

Doctoral School 127 Astronomy & Astrophysics in Île-de-France
Practical guide to individual committees (*Comités de Suivi Individuel* or CSI):
Specific case of PhD students enrolled at Sorbonne University (SU)

References:

- Order of May 25, 2016 on doctoral training, modified by the order of August 26, 2022: [arrêté 2016](#) and [arrêté 2022](#) (legal texts in French).
- The practical guide published by the Doctoral College of Sorbonne University: [link](#) (in French).
Section 3 of this guide reminds us that it is up to the doctoral school to define the practical arrangements for the composition, organization and operation of the CSI, hence this note.
- ED127 rules and regulations: [link](#) (in French).
- ED 127 PhD student follow-up page: [link](#).

Composition of the CSI:

- **The CSI must be composed within three months of the start of the thesis:**
 - A composition with two members (see below) is proposed by the director of the laboratory or their deputies (*direction de l'unité*).
 - The PhD student is consulted, and can propose a 3rd member if he or she so wishes.
 - ADUM: the PhD student enters the composition: this signifies his or her agreement.
 - ADUM: the head of the doctoral school registers it in the definitive database: this signifies validation.
- **Membership rules:**
 - Minimum two members, all PhDs, ideally at least one HDR holder (*habilitation à diriger des recherches*).
 - **One specialist** in the thesis subject and **one non-specialist**.
 - **The director of the laboratory, or their deputy**, or a person mandated by them. Ideally, this person participates in several CSIs.
 - **Members of the CSI must be independent of the PhD supervision team (thesis supervisor and co-supervisors): they may not belong to this team, be their collaborators, or have a professional or non-professional link with the thesis supervisors that could place them in a position of conflict of interest.**
 - **CSI members may not be chosen as thesis reviewers.**
 - *Notes: (1) the notion of specialist should be understood from the point of view of the thesis subject, and not in a general sense such as the perimeter of CNRS or CNU sections; (2) the Doctoral College of Sorbonne University states "The CSI includes a member from outside the institution whenever possible". ED 127 makes this a weak recommendation, encouraging instead the possibility of holding meetings with all participants in person.*
- **In the case of a confidential thesis, a confidentiality agreement can be set up: consult the doctoral school.**

Role of the CSI:

- **Mission 1: Advice.** The aim is to ensure that the thesis is progressing smoothly, that working conditions and relationships are good, and to offer constructive advice from an outside perspective.
- **Mission 2: Evaluation.** This involves following the advancement of the work, the progress achieved, and the ability to present the work carried out, placing it in its scientific context and demonstrating its original and innovative character. It also involves assessing the ability to achieve the expected results within the planned timeframe. Last but not least, it must ensure that the PhD student is well prepared for his or her future career, in particular but not exclusively through doctoral training. **At the end of the interview, the CSI must write a report favoring the continuation of the thesis, without which re-enrollement or extension is not possible.**
- **Mission 3: Detection and Warning.** CSI meetings, particularly during the separate interviews (see below), provide an opportunity to talk freely about any difficulties encountered. In certain cases where there is little or no problem, the CSI can suggest ways of improving the situation (advisory role). In the event of any problematic or conflictual situation, the CSI must promptly inform the head of the doctoral school ED127, which may gather additional information, propose mediation, or report serious cases (violence, discrimination, moral or sexual harassment). This can sometimes be tricky to implement, especially when (i) no dysfunction is explicitly expressed by the PhD student, or by the thesis supervision, but the CSI thinks they can detect indirect clues; (ii) when a conflict, a problematic situation or a malfunction is expressed by the PhD student or the thesis supervision, while requesting that it not be included in writing in the report, which will then be read by all parties (a request that must be respected in order to leave room for free expression). The doctoral school ED127 insists that in such cases, the CSI must first and foremost inform the head of the doctoral school promptly, with all available information, even if it is only indirect or uncertain. The doctoral school ED127 can then take appropriate action.

