Curriculum

To be reviewed by **Feb. 2027**	Activity number *57*	**ESDC Doctoral School Summer University**	ECTS **4**

CORRELATION WITH CTG / MTG TRAs	EQUIVALENCES
CTG / MTG TRA on …..	(i.e SQF MILOF equivalence)

Target audience

Participants should be members of the European Doctoral School on CSDP, PhD Fellows, invited researchers, and academics. Priority is given to EU Member States and Institutions.

Open to:

EU member States / Institutions

Aim

The ESDC Doctoral School Summer University aims to develop a critical mass of academic expertise that fosters collaboration between supervisors, mentors, and PhD researchers in European Security and Defence. It provides a platform for knowledge exchange, skills development, and academic research on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The Summer University is designed to:

− Enhance analytical and methodological competencies for PhD-level research.

− Facilitate scientific discourse on peace, security, and defence topics.

− Support the integration of academic insights into policy-relevant discussions.

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge	LO1. Explain key research methodologies in Peace, Security, and Defence studies.
	LO2. Analyse the evolution of the EU's strategic environment and its impact on CSDP.
	LO3. Identify and evaluate the core policies, missions, and operations of CSDP.
	LO4. Critically assess EU partnerships and cooperation in security and defence.
	LO5. Examine the role of strategic foresight and innovation in EU defence capabilities.
	LO6. Understand the ethical, legal, and political dimensions of CSDP.
	LO7. Evaluate the challenges posed by hybrid threats and geopolitical competition.
Skills	LO8. Apply appropriate research methodologies to security and defence issues.
	LO9. Develop and present research findings effectively in academic and policy contexts.
	LO10. Construct well-argued policy recommendations based on scientific evidence.
	LO11. Utilize interdisciplinary approaches in security and defence analysis.
	LO12. Engage in scenario-based strategic analysis and crisis simulations.
	LO13. Formulate communication strategies for presenting complex security research.
	LO14. Design and conduct foresight exercises related to emerging security trends.

Responsibility and Autonomy	LO15. Independently structure and present a doctoral research paper.
	LO16. Critically reflect on the implications of research for EU security and defence policy.
	LO17. Demonstrate ethical and responsible conduct in security-related research.
	LO18. Develop professional networks and collaborative research partnerships.
	LO19. Take leadership in academic discussions and interdisciplinary collaborations.

Evaluation and verification of learning outcomes

The course is evaluated according to the Kirkpatrick model: it makes use of level 1 evaluation (based on participant's satisfaction with the course) In order to complete the course, participants have to accomplish all learning objectives, which are evaluated based on the active contribution in the residential module, including their engagement in the practical activities and mentoring sessions as well as on their completion of the eLearning phases: course participants finalise the autonomous knowledge units (AKUs) and pass the tests (mandatory), scoring at least 80% in the incorporated out-test/quiz. Active observation by the course director/lead instructor and feedback questionnaire filled by course participants at the end of the course is used.

The proposed ECTS are allocated based on the participants' workload and achievement of learning outcomes. This includes submitting a report on the state of their PhD research before the start of the activity. To attain the maximum 4 ECTS, PhD Fellows must prepare or present a recently written paper aligned with their research objectives, either for academic publication or policy-oriented applications.

All CSDP Doctoral Fellows are required to reflect and bring on paper a structured reflection on their career stage, researcher profile strengths and challenges, career objectives, and specific needs they want addressed during the training event through discussions with mentors, lecturers, and EU staff.

The Working Group of the European Doctoral School on the CSDP takes these factors into account when considering the awarding of certificates to participants. The Course Director is responsible for the overall coordination, with the support of the ESDC Secretariat, and drafts the final evaluation report, which is presented to the Working Group of the European Doctoral School on the CSDP and the Executive Academic Board.

Course structure

The residential module is conducted over five days with interactive sessions, discussions, and research-focused activities.

Main Topic	Suggested Working Hours + (Required hours for individual learning)	Suggested Contents
Global Strategic Environment	1 + (1)	EU's security landscape and geopolitical competition.
Fundamentals of CSDP	2 + (3)	EU security architecture, policies, and decision-making.
EU Missions & Crisis Response	1 + (1)	Mission planning, operational challenges, and effectiveness.
Strategic Capabilities & Innovation	3 + (2)	Defence industry, strategic autonomy, and future trends.
Strategy & Governance	3	EU's role in global security and defence governance.
Resilience & Hybrid Threats	2 + (1)	Cognitive security, societal resilience, and crisis response.
Innovation & Foresight	2	European innovation frameworks, future scanning, and strategic foresight in security and defence.
Research Methods & Design	3 + (3)	Methodologies, publishing strategies, and mentorship.

Research Skills & Career Planning	3	Research communication, networking, and career strategies.
Practical Exercises	6 (2)	Scenario planning, simulations, and policy applications.
Research Colloquium	1 (1)	Presentation of doctoral research and peer feedback.
European Doctoral School Requirements	1	Steps PhD fellows must follow to fulfil programme expectations and academic milestones.
Concluding remarks	1 (1)	Summary, reflections and discussion on learning outcomes.
TOTAL	**32 + (17)**	

Materials

Required e-Learning Modules:

AKU15 - Objectives and Purpose of European Armaments Cooperation
AKU36 - Civilian CSDP Compact
AKU44 - The European Defence Fund
AKU45 - PESCO
AKU55 - Strategic Compass
AKU106 - Hybrid Warfare

Recommended:

AKU1 - History and Context of CSDP
AKU2 - European Global Strategy (EUGS)
AKU3 - Role of EU institutions in the field of CFSP/CSDP
AKU4 - CSDP crisis management structures and the Chain of Command
AKU5 - Civilian and military crisis management and capability development
AKU6 - CSDP Decision Shaping/Making

Syndicate materials, scenario, other documents provided by Course director

Methodology

– **Seminar Participation**: Active engagement in seminar discussions to enhance knowledge sharing and collaboration.
– **Thematic Discussions**: Structured syndicate and plenary discussions to facilitate critical reflection and in-depth analysis of key topics.
– **Research Presentation**: Presentation of a research paper or a segment of the PhD thesis to receive feedback from peers and mentors.
– **One-on-One Mentorship**: Personalized guidance addressing individual research challenges, career development, and strategic planning.
– **Applied Exercises**: Practical application of acquired knowledge and skills through scenario-based challenges and policy-oriented simulations.

Additional information

Pre-course questionnaire on learning expectations and possible briefing topic form specific area of expertise may be used.

All course participants have to prepare for the residential module by going through the relevant eLearning preparatory phase, which is mandatory. The materials proposed for supplementary (eLearning) study will reflect current developments

Course participants must be willing to contribute with their specific expertise and experience throughout the course.

The course will be conducted under the **Chatham House Rule**, meaning: *"Participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s) nor that of any other participant may be disclosed."*

Media and Documentation

Participants are invited to provide consent for photography or video recording during training sessions. These materials may be used by ESDC or its network partners for dissemination and promotion of CSDP-related training activities within the Network.