



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# YUFE Approach to Doctoral Training

## Framework for joint supervision and mentoring

# Framework for joint supervision and mentoring

Task 6.6 – Framework for joint supervision and mentoring (WP 6 YUFE Approach to Doctoral Training)

## Content

1. Introduction .....	5
2. Framework for joint supervision.....	9
2.2. General recommendations for supervision .....	9
2.3. Recommendations for cases in which there are more than one supervisor ...	11
3. Framework for mentoring.....	13
3.1. Guidelines for mentoring.....	15
3.2. Relationship between mentor and DC.....	15
3.3. Expectations for the mentor .....	16
3.4. Expectations for the DC.....	16
4. Annex .....	17
4.1. Supervision agreements, supervision plans, PhD contracts .....	17
4.2. Existing mentoring templates at the YUFE universities .....	17
4.3. Extra: Supportive materials.....	18

## List of terms and abbreviations

Cotutelle	Joint supervision of a doctoral candidate affiliated to one university by academics connected to one or more other universities. Contrary to a joint or double doctorate, a cotutelle ultimately results in one diploma by the university to which the candidate is primarily affiliated, and in which the candidate completes doctoral research and a (joint) training programme when so required. Arguably, the term cotutelle may pose strong overlaps with that of a double doctorate. Indeed, in some Member States joint supervision leading to multiple diplomas is considered a cotutelle.
DC	Doctoral Candidate
DIOSI	In the Horizon 2020 funded project “Developing and Implementing hands-on training on Open Science and Open Innovation for Early Career Researchers”, the partner universities developed the “DIOSI Model for Doctoral Learning”.
Double doctorate	Doctorate consisting of doctoral research and/or a (joint) training programme conducted at two or more universities under the supervision of academics connected to the universities involved where the candidate fulfils the requirements set by all universities part of the double doctorate, ultimately resulting in <u>multiple diplomas</u> .
Joint doctorate	Doctorate consisting of doctoral research and/or a (joint) training programme conducted at two or more universities under the supervision of academics connected to the universities involved where the candidate fulfils the

	requirements set by all universities part of the joint doctorate, thereby ultimately resulting in <u>one diploma</u> .
Mentoring	Offers additional support to the DC, provided by a (non-academic) mentor. It complements supervision by providing additional support and guidance on career development and skill enhancement. It is independent of the doctoral research and focuses on personal and career development and support outside of the research project.
Supervision	The academic supervision of the DC in which one or more senior researchers guide the DC in the development of their doctoral research project
YUFE	Young Universities for the Future of Europe

## 1. Introduction

Through its YUFE approach to Doctoral and Postdoctoral Training<sup>1</sup>, YUFE aims to foster responsible research practices. A key aspect of this initiative is the creation of a framework for joint supervision and mentoring. This initiative further supports the YUFE joint research agenda, strengthens research collaborations, and contributes to the development of early career researchers. The framework proposes guidelines for joint supervision and mentoring of Doctoral Candidates (DCs), ensuring that they receive high-quality support and guidance throughout their research journey.

We distinguish between supervision and mentoring of Doctoral Candidates. With supervision, we refer to the academic supervision of the DC in which one or more senior researchers guide the DC in the development of their doctoral research project. This process is typically formalized by the university. When multiple supervisors are involved, we refer to this arrangement as joint supervision. Joint supervision can occur within the same institution (intra-institutional) or between different institutions (inter-institutional).

The regulatory modes in which inter-institutional joint supervision can take place are<sup>2</sup>:

- **Joint doctorate:** Doctorate consisting of doctoral research and/or a (joint) training programme conducted at two or more universities under the supervision of academics connected to the universities involved where the candidate fulfils the requirements set by all universities part of the joint doctorate, thereby ultimately resulting in one diploma.
- **Double doctorate:** Doctorate consisting of doctoral research and/or a (joint) training programme conducted at two or more universities under the supervision of academics connected to the universities involved where the

---

<sup>1</sup> This is part of the YUFE Work Package 6 “YUFE Approach to Doctoral and Postdoctoral Training”.

