PhD School

POLITECNICO DI MILANO • PHD SCHOOL • WELCOME KIT

PhD First steps

Operational guide for Incoming PhD Candidates
Selection to 2nd Year advancement

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Welcome to Your PhD Journey

This 'PhD First Steps' guide provides an essential roadmap designed to support candidates to set up the beginning of their PhD career with ease, from enrollment to the completion of their first year.

Our goal is to help you begin your path with clarity and confidence, especially throughout your first year as a PoliMi PhD candidate.

At the end of the document, you will also find useful charts with a general directory ('who does what') and a list of terms (eng-ita)

Please, keep in mind this **legend** to correctly consult the document:

Category Icon	Application & Context
★ Funding / Scholarship	Applicable based on the presence, type, or terms of scholarship allocation.
🌀 Cycle Specific	Procedures subject to variations depending on the personal PhD Cycle (e.g., 39th, 40th, 41st Cycle).
☗ Department / Structure	Specific requirements managed directly by individual Departments or PhD Program Secretariats.
Ø Individual Career	Variables depending on personal candidate status (e.g., international researchers, Public Admin).

This document is currently available **only in English**.

For any further **questions or unresolved matters**, please check here:

ⓘ https://www.polimi.it/en/dottorato-1/scuola-di-dottorato/phd-school-offices

ⓘ https://www.polimi.it/en/phd/prospective-phd-candidates/phd-programmes

phd-representatives@polimi.it; phdschool@polimi.it

HOW TO START YOUR PHD: STEP-BY-STEP FLOW CHART
From enrollment to 2nd year advancement

STEP 1: Essential obligations & WHS (workplace security) › click for more details

When: First 30 Days / Month 1 **Where**: INPS Portal & Online Services › Data & SPP

- **Credentials**, **contacts**, **INPS** & **IBAN** for payments, **PhD Regulations**, **Welcome** events
- **International candidates**: Tax Code & Residence permits.
- Mandatory SPP **Safety Courses** (General & Specific) + **Employment Risks** Sheet.

Who to Contact: FAQs Section A.04, B.01-03, B.12 (you can open a ticket) or SPP Safety Unit & Dept. Secretariat

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STEP 2: Academic onboarding & research planning › click for more details

When: Months 1 – 6 **Where**: Online Services › PhD Student Career & Study Plan

- Official assignment of **Supervisor** and **Tutor** by PhD Faculty Board.
- Online **Study Plan** submission (min 20 ECTS, including Soft Skills courses).
- Drafting & formal approval of the **PhD Agreement** (research goals & milestones).
- **All international candidates**: Italian **OFA removal** (Additional Italian Language Obligation).

Who to Contact: FAQs Section B.9-11 (you can open a ticket) PhD Supervisor & PhD Programme Coordinator

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STEP 3: Research tools & mobility management › click for more details

When: Months 1 – 12 (ongoing) **Where**: Online Services › Mission Management & RDA Purchases

- **Tools for research** activities and possible integrations for stays abroad.
- **Missions / Stays Abroad:** requests submission prior to any travel/conference.

Who to Contact: FAQs Section B.7-8 (you can open a ticket), PhD Supervisor, Dept. Secretariat, PhD Coordinator

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STEP 4: Campus Life & other PhD services, PhD representatives › click for more details

When: Months 1 – 12 (ongoing) **Where**: Online Services › PhD Annual Evaluation

- **Support Activities** (DSU, Part-time collaborations, Tutoring, etc.).
- **PhD representatives** (in the PhD School & in other structures) & other guarantees
- **Campus Services** & more.

Who to Contact: FAQs Section C (you can open a ticket) or specific structures and services

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STEP 5: 1st year evaluation & 2nd year advancement › click for more details

When: End of Year 1 (based on enrollment date) **Where**: Online Services › PhD Annual Evaluation

- Supervisor and Tutor meetings; Departmental intermediate milestones & poster sessions.
- Upload of Annual Activity Report approved by Supervisor.
- Formal Faculty Board deliberation for admission to 2nd Year.

