

# **Université Paris-Saclay policy regarding the Accreditation to Supervise Research (*Habilitation à diriger des recherches* - HDR) and exemptions from the HDR**

## **Objectives, criteria, offer and related procedures**

## Summary

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## 1.1 Overview

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### → The provision offered by Universit  Paris-Saclay

The provision of support offered by Universit  Paris-Saclay to attain a HDR is broken down into **three schemes** which are detailed below, and which result in the following three documents:

- › Within the framework of official joint supervision, an **authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate without an Accreditation to Supervise Research (HDR)**, with **guidance from a mentor** to jointly supervise the PhD. This exemption is granted for a period of four years. It cannot be renewed but can be followed by an authorisation to supervise another PhD candidate without a HDR, or a HDR defence.
- › An **authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate alone without a HDR**. This exemption is granted for a period of four years, is non-renewable and is subject to a commitment to obtain authorisation to apply for the HDR before the defence of the directed thesis.
- › An **Accreditation to Supervise Research (HDR)**.

Any **equivalent qualifications to a HDR** which are recognised by Universit  Paris-Saclay are set out in an accompanying document to this guidance.

### → Principles

The provision of support offered by Universit  Paris-Saclay to attain a HDR is designed to:

- › affirm the **values and objectives** of Universit  Paris-Saclay and to translate these clearly and in a practical way into **expectations** for applicants and into **criteria**,
- › ensure **progression** and **coherence** between the expectations and criteria for being **authorised to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR** and those for **obtaining the HDR**,
- › operate in a collegial, open and transparent manner, with provision for **appeal procedures**,
- › draw on the support of the bodies responsible for research and doctoral training, in particular the Academic Council's Research Committee and the doctoral schools,
- › contribute to the dissemination of **good research** and **PhD supervision practices** and to raising awareness of emerging issues at an international and national level in these two areas (university's social responsibility, research ethics and scientific integrity, open science, etc.),
- › be consistent with the training and career support policy for academic staff and researchers (**doctoral supervision training** provided by the doctoral schools, training in scientific project management, etc.).

## → Scope of application

- › The application for a HDR at Universit  Paris-Saclay is open to all applicants, both external and internal to Universit  Paris-Saclay.
- › Authorisations to supervise PhD candidates without a HDR can only be granted by Universit  Paris-Saclay for researchers and academic staff, whether tenured or not, who are members of the host unit teams at the doctoral schools within Universit  Paris-Saclay, and they apply only to doctoral projects for which enrolment as a PhD candidate at Universit  Paris-Saclay is planned.
- › Authorisations to supervise PhD candidates without a HDR granted by other institutions cannot be considered for enrolment for a PhD at Universit  Paris-Saclay.
- › In some disciplines (fluids/processes/energy, industrial engineering, economics, management), the scope of the HDR awarded by Universit  Paris-Saclay is limited by the field covered within the University.

## 1.2 The key players in the process and their roles

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### → The Academic Council's Research Committee

- › According to Article 3 of the Decree [of 23 November 1988 regarding the HDR](#), *'Applications for enrolment are examined by the President of the institution who decides on the basis of a proposal by the scientific committee, which is formed exclusively of persons qualified to supervise research'*.
- › According to Article 16 of the [Decree of 25 May 2016 establishing the national framework for training and the procedures leading to the award of the national doctoral degree](#), *'the duties of a PhD supervisor or joint supervisor may be carried out [...] by other persons holding a doctorate, chosen for their scientific competence by the head of the institution, on the proposal<sup>1</sup> of the director of the doctoral school and after consulting the Academic Council's Research Committee, or an equivalent body in the enrolment institution.'*

In order to ensure the coherence of the overall policy and the different schemes, authorisations to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR and authorisations to apply for the HDR will all be supported by the University's HDR advisors before being processed by the Academic Council's Research Committee.

The Board of the Academic Council's Research Committee at Universit  Paris-Saclay meets once a year with all of the HDR advisors to review the year and draw lessons from it, and possibly to

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<sup>1</sup>The head of the institution may either accept or refuse a proposal for authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR from the doctoral school or a proposal for registration for a HDR from the Research Committee (CR) and the Academic Council (CAC), but may not decide on applications which have not been proposed by the body responsible for doing so according to the regulations in force.

propose changes to the arrangements, procedures and criteria. The Board of Doctoral School Directors is also consulted.

The Academic Council's Research Committee meets at least six times a year to deal with HDR registration applications or authorisation requests to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR.

- All members of the Academic Council's Research Committee are entitled to vote for authorisations to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR.
- Only the members of the Academic Council's Research Committee who are accredited to direct research are entitled to vote for the authorisation of a HDR application.

### → HDR advisors

The HDR advisors are responsible for directing applicants to the most appropriate scheme for their situation and requirements and for helping them to prepare their application.

**Scope of operation:** the scope of operation is specified in terms of disciplines and/or themes and/or doctoral schools or groups of doctoral schools concerned.

