

International Doctorate in Translation Studies

A proposal prepared for the EST
September 2013

Version 4

Document presented to a meeting at the 7th EST Congress in Germersheim on 31 August 2013 and revised in view of that discussion.

The international community of translation scholars recognizes that doctoral programs are one of the main means by which it reproduces itself, affirming and developing its academic identity.

The precedents for EST involvement in this field include Article 2.2 of the EST Constitution, the aim to set up a register of research supervisors (from *EST Newsletter* 1, 1992), the detailed proposal written by Yves Gambier as a result of work by the EST Doctoral Studies Committee and the TS-Doc Working Group (*EST Newsletter* 42, 2013) and the ongoing work of the EST Doctoral Committee. A further precedent is the European ITN project TIME (2011-2014), which has developed a model of industry-relevant doctoral training.

(For a compilation of precedents, see: http://www.est-translationstudies.org/committees/doc_studies/doc_studies_resources.html).

In view of this interest and precedents, it is proposed to establish an International Doctorate in Translation Studies, initially as a network of stakeholders, based on the following principles:

1. The aims of the network are:
 - a. To provide a support structure for cooperation between existing doctoral programs
 - b. To build up a database of online course materials, including copyright-cleared readings, video lectures, presentation slides and model syllabi
 - c. To compile a register of supervisors who are prepared to assist in supervision or co-supervision in particular areas
 - d. To assist in the location of training partners in industry, NGOs, and governmental institutions
 - e. To provide training for research supervisors in the field of Translation Studies
 - f. To provide a reference framework for joint doctorates, particularly those that involve different countries
 - g. To assist in making contacts for the mobility of students
 - h. To organize an annual graduate conference for students in member programs
 - i. To organize an annual meeting of representatives of member programs
 - j. To attract external funding for the activities of the network
 - k. To agree on a set of minimal objectives for and skills for a doctoral program working in Translation Studies and skills to be acquired by students in those programs. The set of objectives and skills should be reviewed periodically.

2. The network may function as a label of quality that can be accorded to existing programs that meet certain minimal criteria.
3. The network may include any program that meets these criteria, independently of the name of the program (the term "Translation Studies" is not required in the name of programs, and programs in more general fields may still be members of the network).
4. "Translation Studies" is taken in a broad sense, including research on written translation, interpreting, audiovisual translation, localization and adaptation.
5. The minimal requirements for member programs may concern teaching content (minimal objectives and skills), training processes (particularly supervision practices) and products (publications by doctoral students). Interim indices may be used until the program is in full operation.
6. A doctoral program may benefit from network membership for cycles of five years. At the end of each cycle, the program must meet the minimal criteria in order to renew membership.
7. The membership fee for each program might be of the order of 2,000 euros per five-year period.

Program profiles

The minimal components required for a doctoral program, as expressed in various documents at the national and European levels, comprise lists of training objectives and skills to be acquired. Annex 1 gives the list of objectives and skills compiled by Yves Gambier (*EST Newsletter* 42, 2013).

Member programs would be required to state, in a detailed written submission, how and when each objective is met and each skill is acquired and/or tested.

Given the extreme variation between programs in different countries, many aspects of existing doctoral programs do not constitute good criteria for membership. For example, there should be no requirements concerning the minimum learning hours per item (since doctoral students often have highly developed skills prior to entering the program), and no external checking of actual acquisition (since such checking is expensive). Further, there should be no requirement that the training process happen within the candidate program itself: in many cases general training can be given within generic doctoral courses at each university, and highly specific training can be organized in seminars and workshops in which several Translation Studies programs participate.

It is envisaged that detailed thought about the list of objectives and skills will in some cases help stimulate existing programs to envisage supplementary training activities (seminars, conferences, workshops).

Quality metrics

Numerous metrics can be used to assess the quality of doctoral programs, and it is not clear that the EST has the status or mandate to apply any of them. We must exclude those that are particularly country-specific (e.g. maximum duration of the program, percentage of taught courses, entry requirements for new students, format of doctoral examination sessions, or grades awarded to doctoral theses). We should also exclude metrics that are onerous to organize or process (e.g. academic qualifications of supervisors, quality of coursework, evaluations by students or inspection visit).

Training in supervision techniques

One way in which the network could help improve doctoral programs is by providing training in supervision techniques that are in some way specific to Translation Studies. This could be through short-term (perhaps three-day) annual workshops that provide certification.

The network should not require that all supervisors have such certification, since many co-supervisors work in disciplines that are not strictly concerned with translation. However, the network may require that a certain percentage of main supervisors in a member program either have completed a training course of some kind or are able to show experience in the supervision of doctoral researchers.

It is recognized that the ability to do research in Translation Studies is not the same thing as the ability to supervise researchers.

Publication impact

Another possible approach would be to use an *external* system that measures quality. At the present time, the one area in which the quality of research work is controlled with some rigor is in the selection of articles by indexed journals.

Thus, a member program might be required to demonstrate that, over a five-year period, an average of two thesis-related indexed-journal publications have been accepted per successful doctoral student. Acceptance might be prior to the defense of the thesis or within three years of the defense of the thesis.

This could be calculated as an average for the entire program. For example, if one student has one publication and another has three, then the average is two and the requirement is met.

