

Terms of Service

The Doctoral Circle — membership terms

Version 1.0 · Effective 25 August 2026

Provider: PhDtoProf

These terms apply to every membership of The Doctoral Circle purchased on or after the effective date.

1. Who we are and what these terms cover

1.1 The Doctoral Circle is provided by PhDtoProf.

1.2 These terms govern your purchase of a membership of The Doctoral Circle (the "Circle", the "programme") and your use of everything inside it. They form a contract between you and us. Please read them before you buy.

1.3 By completing a purchase you confirm that you accept these terms and the documents listed at 1.4. If you do not accept them, do not buy a membership.

1.4 The following also form part of your contract with us and should be read alongside these terms:

- our **Refund and Cancellation Policy**, which sets out your refund rights, the Founding Member Refund Promise and the Momentum Guarantee;
- our **Privacy Policy**, which explains how we handle your personal data;
- the **house rules** set out in the "Start Here" document inside the community.

1.5 Where there is a conflict, these terms take priority, except that the Refund and Cancellation Policy takes priority on anything to do with refunds and cancellation.

1.6 These terms are written in English and the contract between us is concluded in English.

1.7 Most members join as consumers, as individuals, for purposes outside any business. Some join through an employer or with an employer paying. Where a term applies only to consumers, or only to business members, we say so. Nothing in these terms affects the rights the law gives you as a consumer.

2. What the Circle is, and what it is not

2.1 The Circle is expert-led group mentoring for working professionals completing a part-time PhD or DBA. It comprises live group sessions, a recorded library of materials, written question-and-answer support, and access to a members-only community.

2.2 **It works alongside your supervisor and your university. It does not replace them.** Your supervisory team and your institution remain responsible for supervising, assessing and examining your work, and their requirements always take priority over anything said in the Circle.

2.3 **The Circle is not an accredited or validated course of study.** It confers no academic credit, qualification, degree, certificate or transcript, and it forms no part of any university programme.

2.4 **The Circle is provided in a personal capacity.** It is not provided by, affiliated with, endorsed by or delivered on behalf of Lancaster University or any other university, funder or professional body. References to our founder's academic experience describe his background; they do not imply institutional involvement.

2.5 The Circle is not, and must not be relied on as: a proofreading, copy-editing, translation or writing service; a thesis-writing or ghostwriting service; formal supervision; a pre-examination or mock viva assessment; or legal, immigration, financial, medical or careers advice.

2.6 Guidance given in sessions and in the community is general educational guidance, given without seeing your full thesis, your data, your regulations or your examiners. It is for you to decide, with your supervisor, what to act on.

2.7 **We do not guarantee any academic outcome.** We cannot and do not promise that you will submit, pass, pass without corrections, publish, finish within any period, or achieve any particular result. Those outcomes depend on your own work, your supervisors, your institution and your examiners, none of which we control. Any timescales, examples or past results we mention are illustrative and are not a promise of what you will achieve.

Academic integrity: your responsibility

2.8 You remain solely responsible for complying with your institution's regulations on academic integrity, authorship, third-party assistance, editorial help and the use of artificial intelligence. Those regulations differ between institutions, and yours prevail.

2.9 Work you submit for assessment must be your own. We will not write, rewrite or substantially draft any part of your thesis, and you must not present anything produced by us, by another member, or by an AI tool discussed in a session as your own unaided work. Where your institution requires assistance to be declared, it is for you to declare it.

2.10 If you use material or techniques from the Circle in submitted work in breach of your institution's rules, that is your responsibility and not ours.

3. Eligibility and your account

3.1 You must be at least 18 years old to join. The Circle is not intended for children and we do not knowingly accept members under 18.

3.2 You must give accurate registration details and keep them up to date.

3.3 **A membership is personal to one named individual.** You may not share your account, your login, your session links or your access to materials with anyone else, including colleagues, co-authors or others at your institution. If your employer pays for your membership, the membership still belongs to one named person.

3.4 You are responsible for keeping your account credentials secure and for everything done through your account. Tell us promptly if you think someone else has access to it.

3.5 Access is delivered through Whop. You will need a Whop account, and Whop's own terms and privacy notice apply to your use of their platform in addition to these terms.

4. Buying a membership

4.1 Memberships are bought through our Whop checkout. **Whop acts as merchant of record for card network and payment settlement purposes only. We are the supplier of the membership for all other purposes,** including consumer protection, VAT and other taxes, content and support. Your contract for the membership itself is with us.

4.2 Your order is an offer to buy. The contract is formed when your purchase is confirmed and your access to the community is granted.

