

## NATIONAL JOINT PH.D. PROGRAMME IN NAUTICAL OPERATIONS

# MID-TERM EVALUATION PROCEDURE OVERVIEW AND GUIDELINES

### PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW OF THE PROCEDURE

The main purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to evaluate the candidate's PhD studies up to that point and to examine the updated study plan in order to ensure satisfactory progress towards the candidate's intended defense and graduation dates, and to detect any possible obstacles that may hamper the candidate's progress.

Additionally, the candidate will have an opportunity to practice presenting his / her own research project orally to a broader audience. During the presentation, the candidate will demonstrate his / her professional academic development related to the use of relevant scientific theory and methodology, the ethical aspects of the project and put the project in a larger scientific context.

Finally, the candidate will receive comprehensive and systematic feedback on his / her work from the external evaluators.

The mid-term evaluation is subject to the [PhD Regulations](#) (§16) and the [Quality Assurance System](#) of the Joint PhD Programme in Nautical Operations. Candidates are required to familiarise themselves with these documents.

A mid-term evaluation of doctoral work should normally take place in the third semester (for 3-year PhD contracts) or in the fourth semester (for 4-year PhD contracts).

The candidate will present his/her work and plan for further progress for the remainder of the doctoral dissertation work both in writing (in accordance with the provided self-report template) and orally in an open seminar. The open seminar will be held at the candidate's home institution (with possibility for Skype) in front of external evaluators and at least the main supervisor. In addition, the Programme Board, the local PhD leader, other supervisors and fellow PhD candidates may attend the open seminar.

A team of two external evaluators selected by the main supervisor will evaluate the candidate's work. The team of two external evaluators will consist of one expert not affiliated with the PhD candidate's department and one expert who is neither part of the supervisory team, nor one of the co-authors of the PhD candidate. The evaluation team will assess the academic quality and progress status of the doctoral dissertation, and will provide feedback to the candidate, the main supervisor and the PhD leader. If the evaluation team reports significant weaknesses in the research work, measures will have to be taken to correct the situation.

A written report (in accordance with the provided template) from the mid-term evaluation will be submitted to the Programme Board by the external evaluators who will assess the candidate's work so far and make recommendations for the remainder of the work.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### THE PHD-CANDIDATE → WRITTEN PROGRESS SELF-REPORT

The mid-term evaluation self-report forms the basis for evaluation of your research project progress and will stimulate you to get started with writing your dissertation as early as possible.

The self-report will follow the structure of your initial PhD project plan that you submitted as part of your final application for admission to the programme. The self-report must be written in the same language as your doctoral dissertation (English).

The self-report must be sent to your local PhD programme coordinator at the latest three weeks before the open seminar date together with any manuscripts/publications prepared during the first half of the candidate's studies. After making sure that the self-report is completed and all the supporting documents are attached, the local coordinator will forward them to the external evaluators, the candidate's supervisors and the Programme board.

### THE PHD-CANDIDATE → ORAL PRESENTATION AT THE EVALUATION SEMINAR

The evaluation seminar is open to all interested parties, but it is up to the supervisor/department whether it should be publicised in the academic community. The candidate's co-supervisors should, as far as possible, be present at the seminar.

The seminar starts with the candidate's presentation, which lasts approximately **30-45 minutes**, followed by questions from the audience and an open discussion of **45-60 minutes** between the candidate, supervisors and the evaluation committee with the audience present. The external evaluators will lead the discussion.

The candidate's presentation must introduce current state-of-the-art in the field, cover how the study has been carried out up until the moment of the mid-term evaluation seminar, and whether the progress has been satisfactory in terms of the objectives stated in the original plan. Future plans with regard to a timeline, courses, research and an external research stay must also be addressed. The presentation must put special emphasis on research plans, how the project expands state-of-the-art and the resulting publications.

Whenever relevant, the seminar may be concluded with two closed discussions (**up to 15 minutes each**) where problematic aspects of the project, supervision or academic environment can be addressed: one discussion between the committee and the candidate without the supervisor present, and one between the committee and the supervisors, without the candidate present.

The overall timeframe for the evaluation seminar is up to **120 minutes**.

### THE MAIN SUPERVISOR → EVALUATORS

- Finds two external evaluators, writes a short motivation for his/her choice and sends the proposal along with concrete date options to the local PhD programme coordinator.
- Contacts the evaluators, books them for a concrete date and informs the candidate, the PhD programme coordinator and the Programme Board of the confirmed date of the evaluation seminar.

#### **THE PROGRAMME BOARD → EVALUATORS**

- Reviews the PhD Candidate's self-report.
- Attends the open evaluation seminar insofar as possible (in-person or via Skype).
- Reviews the evaluation report of the external evaluators and, if necessary, initiates corrective measures together with the Member of the Consortium at the candidate's home institution.

