

Dear PhD students, dear supervisors,

The NeuroSchool PhD Program launches a new initiative this year: all first-year student are warmly invited to choose a “parrain” or “marraine de thèse”, which in English must be something like “PhD tutor” or “Thesis mentor”...

The idea is that this person (a research or university permanent staff member, not from the same team as the student) could provide good guidance and advice to the student on different topics not necessarily related to the scientific content of the PhD project. Below we provide a short description, in French and English, of the role of the parrain/marraine.

Thanks to the many colleagues who have responded enthusiastically to our call for volunteers, we are happy to provide a rich list of candidates for the role of parrain/marraine. You can find the list [here](#), candidates are listed by their affiliation laboratory and keywords are provided to describe their research interests.

The students can ask for suggestions from his/her supervisors, of course, as well as from senior students, alumni and postdoc fellows, and then contact the selected person (or a couple of them) to discuss about the possibility to be “parrainé” (tutored, sponsored). Please let us know about the student/parrain or student/marraine match that has been decided **here** : <https://forms.gle/D5jv8w8q65wZ1E86A>

All the best,
The PhD Program

French version

Quel est le rôle du parrain/marraine de thèse? Il s’agit d’un rôle d’accompagnement permettant d’échanger avec le doctorant(e) et d’éventuellement prévenir, détecter, ou aider à résoudre des situations complexes. Le parrain/marraine est externe au projet de thèse et n’a pas vocation à se substituer aux encadrants qui sont les responsables et garants du suivi régulier des doctorants. Ainsi, dans le cadre de cette relation de confiance, le doctorant(e) pourra faire appel au parrain/marraine de thèse pour demander conseil et obtenir un regard extérieur tout au long de sa thèse.

Quelles recommandations ? Peu. Il serait préférable que le parrain/marraine ne soit pas un proche ou un collaborateur du directeur de thèse. Le parrain/marraine de thèse ne doit pas spécialement être un expert du sujet de thèse. Il/elle peut être du même laboratoire que le doctorant(e) mais pas dans la même équipe. La proximité au sein d’un même campus, sans être obligatoire, pourrait permettre au parrain/marraine et au doctorant(e) de se retrouver pour un échange rapide, autour d’un café.

Quel engagement en termes de temps ? Pas beaucoup. La cadence des rencontres n’est pas imposée : parrain/marraine et doctorant(e) trouveront leur équilibre selon

les nécessités et la disponibilité de chacun. Un minimum de deux rencontres par an est recommandé (si le doctorant(e) ne fait pas la démarche, il appartient au parrain/marraine de la faire). Le parrain/marraine de thèse peut être invitée à participer aux réunions du Comité de Suivi Individuel (CSI) de thèse à la demande du directeur de thèse et/ou du doctorant(e).

English version

What is the role of the thesis sponsor?

The role of the thesis sponsor is to support the doctoral student and to prevent, detect, or help resolve complex situations. The sponsor is external to the thesis project and is not intended to replace the supervisors who are responsible for and guarantee the regular follow-up of the doctoral students. Thus, within the framework of this relationship of trust, the doctoral student can call upon the thesis sponsor to ask for advice and to obtain an outside view throughout his/her thesis.

What recommendations?

Not many. It is preferable that the thesis sponsor is not a close friend or collaborator of the thesis director. The thesis sponsor does not have to be an expert on the thesis subject. He/she can be from the same laboratory as the doctoral student but not in the same team. The proximity within the same campus, without being obligatory, could allow the sponsor and the student to meet for a quick exchange, around a coffee.

What is the commitment in terms of time?

Not much. The frequency of the meetings is not imposed: the sponsor and the doctoral student will find their balance according to the needs and availability of each. A minimum of two meetings per year is recommended (if the doctoral student does not take the initiative, it is up to the sponsor to do so). The thesis sponsor may be invited to participate in the meetings of the Individual Follow-up Committee (or Comité de Suivi de Thèse, CSI) of the thesis at the request of the thesis director and/or the doctoral student.