GOOD PRACTICE IN PhD EDUCATION AT UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA

This document is a guide to good practice in PhD education at Universidade NOVA de Lisboa and should be read in conjunction with the University´s and Academic Units´ Regulations concerning PhD degrees, the Regulation of each PhD Programme and other University/Units relevant documents.

This document can be found on the web at http://www.unl.pt/escola-doutoral

1. ORGANIZATION OF PhD PROGRAMMES

Recruitment

Efficient recruitment processes are important to supervisors and administrators as well as to students. Delays and problems can be avoided by accurate, clear and complete information, by guidelines for all interactions with potential students, and by fundamental requirements being in place before offers are made (available supervisor, funding, resources and space).

The Academic Units should ensure that all relevant information about the PhD Programmes is available to the potential PhD students (regulations, curricular units, calendars and guidelines, documents required for registration, fees and other charges).

PhD students must be dealt with individually, as each will have a particular supervisor (and/or supervisory panel or committee), a specific research project, individual intermediate progress evaluations and a personal examination process.

Procedures and Documentation

Efficient administration needs to be supported by written procedures and simple forms that clarify, simplify and facilitate the multiple steps and stages of a student's progress from application to graduation. Adequate regulations and cross-institutional agreements can avoid difficulties in the management of joint degrees.

The importance of the communication of information to and from students, supervisors and administrators cannot be overstated. The range of documentation, guidelines, codes of practice and procedures needed for PhD Programmes is quite often wide. Effective communication of such a range of information is facilitated when all elements are short, clear and simple, collectively complete and compatible, and readily available in "soft" and "hard" formats. These may include:

• Research student's general rights and responsibilities;

• Rights and responsibilities of supervisors;

• Research plans;

• Professional development programmes;

• Performance monitoring and examination procedures;

- Intellectual property issues;

- Plagiarism, ethical considerations and definitions of research misconduct;

Getting Started and Progression

Upon enrolment, the PhD students become members of NOVA Doctoral School (see below). The Training Programme offered by the Doctoral School (courses, conferences, workshops) provides the PhD students and supervisors with a structured framework for acquiring and developing skills which will support research, but which will also prove valuable outside their discipline and the academic environment.

This flexible approach fits the image of PhD students as researchers who may need a certain degree of guidance and support, yet are themselves best placed to identify their own particular training needs, issues and concerns.

The Doctoral School will offer a Training Program that includes a Research Skills Development Course (RSD), a three-day course focussing on aspects such as planning, project management, creativity in research, communication skills, group dynamics and networking.

In addition to the participation in the Training Programme, the national and international mobility of the students during their Doctoral studies must be encouraged.

PhD students who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis and who have obtained credits in the modules thaught in the Doctoral Training Programme receive the Diploma Supplement with information about the credits obtained.

NOVA DOCTORAL SCHOOL

The NOVA Doctoral School aims to promote quality, interdisciplinary education and the internationalization of the university's Doctoral programmes.

Without interfering with the structured PhD programmes of each Academic Unit, NOVA Doctoral School will offer to 3rd cycle students and supervisors a range of transferable skills that will support their personal and professional development. Although a number of these programmes are already in place in some Academic Units, they are not offered to all PhD students. Thus, the Doctoral School is an opportunity to join in common transversal activities a diverse population with different background experiences.

NOVA Doctoral School goals are:

- to provide additional training to PhD students and supervisors, enhancing their personal and professional development and contributing to an inspiring work environment;
- to organize common academic and scientific activities with the purpose of avoiding the compartmentalization of scientific areas, creating an open space for discussion and creativity;
- to share best practices, either within NOVA's doctoral programmes or through partnerships with other Higher Education Institutions;
- to forth rationalization and sharing of resources by creating synergies that will benefit all doctoral programmes of NOVA;
- to contribute to attract the best students to our PhD programmes (in Portugal and abroad, including students from the Portuguese speaking countries);
- to create mechanisms of collaboration with enterprises and the society in general.

2. GUIDE OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR PhD STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

This Guide of Good Practice serves as a practical general guideline for PhD students as well as their supervisors at Universidade NOVA de Lisboa. The focus is on the research phase of the PhD programme, since the format of the curricular part varies widely between the Academic Units.

Rights and Responsibilities of PhD students

The PhD student is the most important actor in the PhD process, and is expected to take ownership of the design, organisation and execution of the work; to deliver agreed workpackages on time; to conduct the research with care and to check for errors; to ensure that reporting is complete and transparent.

Students are required to comply with the Doctorate Regulations of Universidade NOVA de Lisboa and of the Academic Unit where they are pursuing their work, as well as with other regulations, including safety/ethical requirements and procedures.

Students should recognise that their supervisor's role is to advise, guide and oversee the research. Even if students are self sufficient in everyday work, they will need to consult their supervisor about major matters: the background, methods, experimental set up of the research project, critical examination of results, safety, and the preparation of the thesis.

Students should always report their holiday arrangements to their supervisor in advance. When students are unable to work because of illness or urgent personal circumstances they must inform their supervisor as soon as practicable.

Students should maintain the progress of the work in accordance with any deadlines agreed with the supervisor; written material should be presented as required in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage. Where students are advised that their progress has been inadequate, they shall take steps to improve their work.

Students should be self-critical of their own work and results, and use these skills in being sceptical of results in the literature.

Students should develop their skills and learn new ones by attending the transferable skills courses and lectures provided by the Doctoral School, other Academic Units of NOVA or external providers. Students that attend the NOVA Doctoral School Transferable Skills Training Programme are responsible for choosing the dates of the courses and completing the required booking process, in consultation with their supervisor. All students are responsible for informing their supervisors which courses they will be attending and the dates.

