

EURODOC survey on the Doctorate<sup>1</sup> structure across Europe (version April 2020)  
prepared by the EURODOC Doctoral Training Working Group

## EU-H2020-MSCA-ITN-European Joint Doctorates

This is a summary of the doctoral programme described under European Joint Doctorates (EJDs), a mode of Innovative Training Networks (ITNs), which are Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions (MSCAs) under the Horizon 2020 programme (H2020) of the European Union (EU). The information in this summary is collected from the EU ITN call for proposals<sup>2</sup> and the H2020-MSCA-ITN Guide for Applicants (version 5.1 from 29.11.2019)<sup>3</sup>.

The MSCAs aim to support the career development and training of researchers – with a focus on innovation skills – in all scientific disciplines through interdisciplinary, international and intersectoral mobility.

ITNs offer innovative doctoral-level training providing a range of skills in order to maximise employability. The specific objectives of the MSCA-ITNs are (in accordance with Principles for Innovative Doctoral Training<sup>4</sup>):

- to train a new generation of creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative early-stage researchers able to face current and future challenges and to convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit.
- to raise excellence and structure research and doctoral training, extending the traditional academic research training setting, incorporating the elements of Open Science and equipping researchers with the right combination of research-related and transferable competences.
- to provide enhanced career perspectives in both the academic and non-academic sectors through international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral mobility combined with an innovation-oriented mind-set.

EJDs are one of the three modes of MSCA-ITNs. These networks have the objective of promoting international, inter-sectoral and multi/inter-disciplinary collaboration in doctoral-level training in Europe through the creation of joint doctoral programmes, leading to the delivery of joint, double or multiple doctoral degrees. An EJD must be composed of at least three independent beneficiaries (see Glossary) from three different EU member states or associated countries<sup>5</sup> of the EU. In order to reach the objectives of EJD, at least three beneficiaries must be entitled to award doctoral degrees, of which at least two institutions conferring a joint, double or multiple doctoral degree must be established in a member state or associated country. There is no pre-defined size for these multi-partner networks.

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<sup>1</sup> **Doctorate** is understood as the institutional frameworks and processes geared towards the completion of a doctoral degree.

<sup>2</sup> [EU ITN call for proposals](#) (version 03.07.2019).

<sup>3</sup> [H2020-MSCA-ITN Guide for Applicants](#) (version 5.1 from 29.11.2019).

<sup>4</sup> [Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training](#) (IDT) published by European Commission (2011).

<sup>5</sup> [Associated Country \(AC\)](#) means a third country which can participate under the same conditions as legal entities from the Member States of EU.

For more details about H2020-MSCA-ITN-EJD please see the Guide for applicants<sup>6</sup>.

## I. General information and application procedure

### **Which institutions award doctoral degrees?**

All supported early-stage researchers, within an EJD, must be enrolled in a joint, double or multiple doctoral degree. At least two-thirds of the supported early-stage researchers within an EJD must be enrolled in a joint, double or multiple degree within Europe, i.e. between two or more beneficiaries/partner organisations established in a member state or associated country. The remaining supported researchers must also be enrolled in a programme that results in a joint, double or multiple degree awarded by at least one European participating organisation (member states or associated countries).

A joint degree refers to a single diploma issued by at least two higher education institutions offering an integrated programme and recognised officially in the countries where the degree-awarding institutions are located. A double or multiple degree refers to two or more separate national diplomas issued by two or more higher education institutions and recognised officially in the countries where the degree-awarding institutions are located. The final degree must be awarded by institutions from at least two different countries.

### **What forms of doctorate attendance are available?**

Normally, the employment is done on a full-time basis. However, in special cases, part-time employment for personal or family reasons can be accepted (the minimum MSCA working time must always be at least 50 %).

### **What is the formal length of time foreseen for completing a doctorate?**

The formal length of the time foreseen for completing the doctorate in EJDs is 36 months (three years).

### **What is the status of the doctoral candidates<sup>7</sup>?**

In EJDs, according to the EU rules, doctoral candidates have the status of an employee. In practice, the ESRs might have a double status: employees (with a work contract) and students (registered as PhD students).

