

LUISS



**Handbook  
of the  
PhD Programme in  
POLITICS  
(Academic Year 2024/2025)**



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## Welcome note

### *From the Coordinator of the PhD Programme*

Welcome to the PhD Programme in Politics at Luiss University! You have decided to embark on an important, and perhaps defining, step in your career – the writing of a PhD thesis – and to do so at Luiss in Rome. We are very pleased that you will be joining our academic community to which I am sure you will make a valuable contribution.

A PhD is a major undertaking: it is the stepping-stone from being a student to becoming an independent researcher; it requires commitment to study and maintaining a sustained interest in a particular field for a number of years; it involves close cooperation with academic supervisors, regular interaction with peers and colleagues in the profession, but also long periods of working on one's own. The defence of your thesis will be the culmination of many years of work – developing an analytical frame, deciding on the appropriate methodology, gathering data in various ways and ultimately writing a book-length dissertation. That defence will be a serious test as it assesses whether your research has contributed original knowledge to our understanding of the social and political world. However, in the years until then, there will be few moments of external assessment, and it will be important that you yourself apply the highest standards to your research and writing and believe in your ability to complete the project.

In the end it will have to be **your** thesis that is submitted for defence, but everyone involved in the PhD programme – your supervisors, the colleagues involved in the teaching programme, the PhD Office and tutor, and myself – is here to support you during this process, doing everything they can to make sure you complete the PhD thesis successfully. We organise a range of courses, seminars, and conferences throughout your time as PhD candidates, we provide financial and practical support for you so that you can undertake study periods and research stays abroad, and we are always there to provide guidance when you need it.

I hope you have a great start to this new phase in your life as a PhD candidate, and that – despite all the hard work that it surely involves – you also cherish the opportunity to pursue independent research and that you enjoy your time at Luiss.

Thomas Christiansen

***Professor of Political Science and European Integration and  
Coordinator of the PhD Programme, Department of Political Science***

## 1. Introduction

The PhD in Politics at Luiss Guido Carli is a fully funded three-year programme, aimed at giving participants the skills needed to embark on an academic or professional career in international institutions, NGOs, public and private research institutes, and political and institutional communications. Under particular and documented circumstances PhD candidates may present a request for extension of the path and of the scholarship for an additional year, subject to the approval of the academic board.

The programme requires full-time attendance and is taught in English.

The programme is structured along three elements:

1. Supervised Research
2. Taught courses (only in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year)
3. Research seminars

Candidates will be assigned a supervisor and one or more co-supervisors who will guide their research throughout the whole duration of their studies. Furthermore, the programme facilitates exchanges with partner universities abroad and provides additional financial support to enable study periods and field work outside of Luiss University.

During their first year, candidates will attend taught courses encompassing the areas of political science, political theory and research methods (both qualitative and quantitative). PhD candidates are expected to write an original paper for each course and are assessed on the basis of class presentations and attendance.

At the end of the each year, candidates will present thesis progress at **the Annual Departmental Postgraduate Conference, commonly scheduled in mid-June**. The result of this presentation will determine their admission to the following years of study. PhD candidates who do not pass this step, as well as the taught courses examinations, may lose their status as PhD candidate following the unanimous decision of the Academic Board.

The second and third year of study are mainly devoted to research activities and to the submission and defence of the thesis. PhD candidates will also take part in the academic seminars organised by the Department (see Section 5).

At the end of every semester of study, PhD candidates and their supervisors submit a detailed monitoring report to the Coordinator and to the Academic Board.

The compilation of an evaluation survey regarding the PhD courses and Professors will be required by the end of each semester.

Furthermore, at the end of each academic year PhD candidates will be asked to complete a mandatory survey from ANVUR (Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research Systems).

## 2. The Team

### ***Programme Coordinator***

Thomas Christiansen, [tchristiansen@luiss.it](mailto:tchristiansen@luiss.it)

[The Coordinator](#) is in charge of the strategic choices related to the programme, such as taught courses, research activities, the organisation of seminars and the relations with both internal and external colleagues. Thomas Christiansen joined Luiss University as a Professor in the Political Science Department in September 2019. He previously held positions at Maastricht University, at the European Institute of Public Administration, at Aberystwyth University of Wales and at Essex University. He is Executive Editor of the Journal of European Integration.

### ***PhD Tutor***

***For more information see [here](#).***

[phdtutordisp@luiss.it](mailto:phdtutordisp@luiss.it)

The role of the tutor is to help PhD candidates with any issues related to the programme, as well as acting as a mediator between the PhD candidates, the Coordinator and the PhD Office. Furthermore, the tutor offers support to every activity related to the organisation of seminars, events, teaching and collection of forms.

PhD Office (Ufficio Dottorati)

***For more information see [here](#).***

Leonardo Risorto (Head), Francesca Pandozy, Tina Rovella, Nina Nachkebia, Gianluca Grilli:

[dottorati@luiss.it](mailto:dottorati@luiss.it)

The PhD Office is responsible for all official communications between the PhD candidates and the University. It helps PhD candidates on all aspects related to administration and compliance with the PhD Programme.

