**CSSE: PhD Handbook 2025**

The document provides a comprehensive guide to the PhD Program in Computer Science and Systems Engineering at the University of Genoa (DIBRIS), outlining its organization and related activities. It defines the program requirements, including a full-time three-year commitment and the acquisition of 30 educational credits, obtained through advanced courses and teaching support activities. The regulations impose a structured timeline with specific annual deadlines—such as the thesis proposal and progress reports—all supervised by an individual committee and an assigned advisor. The text also describes official communication channels and suggested activities, such as participation in seminars and workshops. Furthermore, it details the essential administrative processes, including procedures for the use of research funds (10% of the scholarship) and those for missions and the scholarship increase for research stays abroad. The guide concludes by outlining the entire process of the final PhD examination, specifying the role of external reviewers and the available defense sessions.

## Structure and Context of the Program

DIBRIS is the main department hosting the PhD Program in CSSE, which includes two study tracks (curricula): Computer Science and Systems Engineering.
DIBRIS is also involved in other PhD Programs, including those in Bioengineering and Robotics, in Artificial Intelligence (national program launched in 2021), and the National PhD Program in Robotics and Intelligent Machines. The PhD Programs in Digital Humanities (DISFOR) and in Security, Risk and Vulnerability (DICCA) are also connected.

## Duration, Commitments, and Supervision

The PhD Program is a full-time activity lasting 3 years. Exceptions to the standard duration are possible through agreements with foreign institutions. All professional activities, projects, visits, or internships must be related to the research activity of the PhD. Regarding income, additional annual revenue must not exceed the amount of the PhD scholarship (i.e., the total maximum annual income is twice the scholarship).
The PhD Board assigns each candidate at least one supervisor from the University of Genoa and an individual committee composed of 3 or 4 researchers.

## Deadlines and Reporting (Three-Year Timeline)

PhD students must meet specific deadlines during the three years:

- **End of each year (September/October):** Submission of the Annual Report and the PhD Student Booklet. A set of guidelines for credit assignment to various activities (courses, seminars, publications, etc.) is available.
- **End of the first year:** Submission of the Thesis Proposal and discussion with the individual committee.
- **End of the second year:** Submission of the Progress Report and discussion with the individual committee.
- **End of the third year:** Submission of the Thesis Draft and plan for the final examination (expected session, etc.), followed by a discussion with the individual committee.

## Training Activities and Credits (CFU)

The program requires the acquisition of **30 credits (CFU)** over 3 years.
Credits may be obtained by attending:

- DIBRIS PhD courses (intensive/crash courses on advanced topics).
- Courses from other PhD Programs or Doctoral Schools.

A typical PhD course focuses on advanced topics and consists of 20 hours of lectures over 1 or 2 weeks (intensive course).

Credit assignment is as follows:

- **6 CFU:** Course attendance plus final assessment (exercises, report, seminar, etc.).
- **2 CFU:** Course attendance only.
- **2–6 CFU:** Teaching support activities.

The PhD Board may assign credits for teaching support activities requiring the preparation of materials, labs, or exercises (maximum 60 hours per year for 3 years). To reach the 30 credits, for example, 5 units of 6 CFU or 4 units of 6 CFU plus 3 units of 2 CFU are needed.

Candidates must prepare and submit an annual study plan to the PhD Board, then contact lecturers for course enrolment. After the course, the instructor must provide a certificate of attendance or examination, to be included in the documentation shared with the Board (e.g., the PhD Student Booklet/annual reports). Certificate templates are available on Aulaweb.

## Soft Skills

An additional **10 credits** in soft skills are required. These can be obtained through:

- Attendance of soft-skills courses (e.g., public speaking, scientific writing).
- Participation in the PhD seminar series, in the organization of workshops and seminars, or poster sessions.
- Tutoring activities in Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD courses.

## Funding and Missions

Up to **10% of the annual scholarship funds** may be used to cover costs related to:

- Purchase of a PC/laptop (only within the first 18 months) or special research equipment.
- Registration fees and travel expenses for workshops, conferences, and schools.

If a visit to foreign institutions is planned (maximum 18 months), a **50% scholarship increase** must be requested.

Missions (travel for conferences, schools, visits to laboratories/companies) require opening a mission request via the Uweb service at least two weeks before the planned travel date.

Instructions for opening/closing missions and requesting reimbursements are available on Aulaweb.

## Final PhD Examination

DIBRIS organizes three final examination sessions per year (February, March, and May).
Key timing for a standard cycle is as follows (example target May Y+4):

- **October Y+3:** The PhD Board admits the candidate to the final exam and selects two external reviewers.
- **February Y+4:** The supervisor and coordinator send review templates to the reviewers; the candidate sends the thesis to the reviewers.
- **April Y+4:** The reviewers submit their reports. The Board and supervisors schedule the final examination date and committee. The Rector appoints the committee members.
- **May Y+4:** Final examination (PhD defense).