4.3 All prices are shown and charged in **US dollars**. Your card issuer may apply its own conversion rate and charges, which are outside our control.

4.4 The founding member rate plans available at the date of these terms are:

Plan	Price	Equivalent	Notes
Quarterly	\$450 per term	\$150 a month	One term at a time. Renews each term.
Six-month	\$750	\$125 a month	Renews every six months.
Annual	\$1,350	\$112.50 a month	Renews annually. Includes the Doctorate Diagnostic and the Quarterly Planning Workshop.

4.6 Prices, plans and what is included may change for new purchases at any time. The price you see at checkout is the price you pay for the term you are buying.

4.7 If we discover an obvious pricing error before your access begins, we may cancel the order and refund you in full rather than supply at the incorrect price.

Founding membership

4.8 During the founding period we are offering a limited number of founding memberships, **50 places**. The founder rate ends at midnight on **25 SEPTEMBER 2026**, or when the 50 places are taken, whichever happens first.

4.9 **The first 20 members to join keep \$150 a month permanently**, meaning that rate is not subject to future increases (except for local taxes) for as long as their membership continues without interruption. Order is determined by the time of successful payment as recorded by Whop.

4.10 **Rate lock.** Whatever rate you join at is the rate you keep for as long as your membership continues (except for local taxes) without interruption. If your membership ends for any reason, you cancel, you allow it to lapse, a payment fails and is not resolved, or we terminate it, the rate lock ends with it. Rejoining later is at the price then in force.

5. Renewal, cancellation and price changes

5.1 **Memberships renew automatically** at the end of each term, at your locked rate, using the payment method on file, until you cancel. The term lengths are set out at 4.5.

5.2 **You can cancel at any time** from your Whop account. Cancellation takes effect at the end of the term you have already paid for. You keep full access until then, and you are not charged again.

5.3 Cancelling does not by itself entitle you to a refund of the term you are in. Refunds are governed by the Refund and Cancellation Policy, and by your statutory rights.

5.4 If a renewal payment fails, we or Whop may retry it. If it cannot be taken, your access may be suspended and then ended, and your rate lock will be lost.

5.5 **Price changes.** We may change the price of future renewals by giving you at least **15 days' notice** by email before the change takes effect. If you do not want to pay the new price, you can cancel before your next renewal. A locked founder rate under clause 4.9 will not be increased while your membership continues without interruption.

6. What is included, and when

6.1 **From the day you join** you get: access to the members' community; the Doctoral Vault as it stands on that day, including existing recordings and our non-personalised templates; the Ask Me Anything channel (available only before 1st October); a permanent founding member badge if you join in the founding period; a say in the first curriculum vote; and the Examiner's Scorecard and 14-Day Momentum Kit when they are released on **4 SEPTEMBER 2026**.

6.2 **From [1 OCTOBER 2026]**, the live programme begins: the fortnightly Expert Masterclass, the fortnightly Momentum Q&A, the weekly Writing Room, the monthly Live Writing Retreat, and the skills curriculum building out inside the Vault as the masterclasses run.

6.3 **Annual members** also receive a 45-minute one-to-one Doctorate Diagnostic and access to the Quarterly Planning Workshop. The Diagnostic is one session per membership year, is personal to you, must be booked and taken within **12 MONTHS** of the start of that membership year, cannot be transferred or exchanged, and has no cash alternative. If you do not book it within that period it lapses.

6.4 **Session schedule.** Live sessions run to a published timetable. We may change the day or time of a session, move it, or occasionally cancel one, and we will give as much notice as we reasonably can. Session times are set in local time zone and are not guaranteed to suit every time zone.

6.5 **Recordings.** We intend to record every live session and make the recording available in the Vault. We cannot guarantee that any individual recording will be available, technical failures happen, and a failed recording does not entitle you to a refund.

6.6 **Feedback rounds and hot seats.** Where the programme includes a feedback round at the monthly Retreat, slots are limited and allocated first come. Founding members have first pick during the first quarter. A feedback round consists of a spoken read of one short section, **ONE PAGE MAXIMUM**, given from cold. It is not a written report, not a full chapter review, and not a substitute for supervision.

6.7 **Ask Me Anything.** You may ask questions in writing, one question per thread. We aim to answer within **72 hours on working days**, excluding weekends, public holidays and announced periods of leave. This is a target, not a contractual deadline, and it is not an emergency, crisis or out-of-hours service. Questions requiring us to read something should be kept to one page. This is only available for Founding members joined before 1st October 2026 and until that date.