The PhD Office is also in charge of the strategic organization, according to the University Strategic Plan, the management, innovation and coordination of the PhD Programmes and the ministerial accreditation process.

### ***PhD Representative***

***For more information see [here](#).***

[phdrepdisp@luiss.it](mailto:phdrepdisp@luiss.it)

The PhD representative is elected by the PhD candidates for a period of two years and is in charge of representing the PhD candidates during the PhD meetings and the Academic Board meetings. Furthermore, PhD Representative represents PhD candidates' request to the PhD Office, as well as share information provided by the PhD Office to their peers.

### 3. The Academic Board of the PhD programme (*Collegio*)

Each PhD Programme has an Academic Board (*Collegio dei docenti*) that consists of at least twelve academic staff belonging to broad fields consistent with the programme's educational aims and with documented research results at international level in the disciplines covered by the doctoral programme. The board is chaired by the Coordinator of the PhD programme, Prof. Thomas Christiansen.

Details about the membership of the board can be found at this website

<https://phd.luiss.it/politics/about-us/faculty/>

### 4. Funding

#### - **Scholarship**

PhD Candidates awarded a scholarship (specific types of scholarships may vary), will receive an annual gross amount set in Ministerial Decree n. 247 of 23 February 2022 and is worth € 16,243, paid in 12 monthly instalments. The scholarship is paid out on the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. If the 30<sup>th</sup> falls on the weekend the scholarship will be paid out on the preceding Friday.

The scholarship is subject to social security deductions according to current Italian legislation and benefits the tax relief provided by art. 4 L. 476/1984 (IRPEF exemption).

Scholarships shall be initially awarded for one year and will be renewed on condition that the candidate has completed the programme of activities envisaged for the previous year as checked in accordance with the procedures laid down for each doctoral programme. Those checks must be passed also to keep the scholarships in subsequent years.

#### - **Research Budget**

PhD Candidates with scholarship (specific types of scholarships may have different provisions) have an annual research budget of € 1.624. Eligible expenses include travel, conference and seminars fees, consumables (e.g. audio-visual media, photocopies...), publication fees, specific training aimed at research (e.g. language courses). In any case, reimbursement requests must be approved by the Academic Board.

From cycle 38 onwards, the PhD candidates can benefit of the research funds from the first year. The annual budget can be cumulated with the funds of the following years if not spent entirely, however the annual budget cannot be request in advance (usually it is assigned in September, at the beginning of the academic year). Ex. Every year a PhD candidate can request maximum 1.624 euro; in case they claim € 1.300 during year X the following years they have at their disposal € 1.624 (year X funds) + € 324 (residual from the year X funds).

PhD candidates are invited to consult the dedicated website (below) for the detailed information regarding the procedure for Reimbursement Request submission and follow the directions carefully.

Said procedure can be consulted [here](#), and the relevant Reimbursement Request Form is available below as Annex 4.

#### - **Increase of scholarship for visiting periods abroad**

For research periods abroad longer than 1 continuous month, PhD Candidates with scholarship (specific types of scholarships may have different provisions) may ask for a 50% increase of their PhD scholarship.

That increase may not be used for periods spent in the PhD Candidate's country of birth citizenship, residence or domicile.

How to request the scholarship increase:

The amount is paid according to the exact number of days spent abroad within the PhD Visiting period, to be confirmed with an official letter released by the hosting University or Institution.

PhD candidates may choose one of the following options for the request submission:

- Submit a confirmation letter periodically during the PhD visiting period.

For example: the stay started on 1 January 20XX. By the end of the month the PhD Candidate asks the host institution for a confirmation letter, which should state that said person has been a PhD visiting at their institution from 1 January to 31 January 20XX. Such letter, signed and dated no prior to 31 January, should be immediately sent to the PhD Office to request the increased amount for the above-mentioned period. The amount will thus be paid by the end of February, together with the scholarship payment.

- Submit a confirmation letter once the PhD visiting period is completed.

For example: the PhD visiting period lasted from 1 January to 30 June 20XX. The PhD Candidate submits the letter of confirmation received from the host institution and with specific indication of the period of the stay. The increased amount related to this whole period will be paid with the subsequent scholarship payment.

PhD Candidates should spend a visiting period abroad, at least 1 month up to maximum 6 months; this period may be extended up to a maximum total of eighteen months (18) for PhDs who are under a cotutelle agreement. Indeed, the University may sign specific agreements for the creation of joint research PhDs with universities in foreign countries, which provide for the co-tutoring of theses. In the case of a cotutelle agreement the mobility period is specified by the agreement between the involved universities, however the increased scholarship remains limited to a maximum of 18 months. The PhD candidate's course of study, the procedure for obtaining the degree and the composition of the relevant committee will be defined in a dedicated agreement, in compliance with the regulations in force in the countries in which the PhDs are activated. In any case, the scholarship increase will be paid up to the eighteenth month.