<sup>2</sup> Definitions as in the LINK EDU-RES study “Analysing National and Institutional Doctoral Regulations – The Road to Successful Cross-border Cooperation on Joint Doctoral Programmes” (2021); Download [here](#).

candidate fulfils the requirements set by all universities part of the double doctorate, ultimately resulting in multiple diplomas.

- **Cotutelle:** Joint supervision of a doctoral candidate affiliated to one university, by academics connected to one or more other universities. Contrary to a joint or double doctorate, a cotutelle ultimately results in one diploma by the university to which the candidate is primarily affiliated and in which the candidate completes doctoral research and a (joint) training programme when so required. Arguably, the term cotutelle may pose strong overlaps with that of a double doctorate. Indeed, in some Member States joint supervision leading to multiple diplomas is considered a cotutelle.

In the LINK EDU-RES Project, a study<sup>3</sup> was conducted to identify common ground within national and institutional doctoral regulations with the aim to enable universities part of the YERUN Network to establish joint programmes in doctoral training. The national and institutional regulations of the 17 YERUN universities were compared, leading to recommendations to improve international cooperation on joint and double doctorates in the future.

The framework which is described beneath gives recommendations and guidelines for good supervision practices in any context – regardless of the regulatory mode. It offers practical advice on how to structure and conduct supervision. The recommendations are categorized into two main areas: general principles of supervision and specific considerations for joint supervision, where multiple supervisors are involved.

---

<sup>3</sup> LINK EDU-RES Project (2021): Analysing National and Institutional Doctoral Regulations – The Road to Successful Cross-border Cooperation on Joint Doctoral Programmes; Download [here](#).  
Not all YUFE partner universities are part of the YERUN Network. The Université Sorbonne Nouvelle is not part of YERUN.

In contrast to supervision, mentoring offers additional support to the DC, provided by a (non-) academic mentor. It complements supervision by providing additional support and guidance on career development, employability strategies, and skill enhancement. It is independent of the doctoral research and focuses on personal and career development and support outside of the research project. The *DIOSI Model for Doctoral Learning*<sup>4</sup> suggests to add a mentor to the supervision team. We define a mentor as:

- An additional support person next to the academic supervisor who gives personal and career development guidance that might be unrelated to the content of the doctoral thesis.
- A person with a suitable background (depending on the needs of the DC) with a doctoral degree or a seasoned expert in the relevant field.
- A person who is motivated and committed to supporting the path and the growth of a highly skilled specialist working towards their doctorate.
- A person providing additional support for the DC's personal development and expanding their employability prospects.
- A person who promotes equity, diversity, and inclusivity in their mentoring practice through for example, being mindful of potential biases in their approach, actively listening to the experiences of their mentee(s), and creating a safe space for open dialogue about challenges related to identity.

The mentoring can be integrated into existing organisational structures or integrated into a personal development plan. There are different methods for finding a mentor: a pool of mentors can be created, the mentor-mentee pairs can be matched, or DCs can search for suitable mentors themselves.

---

<sup>4</sup> Margaux Kersschot. (2021). *D2.1 – The DIOSI Model for Doctoral Learning: A holistic approach*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7300114>

Mentoring is an optional addition and not all universities offer this support for all their DCs. However, in this framework, we offer recommendations on how to establish effective mentoring relationships. It is essential to note that mentoring can be integrated into the doctoral journey in various ways, and the YUFE universities that already offer mentoring have developed different concepts.

## 2. Framework for joint supervision

In this section, we offer recommendations for effective supervision practices that can be adapted to suit the specific needs of each university. While the concrete regulations for supervision are typically established by each institution, we aim to provide inspiration and ideas for how these regulations can be implemented in a way that supports the best possible outcomes for Doctoral Candidates.

The case of joint supervision, where multiple supervisors are involved, special consideration are required due to the added complexity and additional measures required to ensure effective collaboration and coordination among the supervisors. Those extra considerations are outlined in a separate section. DCs who are supervised by two or more supervisors from different universities have the opportunity to conduct research in two or more countries, exposing them to diverse academic environments and working styles. This experience enables them to develop a unique understanding of the research landscape and gain valuable insights into the practices of various institutions.

