

# Eurodoc Statement of Standards in the Assessment, Expectations and Outcomes of Doctoral Programmes in Europe



This statement has been brought together with the purpose of identifying common goals that should be met in the assessment and outcomes of doctoral programmes in Europe. Though there are different methods of implementing such goals, it is important to both the researcher and the research community that doctoral candidates hold a comparable level of scholarly standards, the opportunity to disseminate their research widely and undergo fair assessment. Such requirements will ensure that they are not disadvantaged in such ways due to the locations in which they research during and after their doctorate.

## Assessment of a Doctorate

The following 6 guidelines built upon the Dublin Descriptors<sup>1</sup> are agreed by Eurodoc as appropriate indicators that are achieved by a candidate in a doctoral examination:

1. Have demonstrated a systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with that field.
2. Have demonstrated the ability to conceive, design, implement and adapt a substantial process of research with scholarly integrity.
3. Have made a contribution through original research that extends the frontier of knowledge by developing a substantial body of work, some of which potentially is worthy of submission to refereed publication.
4. Are capable of critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas.
5. Can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community and with society in general about their areas of expertise and defend their contributions to knowledge.
6. Can be expected to be able to promote, within academic and professional contexts, technological, social or cultural advancement in a knowledge based society.

## Outcomes and Expectations of Doctorates

To ensure that there are common expectations of a researcher, it is necessary that the following minimum outcomes and expectations from their doctorate are maintained:

- That the thesis or equivalent documentation becomes a publicly accessible resource with the exception of withholding any information that is subject to intellectual property rights. Details of such published documents must be readily accessible via appropriate electronic search engines as would be expected for other publications.
- That there are means to ensure transparency and fairness in the examination procedure in order that there is a witness present to testify to their achievements or whom can act as a backup should the outcome of the examination be challenged in an appeal.
- That a Master level qualification in the majority of cases is the entry requirement to a doctorate although equivalent experience or qualifications are also a valid, while also all applications should be subject to a systematic admissions procedure involving people in addition to the prospective supervisor(s).
- That the thesis has been defended against examiners both internal and external to the institution with suitable expertise in the subject area, ensuring that these examiners are chosen fairly.
- That there is opportunity for critical review, first from the supervisor and then the examiners to allow minor corrections if the thesis contains errors, though is worthy of a doctorate. Where the thesis is not successful, examiners should be expected to clearly recommend necessary major corrections subject to re-submission.
- That the doctoral candidate will have had experience and opportunities to continually develop their transferable skills including ability to independently take on and complete a task, increased leadership roles, publications, experience in original thought, competence in research methodologies, transfer of knowledge, economy and job market.

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<sup>1</sup>Shared 'Dublin' descriptors for the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral awards, *Joint Quality Initiative*, March 2004  
<http://www.jointquality.org/content/ierland/Result%20Draft%20Dublin%20Descriptors%203%20cycles.doc>