

CERGAM Doctoral Charter

Preamble

CERGAM (Centre for Studies and Research in Management of Aix-Marseille) is a Research Unit (UR 4225) in Management Sciences affiliated primarily with Aix-Marseille University (AMU) and secondarily with the University of Toulon (UT). CERGAM members may carry out their duties within six entities: IMPGT (AMU), FEG (AMU), Aix-Marseille IUT (AMU), Aix-Marseille IAE (AMU), Toulon IAE (UT), and Toulon IUT (UT). Its headquarters are located at the Maison de l'Économie et de la Gestion d'Aix (MEGA) in Aix-en-Provence¹. At MEGA, as well as at the University of Toulon, doctoral students have access to workspaces, meeting rooms, social areas, and various research software and databases. These resources provide CERGAM doctoral students with a stimulating work environment and promote a collaborative scientific community.

CERGAM considers its doctoral students to be full members of the laboratory and is committed, from the start of their doctoral studies to their thesis defense, to fully involving them in laboratory life. Within the limits of its resources and with a focus on equity among members, CERGAM provides the material and human support necessary for doctoral students to succeed. CERGAM also consults doctoral students, through their elected representatives on the Laboratory Council, for important decisions that concern them. In return, doctoral students commit to actively participating in the laboratory's activities and adhering to the provisions of this charter throughout their doctoral studies.

The CERGAM Doctoral Charter does not replace the [AMU Doctoral Charter](#) established by Aix-Marseille University's Doctoral College, which specifies the mutual commitments of doctoral students and their thesis supervisors. Instead, it aims to complement and clarify the roles and responsibilities of CERGAM doctoral students and their supervisors, fostering relationships based on respect, cooperation, and trust.

The CERGAM Doctoral Charter was collectively developed by CERGAM's management² in consultation with Laboratory Council members and research area leaders. It undergoes regular review and possible revision by the Laboratory Council, based on proposals from the laboratory director or at least one-third of the council members.

This charter applies to the doctoral student, the thesis supervisor, any co-supervisor from CERGAM, and the head of the research area to which the doctoral student is affiliated.

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² CERGAM's management is made up of: the director, two deputy directors and 5 axis managers and 5 deputy axis managers: for more information on CERGAM's governance, see CERGAM's internal regulations.

Article 1: Prerequisites

CERGAM welcomes doctoral students wishing to conduct their doctoral research within one of its five research areas:

- **Entrepreneurship, Information, Internationalization (E2I)**
- **Finance, Accounting, Control (FCC)**
- **Marketing and Service Management (MMS)**
- **Public Management (PM)**
- **Strategy and Human Resource Management (SHR)**

To enroll in a doctoral program in Management Sciences at CERGAM (Aix-Marseille University), a candidate must meet the following requirements:

1. Hold a national master's degree or another degree conferring the grade of master (cf. Article 11 of the decree dated May 25, 2016, and the [prerequisites defined by AMU's Doctoral School 372](#)).
2. Obtain the approval of a thesis supervisor accredited to supervise research or equivalent, who is a member of CERGAM and a tenured faculty member at Aix-Marseille University (for enrollment at Aix-Marseille University) or at the University of Toulon (for enrollment at the University of Toulon). The chosen thesis topic must be validated by the laboratory and by [Doctoral School 372](#) (for enrollment at Aix-Marseille University) or [Doctoral School 509](#) (for enrollment at the University of Toulon).

