THE DOCTORAL STUDENT PROGRAMME AT CERN
- Guidelines for University Supervisors -

The CERN Doctoral Student programme, established in 1985, aims at providing an environment for the preparation of a thesis in applied science or technology, suitable for obtaining a PhD at a university in the CERN Member States.

The award of the degree remains in the responsibility of the student’s university. Hence for the programme to be successful, it is essential that solid links be put in place between the CERN supervisor, the university supervisor, and the student, in which context the academic arrangements and the progress will be discussed. The doctoral student programme is a training programme and students should not be assigned work unrelated to the scientific scope of the PhD thesis.

1. Eligibility
The programme is intended for nationals of CERN Member States who are studying at a Member State university and hold a diploma qualifying for doctoral studies (in a field covered by CERN’s operations but with the exception of theoretical and elementary particle physics).

CERN accepts non-Member State students in the framework of bilateral agreements providing for substantial external funding.

2. Selection
The student selection is done at the meeting of the Technical Student Selection Committee, which meets twice per year, in June and December. The committee is composed of a chairman and representatives from every department who collect the PhD proposals and student requests from their departments.

3. Contract
The doctoral student contract is a contract of association and its award is therefore linked to the condition of its holder being enrolled as doctoral student at a university of the CERN member states. The award of a doctoral student contract requires a thesis description to be approved by the university and the CERN supervisors, and by the student.

4. Duration of contract
Initially an association contract for a period of 6 months will be issued, which is normally renewable for two periods of 12 months. The maximum duration of a doctoral student’s contract may not exceed 36 months.

5. Supervision
The supervision of the student is shared between the CERN supervisor (a scientific staff member with a relevant technical and/or academic curriculum), and the university supervisor. The role of the CERN supervisor is to advise and guide the student throughout his/her work at CERN. The role of the university supervisor is to review the work at regular intervals, to guide the work towards the fulfillment of the thesis criteria, and to ensure that the administrative procedures are met in due time.

6. Progress Reports
The student must write a report on the progress of the PhD after the first 18 and 30 months. These reports must be signed by the student, the CERN supervisor, and the university
supervisor. A template for these progress reports can be obtained from the departmental secretariat and can be found in the admin e-guide.

- Both progress reports should include a report on the results achieved, the objectives for the next reference period and list the student’s scientific publications.
- The CERN and university supervisors should include a short statement on the student’s performance and a comment about the work.

The respective progress reports constitute the basis for the decision to grant an extension of the student’s contract.

The CERN supervisor’s group shall invite the university supervisor to CERN at the occasion of the 18 and 30 months progress reports and will bear the travel expenses and subsistence allowance, if these are not covered university and if the university supervisor is not already registered at CERN at more than 50% of presence.

7. Library archives of the PhD thesis

Once the PhD is awarded by the university, the student must submit his/her thesis to the CERN Library using the link http://cdsweb.cern.ch/submit?doctype=CTH and forward a copy of the diploma to the coordinator of the Doctoral Student Programme. All PhD theses will be stored electronically at CERN.

8. Suspension of the contract and authorized absences

Suspension of the contract:
Subject to approval by the CERN supervisor, the students may take special unpaid leave in order to return to their university in the context of the PhD research. These absences may be split into several (at least one month long) periods and may not exceed 12 months in total. These absences do not count for the contract duration, that is, the doctoral student’s contract will automatically be extended by the same period. The subsistence payment will be suspended during the period of the unpaid leave.

Authorized absences:
The provisions concerning annual and sick leave of employed members of personnel apply in analogy also to the students. Upon specific written request of the student’s home university, the CERN supervisor may authorize a student to spend up to 5 days per period of 6 months at his/her university. CERN will grant the leave days and the travel expenses for one visit within 12 months.

9. Training for Doctoral Students

The group of the CERN supervisor shall ensure that the student has adequate access to training during his/her stay at CERN. The group shall bear the full costs for at least the following:

- One French or English course at the beginning of the stay to help the student integrate into the CERN environment/region or to improve their skills in scientific writing.
- Participation in one international conference.