“Indexed journals” could be taken to be those journals with an ISI Web of Knowledge impact score, as well as the various national lists of approved peer-reviewed journals. There should be no requirement concerning the impact score or the discipline of the journal, as long as the articles are related to the doctoral research.

A higher or lower degree of quality can be obtained by increasing or decreasing the number of publications per student.

Post-thesis employment

A further criterion could be data on successful post-thesis employment. This would be based on self-report data and would have to allow for research that is not completed in order for employment purposes. This criterion would, however, indicate the desirability of working with industry partners and possible employers in the design and executive of research training.

Board of management

The network could be coordinated by a five-member board, comprising Director, Treasurer, and three further members. It may also have a technical assistant (website, preparation of materials, organization), paid on the basis of hours worked.

The language used in all communications with and from the Board, including candidate dossiers, could be English.

The Board might report annually to the Executive Board of the EST and should be governed in all respects by the constitution of the EST. This structure should be reviewed if and when other Translation Studies associations become part of the network.

The funds generated could be used for the running and further development of the network.

Timeline for implementation

Initial funding for the network could be provided by the EST.

The following events may be considered:

August 2014: Meeting of interested representatives of doctoral programs with the aim of agreeing on a constitutive text and determining the foundation members of the network.

This might also coincide with a three-day course in doctoral supervision techniques, issuing a certificate endorsed by the EST.

December 2014: Constitutive meeting of stakeholders (representatives of doctoral programs and supporters of programs from industry and policy institutions) with the aim of signing the constitutive text and electing a Board for the network.

Annex 1: Objectives and skills compiled by Yves Gambier on behalf of the TS-Doc Working Group (*Newsletter 42, 2013*)

OBJECTIVES (based on the Dublin descriptors, 2004)

After completion of the third cycle, qualifications are awarded to students who:

1. Have demonstrated a systematic understanding of TS as a whole and unified field of research (and not only in a narrow subfield) and mastery of the skills and methods of research associated with TS;
2. Have demonstrated the ability to conceptualize, design and implement a substantial and original research project in TS;
3. Are capable of critical analysis and evaluation of new and complex ideas in TS;
4. Can communicate with their peers, the larger scholarly community in TS and with society in general with respect to the use and importance of translation;
5. Can promote, within academic and professional contexts, social and technological progress related to international and multilingual communications;
6. Are able to plan a high-level career involving research in TS.

RESEARCH COMPETENCES OF A DOCTORATE

By the end of the program, the graduates should have acquired the following skills:

Basic skills

1. Manage time and demonstrate self-discipline, manage intermediate milestones and prioritization of activities
2. Manage research with self-reflection, awareness, creativity, open-mindedness
3. Identify and access appropriate bibliographical resources, archives, and other sources of relevant information (acquisition and collection of information through the effective use of appropriate resources and equipment)
4. Use information technology appropriate for database management, recording and presenting information
5. Read critically the scientific literature
6. Learn from other disciplines
7. Identify one's own training needs
8. Work in a team in an international and intercultural context; be able to network and develop working relationships with supervisors, peers, colleagues within the institution, and the wider research community
9. Criticize and intellectually defend solutions
10. Resolve problems involving professional and research ethics
11. Communicate academic arguments with consistency, precision and explicitness, present logical thinking and evidence, and defend research outcomes effectively
12. Write academic papers, have citation skills
13. Summarize, document, report and reflect on progress
14. Present skills, personal attributes and experience through effective CVs, applications, interviews
15. Plan and write funding applications
16. Demonstrate awareness of issues relating to the rights of other researchers, of research

subjects, and of others who may be affected by the research, e.g. confidentiality, ethical issues, copyright, ownership of data, plagiarism, etc.

Research skills

1. Be aware of what has been done before
2. Recognize and validate problems and formulate and test hypotheses
3. Accept great flexibility in choosing research questions
4. Pay attention to claims, possible counter-evidence, counter-arguments
5. Think about the advantages and disadvantages of case studies
6. Select appropriate and sufficient material/data/subjects/examples for the dissertation
7. Choose appropriate variables in relation to the objectives and the resources available
8. Develop theoretical concepts
9. Analyze critically and evaluate one's findings and those of others
10. Understand relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application within TS
11. Justify the principles and experimental techniques used in one's own research
12. Question the position of the researcher as an observer with subjectivity, assumptions, implicit ideology, cultural background, stereotypes
13. Have a clear view of generalizability limitations, of risk of oversimplification and of comparability of situations, actions and data
14. Understand the processes for evaluation of research
15. Demonstrate the potential impact of the research project

Translation research skills:

1. Have knowledge of recent advances in TS and in related areas
2. Read and analyze critically the literature in TS and evaluate findings (read about the same topics researched using different methods; read about different topics researched using the same methods)
3. Be open to research outside TS, with a critical eye on scholars, schools, trends which can be easily taken as "authorities"
4. Appreciate research conducted using other methods
5. Understand and apply the current meta-languages of TS, clarify basic terms, provide working definitions
6. Resolve complex problems in an interdisciplinary context
7. Understand and apply research techniques relevant to the project
8. Make efficient use of current language technologies to carry out the project
9. Understand and apply quantitative methods relevant for new developments in TS
10. Appreciate standards of good research practice in TS
11. Demonstrate the relevance of the research project