In addition to these general principles, and to ensure the smooth progress of the doctoral program, CERGAM makes the following recommendations:

1. Candidates should preferably have a background that demonstrates their motivation and aptitude for research (e.g., having completed a research dissertation) and should possess solid knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methodologies specific to research in Management Sciences.
2. If these skills are not fully established by prior education, CERGAM advises candidates to take training during their first year of the doctoral program to acquire the necessary competencies for conducting their research.
3. Pursuing a doctoral degree requires time and favorable material conditions. CERGAM strongly encourages doctoral candidates to ensure, before committing to the program, that they have the time and financial resources needed throughout their doctoral studies.
4. Doctoral enrollment can take place under one of two distinct modalities:
 - **Full-time enrollment:** If you have dedicated funding for your thesis (e.g., a doctoral scholarship, full-time funding from a public or private organization, national or international, or a CIFRE contract), you must enroll as a full-time student (initial training).
 - **Part-time enrollment:** If you are employed, enrollment will be part-time (continuing education), allowing six years (instead of three for full-time enrollment) to complete your thesis. You will be required to justify your resources and provide a document confirming that you will have part-time availability for the entire duration of your doctoral program.

Article 2: Doctoral Students' Participation in Laboratory Activities

CERGAM ensures that its doctoral students have numerous opportunities to exchange ideas (among themselves and with the laboratory's faculty members) and to present the progress of their work throughout their doctoral studies. Active contribution to the laboratory's scientific life is essential, as it fosters better support and prevents isolation. To this end, CERGAM doctoral students are strongly encouraged to:

1. **Be physically present on-site as much as possible**, either at MEGA or their research, teaching, or training location, with a recommended minimum presence of three days per week. This recommendation can, of course, be adapted based on the doctoral student's status (e.g., doctoral contract, CIFRE, or company agreement).
2. **Attend research seminars and doctoral workshops** held by the research area they are affiliated with. In cases where attendance is not possible, the doctoral student must inform the area leader in advance.
3. **Participate in the laboratory's scientific events** listed on the [CERGAM agenda](#). These include seminars, study days, conferences organized by the laboratory, and other networking events. Participation in these events is decided in consultation with the thesis supervisor, based on the progress of the thesis and the student's availability.
4. **Engage in informal exchanges and community building**. Doctoral representatives on the Laboratory Council regularly organize informal gatherings and research seminars to foster a convivial and collaborative environment within the laboratory. CERGAM doctoral students are strongly encouraged to support these initiatives and actively contribute to building a network of CERGAM doctoral students.
5. **Contribute to laboratory operations if on a doctoral contract**. Doctoral students funded through an Aix-Marseille University doctoral contract are fully involved in the laboratory's daily management. They may be asked to participate in collective activities such as helping organize scientific events, updating the website, or preparing the CERGAM newsletter.
6. The laboratory ensures that these activities do not hinder the proper progress of the thesis. During the final year of the doctoral program, efforts are made to minimize these tasks so that doctoral students can focus entirely on writing their thesis.

These principles align with those of the [AMU Doctoral Charter](#), which stipulates in Article 12 that:

“Doctoral students must comply with all attendance, safety, and discipline rules in effect at their research unit. (...) They must participate in all activities of the research unit and present their work in the unit's seminars.”

Additionally, the laboratory emphasizes that doctoral students who are full-time and on a doctoral contract must dedicate most of their time to research. They may undertake teaching duties equivalent to a maximum of 64 tutorial hours or engage in expertise, scientific dissemination, or research valorization activities up to one-sixth of their service time. Any other activities assigned by the department or laboratory (e.g., supervising dissertations, helping organize a conference or event) must remain occasional, non-mandatory, and not interfere with thesis work.

For doctoral students funded by a CIFRE contract, 100% of their time must be dedicated to research shared between the company and the academic laboratory. Time spent in the company must not involve operational activities unrelated to the thesis.

Article 3: Human and Financial Resources Available to Doctoral Students

The success of a doctoral project depends on the involvement and collaboration of several key actors: the doctoral student, the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable), the laboratory director and deputy directors, the research area leader to which the doctoral student is affiliated, and the laboratory's administrative officer. The latter plays a significant role by supporting the doctoral student with administrative, financial, and logistical matters.

To support doctoral research, the laboratory may provide occasional financial assistance, the amount of which is determined based on the available budget. This assistance may only be used for the following purposes:

- **Participation in conferences, research seminars, or fieldwork costs**, including registration fees, travel, and/or accommodation. For conferences or research seminars, proof of acceptance of the presentation will be required, along with evidence of submission to HAL (see Article 9 below).
- **Editorial assistance for proofreading (copy editing)** of an article in English intended for an international conference or journal.