### 2.2. General recommendations for supervision

- If the university provides it, the supervisor(s) and the DC fill out and/or sign a supervision agreement, supervision plan, or a similar document that supports the collaboration between the DC and the supervisor(s). [See *existing templates in the annex*].
- Appreciative and regular communication are the basis of good doctoral supervision. Clear channels and processes are established for reporting issues, ensuring they are addressed promptly and in a safe manner.

Recommended tasks and duties of the supervisors: The supervisor

- guides the DC in developing a research plan, and discusses with the DC a realistic timetable, associated research methods and data management aspects.
- provides regular professional guidance and feedback to the DC and to hold regular discussions about the progress of the research and adherence to the time and work plan. This also includes providing information on the doctoral programme requirements, giving access to resources and providing constructive feedback on parts/chapters of the dissertation in a timely manner.
- supports the doctoral candidate's development towards academic independence and supports the DC's integration into the scientific community.
- provides supervision, as agreed by the institutions regarding timelines and commitment levels, with the aim of enabling the doctoral candidate to successfully complete the doctorate. In case where the supervisor DC relationship or commitment breaks down and an alternative supervisor needs to be put in place, joint efforts will be made in accordance with local and inter-university policies.
- actively supports the DC's career development.
- is aware of university guidelines for diversity and inclusion – as well as other ethical guidelines. If the DC requires special support, the supervisor guides the DC towards the support offers of the university.

#### Recommended tasks and duties of the Doctoral Candidate: The DC

- develops a research plan and a personal roadmap (e.g. Personal Study Plan, Personal Development Plan, etc.) and takes into account the guidance and feedback from the supervisors.
- reports regularly on the content-related partial results of the doctoral research project and adheres to the time and work plan.

- (if applicable) shall participate in the study programme provided by the responsible party for doctoral education at the university.
- and the supervisor agrees on the DC's participation in discipline-specific and interdisciplinary qualification offers.
- actively follows the guidelines of their degree programme and confirms and validates the progress stages together with the supervisor(s).
- adheres to ethical conduct of research and research integrity in both their research work and as a member and representative of the scientific community.

### **2.3. Recommendations for cases in which there are more than one supervisor**

Next to the above-mentioned recommendations, cases in which there are more than one supervisor require additional measures to ensure good support of the DC. It can be noted that having more than one supervisor (supervision committee or supervision team) has the benefit of combining complementary expertise, broadening the DC's access to academic and professional networks, and the DC not being dependent on only one supervisor.

Moreover,

- The supervisors (regardless whether they are from different universities or the same university) work as a team. They make clear, written agreements in accordance with the regulations of all institutions involved on the responsibilities in the supervision. This entails for example task allocation between the supervisors, if there is a principal supervisor, co-authorships, etc. The agreements are communicated transparently and in writing to all parties, including the DC. If changes in the work plan occur, the work plan is renegotiated with all parties, including the DC.

- The supervisors acknowledge and navigate cultural difference in supervision styles with transparency, taking into account hierarchy, independence, negotiations, and feedback.
- It is implied that the language of negotiation and communication would be a lingua franca shared by both (all) supervisors and the DC. This could be English or a language that has been agreed upon by all parties.
- Universities are responsible for providing a clear path in situations of conflict resolution where advice or guidance is needed from an impartial party.

### 3. Framework for mentoring

In this section, we provide recommendations for effective mentoring practices, offering ideas that can be adapted to suit the unique needs of each university. While mentoring programmes may vary in concept and implementation, these recommendations highlight essential elements that can enhance the quality and impact of mentoring relationships. Mentoring can be an important part of the doctoral journey, as it creates an additional contact and support resource for the DC. It enriches the DC's support system with career advice, and advice on skill development. Mentoring can improve wellbeing and mental health of DCs as they have more contact and support points, by alleviating career-related stress, and by increasing the DC's self-confidence. It allows for a more inclusive and diverse approach, as it can help DCs to find role models that they identify with. Mentoring allows for DCs to become even more imaginative and ambitious, in terms of research, career development, and employment beyond academia, and can encourage interdisciplinary thinking.<sup>5</sup>

Mentoring programmes can take a wide range of forms. The level of formalisation can vary significantly, from being an integral part of a doctoral supervision team to a more informal arrangement. Another key distinction lies between one-on-one mentoring, where a single mentor supports a single DC, a mentor pool, which provides a group of DCs with access to a team of mentors, and a setting in which one mentor supports several DCs. In the latter case, each DC can draw on the expertise of multiple mentors for specific support, depending on their needs. The various types of mentoring offer different benefits, which are highlighted in the table below.