**Appraisal procedures by advisors:** HDR advisors are free, in conjunction with their network and area of responsibility, to organise the examination of application files and the support of applicants. In particular, they can refer to a local HDR committee or call on experts, especially from outside the University.

In the fields of humanities and social sciences, economics and management, and legal sciences, the appraisal of HDR files requires the designation of a 'guarantor' among the University staff (someone who is themselves qualified to supervise research) to provide scientific support for the development of the HDR project.

**Appointment of HDR advisors:** HDR advisors are nominated by the Graduate Schools, together with their area of responsibility, and are appointed by the President of Université Paris-Saclay for a period of five years, which is renewable only once, after seeking the opinion of the Academic Council's Research Committee and the opinion of the Management Committee at Université Paris-Saclay.

### → The doctoral schools

They are invited to give an opinion on applications before they are submitted to the Research Committee.

### → Mentors involved in doctoral supervision

Mentors involved in doctoral supervision are professors or equivalent who are experienced in doctoral supervision. Emeritus professors can, in particular, be called upon to provide this support to attain the HDR. The mentors will, except in special cases, be invited to participate in the HDR defence examination board when it takes place.

The mentors undertake to support the applicant (mentee) towards independence in doctoral supervision and research project management. In particular, they commit to meetings with the

mentee, without the presence of the PhD candidate concerned, to discuss, give advice and provide constructive feedback on good practice in doctoral supervision, on conducting a research project or on scientific output. Mentors commit to participating in at least half a day of briefing on their role and discussion with other mentors about the role of a mentor in doctoral supervision.

The mentors are, except in special cases, involved in the scientific guidance of the thesis in their role as joint supervisors. As the applicant for the exemption is the thesis supervisor, this participation in the scientific guidance of the thesis will not be considered as additional thesis supervision on the part of the mentor, but will be taken into account by the doctoral school as part of the joint supervision quota in the same way as any other joint supervision.

### 1.3 Criteria for the supervision of a PhD candidate without a HDR and the HDR

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**Extract from Article 1** of the Decree dated [23 November 1988](#): *'The Accreditation to Supervise Research (HDR) recognises the applicant's high scientific level, the originality of the applicant's approach in a scientific field, the applicant's ability to master a research concept in a sufficiently broad scientific or technological field and the applicant's ability to supervise young researchers.'* Universit  Paris-Saclay gives equal attention to each of these aspects.

The expectations of applicants are defined in accordance with the doctoral policy of Universit  Paris-Saclay on the one hand and its research policy on the other. The generic criteria, valid for all disciplines and all applicants, are specified below. These generic criteria are broken down into qualitative or quantitative indicators specific to each discipline, which HDR advisors can share with applicants. In all cases, application files are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and the criteria only given as a guide.

The option to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR is a route towards attaining a HDR and is not an alternative to a HDR. For this reason, whether generic or specific, the expectations progressively increase from the authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR with guidance from a mentor, to the authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate alone without a HDR, through to the authorisation to apply for the HDR.

#### → Ability to conduct research

With regard to research, taking into account the expectations and criteria specific to each discipline and subject matter, particular attention is paid to:

- › the quality and significance of the scientific output,
- › the national and international scientific influence and reach (including any prizes or distinctions obtained),
- › research projects and collaborations,
- › initiatives to stimulate the scientific community,

- › interdisciplinary research activities and/or those linked to the socio-economic environment (companies, hospitals, associations, local authorities, etc.)

Work related to research ethics and scientific integrity, open science and science/society initiatives are also taken into account in the assessment of applications.

Applicants are not required to present experiences or achievements in each of the aspects above, but HDR advisors should ensure that, in their guidance to applicants, they do not overemphasise one aspect of research activity to the detriment of another. In particular, authorisation to apply for the HDR or to supervise PhD candidates without a HDR cannot be granted 'automatically' on the basis of exclusively bibliometric criteria, even if this is broken down by discipline.

### → Suitability for doctoral supervision

With regard to doctoral supervision, again taking into account the specific characteristics of each discipline or subject, particular attention is paid to assessing the suitability of applicants for doctoral supervision, with reference to Université Paris-Saclay's doctoral charter, the national framework of doctorates (see Decree of 25 May 2016), the skills expected of doctors (see Decree dated 22 February 2019), and emerging issues regarding doctoral supervision.

The various experiences and activities which can attest to their ability to supervise young researchers will be taken into account in the assessment of their application, such as:

- › supervision of research trainees or students in an introductory research project, joint supervision of PhD candidates, supervision of a PhD candidate within the framework of an authorisation to direct a thesis without a HDR,
- › joint publications with jointly supervised or jointly directed young researchers,
- › having followed one or more training courses in doctoral supervision or participated in awareness-raising or mentoring initiatives by an experienced supervisor,
- › participation in doctoral training support activities, such as:
  - initiatives to promote PhDs among Master's level students in France and abroad,
  - participation in thesis examination panels, individual monitoring committees, doctoral school councils, High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES) doctoral school evaluation committees,
  - initiatives to help prepare and monitor the professional future of PhD candidates, and initiatives for PhD alumni.