To allow the laboratory to establish a budget forecast, doctoral students must submit their anticipated requests for the year either to the administrative officer of their research area or to the deputy director at the University of Toulon by December of the current year (Year N) for the following year (Year N+1). A decision will be made after reviewing all submitted requests and the budget available for each research area. Financial resources are allocated to doctoral students equitably and within the laboratory's budgetary constraints.

Before embarking on any mission, the doctoral student must ensure they have obtained the necessary authorizations (e.g., mission orders, permits for stays abroad). Upon returning from a mission, they must provide the administrative officer of their research area with all supporting documents required for reimbursement.

Funding provided by the laboratory may be supplemented by additional funding from research area leaders, departments, or mobility grants offered by Doctoral School 372 (for Aix-Marseille University) or Doctoral School 509 (for the University of Toulon).

Article 4: Progress Criteria During Doctoral Training

The AMU Doctoral Charter specifies in Article 12 that doctoral students “commit to submitting as many progress reports to their thesis supervisor, and co-supervisor if applicable, as requested. In return, the thesis supervisor commits to providing feedback on the reports submitted. Doctoral students have a duty to inform their thesis supervisor of any difficulties encountered in the progress of their work.”

In addition to this individual follow-up by the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable), the laboratory ensures that doctoral students have multiple opportunities to present and discuss their research with other faculty members and doctoral students, particularly through seminars organized by research areas. Regular involvement in the laboratory’s collective activities is essential for these presentations and discussions. To this end, doctoral students are strongly encouraged to follow these steps:

1. **Present research progress at least once a year** during seminars organized by the laboratory. It is the doctoral student’s responsibility to request a presentation slot directly from research area leaders or doctoral representatives. To facilitate this, each research area will distribute a shared calendar at the beginning of the academic year (in September), inviting doctoral students to select a time slot. It is desirable for the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) to attend these presentations. These seminars are distinct from the [Individual Monitoring Committee \(IMC\)](#) and are intended to support doctoral students in addressing methodological and theoretical aspects of their work, whereas the TMC focuses solely on assessing research progress and working conditions.
2. **Address gaps in progress or quality:** If, after a seminar presentation, the progress or quality of the work is deemed below expectations by the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable), the doctoral student will receive constructive and precise feedback from participants on how to improve. In such cases, either the supervisor or the doctoral student may request a second seminar presentation within the same year to monitor progress and evaluate the implementation of the recommendations provided.

Milestones during the doctoral journey:

- **First year:** By the end of the first year, the doctoral student should ideally have completed most of the literature review, refined the research problem, and clarified the data sources and/or fieldwork, as well as the methods to be used for the thesis.
- **Second year:** By the end of the second year, the doctoral student is encouraged to have submitted at least one scientific contribution (e.g., a conference paper, article, or book chapter) related to the thesis, with their name listed as the primary author. This will be considered during the second-year IMC to assess thesis progress.
- **Third year:** By the end of the third year, the doctoral student is encouraged to have submitted at least one additional scientific contribution distinct from the first, again related to the thesis and listing their name as the primary author. This will be evaluated during the third-year IMC.

Article 5: Pre-Defense of the Thesis

The [pre-defense](#) of the thesis is not mandatory at CERGAM, but it is recommended. If organized, it should ideally take place before initiating the official thesis defense process, typically 3 to 6 months prior to the defense date.

The pre-defense jury includes the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) and two faculty members who are specialists in the field. Depending on financial resources and the jury's availability, the pre-defense may be conducted remotely.

A report is prepared by the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) following the pre-defense and validated by the pre-defense jury members. This report is recorded in the pre-defense form provided by Doctoral School 372 (for Aix-Marseille University) or Doctoral School 509 (for the University of Toulon).

