RULES FOR THE 2027 DOCTORAL CONTRACT AWARD COMPETITION

Article 1 – Purpose of These Rules and Procedures

- This document establishes the conditions for conducting the competitive selection process for doctoral contracts at the Doctoral School of Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Sciences (ED STEP) for the year 2027.
- These rules apply equally to all doctoral contracts subject to recruitment by ED STEP (USMB contracts, etc.).
- Number of doctoral contracts offered in the competition for the year 2027: updated information available on the Doctoral School's website
- The submission process is entirely online via ADUM and consists of two stages, according to the schedule outlined in Article 14:

    - Proposal of a thesis topic by the advisor(s)
    - Submission of the application file for the candidate selected and nominated for the competition for that topic

- The selection process consists of two stages, in accordance with the schedule set forth in Article 14:

    - An eligibility phase, which consists of an evaluation of the application file by the selection committee
    - An admission phase, which consists of an interview with the candidate

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TITLE I – PROPOSAL OF THESIS TOPICS

Article 2 – Eligibility Requirements for Thesis Advisors

To propose a topic for the competitive selection process, the thesis advisor must:

- be affiliated with the STEP Doctoral School;

- hold the Habilitation to Supervise Research (HDR) or, as of the date of the competitive selection process, be able to provide proof of authorization to take the HDR exam issued by the Doctoral School's HDR committee (please anticipate the committee's meeting schedule). In the latter case, if the topic is placed on the main list following the competition, a request for ad hoc approval to supervise the dissertation must be submitted to the doctoral college (the Exceptions Committee, CD3, decides on the suitability of the supervisor/doctoral student selected in the competition);

- comply with current rules regarding supervision: the maximum number of doctoral students who may be simultaneously supervised or co-supervised by the same person is set at five. The cumulative supervision rate must not exceed 300%. The awarding of a doctoral contract following the competitive selection process must ensure compliance with these rules.

The host laboratory verifies the eligibility of the research topics and the supervision arrangements for each project submitted.

Article 3 – Rules Regarding the Supervisory Team

To promote a balanced distribution of doctoral contracts, no member of the supervisory team for a project submitted to the competitive selection process may have been awarded a doctoral contract through the ED STEP competitive selection process during the preceding two years.

Members of the supervisory team must certify compliance with this rule when submitting the application, in accordance with the procedures established by the Doctoral School.

Article 4 – Submission and Approval of Thesis Topics

Thesis topics are submitted by the thesis advisor on the ADUM platform as part of the competitive selection process.

Only topics submitted by the deadline and approved by the director of the relevant laboratory (via signature on the application form) may be published and offered to candidates.

Each member of a supervisory team (advisor and co-advisors) may participate in only one topic proposed for the competition.

When a topic is published, it is prohibited to indicate or imply that it is reserved for a previously identified candidate.

ED STEP reserves the right to withdraw from the competition, at any stage of the process, any topic that does not comply with the eligibility requirements or the rules set forth in these regulations. Such a decision would then be communicated to the advisors via a letter explaining the reasons.

Article 5 – The Thesis Topic

The topic must clearly present the main characteristics of the doctoral project and enable potential candidates to assess its scientific content, the context in which it will be carried out (other funding, environment, collaborations, etc.), and the skills required.

The topic published on ADUM serves as the official reference for the thesis opportunity. It must be attached as an appendix to the application package, in accordance with the provisions of Article 9.

TITLE II – APPLICATIONS

Article 6 – Application Requirements

Each topic proposed for the competition may be submitted by only one candidate in the ED STEP competition.

Each candidate may apply for the competition for only one thesis topic.

Candidates must meet the regulatory requirements for enrollment in a doctoral program or be expected to meet them before the start of the thesis, in accordance with the rules in effect at the University of Grenoble Alpes and ED STEP.

Article 7 – Recruitment of Candidates

The selection of the candidate to be nominated for the competition on a given topic is the responsibility of the management team that proposed that topic and the host laboratory.

Those responsible for published topics are required to review all applications received and to respond to all candidates.

The management team's candidate selection process may include, among other things, reviewing applications, conducting interviews or oral examinations, and, where appropriate, consulting with the supervisors of the candidate's previous research internships or training programs.