The minimum period should depend on the rules set by each PhD Academic Board. The choice of the university will be agreed with the supervisor and the PhD Coordinator and then approved by the Academic Board.

## **5. The PhD Thesis**

The thesis should provide a substantial and original contribution to knowledge.

The completion of a PhD thesis in our programme involves the writing of a single, substantive manuscript approximating the length of a research monograph (usually between 80.000 and 120.000 words), consisting of discrete chapters covering the development of the conceptual and analytical framework and the presentation of the empirical material. In consultation with the Coordinator of the PhD programme and the supervisors, it is also possible to submit a thesis based on a number of papers (the specifics to be defined with the Coordinator and the Supervisors).

The thesis needs to include an introductory chapter setting out the research puzzle or question, the relevance of the research project, the intended steps in addressing and answering the proposed question, and an overview of the structure of the thesis. The thesis concludes with a chapter in which



the candidate summarises the findings of the research, reflects on the empirical and theoretical contribution of the work, and identifies the future research agenda arising from it.

The PhD thesis is written in English and must be an original piece of work. All existing work on which the thesis is based must be appropriately cited, and any previously published text that the thesis reproduces must be clearly identified as quotations (once submitted, the thesis text will be submitted to a plagiarism check). All primary and secondary sources need to be cited consistently in the text, and a complete bibliography listing these sources needs to be provided at the end of the thesis.

The main body of the thesis may be accompanied by appropriate annexes providing supplementary details such as e.g. the sources that have been used, the list of interviewees, verbatim transcripts of interviews, tables or graphs arising from statistical datasets, legal documents, etc.

You can consult Luiss' recommendations and guidelines on how to design, organize and write the final thesis here: <https://biblioteca.luiss.it/en/how-write-thesis>

The first page templates to use for PhD candidate are available here: <https://phd.luiss.it/procedure/tesi-di-dottorato/>

## 6. PhD Supervision

Each PhD Candidate has two supervisors as allocated by the PhD Coordinator and the Academic Board. The supervisor must be a Board member of the PhD to which the student belongs, whereas the co-supervisor can be external but must be in possession of the scientific requirements of the Board in question. In case of more than one co-supervisor, at least one must belong to the same academic background and must be in possession of scientific requirements of the Board in question.

The supervisors monitor and assess the candidate's research activity and reports to the PhD Coordinator of the programme and the Board about the candidate's progress – i.e. pass/fail concerning research papers, and ensuing admission to the following years.

Candidates and supervisors jointly complete the “Monitoring and Evaluation” form (see Annex 1) twice a year at the end of each semester.

During the conclusive year of the PhD course the supervisors read and comment on the final draft of the doctoral thesis prior to formal submission.

Supervisors accompany the doctoral student's journey towards a doctorate, providing academic support and advice as per the research area, methodology, structure of thesis, and publication strategy. The supervisors provide guidance and advice regarding the thesis and support the candidate's training and personal development. However, the ultimate responsibility for the quality and content of a doctoral thesis remains that of the candidate.

Supervision is key to the PhD candidates' research career. The supervisors advise PhD candidates throughout every stage of their research trajectory: this means to read and provide comments on the proposal, advice on research methods and content, help with industry contacts, and the likes. Please note that Luiss does not pay an additional honorarium as per the supervision.

In particular, the role of the supervisors includes:

- Locating the intended research within the existing field of study and identifying a suitable research question and research strategy;





- Supporting the candidates to plan and manage their research effectively from literature sources and reviews through the choice of appropriate research methods to data analysis and writing up;
- Agreeing a schedule of regular meetings either face-to-face or remotely with the participant, ideally at least on a monthly basis;
- Commenting on the PhD candidates' research progress through a monitoring report at the end of each semester;
- Reading and providing comments, constructive criticisms, and suggestions on the candidate's written work – i.e. research proposal, drafts of the chapters, and the final thesis;
- Ensuring that the candidate is aware the standard expected and helping them to achieve a timely submission of a thesis that meets these standards;
- Giving guidance on academic publishing and careers including writing references for job market applications.

## **7. Teaching Programme**

While supervised research is the core element and involves the candidate conducting independent research leading to the completion of an original contribution to knowledge within three years, taught courses are offered in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the PhD trajectory in order to:

- provide candidates with a sound foundation in theories, methods and skills of social science;
- provide them with the required concepts and tools to undertake their individual research projects.

The Young Researchers' Seminar Series constitutes a forum for PhD candidates to present their work in progress as well as listen and learn from the presentations of their peers. PhD candidates are also expected to participate in, and contribute to, the Departmental Research Seminars which usually take place twice a month.

The PhD programme consists of three years of full-time study. The overall path consists of research, a visiting period abroad, and dissertation preparation.

Year 1 consists of courses in political science, political theory and research methods courses as detailed below. During this year the PhD candidates will achieve at least 60 Credits while also working on their research Project. The first semester lasts from mid-October to mid-December, while the Second semester lasts from early February to mid-May (the dates of the academic year are available [here](#)). PhD candidates should prepare an original paper for each course, being assessed on the basis of these papers. The courses require class attendance and presentations may be assigned as well.