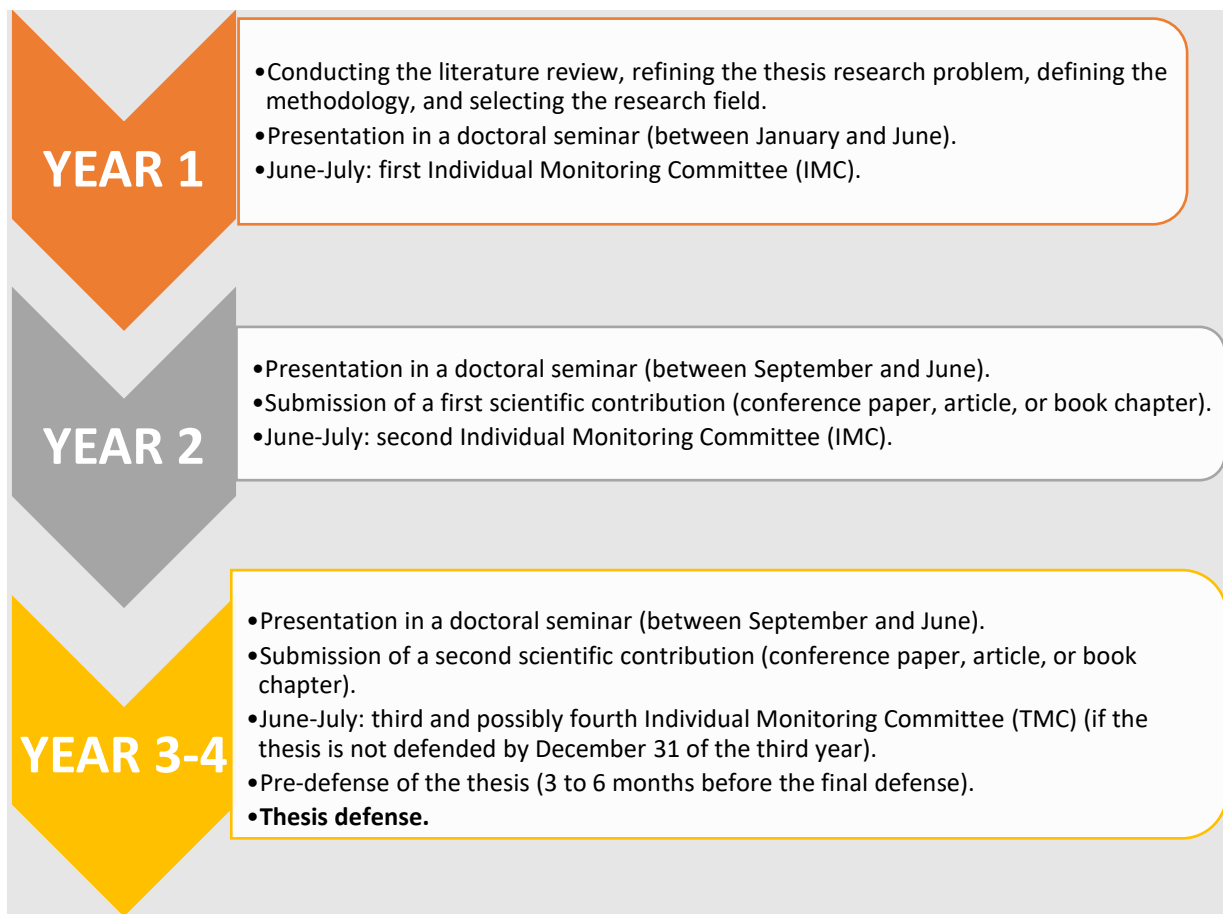
Article 6: Duration of the Doctoral Program

CERGAM encourages doctoral students to complete their thesis within the allotted time. As stated in Article 4 of the AMU Doctoral Charter : *“Beyond three years, re-enrollment in the doctoral program is considered exceptional.”*

Re-enrollment for a fourth year may be justified to finalize the thesis and organize the defense, but further extensions should be avoided. For any re-enrollment request for a fifth year or more, the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) must submit a detailed application to the laboratory and Doctoral School. This application must include:

1. A **thesis document of at least 100-120 pages**, including a detailed thesis outline and clearly indicating which parts remain to be completed.
2. A **letter from the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable)** explaining the reasons for the extension request, the scope of the remaining work, a precise timeline for completing this work, and the proposed dates for the pre-defense and defense.
3. Supporting documents, if necessary.