6.8 **The curriculum evolves.** Topics, bonus modules and the order in which things are released may change. Where we have announced a bonus or module that we later decide not to release, we may substitute something of broadly equivalent value.

6.9 **If we make a change that materially reduces what you have paid for**, we will tell you, and you may cancel and receive a pro-rata refund of the unused part of your current term.

7. How the community works: your obligations

7.1 The Circle depends on members bringing real work and engaging with each other. We ask every member to post at least once a week. This is an expectation of the room, not a condition of membership, except where it forms part of the Momentum Guarantee conditions in the Refund and Cancellation Policy.

7.2 You agree to treat every member and guest with courtesy. Harassment, discrimination, abuse, personal attacks and unwanted contact are not permitted and will result in removal.

7.3 **Confidentiality: nothing leaves the room.** Members share unfinished work, supervisory difficulties and personal circumstances on the understanding that it stays inside the community. You must not copy, quote, screenshot, forward, publish or otherwise disclose outside the Circle anything another member shares inside it, or anything from a live session, without that person's permission.

7.4 **You must not record** any live session, in whole or in part, by any means, and you must not download, copy or redistribute session recordings from the Vault.

7.5 You must not use the community to advertise, promote or sell anything, to solicit members for your own services, to recruit them to another community or programme, or to send unsolicited direct messages of that kind.

7.6 You must not post anything unlawful, defamatory, discriminatory, obscene or infringing of anyone's rights, and you must not upload malicious code.

7.7 **Do not post confidential or personal data belonging to other people**, including unpublished data about research participants, identifiable case material, patient or client information, or material covered by an ethics approval, a non-disclosure agreement or your employer's policies, unless you are certain you are permitted to do so. You are responsible for anything you post.

7.8 We may moderate, edit or remove content, and restrict or withdraw access to any part of the community, where we reasonably consider it necessary to enforce these terms or to protect members.

8. Recording of sessions and your appearance

8.1 Live sessions are recorded. Recordings may capture video, audio, chat messages, shared screens and participant names.

8.2 **By joining a live session you consent to being recorded.** If you would rather not appear, you may keep your camera and microphone off and take part through the chat. If you want your contribution kept out of a recording altogether, tell us before the session and we will do what we reasonably can.

8.3 Recordings are made available to members inside the Doctoral Vault. We will not publish a session recording that identifies you outside the membership, or use it in marketing, without your separate written permission.

8.4 If you later ask us to remove a recording in which you appear, we will take reasonable steps to remove or edit it, and we will explain what is and is not technically possible. See our Privacy Policy for how to make that request.

8.5 Recordings are retained for as long as they remain useful to members, and in any event no longer than the period stated in our Privacy Policy.

9. Intellectual property

9.1 All programme materials, recordings, slides, templates, scorecards, kits, written guidance and the structure and content of the curriculum, are owned by us or licensed to us, and are protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights.

9.2 **Your licence.** For as long as your membership continues, we grant you a personal, non-exclusive, non-transferable, revocable licence to access and use the materials for your own doctoral study and professional development.

9.3 **Materials marked as yours to keep.** Where we make a resource available for download and describe it as yours to keep, for example the Examiner's Scorecard, the 14-Day Momentum Kit and our templates, you may keep and continue to use your downloaded copy for your own personal, non-commercial use after your membership ends. All other rights, and all access to the platform, end with your membership.

9.4 You must not, in relation to any of our materials:

- share, publish, sell, licence, lend or otherwise distribute them, in whole or in part;
- upload them to any file-sharing, note-sharing, course-sharing or public repository;
- use them, or any session recording, to train, fine-tune, evaluate or ground any artificial intelligence or machine learning system;
- use them to create, deliver or market a competing programme, course or community;
- remove or obscure any copyright notice, watermark or attribution.

9.5 **Your own content.** You keep all intellectual property rights in the work, questions and posts you contribute. You grant us a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to host, display and distribute that content within the

community and within session recordings, for the purpose of running the programme, and to keep it in our records as described in the Privacy Policy.

9.6 **Testimonials and quotations.** We will only use your name, image, words or results in marketing with your specific prior permission, which you may withdraw at any time for future use.

9.7 "PhDtoProf" and "The Doctoral Circle" are our trading names and you may not use them, or any confusingly similar name, without our written permission.

10. Confidentiality of your work

10.1 We treat work you share with us in the course of the programme as confidential. We will not publish it, share it outside the membership, or use it as an example without your permission.

10.2 We ask every member to do the same, and clause 7.3 makes it a condition of membership. However, we cannot control what other members do with what they see. **Share only what you are comfortable sharing with a room of peers**, and if any part of your work is commercially sensitive, subject to an embargo, or covered by a confidentiality obligation to a third party, do not post it.