#### **THE LOCAL PHD PROGRAMME COORDINATOR**

- Keeps track of which candidates are due with their mid-term evaluation and signals that to the candidates, their main supervisors and the Programme Board.
- Receives the main supervisor's suggestions as to the external evaluators and forwards them to the Programme Board.
- Informs the main supervisor of the Programme Board's decision.
- Makes the date of the open seminar public and informs everyone involved in the Programme about it.
- Receives the progress self-report from the candidate, checks that it is completed and that all the necessary supporting documents (i.e. manuscripts/publications) are attached and forwards them to the Programme Board, the candidate's Supervisors, and the External Evaluators (as soon as they get appointed by the Programme Board) along with evaluation instructions and the evaluation form/protocol for the evaluators.
- Receives the evaluation protocol from the external evaluators, checks that it is completed, and forwards it to the PhD candidate, the supervisors, the Programme Board, the Member of the Consortium at the candidate's home institution and the national administrative coordinator (for archiving purposes).
- Takes care of remuneration of the external evaluators in accordance with the relevant regulations at the PhD candidate's home institution. Each institution has individual financial responsibility for the compensation.
- Archives the evaluation protocol and the candidate's self-report at the home institution's archiving system in the candidate's student folder.

#### **THE EVALUATORS**

**Based on the PhD candidate's progress plan and project description and self-report, the committee should evaluate the following:**

- Are courses and any other elements of the coursework component in line with the progress plan?
- Is the candidate's progress in line with the expected learning outcomes of the PhD education and his/her individual progress plan?

- Does the candidate show a good knowledge of the research field of the PhD project in particular and a broader knowledge of the research field in general?
- Does the candidate demonstrate a good knowledge of research methods in general and research methods used in the PhD project in particular?
- (If relevant.) Are the right approvals for the research project procured? Does the content of the application correspond to the research that is or will be carried out?

**Based on written works and talks with the candidate and supervisor, the committee should evaluate:**

- The candidate's knowledge of the methods which are relevant to the PhD project
- The candidate's ability to present, analyse and assess research findings
- The candidate's understanding of scientific thinking
- The candidate's academic independence and originality

**Together with the candidate and supervisors, the committee should discuss:**

- Future plans for the PhD education and further career
- The structure and quality of the supervision
- Ethical questions

**Together with the candidate, the committee should discuss:**

- Any problems associated with the project, supervision, academic environment or other issues affecting the PhD project's implementation.

***Please, note that the candidate's oral presentation at the open seminar deals with the project and the wider thematic framework of the project as described above. It is not meant to be a general examination in the scientific field of the PhD programme with which the candidate is affiliated.***

When the mid-term evaluation has been completed, and up to one week after the open seminar, the mid-term evaluation form should be filled out by the evaluators jointly and submitted to the local PhD programme coordinator.

The local PhD programme coordinator will forward it to the PhD candidate, the supervisors, the Programme Board, the head of department at the candidate's home institution and the national PhD programme coordinator.

## HERE IS A SCHEMATIC CHRONOLOGICAL REPRESENTATION OF THE MID-TERM EVALUATION PROCEDURE:

1

- The local PhD programme coordinator keeps track of which candidates are due with their mid-term evaluation and signals this fact to the candidates and their main supervisors and to the Programme Board.
- The PhD candidate's main supervisor finds two external evaluators, writes a short motivation for his/her choice and sends the proposal along with concrete date options for the open seminar to the local PhD programme coordinator.

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- The main supervisor contacts the appointed evaluators, books them for a concrete date and informs the candidate, the local PhD programme coordinator and the Programme Board of the confirmed date of the evaluation seminar.
- The local PhD programme coordinator makes the date of the open seminar public and informs everyone involved in the Programme about it.
- **At the latest three weeks** before the date of the evaluation seminar, the PhD candidate sends his/her self-report and supporting documents to the local PhD programme coordinator.
- The local PhD programme coordinator checks that the sent documents are completed and that all the necessary supporting documents are attached and forwards them to the Programme Board, the candidate's supervisors, and the external evaluators along with evaluation instructions and the evaluation form/protocol for the evaluators.

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- On the day of the open seminar, the candidate gives a presentation of his/her project followed by an open discussion with the evaluation committee and the supervisors and, when relevant, concluded with two closed discussions: one between only the candidate and the external evaluators and one only between the supervisor(s) and the external evaluators.
- Within up to one week** after the open seminar, the evaluation committee completes the evaluation protocol and sends it to the local PhD programme coordinator.
- The local PhD programme coordinator checks that the sent evaluation form is adequately completed and signed, archives it in the PhD candidate's folder and forwards it to the PhD candidate, the Programme Board, the candidate's supervisors, and the Member of the Consortium at the candidate's home institution and the national PhD programme coordinator. If relevant, the Programme Board (along with the Member of the Consortium at the candidate's home institution) initiates any follow-up measures.
- The local PhD programme coordinator takes care of compensating the external evaluators for their work in accordance with the relevant local regulations.