Who to Contact: FAQs Section B.9-10 (you can open a ticket), PhD Supervisor, PhD Coordinator, Faculty Board

STEP 1.
Essential obligations & WHS (workplace security)

📌 **WHERE DO I FIND IT?** I PhD Handbook: Sect. A (A.7 / B.1-4 / D) ⇄ PhD FAQs: Sect. A.04 / B.01-03 / B.12

A) Digital IDs and e-mail, Badge for access to spaces, PhD regulations, Welcome [Ø]

Initial registration on Polimi Online Services assigns a unique Person Code (Codice Persona). This step will have been done already if candidates have participated in a call on the Polimi online services. After selection, all candidates must activate their **SPID/CIE digital identity** credentials and their institutional email account (@polimi.it), which serves as the sole official channel for all administrative, academic, and financial communications. Also, they must contact their department to check the key access rights (online services, software and tools, **badge** for study and working areas and spaces, etc.).

All newly enrolled **PhD candidates are required to carefully read and study the latest PhD regulations** (with all its attachments, e.g. the PhD Manual), always available on our website, and the relevant PhD legislation, listed on the PhD Handbook.

The most important information to begin your PhD career is presented and provided during **Welcome Days** and events that both the **PhD School** and **Departments** organize for newly enrolled candidates.

B) INPS Separate Management, IBAN for payments, Tax Status, U-Web Declarations [Ø, ★]

For all scholarship recipients it is mandatory the **INPS 'Gestione Separata'** registration for social security pension contributions (2/3 covered by the University, 1/3 charged to the candidate), together with a prompt submission of bank account **IBAN details** in Online Services to enable monthly stipend disbursal. **Scholarships are paid** in deferred monthly payrolls (usually by the 25th of the following month). They are also exempt from personal income tax (IRPEF). Mandatory completion of the online **U-Web Declarations** form to define tax deductions and social security status is also required.

C) International Candidates: Tax Code & Residence Permit [☗, Ø]

International students must obtain their **personal Italian Tax Code** (Codice Fiscale). There are **4 official pathways for obtaining it**: 1) Italian Embassy/Consulate abroad; 2) Request via the PhD School (open a ticket via FAQ section B.01); 3) Tax Agency (Agenzia delle Entrate) in Italy; 4) Questura during Residence Permit processing. **Please note**: Tax Codes automatically generated on **Universitaly** are **unofficial** and **MUST NOT** be entered in Online Services.

Residence permit: Visit a post office and collect the KIT for the residence permit application. Contact the Questura to schedule an appointment. Request your **academic career certificate**, which is required for your residence permit application. The certificate can be requested through the university's online services.

D) WHS – workplace security [Ø]

Under Italian health & safety law (D. Lgs. 81/08), PhD candidates are treated as workers. Therefore, you have to consult your Dept. for a list of **mandatory safety training courses** (General and Specific Risk) and the online submission of the **Employment Risks Sheet** (*Scheda Rischi Lavorativi*) followed by medical surveillance examination where required.

Phase / Procedure	When (Timeline)	Where (Portal/Platform)	Who to Contact
Services and spaces access	Deadline published in the call or notified by the Administrative Offices	Online for the request / onsite when required (Dept. buildings, Polimi central secret. building, only with appointment)	Dept. Secretariat / PhD School admin offices via Ticket
Enrollment & Fee Payment	Deadline express on the call or notified by the structure	Online Services > PhD Enrollment	Dept. Secretariat / PhD School Secretariat
Official Tax Code Request	Before / Upon arrival in Italy	Embassy / PhD School / Agenzia delle. Entrate	Dept. Secretariat / ticket via PhD FAQs, after login
Residence Permit (Permesso)	Within 8 days of arrival in Italy	Post Office (Sportello Amico) / Questura	Dept. Secretariat / ticket via PhD FAQs, after login
INPS Separate Management Registration	Before 1st scholarship disbursal	INPS Portal (Access via SPID/CIE)	INPS / PhD School / ticket via PhD FAQs, after login
IBAN Submission for Stipend	Upon enrollment	Online Services > Data > Payment Methods	PhD School / ticket via PhD FAQs, after login
Monthly Scholarship Disbursal	Monthly in arrears (by 25th)	Bank Account (IBAN)	PhD School / ticket via PhD FAQs, after login
U-Web Tax Declarations	At career start & upon changes	Polimi U-Web Declarations Portal	PhD School / ticket via PhD FAQs, after login
Safety Courses (General/Specific)	Within 30 days of start date	Online Services > Training Courses	Dept. Secretariat / ticket via PhD FAQs, after login
Employment Risks Sheet & Medical	At start of research activity	Online Services > Risks Sheet (SPP)	Supervisor / Dept. Secretariat / ticket via PhD FAQs, after login
PhD Regulation and legislation	As soon as possible	PoliMi, Ministerial and UE websites	Supervisor / Tutor / Coordinator