---

<sup>5</sup> Margaux Kersschot. (2021). *D2.1 – The DIOSI Model for Doctoral Learning: A holistic approach*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7300114>

Aspect	Formal Mentoring	Informal Mentoring
<b>Structure</b>	Clear framework with defined roles and responsibilities	Flexible, based on individual preferences and circumstances
<b>Consistency</b>	Offers consistent, ongoing support	Support can be adapted to the needs and takes place spontaneously
<b>Feedback</b>	Regular feedback mechanisms	Feedback is ad hoc and provided when needed
<b>Flexibility</b>	Offers a structured frame for the DC	Adaptable to DCs' needs and research paths
<b>Administrative Burden</b>	Requires coordination and bureaucracy	Minimal administrative load
<b>Personalisation</b>	Focuses more on the strategic direction of the whole mentoring programme	Offers very personalised support
<b>Access to Expertise</b>	Structured access to experienced, vetted mentors	More responsibility for DCs to find a suitable mentor

Ultimately, the choice between a formal and informal mentoring programme depends on the specific needs and goals of the DCs, as well as the resources and capacity of the institution or organization providing the programme. A hybrid approach that combines elements of both formal and informal programmes may also be a viable option.

### 3.1. Guidelines for mentoring

Regardless of the set-up, some guidelines should be followed:

- The mentoring programme is open for a diverse group of DCs. Aspects of diversity and inclusion are to be considered to make the programme accessible.
  - Open call for DCs (using inclusive language)
  - Diversity in the mentors (the concrete measures to ensure a diverse group of mentors is operationalised by the institution that organises the mentoring programme)
  - Autonomy for mentors and DCs to decide on the means of their mentoring relationship (language, structure of the mentoring conversations, time, etc.)
- The DCs and mentors receive guidance, resources and/or training depending on the local context.
- Universities have general guidelines for the mentoring that state the responsibilities of both the mentor and the DC, and describe the relationship between mentor, DC and the DC's academic supervisor(s). [*see existing templates in annex*]
- There is transparency and clarity about whom the mentor or DC can contact in situations of concern and who would solve disputes between mentor and DC.
- The mentor and the DC take note of the guidelines and set up a plan for their collaboration that states the goals and rules of their relationship.
- The mentor and the DC agree on a timeframe for the expected duration of the relationship (after which they can conclude their mentorship or decide on future contact).

### 3.2. Relationship between mentor and DC

- Mentorship is a unique interpersonal relationship that both parties shape together.

- Mentorship is not one-directional, but rather reciprocal in giving perspective for both parties.
- Active interaction between mentor and DC is required, with clear expectations and set personal and professional boundaries.
- Discussions should be open, honest and confidential.
- The mentor and DC periodically reflect on and assess their mentoring relationship, making adjustments as needed.

### **3.3. Expectations for the mentor**

- The mentor is not a supervisor and therefore not responsible for the academic supervision.
- The mentor gives reliable support for the professional growth of the DC.
- Mentoring provides perspective, not advice based on the mentor's own career trajectories.
- The mentor promotes ideas for the DC's career and may share their network.
- The mentor supports the DC's work ability and helps enhance their resilience.
- The mentor shares the joys of the DC's achievements.
- The mentor encourages and helps in situations of change and transitional phases.
- The mentor cannot obligate the DC to engage in any professional tasks or favours.