Particular attention will be paid to the quality, fairness, and transparency of the selection process.

At the conclusion of this phase, only one candidate may be selected for the research topic presented in the competition.

TITLE III – SUBMISSION AND CONTENTS OF THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

Article 8 – Submission Procedures

The application package must be submitted electronically via the ADUM platform before the deadline specified in the application cycle calendar.

It is the responsibility of the applicant and the thesis advisory committee to ensure that the application is complete before the application deadline.

Unless otherwise specified in the application cycle calendar, no additional documents will be accepted after the deadline. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis if the situation warrants it and with the approval of the Doctoral School (for example, if grades are published after the submission deadline but before the applications are reviewed).

The application form (attached to these regulations) must be signed by the applicant, the thesis advisor, and the director of the host laboratory or their representative.

Any incomplete application will be rejected.

The application must be submitted electronically as a single PDF file.

To facilitate data processing, please submit your documents in a PDF format that allows for text selection and copying (native PDF, not scanned).

Article 9 – Contents of the Application Package

In addition to the application form provided in the appendix, the application package must include, in the following order, the following items:

9.1 – Materials Related to the Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal includes:

• a summary of the thesis proposal, no more than one to two pages long, presenting in an accessible and structured manner the scientific context of the project, its positioning relative to the state of the art, the scientific questions addressed, the objectives, and the proposed resources and methods

• conditions for carrying out the thesis: context of the thesis, associated collaborations, funding for the thesis environment, and, if applicable, coverage of the co-funding requirement

• the desired candidate profile

• any supporting documentation regarding additional funding, if applicable.

Note: The thesis project summary is different from the topic published on ADUM; it is a document specific to the application and is intended to enable each member of the selection committee (including those who are not specialists in the field) to evaluate the project within the context of the competition.

• The complete thesis topic as published on the ADUM platform must also be provided as an appendix to the application package

9.2 – Information Regarding the Candidate

The application package must include:

- a concise resume, limited to three pages, outlining the candidate's educational background, work experience, and any other information relevant to the evaluation of their academic and professional background;
- a statement of purpose detailing the reasons for their doctoral project, their interest in the topic and the host laboratory, the alignment between their background and the proposed project, as well as their career plans;
- transcripts, diplomas, or certificates corresponding to the higher education programs completed (Bachelor's, M1, M2, or equivalent) and necessary for evaluating their academic background;
- the title and abstract of the Master's 2 research internship report or equivalent;
- if applicable, letters of recommendation from the internship supervisor(s) or employer(s);

To ensure fairness among all applicants, the research internship grade is not required and will not be considered in the selection process.

For applicants holding a foreign degree or a degree requiring verification of equivalence, the documents necessary for assessing their eligibility must be provided (grade equivalence).

9.3 – Information Regarding the Supervisory Team

For each member of the supervisory team, the application package must include:

- a resume that demonstrates their experience and ability to supervise the doctoral project;
- for those without an HDR who are proposing the topic as the primary advisor, proof of authorization to take the HDR exam issued by the doctoral school's HDR committee;
- a brief statement of their motivations for advising the candidate applying for the position;
- a summary of the recruitment process, including any interviews and the factors used to assess the candidate's suitability for the doctoral project;
- finally, in accordance with Article 3, each member of the supervisory team must provide a written commitment stating that they are not involved in supervising a

dissertation for which funding was obtained through the doctoral school's competitive selection process during the preceding two years.

Throughout the duration of the competitive selection process, the doctoral school reserves the right to withdraw the relevant application in the event of non-compliance with this final clause.

TITLE IV – SPECIAL FUNDING

Article 10 – Applications for Partial Funding

An application for partial funding may be submitted as part of the competitive selection process, provided that the other portion of the funding is definitively secured before the application deadline and is compatible with the financial management policies of the institution (UGA as employer).

If a partial contract is awarded from the main list, the available partial contract may be offered, in order of merit, to candidates on the supplementary list who can demonstrate, on the day of the competition, that they have secured the other portion of the funding.

Any specific terms and conditions applicable to applications for partial funding are specified for each annual call for applications (see the ED website).

TITLE V – ELIGIBILITY, INTERVIEWS, AND CONTRACT AWARDS

Article 11 – Selection Committee and Competition Procedures

The selection committee consists of members of the Executive Board, in accordance with the ED STEP operating rules.