### **What are the social benefits for doctoral candidates with student status?**

Not applicable, because EJD doctoral candidates are hired with an employment contract or other direct contract with equivalent benefits, including social security coverage. Fixed amount fellowship agreements are only permitted where national law prohibits the possibility of an employment contract/equivalent direct contract. In all cases, the beneficiaries must ensure that the researcher is covered under the social security scheme which is applied to employed workers within the country of the beneficiary, or under a social security scheme providing at least sickness and parental benefits, invalidity and accidents at work and occupational diseases.

<sup>6</sup> [H2020-MSCA-ITN Guide for Applicants](#) (version 5.1 from 29.11.2019).

<sup>7</sup> **Doctoral candidate** is a person enrolled in a doctorate

## How are doctoral candidates financially supported?

The doctoral candidates employed in EJDs receive salaries from the beneficiary that hired them. This salary always includes a living allowance (3.270 euro/month, which is 39.240 euro/year, for MSCAs calls launched in 2018-2020). Depending on the situation of the doctoral candidates, a mobility allowance (fixed rate of 600 euro/month) and family allowance (fixed rate of 500 euro/month) can be included in the salary. In addition, the research, training, and networking costs of the doctoral candidates are funded through the EJD (1.800 euro per person-month given to the beneficiary that hired the respective doctoral candidate to be spent only with EJD related costs). A correction coefficient<sup>8</sup> is applied to the living allowance, depending on the country of the beneficiary hiring the doctoral candidate. These stipulated amounts are gross amounts. Consequently, the net salary results from deducting all compulsory social security contributions as well as direct taxes (e.g. income tax) from the gross amount, following the legislation in the country where the ESR is employed.

## What are the admission requirements for a doctorate?

The requirements specific to the EJD are that the applicant:

- has to be an Early Stage Researcher (at the date of recruitment by the beneficiary, the applicant must be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience) of his/her research career and have not been awarded a doctoral degree);
- must not have resided or carried out his/her main activity (work, studies etc.) in the country of the recruiting beneficiary for more than 12 months in the three years immediately before the recruitment date.

In addition to these requirements specific to EJDs, each beneficiary and institution enrolling the doctoral candidate in a doctoral programme can have their own admission requirements.

## II. Progression

### How is a doctorate organized in an EJD?

Each EJD organises its own doctoral programme, in which each doctoral candidate hired by the EJD takes part through an individual, personalised research project. The doctoral candidates hired in an EJD have to follow the doctoral programme set up by the EJD and also fulfil the requirements of doctoral programmes at the institution where they are enrolled in a PhD programme. As ITNs aim to improve the employability of the ESRs through intersectoral exposure, normally secondments at academic/non-academic entities are part of the EJD doctoral programme. The total duration of all secondments is limited to a maximum of 30 % of the employment time.

In EJD it is expected that the researchers will need to spend at least the minimum period of time required to be eligible to enrol in a doctoral degree and defend the doctoral thesis at the corresponding academic participating organisations. This will vary according to the institution

<sup>8</sup> For all these country correction coefficients see Table 2 [here](#) (pages 82-83).

and country in question. The limitation of secondments to 30 % of the total recruitment period does not apply to EJD insofar as time spent at other participating organisations occurs in line with the proposal description.

## **How is doctoral supervision provided?**

The joint supervision of fellows is mandatory, as is the creation of a joint governance structure with joint admission, selection, supervision, monitoring and assessment procedures. Doctoral supervision within EJDs is provided in accordance with the specific rules described by the EJD project and the rules of the institution where the doctoral candidate is enrolled in a PhD programme. Thus, any model of supervision is practically possible.

Each recruited researcher must:

- be selected, supervised, monitored and assessed through a joint governance structure;
- be enrolled on a joint doctoral programme.

## **What are the main obligations of doctoral candidates?**

The main obligations of doctoral candidates are described by each specific EJD and may include attending network meetings, training sessions, science communication activities, public engagement activities etc. In addition, as part of the implementation, each recruited researcher has to establish, together with her/his personal supervisor/s at the host organisation/s, a personal Career Development Plan. Besides research objectives, this plan should include the researcher's training and career needs, as well as planning for publications and participation in conferences. Each EJD designs her/his own Career Development Plan structure.

