

## Supervision Agreement

RWTH Aachen is a world-class University committed to scientific research excellence and we see it as our duty to support our early-career researchers with their doctoral research projects and guide them to fully benefit from our scientific environment. One major goal is to ensure a trusting collaboration between the doctoral candidate and his or her supervisor at a high scientific level. To achieve this goal, the doctoral candidate and his or her supervisor conclude the present Supervision Agreement. The doctoral regulations of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and the Principles for Securing Good Scientific Practice of RWTH Aachen University Aachen in the currently valid version form the basis for the agreement.

The Supervision Agreement does not confer any right to complete a doctoral thesis and examination, but regulates the rights and obligations of the doctoral candidate and her/his supervisor. It comes into effect only after the doctoral candidate has been approved as a doctoral candidate by the Doctorate Committee of the Faculty.

Between:

(Doctoral Candidate),

(First Supervisor),

(Secondary Supervisor),  
(optional, only to be named if already appointed)

the following agreements are made:

### 1. Subject Area of the Doctoral Thesis

The doctoral candidate creates, as an independent scientific work, a doctoral thesis in the field of:

### 2. Objectives and Work Plan

The supervision agreement is valid between  and

The aim of the doctoral project is to create an independent scientific study in the above named subject area which delivers original contributions to research.

Typically, the doctoral degree process has the following stages:

- Preparatory phase: the candidate reviews the relevant literature and acquires the required skills.
- Advanced-level phase: the candidate identifies research objectives which have not as yet been addressed, but which can be successfully achieved within the doctoral project and published as contributions to research.
- Development and publication phase: the candidate publishes first results and/or presents them at conferences.
- Conclusion phase: the doctoral thesis is completed and defended in a doctoral colloquium.

The different phases can overlap extensively; their respective duration depends on the doctoral candidate's skills and time investment. The supervision agreement is valid only in the above named period of time, unless all involved parties agree to extend its period of validity.

Any special requirements on the part of the involved Faculties, e.g. concerning the duration, specification, or objectives for the

individual phases can be regulated in appendices to the supervision agreement.

### **3. Supervision of the Doctoral Thesis**

#### **a. Obligations of the first supervisor**

(1) The first supervisor advises and supports the doctoral candidate in his or her independent research work by

- Introducing the candidate to the subject area and the relevant scientific environment
- Providing advice on how to procure the relevant literature and research equipment/materials
- Providing advice on how to formulate and delimit the topic and the research question(s)
- Discussing and evaluating hypotheses and methodology
- Discussing and evaluating research results
- Supporting the candidate in participating in scientific conferences, as far as the budget allows
- Making it possible for the candidate to gain practical experience, if needed
- Scheduling regular meetings for intensive discussion with the candidate (at least once every six months)
- Advising the candidate on the disposition and presentation (structure, style) of the thesis, also to facilitate completion in a timely manner

(2) Compatibility between research work and family life is to be taken into account.

(3) The first supervisor advises the doctoral candidate with regard to more general qualifications (transferable skills) and personal development and provides support to ensure steady progress with the thesis.

(4) If a second supervisor has been appointed, these responsibilities may be shared among both supervisors.

#### **b. Responsibilities of the doctoral candidate**

- The doctoral candidate commits her- or himself to maintain an effective working relationship with the supervisor and make use of the supervision support as outlined in section 3 a. This is facilitated by keeping in close contact with the supervisor and keeping committed to targeted, independent academic work.
- Upon request, the doctoral candidate has to inform the first and second supervisors as well as the Board of Examiners about the status and progress of the doctoral project. Furthermore, upon request, the candidate is to provide information on additional qualifications being completed as part of the doctoral project.
- As a rule, the candidate submits at least one contribution to a peer-reviewed journal or to peer-reviewed proceedings of an international conference. Publication of the thesis as a monograph does not meet this requirement.

### **4. Accompanying Qualification and Training Program**

a. As a rule, the doctoral candidate has to participate in specialist events (doctoral seminars, special lectures, summer/winter schools, conferences, etc.) in the equivalent of at least 6 weekly contact hours per semester (distributed over the duration of the doctoral project).

b. The doctoral candidate seeks to engage in international academic exchange activities. These exchange activities can include, for example:

- One or several stays at a research institution or a company active in research and development located abroad
- Attendance of an international conference
- A joint research project with international visiting researchers, who, for example, have been invited to RWTH by a group of doctoral students.

c. Participation in at least three one- or two-day transferable skills seminars offered by the CDS is recommended.

**5. Workplace and Working Conditions**

If the doctoral project is conducted within an employment relationship at RWTH Aachen University or with the help of a scholarship, the first supervisor has to ensure appropriate working conditions.

**6. Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice**

The doctoral candidate and the supervisor commit to adhering to the Principles of Good Scientific Practice as published in the Official Announcements of RWTH Aachen University, no. 2019/106, in their currently valid version.

**7. Conflicts and Termination of the Supervision Agreement**

In cases of conflict which cannot be resolved between the involved parties, the first supervisor or the doctoral candidate is advised to contact the ombudsperson of the Faculty, who seeks to reach a mutual solution to the conflict.

Furthermore, in cases of conflict, the doctoral candidate has the additional option of involving the ombudsperson for academic staff.

In case that the candidate wants to withdraw from the doctoral project, s/he can terminate the supervision relationship at any time without providing any reasons.

Moreover, if both the supervisor and the candidate agree that the latter is not capable of successfully completing the doctoral project, the supervision agreement can be terminated by mutual consent.

In the event that the candidate and the first supervisor disagree in their assessment of whether the candidate is capable of completing the doctoral project, the supervisor will contact the ombudsperson of the Faculty. If, after involvement of the ombudsperson and having granted the candidate a further period of time to continue working on the thesis, the supervisor reconfirms her/his initial assessment, the supervision can be terminated with the consent of the Doctoral Committee.

In the event that the supervision relationship is terminated by the first supervisor, the Faculty’s Doctoral Committee will assess whether suitable alternative supervisory relationships are available. This also happens in the event that the first supervisor leaves the University and wants to be released from the supervisory relationship.

**8. Requirements**

The following requirements are proposed by the supervisor/s to prove that a doctoral candidate is capable of delivering independent scientific work:

Course Title	Lecturer	SWS
<b>Total:</b>		

For the review of the thesis on equivalency with a local master's thesis I suggest Mr. / Mrs. ....

These requirements must be confirmed by the Doctoral Committee at the time of verification of the candidate’s eligibility for admission to the doctoral program.

After the candidate’s eligibility has been verified, the requirements must be successfully fulfilled within a period of three semesters. Exams are to be taken in accordance with the currently valid examination regulation. They may, however, be retaken only once.

		(Doctoral Candidate)
Date	(Signature)	
		(First Supervisor) (Second
Date	(Signature)	Supervisor)
		(optional, only to be named if already appointed)
Date	(Signature)	