Any member of the Executive Board involved in a project submitted to the competition is automatically excluded from all evaluations and discussions concerning the relevant candidate and must leave the room during deliberations on that candidate, particularly during interviews. Nor may that member participate in votes that could affect the ranking of candidates.

The Doctoral School conducts a preliminary review of the eligibility and administrative and regulatory compliance of applications.

Applications approved by the Doctoral School are then evaluated by the selection committee.

Successful candidates are selected following an eligibility phase and an admission phase.

Article 12 – Eligibility

Applications deemed admissible are reviewed by the selection committee, which considers:

- for the applicant:

• academic performance;

• the quality and consistency of the applicant's academic background (this does not preclude "non-traditional" paths, which will not be penalized as long as the choices that guided this path and led to the dissertation are well-founded);

• their suitability for the proposed doctoral project;

• their motivation and aptitude for conducting research;

- for the supervisory team:

• the scientific quality of the project and the conditions planned for its implementation (environment, collaborations);

• supervision: the criteria take into account the complementarity within the team (in relation to the thesis objectives), and for each supervisor, the number of ongoing theses, the supervisor's "youth" (particularly if HDR qualifications are at stake), and the overall stage of the supervisor's career;

• the quality of the selection process for the nominated candidate;

• the overall quality of the submitted application: this ranges from the quality of the documents provided to compliance with the guidelines set forth in these regulations;

A score is assigned at the end of this eligibility phase, accounting for:

- 50% of the final score for the "candidate" portion;

- 15% of the final score for the "supervisor" portion.

Candidates whose applications are deemed eligible are invited to an audition before the competition jury.

Article 13 – Admission

Admission consists of an audition of the candidate, which includes:

- A 10-minute oral presentation in which the candidate is asked to present (in a manner of their choosing):

• the topic and their approach to it

- their motivation and how it aligns with the topic
- their prior research experience (M2 internship, M1 internship, other)
- their career plans

- a 15-minute interview with the selection committee: this question-and-answer session will allow the committee to assess the candidate's understanding of the topic and, if necessary, to better evaluate certain aspects of the application.

The interview may, if necessary, be conducted in English.

In-person interviews are preferred (the location will be specified in the invitation letter); the use of videoconferencing may be considered on a case-by-case basis, at the discretion of the Department.

The interview is graded and accounts for 35% of the final grade.

Following the interviews, the overall score (eligibility + admission) allows the selection committee to rank the candidates.

The main list includes the top-ranked candidates in order of merit, up to the limit of the number of available positions.

The supplementary list ranks the candidates not selected for the main list according to their ranking.

The results are published in accordance with the schedule and procedures established for the application cycle.

TITLE VI – GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 14 – Compliance with the Rules

Participation in the competition implies unreserved acceptance of these rules.

Any application that does not meet the specified conditions or deadlines will be deemed ineligible.

ED STEP reserves the right to request any information necessary to verify the eligibility of a project or application.

TITLE VII – SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

Article 15 – Timeline

February 19, 2027: Deadline for thesis advisors to enter thesis topics into ADUM.

April 23, 2027: Application deadline

May 18, 2027: Eligibility review committee

June 9–11, 2027: Auditions (dates will be finalized based on the number of candidates)

June 14, 2027: Announcement of admissions

APPENDIX: Application Form

Ph.D. Application – Last Name, First Name

Date and place of birth: ……

Gender: ……

Nationality: ……..……

Address: …….

Email: ……

Degree qualifying the holder for admission to a doctoral program (Master's or equivalent)

Title: …….

Institution: ……..…….

Year of graduation: ..…… …….

Application

Proposed thesis at the institution (UGA, USMB, Other):…….

Proposed thesis advisor: …….

Laboratory: ……

Laboratory Director: … ……..

Thesis Topic: …… ……..

…… ……..……

Estimated start date of thesis work: ……

Planned co-funding (1/2 doctoral contract): ……..……

If yes, type of funding: ……..……

Dated: ……

Thesis Advisor	For approval, Laboratory Director	Candidate
Last Name First Name	Last Name First Name	Last Name First Name
Signature	Signature	Signature