

PRESS RELEASE

Paris-Saclay, 28 September 2021

The Doctoral College at Université Paris-Saclay publishes its annual report

The report confirms the appeal of PhD programmes at Université Paris-Saclay, with a 4.3% increase in the number of new enrolments over the past five years. 85% of PhD candidates stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of supervision. The health crisis has had a major impact on PhDs however, in particular regarding the number of vivas, which dropped by 15% compared with 2020, with many being postponed to 2021.

Every year the Doctoral College at Université Paris-Saclay publishes a report on the University's PhD activity.

The 2021 report has shone a light on the strong appeal of PhD courses at Université Paris-Saclay. In a context where PhD enrolments are declining nationally in France, not only do PhDs at Université Paris-Saclay continue to attract candidates, but over the past five years, the number of PhD candidates enrolling in their first year has steadily risen by 4.3%. 1,100 new PhD candidates were admitted in 2020/2021, 60% of whom were French and 40% of whom were international candidates, with a total of 72 different nationalities.

Almost half of theses from 2020/2021 were written entirely in English (45%), 48% written in French and the remaining 8% written in both languages. 62% of French PhD candidates wrote their thesis in French and 38% in English or in both languages. Conversely, 34% of nationals from other countries wrote their theses in French or in both languages and 66% in English.

The rise in the number of PhD candidates has not been at the expense of training conditions or the quality of supervision. 94% of PhD candidates receive funding to prepare their theses and 56.6% of PhD candidates stated that they were very satisfied with the quality of supervision they received, with an additional 27.8% stating that they were satisfied. Thesis supervisors rarely supervise more than five PhD candidates (just 2%); 50% supervise a single candidate, 80% supervise one or two, and 91% supervise no more than three. Furthermore, 62% of PhD candidates are supervised by a team of supervisors, facilitating the coordination of interdisciplinary doctoral projects at the interface between different disciplines.

Nonetheless, the availability of doctoral funding and funding amounts are not sufficient. For 77.6% of supervisors, the main factor limiting doctoral research is finding funding for PhD candidates.

The health crisis has significantly affected PhDs, with a 15% fall in the number of vivas: 854 vivas in 2019 and 720 in 2020. This drop can be explained by certain vivas being delayed by several months due to the pandemic. However, this figure should be treated with caution as consequences of the pandemic in terms of doctoral withdrawals may be delayed.

PhD theses are increasingly more available online and are more visible than ever, in line with the University's Open Science policy, with 70% of theses from 2020 accessible online.

[View the infographic \(in English\)](#)

ABOUT UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SACLAY

Université Paris-Saclay brings together ten constituent faculties and institutes, four Grandes Écoles, the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques, two associate institutions and shared laboratories with six national research organisations.

With 48,000 students, 8,100 lecturers and 8,500 administrative and technical staff members, Université Paris-Saclay offers a comprehensive and varied range of undergraduate to doctorate level programmes and engineering degrees, renowned for their quality thanks to the reputation and commitment of the University's academic staff.

Located in the south of Paris on vast sites that stretch across Paris, Orsay, Évry and Versailles, Université Paris-Saclay benefits from a strategic geographical and socio-economic position that is strengthened by its international visibility. A leading university, Université Paris-Saclay is recognised for its excellent Mathematics and Physics programmes but also for Biological and Medical Sciences, Agriculture, Engineering, and its extensive Humanities and Social Sciences courses. Close to Paris, Université Paris-Saclay is nestled in a protected natural area, at the heart of a dynamic economic hub.



Press Contacts:

Katie O'Dowdall

katie.odowdall@universite-paris-saclay.fr

+ 33 (0) 6 98 58 79 10

The Press Team

service.presse@universite-paris-saclay.fr