PhD candidates also follow a programme of relevant literature reading on the chosen research problem with the support of the supervisor, concluding with the development of a research proposal. The research progress is assessed at the end of first year, also through a presentation at the Annual Departmental Postgraduate Conference.

To proceed to the following academic year, the PhD candidates must achieve:

- Satisfactory completion of the courses taught in the first year
- Satisfactory presentation of the extended research proposal at the Annual Departmental Postgraduate Conference
- Positive recommendation from the supervisors in their annual monitoring report

## 8. List of Courses

### I YEAR (A.Y. 2024/2025)

#### *Semester I*

- Philosophy of Social Sciences
- Theory in Political Science I: Democracy & Representation
- Quantitative Methods
- Research Design

#### **Philosophy of Social Sciences**

In this course we will explore some aspects related to the (social) epistemology of social science. The course is articulated in four themes: philosophy of science; rationality and rational choice; games and institutions; social norms. In the first set of meetings (philosophy of science) we will look at the issue of progress in science, analyzing various accounts of science and of its dynamics. In the second set of meetings (rationality), we will concentrate on the theory of rational choice as it has been developed in the second half of the past century, along with applications to political philosophy. In the third set of meetings (institutions) we will focus on the theory of social interactions (game theory) and in particular on those classes of games that are amenable to represent social institutions, with applications to social ontology. Finally, in the fourth set of meetings (norms), we will reflect on the nature of social norms and on ways and instruments to change them.

#### **Theory in Political Science I: Democracy & Representation**

The course presents a political science (i.e. non-normative, and empirically oriented) perspective on democracy and representation. The first part of the course is dedicated to the concept of democracy in political science: definitions, focus on procedural characteristics, key aspects and processes, changes in democratic institutions and practices, and how democratic regimes are able (or not) to face contemporary substantive challenges. The second part of the course then focuses more closely on the process of representation that ensures that democratic regimes provide the policy responsiveness that is at the core of the definition of democracy. Based on the identification of key actors such as parties and voters, the course analyses the action and interaction of these actors: how it led to the birth of mass democracy, what are the main dynamics involved (and how changes in such dynamics inevitably lead to changes in how democracy works), and what challenges to these interactions are leading to crisis and change in democracy.

#### **Quantitative Methods**

The aims of the course are: a) to introduce PhD candidates to the main quantitative research approaches in empirical political science and b) to foster capacity to do original empirical research on the various themes of the discipline (political institutions, voting, public opinion analysis, public policy, etc.) in a comparative perspective. This is not a class on statistics/mathematics although some statistics will be discussed and studied. Rather it is a class on research methods which will allow PhD candidates to select the appropriate research design for their own PhD thesis/research papers.

### **Research Design**

This course aims at providing tools for developing a sound research design. Moreover, it offers a wide-range introduction to the diverse strategies and methodological tools employed by contemporary social science, in order to first provide PhD candidates with the ability to understand research products that belong to different research traditions and approaches in political science.

The course starts with a presentation of the cycle of social and political research. Some key aspects on how to build a proper research design are discussed and analysed in following steps, in particular: 1) the construction and development of concepts and their operationalization; 2) the selection of cases and all the choices related to the spatial and temporal scope of a research.

The second part of the course moves on to a comparison among different approaches and strategies that a researcher may adopt within the broad framework of the comparative method, and particularly the long-term debate between small-N and large-N strategies, case-oriented and variable-oriented research. Finally, PhD candidates are asked to prepare and present their own PhD research design, based on what they have learnt throughout the course.

### ***Semester II***

- Contemporary Debates in Political Theory
- Theory in Political Science II: IR, Political Economy & European Integration
- Qualitative methods
- Research Skills I: Academic Writing

### **Contemporary Debates in Political Theory**

This course aims at reconsidering Liberal Democracy in the wake of an increasingly pluralised and divided world. Although democracy is a widely endorsed modern ideal and a guiding principle in both domestic and international politics, disagreement emerges on what exactly democracy means, why it might be a good thing, which values it entails and/ or what institutions give expression to it and, finally, how and whether liberal democratic justice should be endorsed globally. This course will consider Liberal Democracy from the vantage point of Rawls' theory, with the aim of confronting this influential perspective with recent debates emerging in political theory. The course is designed with a mixture of Guest lectures and seminars and will cover several topics ranging from more standard debates on the meaning of democratic equality, tolerance and religions and global justice to more recent topics/issues in this debate, such as European Integration, Historical Injustice and Transitional Justice.

### **Theory in Political Science II: International Relations, Political Economy and European Integration**

This course provides participants with an introduction to the main theoretical approaches in the study of political developments beyond the nation-state. The study of International Relations theories involves the conceptualisation of the modern state and the operation of the international state system, including the significance of the institutions of global governance and the role of non-state actors in this system. It will also introduce key approaches to the study of political economy within and beyond the state before turning to the study of the process of regional integration in Europe. Here the focus will be on debates between intergovernmentalist and supranationalist approaches to understanding the creation and evolution of the European Union, with particular attention to the federal aspects of the EU and its fiscal regime.