Rights and Responsibilities of Supervisors

Appropriate supervision is vital to the successful completion of a PhD degree and implies a partnership based on scientific integrity and mutual respect that benefit both PhD students and supervisors in their research and careers. Supervisors should build up a constructive and positive relationship with the early-stage researchers, in order to set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge.

Doctoral candidates must be informed about all the relevant regulations: Academic Unit´s and NOVA´s Doctorate Regulations, safety/ethical regulations.

At the beginning of the PhD programme, students must be informed about the facilities available and the rules governing their use.

In the initial period, supervisors will give appropriate guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, and how to plan the programme to ensure that the normal expectation of submission of the thesis is met.

Supervisors will give guidance on the systematic recording of data or theoretical calculations and the importance of keeping and maintaining a clear record of all that has been undertaken.

Supervisors will maintain regular contact with students through tutorials, group meetings or at the bench. Supervisors will guide students on the relevant use of library facilities, including approaching original literature and sources with a critical attitude and will give guidance on avoiding plagiarism.

Supervisors will ensure that students are made aware when progress is inadequate or when standards of work fall below those generally expected. Supervisors must be prepared to revise the questions and hypotheses under investigation and to provide alternative ideas if the PhD student reaches an impasse.

Supervisors will arrange, as appropriate, for their students to talk about their work to staff and/or group seminars and to have practice in oral presentations.

Where appropriate supervisors will encourage students to produce written work, which may often provide a basis for the preparation of the final thesis; they should return such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time. Normally, supervisors will encourage their students to publish the results as they emerge and are suitable for publication and must make sure that mention is made to the funding source and that the affiliation to the Academic Unit and Universidade NOVA de Lisboa is written in accordance with the guidelines.

Supervisors should encourage students to undergo furher training, in order to expand their areas of expertise (transferable and specialist skills, etc).

Ethics, Safety and Intellectual Property

Students are reminded that their thesis must be their own work and all quotations from other sources, whether published or unpublished, must be properly acknowledged. Plagiarism is a very serious offence and, where proven against a student, may result in disqualification from the examination for the PhD.

Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of another person's thoughts or words or artefacts or software as though they were a student's own. Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons must be clearly identified as such by the citation of sources as accurately and fully as possible. A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism just as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source. If a student summarises another person's ideas, judgements, figures, software or diagrams, a reference to that person in the text must be made and the work referred to must be included in the bibliography.

Use of unacknowledged information downloaded from the internet also constitutes plagiarism.

Students should be aware that "self-plagiarism" is also not acceptable. In self-plagiarism, authors reuse their own previously written work or data in a "new" written work without letting the reader know that it has appeared elsewhere. The reproduction of material which was used in other work or course assessment is also considered self-plagiarism.

The Academic Units can use detection systems (e.g., Turnitin®, which has access to billions of sources (websites, journals, etc) to scan work for evidence of plagiarism.

In what concerns research ethics in general and plagiarism in particular, Universidade Nova de Lisboa endorses the guidelines of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (European Science Foundation).

Employers and/or funders should ensure that researchers at all career stages reap the benefits of the exploitation (if any) of their R&D results through legal protection and, in particular, through appropriate protection of Intellectual Property Rights, including copyrights. Policies and practices should specify what rights belong to researchers and/or, where applicable, to their employers or other parties, including external commercial or industrial organisations.

As far as safety is concerned, students must be informed about all the applicable regulations in force in their Academic Unit/Department/Laboratory.

Conflict Resolution

One of the objectives of these guidelines is to contribute to the avoidance of conflict. However, it is possible that difficulties may arise between the PhD student and the supervisor, related either with the substance of the doctorate (contents of the research, approaches, misunderstandings, failure to adhere to agreements) or with personal relations.

If this does happen, both sides should do their best to discuss openly the situation in a professional and unemotional manner as early as possible. If the problem cannot be solved, students and supervisors can resort to a number of people: the co-supervisor (if any) and/or other members of the thesis committee (if

there is one), the Director of the PhD programme or the bodies responsible for directing or coordinating the PhD programmes. If the problem persists, the matter should be presented to the students´ombudsperson of the Academic Unit or, when an ombudsperson does not exist, to the students´ ombudsperson of NOVA.

3. THIS DOCUMENT IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING SOURCES

Codes of Practice of the Imperial College Graduate School, UK
Good Practice in the Organisation of PhD Programmes in Irish Higher Education, Irish Universities Quality Board, Ireland
Code of Good Practice, Technical University of Delft Graduate School, The Netherlands
Shaping a Doctorate Together – Guidelines for Doctoral Candidates and Supervisors Qualitätszirkel Promotion, Germany
Central Regulations Concerning the Conferring of the Academic PhD Degree, Annex II, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
UCL´s Policy Statement on Plagiarism, University College London, UK
Pre-Experience Teaching Handbook 2011-2012, Nova School of Business and Economics, Lisboa
The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, European Science Foundation
The Ethics of Self-Plagiarism, found online at http://www.ithenticate.com/self-plagiarism-free-white-paper

4. RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

University and Academic Units´ Regulations:
- NOVA´s Regulation for PhD degrees
- NOVA´s guidelines for affiliations in publications
- Regulation of NOVA´s students ombudsperson
- Academic Units´ Regulations for PhD degrees
- Academic Units´ Regulations of PhD Programmes
- Academic Units´ Regulations for preparation and defence of PhD theses

Research ethics
- The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, European Science Foundation
- The European Charter for Researchers, European Commission, DG Research
- International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects, Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS) and World Health Organization
- International Ethical Guidelines for Epidemiological Studies, Council for International Organizations of Medical Sciences (CIOMS)