STEP 2.
Academic onboarding & research planning

> **WHERE DO I FIND IT?** I PhD Handbook: Section B.9-10 ⇄ PhD FAQs: Section B.09-10

A) Key Academic Figures (Supervisor, Co-supervisor, Tutor, Coordinator) [Ø]

Academic role definitions: The **Supervisor** guides scientific research and dissertation development; the **Tutor** mainly serves as a reference for any general career issue or trouble; the **Coordinator** and **Faculty Board** (*Collegio dei Docenti*) are the governing/managing bodies of the Program. Check the Doctoral Manual at the end of the PoliMi PhD Regulation.

B) Study Plan, ECTS/CFU Credits & Soft Skills Courses [☗, 🌀]

Each candidate must acquire the **ECTS/CFU** credits prescribed by their **PhD Educational Project** (minimum 20 doctoral-level ECTS overall), divided between discipline-specific courses and transversal Soft Skills courses organized by the PhD School (at least 10 ECTS). The key figure to plan this activity is the Supervisor.

C) The PhD Agreement & Individual Research Project [☗, 🌀]

Execution of **PhD Agreement** is mandatory from the 38th cycle onwards by the end of the 1st year: it is a formal agreement between candidate, supervisor and coordinator defining scientific goals, coursework planning, expected deliverables, research timelines and more. **Check again the PhD Manual** for more info.

D) OFA (Additional Education Obligations) of Italian [🌀]

As described in all PhD Progs' educational projects, from the 39th cycle, PhD candidates with foreign citizenship are automatically assigned an **Italian OFA** (additional educational obligation), which must be removed **before admission to the final exam**. All information is available at this link. Different rules may apply depending on your PhD Cycle of enrollment.

E) Personal rights and duties connected to the career path [Ø]

By law, **PhD candidates have rights** allowing them to manage possible personal troubles (e.g., parental leave, illness or injuries, personal issues, withdrawals, etc.). It is always **necessary to discuss** this matter in time **with the Supervisor** (or Tutor, Coordinator, Dept. Secretariat, etc.). With rights also come **duties**, that may cause career **interruptions** or serious **measures** if disobeyed or not attended. You are strongly advised to **carefully read** our latest PhD Regulations in order to have a thorough picture in this regard.

Phase / Procedure	When (Timeline)	Where (Portal/Platform)	Who to Contact
Supervisor & Tutor Assignment	Start of 1st Academic Year	Dept. communication (Faculty Board)	PhD Program Coordinator
Online Study Plan Submission	Dedicated windows (e.g., Fall / Spring)	Online Services > PhD Study Plan	Academic Tutor / Secretariat
Soft Skills Courses (PhD School)	During 1st & 2nd Year	Online Services > PhD Study Plan (PhD School)	PhD School / Course Instructors
PhD Agreement Draft & Approval	Within first 3-6 months	Online Services > PhD Student Career	Supervisor & Program Coordinator

STEP 3.
Research tools & mobility management

WHERE DO I FIND IT? I PhD Handbook: Section B.7, B.8 ⇄ PhD FAQs: Section B.07-08

A) Purchase evaluations, equipment & petty cash [☗]

In addition to the formative and research structure of the PhD Programme, PhD candidates can count on many **different tools** to engage in a successful **research and doctoral activity**: conference registrations, scientific travels, books, IT hardware and software (MATLAB, Adobe for accredited departments, anti-plagiarism verification software like Turnitin, PoliTesi repository) and other supplies and services. To evaluate the actual opportunity of making a request to benefit from these tools, candidates must always **discuss it with their own Supervisor**; related procedures (e.g., RDA requests, Petty Cash ("Spese Economali"), etc.) must be managed with the support of **Departmental Administration**.