**Qualitative Methods**

This course is meant to familiarize PhD candidates with qualitative research methods for the social sciences – in particular political science and political theory – and, in particular, discuss the relationship between qualitative and quantitative methods. Good methods produce good research, regardless of whether they are qualitative or quantitative. However, a good research project starts from an interesting research question, extensive knowledge of the relevant literature, precise concepts and unambiguous terminology, a sound (and possibly innovative) research design, solid knowledge of the available methods – not to mention a keen awareness of the potential obstacles that could slow down or impede the relevant data collection. For these reasons, this course will deal with research design, concepts and typologies, and theory development in addition to examining a number of qualitative methods in greater detail.

**Research Skills I: Academic Writing**

The Research Skills course aims to equip students with the theoretical knowledge and practical competence necessary to produce formal academic writing which is clear and well-organized, concise, and grammatically and orthographically accurate. This competence is developed by engaging in activities which enable students to produce the kind of writing which is indispensable for producing effective research. Students will be introduced to the issues related to writing effectively in academic contexts. Through critical analyses of written discourse, they will gain awareness of the tools and strategies available to improve their academic writing skills. Focus will be given to how to structure clear and concise argumentation. The course materials are designed in such a way as to encourage comparison and evaluation of alternative sources, stances, and text organization, and to express resultant conclusions in a language and form appropriate to the specific context. Feedback from the course instructor along with peer and self-evaluation will allow students to independently fine-tune and adapt their skills.

**II YEAR (A.Y. 2025/2026)*****Semester I***

- Applied Quantitative Methods
- Applied Qualitative Methods

**Applied Quantitative Methods**

The aim of the course is to make PhD candidates familiar with the usage of basic mainstream quantitative analytic tools, through their first-hand application to original research questions of interest for the PhD candidates of the course itself.

The course will largely improve PhD candidates' ability to conduct their own quantitative research (also with possible reference to their final thesis), but also to confront themselves with empirical scientific literature in different subfields of political science.

**Applied Qualitative Methods**

The aim of the course is to make PhD candidates familiar with the application of the main qualitative methods, through their first-hand application to original research questions of interest for the PhD candidates of the course itself. The course will largely improve PhD candidates' ability to conduct their own qualitative research (also with possible reference to their final thesis), but

also to confront themselves with empirical scientific literature in different subfields of political science.

## **II YEAR (A.Y. 2025/2026)**

### ***Semester II***

- Mixed Methods
- Research Skills II: Academic Publishing and Career Planning

#### **Mixed Methods**

Many researchers are trained in the use of one primary method. Using an innovative method may require them to reach out across their own methods of comfort zone, to think outside their normal everyday methods routine. The course on mixed methods will introduce the students into a rather new set of research methods. The main goal is to enable the students:

- a. to enrich and deepen their traditional academic tool-box on methods of social research, and familiarize with the basic elements of mixed methods research (MMR)
- b. to learn how to handle the methodological choices they are going to face in preparing their PhD dissertation relying on a larger and new set of options, beyond the purely quantitative and/or purely qualitative approaches, being well aware of the advantages and pitfalls implied in conducting a research in applied settings,
- c. to get used to deal with and manage to solve the methodological issues students face in their daily research practices (writing up a research proposal, designing research methods, evaluating and selecting of different tools for mixed methods data collection and analysis, writing a mixed-method research report), avoiding ritualized take away recipes, and progressing in their scientific endeavour through peer-to-peer, open and informed debate.

#### **Research Skills II: Academic Publishing and Career Planning**

The goal of this course is to provide participants with a foundation of essential skills related to conducting and disseminating academic research. A series of experts will conduct sessions on submitting articles to journals and book proposals to publishers, the use of various social media channels in the context of academic work, and avenues for planning an academic career. Upon completion of the course, participants are expected to have a strong command of research and writing skills considered essential in academic careers.

#### **9. The Road towards Thesis Defence**

The PhD Office will circulate the candidates' theses and the evaluation sheets among the respective referees. Referees are expected to carry out their review and to return their evaluation sheets within one month of the reception of the theses.

The role of the referees is to assess the candidates' theses, and to either determine their admission to the public defence or to suggest a postponement of up to six months. More specifically, they will evaluate:

- The quality of the research project;
- The quality of the research methods;
- The relevance of the topic and findings, as well as their implications;



- The ability to demonstrate of a researcher’s mindset – i.e. the ability to frame and investigate a relevant research problem, to adopt the most appropriate research methods, to discuss the relevant findings and their implications, and to suggest solutions based on the research results.

Once the thesis has undergone the review process, the relevant candidate will be able to revise and resubmit it following the suggestions offered by the referees. If the revised thesis is deemed as satisfactory, the candidate will be admitted to the public defence.