Frequency of CSI meetings:

- The **CSI** must meet every year, before **June 15**, so that the report is available for re-enrollement.
- The doctoral school **ED 127** recommends (for a thesis that began on **October 1**):
 - First year: January-February, to ensure that the thesis gets off to a good start.
 - Second year: at the time of the mid-thesis interview proposed by the doctoral school ED127, or shortly afterwards. The mid-thesis interview does not replace the **CSI** meeting; the **CSI** is simply invited to attend, but is not obliged to do so.
 - Third year: in November-December, to ensure that the timeline leading up to the thesis defense is realistic (in particular, writing the manuscript).
- In the event of difficulty, the PhD student or thesis supervisor should not hesitate to contact the **CSI** without waiting for the annual meeting (or to contact the head of the doctoral school ED127).

Preparing for a CSI meeting:

- Before the meeting, the PhD student must:
 - ensure that their **ADUM** page is up to date, particularly with regard to doctoral training courses or publications. This will be checked by the **CSI** at the meeting.
 - when this is done, (i) generate from ADUM the first (factual) part of the form for the **CSI** meeting report (from their home page: section “Individual follow-up committee” then download “*CSI - Fiche d'entretien annuel*”); (ii) forward this form to the **CSI** members.
 - prepare a short presentation (step 1 below in the meeting procedure).
- The **CSI** can also directly consult the PhD student's **ADUM** page (to which each **CSI** member has access for consultation only, with no right of modification) and download the “*CSI - Fiche d'entretien annuel*”.

Steps of a CSI meeting:

- **Step 1: presentation and discussion of progress, in the presence of all parties (PhD student, thesis supervisor(s), CSI):** this step generally takes the form of a presentation lasting around 10-15 minutes, followed by a discussion. The following topics should be covered:
 - **Research work** (adapted to the year of the thesis): context, methodology, results obtained, prospects.
 - **Publications** (submitted/published/in project), contributions to **conferences** or workshops.
 - General participation in the **scientific life** of the team, laboratory or any other collaboration in which the thesis project takes place.
 - In the case of a **complementary mission (e.g. teaching)**: brief report on the relevant activities.
 - **Doctoral training**: this training is compulsory, with precise and quantitative instructions, cf. “ED127 internal rules and regulations/part 4”. You must therefore present, using the corresponding ADUM page (see above), an update on the training courses attended and those planned for the remainder of the thesis.
 - **Timeline leading up to the defense.**
- **Step 2: interview between the CSI and the thesis supervisor(s), without the PhD student.**
- **Step 3: interview between the CSI and the PhD student, without the thesis supervisor(s).**
- **These three stages are mandatory.**
- If not addressed spontaneously in step 1, the general discussion and/or interviews should include a point on **post-PhD projects** and how to prepare for them, particularly from the 2nd year interview.

CSI report: writing and transmission

- Within 10 days of the meeting, the **CSI** writes a summary report: (i) the first part consists of the document “*CSI - Fiche d'entretien annuel*” downloaded from ADUM (see above); (ii) the second part is written using the form provided by the doctoral school ED127¹. The two documents are merged to form the “report” below.
- The **CSI** then sends this report to the PhD student for his or her opinion: (i) if the PhD student proposes a modification with which the **CSI** agrees, this can be incorporated into the final version of the report; (ii) if the PhD student proposes a modification that is not accepted by the **CSI**, the report remains unchanged and the PhD student can write a comment (“observations” field provided for this purpose).
- The **CSI** signs the report, which also serves as an undertaking of confidentiality.
- The **CSI** then has the PhD student sign the report, adding any comments he or she may wish to make.
- The **CSI** then sends the report to the head of the doctoral school (ecole.doctorale127.su@obspm.fr), with a copy to the PhD student, the thesis director and the director of the laboratory. After verification, the doctoral school uploads the report on ADUM.
- This report is mandatory for re-enrollement and must be attached to the PhD student's file.

¹ Links to the form in word or pdf format on [this page](#).