## **Is any mobility compulsory?**

Interdisciplinary, intersectoral, and international mobility are compulsory requirements of EJDs. In EJDs, mobility is also connected to recruitment. Two possibilities exist:

- a researcher is employed 100% by a beneficiary and sent to other beneficiaries or partner organisations for the share of time foreseen under the implementation mode in question, or
- a researcher is recruited separately by each beneficiary for the period of time they spend there.

## **How are courses in transferable skills provided?**

Each EJD project provides courses in transferable skills as it seems fit to its own research and doctoral training specificities. However, the ITN guide for applicants includes the following topics of interest for transferable skills courses:

- *Training related to research and innovation*: entrepreneurship, commercialisation of results, management of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), take up and exploitation of research results, communication, standardisation, ethics, scientific writing, personal

development, team skills, multicultural awareness, gender issues, research integrity etc.

- *Training related to management or grant searching:* involvement in the organisation of network activities, entrepreneurship, management, proposal writing, enterprise start-up, task coordination etc.

### **How is the progress of the doctoral candidate evaluated?**

Each EJD defines itself how to evaluate the progress of the doctoral candidates employed by the network.

### **Is it possible for doctoral candidates to change supervisor(s)?**

The EJD doctoral candidates can change the supervisor(s) according to the rules of the specific EJD and the rules of the institution where the doctoral candidates are enrolled in a PhD programme.

### **Are supervisors required to have training in order to supervise doctoral candidates?**

It is not a specific EJD requirement that supervisors need to have training in order to supervise doctoral candidates. However, in order for EJD grant applications to receive funding, the EU evaluators have to consider that: 1) the supervisors are qualified and experienced enough; 2) the doctoral training is proposed by the EJD is good enough.

## **III. Defence procedure**

### **What requirements should be met to receive acceptance to enter the defence procedure?**

The requirements to be met in order to receive acceptance to enter the defence procedure are those of the institution where the doctoral candidate chooses to hold the defence.

### **What documents are required to start the defence procedure?**

The documents required to start the defence procedure are those required by the institution where the doctoral candidate chooses to hold the defence.

### **What is the defence procedure?**

The defence procedure follows the rules of the institution where the doctoral candidate chooses to hold the defence.

### **Glossary:**

**Beneficiary** - legal entity that contributes directly to the implementation of the research training programme of the ETN by recruiting, supervising, hosting, and training ESRs. It may also provide secondment opportunities. Beneficiaries are signatories to the Grant Agreement<sup>9</sup>, receive funding, claim costs, and take complete responsibility for the proper

<sup>9</sup> The **Grant Agreement** is an EU standard **contract** defining the basic conditions for the project financing.

implementation of the proposed research training programme. In ETNs, every beneficiary must recruit, host at its premises, and supervise at least one ESR. Only beneficiaries can recruit researchers.

**Early Stage Researcher (ESR)** - person hired in an ETN by a beneficiary, usually also enrolled in a PhD programme (i.e. doctoral programme; these terms are used interchangeably in this document) during the ETN project.

**Entities with a legal or capital link** - organisations with an established relationship with the beneficiary which is not limited to the action nor specifically created for its implementation. These entities implement certain action tasks described in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement<sup>10</sup> i.e. hosting and training of researchers. Such entities may not employ the researcher under the action and must fulfil the same conditions for participation and funding under Horizon 2020 as the beneficiary they are linked to. The involvement of such entities must be clearly described in the proposal and will be assessed as part of the evaluation.

**Partner organisation** - entity contributing to the implementation of the action, but that does not sign the Grant Agreement. Partner organisations do not employ the researchers under the action.

*Author: Cornel Borit*

*University affiliation: Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic*

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EURODOC survey on the Doctorate structures across Europe was prepared for the EURODOC Doctoral Training Working Group by the following members (in alphabetical order): Melania Borit (NO), Gergely Buday (HU), Eva Hnatkova (CZ), Filomena Parada (PO), and Olga Shtyka (PL).

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<sup>10</sup> H2020 Programme AGA – [Annotated Model Grant Agreement](#) (version 5.0, 2018).