The candidate will defend their thesis in front of the Dissertation Exam Committee, which consists in at least three scholars appointed by the Academic Board and approved by means of a Rector’s decree. More specifically, the Committee will be composed of one internal examiner, chosen on the basis of their expertise, and of the two external referees. Three substitutes will be appointed as well. Should one or more members of the Committee be affiliated with an institution abroad, they may attend the public defence remotely via a conference call.

At the end of the defence, the thesis will either be approved or rejected by means of a collegial decision. The Committee may unanimously decide to award a cum laude distinction to a particular thesis, if its findings and results are of exceptional academic relevance.

A graduation fee of € 200 will be applied for the PhD candidates from the cycle 40 onwards.

Procedures for the award of PhD titles jointly supervised with institutions abroad must be regulated through specific agreement and must comply with the laws applicable in the country where the doctoral programme is run.

The following table outlines the various steps on the road for the thesis defence. A detailed schedule will be circulated in due time for each cohort that is due to submit their thesis.

No.	Action
1	Coordinator contacts supervisors regarding the thesis progress of PhD candidates entering the final year.
2	Candidate submits draft thesis to supervisors
3	Supervisor(s) provide comments and suggest final revisions on draft thesis prior to formal submission
4	Supervisors(s) propose possible referees to coordinator
5	Supervisor(s) and PhD candidates declare absence of any conflict of interest with proposed referees
6	Candidate provides one-page summary of their thesis to PhD Office and Coordinator
7	Coordinator agrees possible referees and internal examiner with supervisors and informally explores their availability.
8	Supervisor(s) (with assistance of PhD tutor) submits thesis to plagiarism check.
9	Board approves submission of thesis and appointment to the referees and of internal examiner
10	Candidate submits the final version of the thesis
11	PhD Office sends thesis, explanatory notes and evaluation form to referees
12	Referees submit their reports to the PhD Office and Coordinator within one month
13	PhD Office shares report with coordinator, candidate, supervisors, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ 13(a) In case of positive evaluation: the thesis submission process will proceed with step 16</li> <li>➢ 13 (b) In case of negative evaluation: PhD office must re-send the thesis to the referees, indicating deadline for re-submission of final version of the thesis, and wait for a second review.</li> </ul>
14	Candidates re-submit final version and required documents by the deadline
15	PhD office sends the revised thesis to the referees
16	Referees submit their final reports to the PhD Office and Coordinator within one month
16	PhD office schedules defence thesis
17	In case of successful defence, PhD candidate is invited to the Annual Ceremony

## 10. Milestones in the PhD Trajectory

In each of the three years of the PhD trajectory, candidates have to meet certain milestones. Please see the programme website (<https://phd.luiss.it/politics/activities/structure/>) for details.

## 11. Academic events

### ***PhD Welcome Day***

A Welcome Day is organized at the beginning of the academic year. It provides an opportunity for the new PhD Candidates to meet the top academics such as the Rector and the Deputy Rectors, the PhD Coordinator and the PhD Academic Board. The new PhD Candidates will have also the opportunity to meet some PhD Graduates, the PhD Tutor and the PhD Candidates enrolled in the previous cycles.

### ***DiSP Young Researchers' Seminars***

The New DiSP Young Researchers' Seminars Series aims at bringing together our entire PhD and Post-doctoral community across the various years. The Seminars are held regularly in both semesters and they provide a forum for presentation of work in progress, be it by members of the PhD community, Postdoctoral fellows, or invited speakers, as well as an opportunity to discuss academic and administrative matters of mutual concern.

### ***Departmental Research Seminars***

The Departmental Research Seminars are part of a more comprehensive research and networking activities carried out by the Department of Political Science. The Departmental Research Seminars take place every fortnight, usually during lunchtime. The aim of the seminars is to offer PhD candidates the chance to network with fellow colleagues, to provide and receive feedback on research materials, to engage in fruitful debates both with junior and senior scholars.

### ***Annual Conference***

At the end of each academic year, generally in mid-June, an Annual Postgraduate Conference is being held. On such occasion, the PhD candidates who have completed their first year of programme will present their research progress. The Annual Conference may include presentations from other PhD candidates and members of the faculty as well.

### **Activities of the Clusters of Research Excellence**

Following a re-organization of the Clusters of Research Excellence of our Department of Political Science in January 2023, four new interdisciplinary Research Clusters have been created:

1. Elections and Political Systems (Coordinator: Vincenzo Emanuele)
2. Global and International Studies (Coordinator: Valentina Gentile)
3. European Integration and Public Policies (Coordinator: Cristina Fasone)
4. Communication, Sustainability and Social Innovation (Coordinator: Emiliana De Blasio)

The aim of the Clusters is to strengthen the culture of research collaboration by facilitating the organization of events, the writing of joint publications and the submission of research funding applications. You can find all the details of our Research Clusters here: <https://phd.luiss.it/politics/about-us/research-clusters/>.



Faculty members, Postdoctoral Research Fellows, and PhD Candidates will be invited to join the one cluster closer to their research interests.

