

Quality Assurance policy ESDiT

Quality Assurance mechanisms in ESDiT target both the programme as a whole and the research activities of individual researchers. The main actors responsible for QA are the Management Board, the Scientific Advisory Board, the programme line leaders, and the supervisors of PhD students and postdocs.

The overall output goal of ESDiT is to produce innovative, high-quality research that meets the ESDiT research goals. We encourage publication in high-quality international journals, not just in our own specialized field, but also in other fields relevant to ESDiT, including publications in philosophy at large (beyond journals in our specialization, which is the philosophy and ethics of technology), and publications in multidisciplinary, engineering and policy journals. We moreover encourage people to present their work at international refereed conferences, to become members of editorial boards and board members of international scientific associations, and to apply for competitive personal grants that also serve as a marker of research quality. (We encourage that these grants are related to the goals of ESDiT, so that collaboration between ESDiT and these individual projects will be possible.)

Quality assurance starts with selection of new employees, for which we assume high standards. Our job opening are typically applied to by more than fifty candidates, many of them meeting the qualifications for the position, and we select the best candidate in a thorough procedure that includes committee members from at least two participating universities. We also devote much attention to training of PhD candidates, with an extensive PhD educational programme (Ethics and Technology) that is followed by all, and which includes many ESDiT members as teachers. We also have an introduction day for new employees, and provide mentors for new (junior) employees.

We spend much time discussing research strategy and research approaches, a reflective process that is also intended to enhance quality and innovation. We do this in frequent research line meetings, plenary ESDiT meetings, meetings with the Scientific Advisory Board, meetings of the postdoc council, and meetings between the programme leadership and PhD candidates, and meetings between the programme leadership and PhD candidates. We also have many ESDiT research colloquia, workshops and conferences in which our researchers present and receive feedback on their work. This feedback process is also an important part of quality assurance.

To support the knowledge and skills of PhD candidates, we encourage them to take a semester abroad, which is paid for by ESDiT. We also engage in collaborations with other Gravitation programmes and other research centres, which also brings in new knowledge and perspectives.

As part of the Quality Assurance process, the Management Board annually discusses the annual report, including the output that has been generated, and takes measures if the quality or quantity of output is not according to expectations. We also encourage Management Board members to report serious issues in progress or functioning of staff members, so that measures can be taken at Management Board level if needed. We also annually consider the list of researchers participating in our programme, and flag situations in which participation has been problematic.