B) Travel & Mission Management, Stays Abroad requests (with possible scholarship increase of 50% of monthly scholarship amount) [☗]

Before traveling there is a mandatory **procedure for scientific travel** (conferences, seminars, field research) and study periods abroad to complete. First, a '**mission' authorization** request must be submitted (via the online service dedicated to missions), which is necessary for reimbursements and insurance coverage, followed by a detailed expenses report upon return. Then a parallel '**stay abroad'** must also be requested (via the PhD Career online service), which is necessary for educational reasons and for possible financial integrations (scholarship increase).

Phase / Procedure	When (Timeline)	Where (Portal/Platform)	Who to Contact
Check for available research endowments	Ongoing starting from Year 1	Online Services / Dept. accounting	Department Secretariat
Software License Downloads	Throughout PhD career	Polimi Software Download / Intranet	Department / ICT Services
Library & Online Bibliographic tools	Continuous	Polimi Library Portal / PoliTesi	Department / Library Services Area
Mission Request and insurance coverage	If possible, at least 15 days prior to travel	Online Services > Mission Management	Supervisor / Dept. / PhD School / Insurance Unit
Mission expenses reimbursement	Within 15-30 days of return	Online Services > Mission Management	Department / Missions Office
Stay Abroad Request	possibly 15 days in advance (approval is expected within the month to align the scholarship increase with monthly payrolls)	Online Services > PhD Career	Supervisor / Coordinator / Dept Secretariat / PhD School
Purchase request	At career start / 1st purchase	Email to Dept Purchases Office / RDA Purchase Tool	Department Purchases Officer

STEP 4.
Additional opportunities and campus services

WHERE DO I FIND IT? I PhD Handbook: Section B.5 / C ⇄ PhD FAQs: Section B.04 / C

A) Support Activities (DSU, Part-time collaborations, Tutoring) [★]

As per Bachelor and Master students, throughout their career PhD candidates have the chance to engage in **DSU facilitation initiatives**, such as specifically dedicated **part-time collaborations**, paid **teaching support**, lab **assistance** and **tutoring** for Bachelor's and Master's courses. Participation is always subject to **authorization** from Supervisors and Coordinators and within the related regulation limits.

B) PhD Representatives

PhD candidates have **representatives in several boards**, committees, and governance bodies throughout the whole University. In particular, each Department foresees a PhD Representative in the **Dept. Council**. Moreover, the **PhD School has 4** PhD Representatives with the right to participate in PhD School Council meetings. We suggest you get in contact with these figures (check here), in order to grasp an important channel of communication of your interests and those of your colleagues.
In general, the current Higher Education legal framework in Europe and Italy is designed to offer several channels of representation and guarantee one's integrity, health, well-being and balance. To discover them, please read carefully the section 5 of our PhD Handbook.

C) Campus Services & more

PhD candidates and Polimi have access to many **special offers and services** to enrich their experience beyond the mere educational and research sphere. All these services and opportunities are mainly managed by the specific Department and by the Campus Life Unit. An approximate list of these opportunities is the following: train and urban **transportation**; theatre and **cultural activities**, Polimi and other **Sport** facilities and services, **wealth and healthcare** assistance, **psychological support** (PoliPsi) and many more.

For more exhaustive information you can check this link.