### **Other academic events**

The PhD Coordinator, the PhD Office and individual PhD candidates may be engaged in the organisation of external conferences and other activities. The conferences may be hosted by both Luiss University and other national or international institutions. External conferences have the aim of promoting Luiss University as a global hub for high-level research, networking and academic experiences.

### **12. Study and Research Period Abroad**

PhD Candidates have the possibility to spend a research period abroad for at least 1 month up to maximum 6 months (this period may be extended up to a maximum total of eighteen months [18] for PhDs who are under a cotutelle agreement), usually starting from the second semester of the second year of their studies. This study period abroad can be devoted to conduct interviews, to carry out data collection, archival research or other kinds of fieldwork, or to attend specialised training linked to the PhD project.

Proposals regarding this matter must be approved by the supervisor(s) and the programme Coordinator before being formally addressed to the Academic Board (**Collegio dei Docenti**).

In order to formally request the permission to conduct their research abroad, PhD Candidates must submit the “Request for Study Experience Abroad” form (see Annex 2) and an official invitation or confirmation letter from the Host Institution. The request must be submitted in due time to both the PhD Office and to the PhD Coordinator for approval. Proposals must include a detailed description of the host institution, including the research goals of the fellowship, and the proposed duration of the fellowship and the identification of a (temporary) co-supervisor at the host institution. At the end of the study experience abroad, candidates must submit the “Report on Study Experience Abroad” form (see Annex 3) and an official letter from the host Institution confirming that the Candidate has completed the visiting period. The purpose of the Report is to summarise the experience and to highlight the added value it brought to the research. The report shall be submitted to both the PhD Office and the PhD Coordinator.

PhD candidates may ask for a 50% increase of the scholarship amount for the PhD Visiting period. For details regarding this procedure please refer to Chapter 4 (**Funding**) of this handbook.

For research periods abroad longer than 1 continuous month, PhD Candidates with scholarship (specific types of scholarships may have different provisions) are entitled to an increase of 50% of their scholarship which can be paid as soon as the confirmation letter or certificate from the host institution confirming the period of study abroad has been submitted. That increase may not be used for periods spent in the PhD Candidate’s country of birth, citizenship, residence or domicile.

PhD Candidates should spend a visiting period abroad (at least 3 months up to maximum 6 months); The choice of the university will be agreed with the supervisor and the PhD Coordinator and then approved by the Academic Board.

### **13. Relevant Rules & Regulation**

Beyond the provisions in this handbook, PhD Candidates should be aware of the following rules and regulations that also apply to the programme.

Please consult our website for the [Code of Ethics](#) and the [Research Doctorate Regulations](#) of Luiss University.



**Rules of Conduct**

PhD Candidates are obliged to observe applicable laws and regulations and act in keeping with the principles of honesty, propriety, earnestness and cooperation in their dealings with fellow PhD Candidates, Faculty and all Luiss personnel.

PhD Candidates' behavior must be informed by the principles of personal dignity, nondiscrimination on the basis of physical condition, political opinion, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation and disability. PhD Candidates must dress in a sober and dignified manner on university premises in keeping with the fact that they are at an academic institution and refrain from consuming alcohol and/or drugs.

Without prejudice to freedom of expression and the right of criticism, PhD Candidates must always express themselves (in writing, verbally and through digital channels) in a dignified and civilized manner, avoiding violent and discriminatory language that could damage the University's reputation.

PhD Candidates must not damage the facilities (including Luiss property, premises and resources) that they use and must abide by the instructions given by Governance Bodies, Faculty, Employees and other workers of Luiss or other university/institution where they are staying for a period of study.

In addition, PhD Candidates are required to adopt an attitude consistent with the principles of environmental protection and sustainability, avoiding the waste of resources, energy and food.

The provisions of this article also apply when PhD Candidates spend a period of study at other Italian or foreign institutions/universities, consistent with the latter's own rules.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, and in any case any improper use of academic material in the writing of dissertation for assessment, is forbidden. Plagiarism has obvious consequences for the academic evaluation of the guilty PhD Candidate but it can also give rise to further moral and legal sanctions. A judgement in the matter is given on a case-by-case basis by the Ethics Committee, which informs the University's top bodies thereof. Acknowledgment of the sources and of the work of others to which the work of others has been used and/or for which the assistance of individuals, associations or institutions has been obtained, shall be clearly reported in notes, references and appendixes. Plagiarism consists in using the intellectual work of others without acknowledgment. According to academic conventions and copyright law, participants are required to acknowledge the use of ideas of others whether paraphrased or quoted verbatim. Verbatim quotations must be either in inverted commas or indented and sources – e.g. books or journal articles - thereof must be indicated in the bibliography. Luiss will check plagiarism in all the doctoral thesis uploading them on a specific software.

If PhD Candidates plagiarise their own work or others can be expelled from the PhD upon decision of the PhD Academic Board.