As with the ability to conduct research, applicants are not required to show experience or achievements in each of the above aspects, but this ability to supervise should nevertheless be considered at the same level as that as the ability to conduct research. HDR advisors take care, in the support they provide to applicants, not to give excessive priority to one aspect in the supervision of young researchers to the detriment of others. In particular, authorisation to apply for the HDR or to supervise PhD candidates without a HDR cannot be granted 'automatically' on the basis of criteria based exclusively on the number of joint supervisions undertaken, even when broken down by discipline.

If the applicant's career has taken place mainly outside the French system and cultural integration to that system is necessary, applicants will be required to have undergone specific training in that system.

## 1.4 Conditions for an authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR

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The applicant must have a PhD, be a researcher or an academic staff member, with or without tenure, at Universit  Paris-Saclay, be a member of one of the teams at one of the doctoral schools within Universit  Paris-Saclay for a provisional period of at least four years after the authorisation date.

- › If the doctoral project is already underway, the PhD candidate's agreement to this change in supervision must be obtained, as well as the agreement of the PhD supervisor and the PhD candidate's employer.
- › In the case of an application for a doctoral project which has not yet begun, the planned course of the PhD, the subject of the PhD and, except in special cases, the prospective PhD candidate must nevertheless be known and specified in the application.

The exemption is granted for a single PhD candidate and for a period of four years. It is non-renewable.

- › If it is a request for an exemption to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR with guidance from a mentor, it can be followed by an authorisation to supervise another PhD candidate alone without a HDR or for a HDR defence.
- › In the case of a request for an exemption to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR, the applicant undertakes to request authorisation to apply for a HDR at Universit  Paris-Saclay before the defence of the thesis for which this exemption is requested.

This exemption framework is not recommended for the international joint supervision of PhDs or when the PhD candidate is involved in a professional activity alongside the preparation of the thesis (continuing education) and/or is significantly older or more professionally experienced than the applicant.

## 1.5 In the event of a disagreement

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### → Authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR

Only applications for authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR which have been proposed by the doctoral school are presented to the Academic Council's Research Committee and then to the President of Universit  Paris-Saclay.

If the doctoral school does not wish to propose that the applicant be authorised to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR, it will provide the applicant with reasons for its decision.



In the case of a disagreement between an applicant and a doctoral school regarding the outcome of the applicant's application, the applicant may lodge an appeal with the President of Universit  Paris-Saclay.

In the event of an unfavourable recommendation from the HDR advisor, the laboratory director or the Academic Council's Research Committee, regarding a request for authorisation to supervise a PhD candidate without a HDR, the application is nevertheless submitted to the President of Universit  Paris-Saclay, subject to having been proposed by the director of the doctoral school.

### → Authorisation to apply for the HDR

Only applications for an authorisation to apply for a HDR which have been proposed by the doctoral school are presented to the Academic Council's Research Committee and then to the President of Universit  Paris-Saclay.

If the Academic Council's Research Committee does not wish to propose that the applicant be authorised to apply for a HDR, it will provide the applicant with reasons for its decision.

In the event of a disagreement between an applicant and the Academic Council's Research Committee on the outcome of the applicant's application, the applicant may lodge an appeal with the President of Universit  Paris-Saclay.

In the event of an unfavourable recommendation by the HDR advisor, the laboratory director or the doctoral school director, regarding an application to apply for a HDR, the application is still presented to the Academic Council's Research Committee and, subject to a decision on the enrolment made by the Academic Council's Research Committee, to the President of Universit  Paris-Saclay.

### → The President of Universit  Paris-Saclay's decision

In the event of a disagreement regarding the decision of the President of Universit  Paris-Saclay, the applicant may lodge an appeal with the President of Universit  Paris-Saclay within two months of the decision being made. The appeal must be justified and accompanied by a copy of the contested decision.

## 1.6 References

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- › [European Research Charter and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers](#)
- › [Doctoral charter of Universit  Paris-Saclay](#)
- › Article [L-612-7 of the Education Code](#) concerning the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle, implemented by:
  - [Decree dated 23 November 1988 concerning the HDR](#)
  - [The Decree dated 25 May 2016 laying down the national framework for training and the procedures leading to the award of the national doctoral degree \(Article 16 for the conditions required to supervise a PhD candidate, Article 3 Paragraph](#)

4: training of supervisors)

- › Article [L613-1 of the Education Code](#), implemented by:
  - [Decree dated 22 February 2019 outlining the skills of PhD graduates](#)
- › Decree No. 84-431 dated 6 June 1984 determining the common statutory provisions applicable to academic staff and defining the special status of the body of university professors and the body of lecturers. - Article 46 (regarding the [recruitment of university professors](#))
- › [The Decree dated 15 June 1992 establishing the list of civil servants assimilated to university professors and lecturers for the appointment of members of the National Universities Council](#)
- › [The Decree dated 10 February 2011 regarding the equivalence chart of titles, works and jobs of academic staff](#) and the comparison table ([here](#))

## 1.7 Flowchart

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