For doctoral students enrolled in part-time programs (continuing education), these rules apply starting from the seventh year of enrollment.



Article 7: Thesis Format

The [thesis](#) may be completed in either the "**traditional**" format or the "**essay-based**" format. The choice between these formats is freely decided by the thesis supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable) in consultation with the doctoral student.

For essay-based theses in Management Sciences conducted within CERGAM, the laboratory strongly recommends adherence to the main guidelines of CNU Section 06³. Specifically, it is advised that essay-based theses include the following:

1. **A comprehensive introduction or structured preliminary chapter** that highlights the "common thread" linking the three essays and the research problem. The thesis should not simply be a series of disconnected essays.
2. **A distinct methodology section**, if the methodological aspects are not sufficiently detailed within the essays themselves. This section should summarize and explain the processes for data collection and analysis used in the essays and may also elaborate on the doctoral student's epistemological positioning.
3. **A discussion/conclusion section** that synthesizes and contextualizes the contributions of the three essays.

³ [le Rapport session CNU 06 pour la qualification MCF](#) p.5.

The above elements must be written solely by the doctoral student.

Additional recommendations for essay-based theses:

- A majority of the essays should be relevant to Management Sciences and should ideally result in at least one article under revision (even if not yet accepted or published) in a journal recognized in the field.
- At least one essay should be authored solely by the doctoral student. For example, this could be a preliminary version of an article submitted to a conference.
- If some essays are co-authored, the doctoral student should appear as the first author or, at a minimum, as a 50% contributor to all co-authored essays included in the thesis.
- While collaboration between the doctoral student and their thesis supervisor (or co-supervisor) on publications is natural and encouraged, the supervisor is not entitled to co-authorship unless they have made a significant contribution to the work.
- If none of the essays are published at the time of the defense, it is recommended that all essays have been submitted for review, and at least two should have been accepted for presentation at peer-reviewed national or international conferences.

Article 8: Composition of the Thesis Jury and AMU Thesis Prize

The composition of the thesis jury must comply with the rules set by Doctoral School 372 (for defenses at Aix-Marseille University) or Doctoral School 509 (for defenses at the University of Toulon). This includes, where possible, adhering to gender parity. Additionally, the jury should include at least one member from a foreign university, if feasible and appropriate. If the international member cannot travel, the defense may be conducted in a hybrid format.

CERGAM encourages the inclusion of at least one international member on the jury, as this enhances the international visibility of both the doctoral student and the laboratory. Such inclusion, along with the presence of publications, is among the criteria that can strengthen the doctoral student's candidacy for the [Aix-Marseille University Thesis Award and Marseille Thesis Award](#) upon completion of their thesis.

Article 9: Rules for Scientific Publications

Publications by its members are a critical priority for CERGAM, especially in terms of national and international visibility and attractiveness. Publications are the primary criterion used in international research rankings and evaluations by national bodies (e.g., HCERES). It is therefore essential that CERGAM publications are easily identifiable.

Every scientific publication by a CERGAM doctoral student must strictly adhere to [AMU's publication signature guidelines](#).

- For a doctoral student affiliated with Aix-Marseille University, publications should be signed as follows:
Aix Marseille Univ, CERGAM, Aix-en-Provence, France.
- For a doctoral student affiliated with the University of Toulon, publications should be signed as follows:
Université de Toulon, CERGAM, Aix-en-Provence, France.

Adding the name of the specific entity (e.g., IMPGT, FEG, IAE, etc.) to this signature is encouraged.