**Obligations and Responsibilities of PhD Candidates**

Admission to a doctoral programme entails an exclusive and full-time commitment in line with what is specified in the plan for the research doctorate programme concerned, without prejudice to the special rules that may be made for the doctoral programme organized under article 10 of the PhD Regulations. Enrolled PhD Candidates must attend doctoral courses and activities and continuously undertake study and research within the context of the facilities intended for such



purposes and in the manner established by the academic board. Specifically, PhD Candidates are responsible for:

- Developing the research proposal and sharing it with supervisor;
- Discussing with the supervisor the type of guidance and comment which will be most helpful, and agreeing upon a schedule of meetings;
- Taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties with supervisor and with the PhD Coordinator in the case she or he feels that the working relationship with the supervisor is not effective;
- Maintaining the progress of work in accordance with the milestones as agreed with the supervisor, and in particular the timely submission of written work to allow for comments;
- Being aware of the Luiss Codes of Ethics and observing the principles contained therein.

PhD candidates are required to submit an approval request to the Academic Board for any activity conducted outside of the PhD program (TA, RA, external courses, additional work-related commitments and so on). All additional commitments, if approved, must nevertheless be accordant with [the National and Luiss Regulations for PhD candidates](#).

### ***Suspension***

In the case of serious and documented illness or for proven reasons that make it impossible to attend courses and undertake the activities scheduled for the PhD Programme, PhD Candidates may request a suspension. The application for a suspension, stating the reasons therefor, must be submitted for approval by the academic board of the doctoral programme concerned. If the application is approved, a suspension of at most one year may be granted. During that period of suspension PhD Candidates cannot use any scholarship that they may have.

### ***Extension***

Under particular and documented circumstances PhD candidates may present a request of extension of the path and of the scholarship for an additional year, subject to the approval of the academic board.

### ***Dis-Coll***

Within the deadline of 68 days from the date of completion of the doctorate or termination of the scholarship, it is possible to apply to INPS for DIS-COLL benefit. For more information (in Italian only):

<https://www.inps.it/it/it/dettaglio-scheda.it.schede-servizio-strumento.schede-servizi.dis-coll-indennit-mensile-di-disoccupazione-50183.dis-coll-indennit-mensile-di-disoccupazione.html>

### **Annexes**

Please find below (for illustration) the forms required at various stage during the PhD trajectory:

- Annex 1: Monitoring and Evaluation Form
- Annex 2: Request for Study Period Abroad
- Annex 3: Report on Study Period Abroad
- Annex 4: Reimbursement Request Form

For more forms: <https://phd.luiss.it/procedure/>



## Annex 1

### Monitoring and Evaluation Form

A.Y. 2024/2025 – I Semester

Please complete this form and submit it by **[date]** to [phdtutordisp@luiss.it](mailto:phdtutordisp@luiss.it)

The first part of the form involves a self-assessment by the PhD candidate of the state of play of his/her doctoral research project, while in the second part supervisors may provide their observations on the responses by PhD candidates and their own assessment of the progress of the PhD project.

PhD Candidate: .....

PhD Supervisor(s): .....

1. Please describe the current state of your research project ? (500 words)
2. What challenges have you encountered in the past semester? (500 words)
3. What are your plans for next semester? (500 words)
4. Assessment of the PhD candidate's progress by the PhD Supervisor(s) (500 words).

Completed by:

[Name]

Date



**Annex 2**

**Request for Study Period Abroad**

Name of PhD Candidate: .....

Name of PhD 1st Supervisor: .....

Name of PhD 2nd Supervisor: .....

Research plan (500 words):

Relevance of host institution to the research project (500 words):

The Confirmation letter from the Host institution has been submitted

Date: ..... Signature: .....



**Annex 3**

**Report on Study Period Abroad**

Name of PhD Candidate: .....

Name of PhD 1st Supervisor: .....

Name of PhD 2nd Supervisor: .....

Host Institution: .....

Period: from... to...

Local Mentor: .....

Description of research activity (max. 500 words):

Date: ..... Signature: .....



## Annex 4

### Reimbursement Request Form

NAME and SURNAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHD and CYCLE \_\_\_\_\_

OBJECT OF REQUEST \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PERIOD \_\_\_\_\_

PLACE \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Expenses**

*(cross the type of expenditure incurred and report the amount, or the sum of the amounts, indicated in the expense receipts /invoices)*

**Flights**

Amount in euro \_\_\_\_\_

Description (es: Flight a/r Rome – London)

---

**Train**

Amount in euro \_\_\_\_\_

Description (es: train a/r Rome-Salerno)

---

**Other transport (es: bus, metro....)**

Amount in euro \_\_\_\_\_

Description (es: bus a/r Roma – Salerno)

---

**Hotel**

Amount in euro \_\_\_\_\_



Description (es: n°2 nights in Hotel Hilton)

---

**Restaurant**

Amount in euro \_\_\_\_\_

Description (es: n°3 receipts for restaurant/food)

---

**Fee enrollment**

Amount in Euro \_\_\_\_\_

Description (es: iscrizione Summer School)

---

**Other (not included in the previous expenses)**

Amount in Euro \_\_\_\_\_

Description  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Total amount requested** \_\_\_\_\_

Place, date

Signature