### **3.4. Expectations for the DC**

- The DC establishes general goals or expectations for the mentoring time.
- The DC takes initiative and demonstrates an interest by initiating mentoring sessions.
- The DC seeks advice and feedback on progress from the mentor and is open to new learning opportunities.
- The DC is willing to receive (and perhaps also give) constructive feedback.

## 4. Annex

### 4.1. Supervision agreements, supervision plans, PhD contracts

- University of Antwerp: Charter for PhD researchers (annex of [“General regulations on obtaining the academic degree of doctor at the University of Antwerp”](#))
- University of Antwerp: The “contract template for PhD with universities except Flemish universities” can be shared upon request.
- University of Antwerp: [Charter for postdoctoral researchers at the University of Antwerp](#)
- University of Bremen: [Agreement on Doctoral Supervision Template UBremen July2023.docx](#)
- University of Eastern Finland: [Supervision plan - UEF](#)
- Maastricht University: [2023-04-08 UM double doctorate agreement.docx](#)
- Maastricht University: [2023-04-08 UM joint doctorate agreement.docx](#)
- Sorbonne Nouvelle University: [SNU charte du doctorat 2024-2025.pdf](#)
- University of Cyprus: [Regulations for Joint Degree or Cotutelle \(PhD Students\)](#)
- University of Cyprus: [Postgraduate Studies Regulations](#) governing the supervision of doctoral candidates
- University of Cyprus: The template of the cooperation agreement for the joint supervision of a doctoral thesis can be shared upon request.

### 4.2. Existing mentoring templates at the YUFE universities

- Maastricht University: [PhD Mentoring Guideline.docx](#)
- Maastricht University: [Partnership Setup, Principles and Guidelines of the FPN Mentoring Program for PhD candidates.docx](#)
- Maastricht University: [mentoring dos and donts.docx](#)
- University of Antwerp: [Dialogue prompts.pdf](#)
- University of Antwerp: [Expectations & guidelines.pdf](#)

- University of Antwerp: [My Mentoring Trajectory.pdf](#)
- University of Antwerp: [YUFE Pilot Doctoral Learning Mentoring V20240611.pdf](#)
- Sorbonne Nouvelle University: [USN My Mentoring Trajectory - mentor.docx](#)
- Sorbonne Nouvelle University: [USN Expectations & guidelines - mentor.docx](#)
- Sorbonne Nouvelle University: [USN - Dialogue prompts - Mentor.docx](#)

### 4.3. Extra: Supportive materials

Please note: Links to external websites are provided for convenience and informational purposes only. We are not responsible for the content, accuracy, or updates of any third-party sites, which may change or be removed without notice.

*On Supervision:*

*European Commission: Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions – Supervision guidelines, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/2033301>*

Link EDU-RES Project: Toolbox for doctoral candidates,  
<https://www.jointphdprogrammes.com/toolbox/>

*On Mentoring:*

WorkLife with Adam Grant: The Three Big Myths of Mentoring

October 17, 2023

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1edv7NdCj6fOKqrJAIfeeF>

Michelle McQuaid's Podcast: Guest professor Belle Rose Ragins on "Can We Make Mentoring Extraordinary?"

<https://www.michellemcquaid.com/podcast/can-we-make-mentoring-extraordinary-podcast-with-belle-rose-ragins/>

Linda Phillips-Jones: Skills for successful mentoring: Competencies of outstanding mentors and mentees, 2023

[https://my.lerner.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/Skills for Sucessful Mentoring.pdf](https://my.lerner.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/Skills_for_Sucessful_Mentoring.pdf)

Linda Phillips-Jones: [The Mentor's Guide - Linda Phillips-Jones](#)

Tampere IAS Mentoring Programme: [Mentoring Programme | Tampere Institute for Advanced Study | Tampere Universities](#)

*On listening:*

Ten listening tips: The ten listening tips were shared by the key scholars of listening Sept 27th, 2017 to celebrate the International Day of Listening. The materials were produced by the International Listening Association.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrFP69MjAFM&list=PLN2\\_fQgD2OzUrtOZmWs\\_J4kQUrpfYXqnz](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrFP69MjAFM&list=PLN2_fQgD2OzUrtOZmWs_J4kQUrpfYXqnz)