Phase / Procedure	When (Timeline)	Where (Portal/Platform)	Who to Contact
Part-time coll. calls & Dept./Faculty tutoring	Periodic (usually semester start)	Online Services > Student Collaborations	Issuing School / Department
Psychological Support & Sports	Upon request	PoliPsi & Polimi Sport Portals	PoliPsi Team / Polimi Sport
PhD representatives and other helpful bodies and figures	With the beginning of the activities	Dept Council / PhD School Council / Polimi website	Department / PhD School / specific structures
work-life balance and everyday various needs	Throughout the entire career	Campus Life / Polimi Website	Department / Campus Life Area

STEP 5.
First-year evaluation and 2nd year advancement

> **WHERE DO I FIND IT?** I PhD Handbook: Section B.9 ⇄ PhD FAQs: Section B.09

A) Departmental Milestones & Presentation Templates

Intermediate checks and milestones are established by individual Departments mid-year and/or throughout every year (especially the first). E.g., Year 1: public presentations, progress seminars, poster sessions, and literature reviews. To prepare the material for an evaluation, candidates should coordinate with their supervisor.

B) Annual Activity Report & Faculty Board Advancement Deliberation

By the **end of the first year**, the submission of the **Annual Activity Report** compiled by the candidate and approved by the Supervisor is required to assess the successful completion of yearly activities. Beyond milestones, this final annual evaluation is how the PhD **Faculty Board deliberates candidates' admissions** to the following Year of the program. For candidates with scholarships, this passage determines whether the **scholarship** is confirmed for the following year or if it should be temporarily suspended while the candidate completes unresolved activities. In case of serious and repeated educational **misconducts** and violations of regulations, milestones and evaluation sessions can results in the anticipate conclusion of the PhD career by exclusion.

Phase / Procedure	When (Timeline)	Where (Portal/Platform)	Who to Contact
Intermediate Milestones / Poster	Mid-Year / Summer	Department Venues / Online	Faculty Board / Program Coordinator
Poster & Rollup Preparation	Prior to public presentation	Official Polimi Graphics Templates	Dept Printing / Graphics Services
Annual Report Upload	September – October (End Year 1)	Online Services > PhD Annual Evaluation	Research Supervisor
Faculty Board Year Passage Resolution	By October 31st	Faculty Board Minutes	Coordinator / PhD Secretariat

DIRECTORY ('WHO DOES WHAT') AND TERMINOLOGY (ENG-ITA)

WHERE DO I FIND IT? I PhD Handbook: Section E

Structure / Office	Primary Responsibilities	Contact Channel / Platform	Key Reference
PhD School Secretariat	Calls, enrollment, scholarships, admin. career steps, official certificates, stays abroad, degrees and diplomas; Soft skills teachings, …	Polimi PhD Assistance	PhD School
Department / Program Secretariat	Educational project, Programme design, Disciplinary courses, study plans, missions, RDA purchases, research tools and budget, …	Department Secretariat	Local PhD Departmental Offices
International candidates	Visas, residence permits, housing, tax codes, etc.	Department Secretariat / Polimi PhD Assistance	Local PhD Departmental Offices / PhD School / Other local offices
Prevention & Safety Unit (SPP)	Safety courses, employment risks sheet, occupational health medical visits, …	Department Secretariat / SPP PoliMi	Prevention and Protection Unit
ICT Helpdesk / Online Services	Credentials, Person & Student ID, institutional email, technical support, etc.)	Online Services - ICT Assistance / Polimi PhD Assistance	IT Support (ASICT) Local PhD Departmental Offices / PhD School

Basic Terminology ENG - ITA

Faculty Board	=	Collegio Docenti	Milestone	=	Valutaz. intermedia
Supervisor	=	Relatore	Person ID	=	Codice Persona
Co-supervior(s)	=	Co-Relatore/i	Student ID	=	Num. di Matricola
*Tutor	=	Tutor (accademico)	Study Plan	=	Piano degli Studi
Stay aborad	=	Permanenza all'estero	PhD School course list	=	Manifesto di Scuola
Mission	=	Missione / trasferta	Phd Programme course list	=	Manifesto del Corso

**What we call "Tutor" or "Academic Tutor" (as described in the PhD Manual), emerges from the figure of the "co-supervisore" presented by Italian Laws, not to be confused with our "co-relatore".*