To ensure proper recognition by evaluation bodies, doctoral students must also promptly deposit their publications in HAL and verify that their profile is correctly linked to CERGAM: [HAL-AMU⁴](#). Depositing the full text (not just metadata) is critical for the laboratory's visibility. CERGAM's recommendations for deposits are as follows:

- **Peer-reviewed journal articles:** Submit the metadata and the full text. If necessary, set an embargo period (12 months unless the journal is open access). The version deposited should be the final version submitted to the journal, prior to editorial formatting.
- **Conference papers:** Submit the metadata and the full text. This may be the complete text submitted to the conference, a shortened version (2-3 pages including abstract, introduction, and references), or a PowerPoint presentation. The laboratory recommends the latter to avoid prematurely disseminating results intended for journal submission.
- **Books and book chapters:** Only metadata submission is required.

Article 10: Ethics, Professional Conduct, and Scientific Integrity

CERGAM prioritizes adherence to principles of scientific integrity and professional conduct. Doctoral students and their thesis supervisors (and co-supervisors, if applicable) are encouraged to thoroughly review the following:

- The [AMU Charter on Combating Plagiarism](#),
- The [National Charter of Ethics for Research Professions](#), signed by French higher education and research institutions.

To support doctoral students, CERGAM recommends the following:

- Adhere to the rules for direct and indirect citation as outlined by the [American Psychological Association \(APA\)](#).
- Consult the guide "[Practicing Responsible and Ethical Research](#)", published by the CNRS and the CPU.
- Use plagiarism detection software, such as **Compilatio**, to ensure that the thesis fully complies with citation rules.

⁴ <https://doc.hal.science/tutoriels/>

In the event of conflicts related to plagiarism, ethics, or scientific integrity, mediation procedures are outlined in Article 30 of the AMU Doctoral Charter. Additionally, AMU's Scientific Integrity Officer can be contacted at : referent-integritescientifique@univ-amu.fr

Before initiating formal procedures, doctoral students should inform the laboratory director or their research area leader if conflicts arise concerning plagiarism, ethics, or scientific integrity. If appropriate, the laboratory will implement a conciliation process to address the issue.

Article 11: Combating Stereotypes, Gender Inequality, Harassment, and Violence

CERGAM members recognize the importance of combating stereotypes and gender inequality and are committed to respecting best practices in communication to avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes.

Additionally, CERGAM members pledge to promote the **AMU system for combating harassment, gender-based violence, sexual violence, and homophobia** within the laboratory.

Article 12: Post-Thesis Career Development

After completing their thesis, any doctoral graduate from CERGAM may, if they wish, remain an associate member of the laboratory for a renewable four-year period.

Doctoral graduates commit to communicating any updates to their professional situation to the CERGAM administrative officer and the Aix-Marseille University Student Life Observatory (OVE) within the five years following their thesis.

Article 13: Protection of Personal Data

Respect for personal data protection regulations is a priority at Aix-Marseille University and the University of Toulon. Therefore, the laboratory's management, thesis supervisors (and co-supervisors, if applicable), research area leaders, and CERGAM doctoral students commit to complying with applicable regulations on the processing of personal data, including:

- The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** (EU Regulation 2016/679 of April 27, 2016),
- **French Law No. 78-17 of January 6, 1978**, on Information Technology, Data Files, and Civil Liberties.

For data collection related to their doctoral research, each CERGAM doctoral student is solely responsible for the processing of personal data carried out for their research purposes. The processing of personal data must be limited to the objectives of their thesis and the execution and monitoring of their research.

Doctoral students must adhere to the following rules:

1. **Inform individuals whose data is being processed** about the processing of their data and their rights, including access, correction, deletion, or opposition in certain cases.

2. **Respond to individuals' requests** regarding their data within one month.
3. **Destroy all personal data and copies thereof** once they are no longer necessary for the research, unless otherwise legally required.
4. **Restrict data processing to within the European Union**, unless prior authorization is obtained from CERGAM's management.
5. **Report any data breaches or complaints** to the CERGAM management as soon as possible, and no later than 36 hours after discovering the breach or receiving the complaint.