10.3 Nothing in these terms transfers any rights in your research to us.

11. Suspension and termination

11.1 **By you.** You may cancel at any time under clause 5.2.

11.2 **By us, for breach.** We may suspend or end your membership immediately, without refund, if you materially breach these terms — in particular clauses 3.3 (sharing access), 7.2 to 7.7 (community conduct and confidentiality) or 9.4 (misuse of materials). Where the breach is less serious and can be put right, we will normally warn you first and give you a chance to do so.

11.3 **By us, for convenience.** We may end your membership on 30 days' notice for any other reason, in which case we will refund the unused part of your current term on a pro-rata basis.

11.4 **If we close the programme.** If we decide to discontinue the Circle, we will give members as much notice as we reasonably can and refund the unused part of the current term on a pro-rata basis.

11.5 **Effect of ending.** Your access to the community, live sessions and the Vault stops. Your licence under clause 9.3 to materials you have already downloaded continues. Clauses 7.3, 9, 10, 12, 15 and 17 survive the end of your membership.

12. Changes to these terms

12.1 We may change these terms — for example to reflect changes in the programme, in the platforms we use, or in the law.

12.2 We will publish the updated terms and, where the change is material, notify members by email or by a notice in the community at least **14 DAYS** before it takes effect.

12.3 Changes apply from the start of your next term. If a change materially disadvantages you, you may cancel before it takes effect and, if it takes effect mid-term, receive a pro-rata refund of the unused part of that term.

13. Platforms, access and availability

13.1 The Circle is delivered using third-party platforms, currently Whop for access and payment, Zoom for live sessions, and Whop and Kajabi for our website and email. We may change these platforms. Their own terms apply to your use of them and we are not responsible for their acts or omissions.

13.2 You are responsible for your own internet connection, device, camera, microphone and any costs of using them. Some institutional or employer networks block video platforms; that is outside our control.

13.3 We will provide the programme with reasonable skill and care, but we do not promise that access will be uninterrupted or error-free. We may suspend access for maintenance, and will try to do so at times that inconvenience members least.

14. Events outside our control

14.1 We are not liable for failure or delay in performing our obligations caused by events outside our reasonable control, including illness, bereavement, platform outages, loss of internet or power, industrial action, and government restrictions.

14.2 If such an event affects a live session we will reschedule it, or provide a recording or equivalent content, as soon as we reasonably can. If it prevents us from delivering the programme for a continuous period of more than 30 days, either of us may end the membership and we will refund the unused part of the current term on a pro-rata basis.

15. Our liability to you

15.1 **Nothing in these terms limits or excludes our liability** for death or personal injury caused by our negligence, for fraud or fraudulent misrepresentation, or for anything else that cannot lawfully be limited or excluded, including your statutory rights as a consumer to services supplied with reasonable skill and care.

15.2 We are responsible for loss or damage you suffer that is a foreseeable result of our breaking this contract or failing to use reasonable skill and care. We are not responsible for loss or damage that is not foreseeable.

15.3 **We are not liable for academic outcomes.** Without limiting clause 2.7, we are not liable for: the outcome of any examination, viva, review or upgrade; decisions of your institution, supervisors, examiners or funder; delay to, suspension of or failure to complete your doctorate; the outcome of any publication submission; or any lost promotion, employment or income connected with any of these.

15.4 We are not liable for the acts, omissions, statements or content of other members. Contributions by other members are their own views and are not advice from us.

15.5 **If you are a consumer**, we supply the programme for your personal use and we are not liable to you for business losses, loss of profit, loss of business, business interruption or loss of business opportunity.

15.6 **If you are a business member**, we are not liable to you for loss of profit, loss of business, business interruption, loss of anticipated saving or loss of opportunity, and our total liability to you in connection with this contract, whether in contract, tort (including negligence) or otherwise, is limited to the total fees you paid us in the 12 months before the event giving rise to the claim. Clauses 15.3 and 15.4 apply to you in full.

16. Complaints and dispute resolution

16.1 If something has gone wrong, tell us first: email hello@phdtoprof.com with the details. We aim to acknowledge within 3-5 working days and to resolve complaints within 30 days.

16.2 If we cannot resolve it between us, you may be able to use an alternative dispute resolution scheme. The European Commission's Online Dispute Resolution platform closed on 20 July 2025; consumers in the EU should instead contact their national consumer authority or their nearest European Consumer Centre, and consumers in the UK may use an approved ADR body. We are a member of an ADR scheme.