Agreement number 130/2016 of the Governing Council approving academic regulations for doctoral studies.

- Favorable report by the Research Committee of the Governing Council of 01/07/2016
Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies

Introduction

Royal Decree 1393/2007 lays down basic regulations regarding the structure of university programmes that are fully adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It also regulates the validation of programmes and their subsequent accreditation. However, Royal Decree 99/2011 (issued subsequently) specifically regulates doctoral studies.

Royal Decree 99/2011 fully recognises the existence of doctoral schools at universities and comprehensively regulates doctoral degrees, covering everything from validation reports to the organisation of programmes, regulation of admission, monitoring and assessment, thesis defence, and so on. It also provides for the phasing out of doctoral programmes regulated by previous legislation. Thus, doctoral candidates enrolled in programmes regulated by Royal Decree 185/1985, 778/1999 or 56/2005 must have defended their thesis by 11 February 2016. Depending on their date of first enrolment, doctoral candidates enrolled in programmes regulated by Royal Decree 1393/2007 have until 30 September 2017 to defend their doctoral thesis. From the 2017-2018 academic year, doctoral programmes will be regulated only by Royal Decree 99/2011.

Pursuant to the aforementioned regulations, the UPC’s Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies were approved by Resolution No. 105/2011 of the Governing Council, of 20 July. However, these regulations were adopted before the creation of the UPC’s Doctoral School. Consequently, they refer to the previous Doctoral Studies Committee and extensively regulate organisational matters related to the provisions of Royal Decree 99/2011, which introduced a new approach to programme management. The new system is now well established, not only in universities, but also for external bodies such as the administration of the Government of Catalonia and quality assurance agencies.

The 2012 UPC Statutes recognise the Doctoral School as an academic unit with specific functions, which are specified in the Regulations on the Organisation and Operation of the Doctoral School. The Doctoral School has also approved its own internal regulations, which regulate matters such as the functions of the doctoral programmes’ academic committees, and the rights and duties of thesis supervisors and doctoral candidates. Also, pursuant to Article 6 of the Statutes, the UPC wishes to promote a balance between male and female members of the collegial bodies covered by these regulations. For all of these reasons, the UPC has revised the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies. The new regulations are set out below.

1. Aim

Doctoral studies are the third cycle of official university studies and lead to the acquisition of competencies and skills related to high-quality scientific research. A doctoral degree, the highest academic qualification, is awarded as the result of a candidate having written a
doctoral thesis and successfully defended it before an examination committee composed of PhD holders. The aim of these regulations is to regulate doctoral studies at the UPC.

2. Scope

The regulations set out in this document apply to doctoral degrees offered at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) that have been validated in accordance with the official university degree regulations laid down in Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, on official doctoral studies.

3. Doctoral studies

3.1. Structure

Doctoral studies primarily involve writing a doctoral thesis. The main activity is therefore research, combined with specific and cross-disciplinary training, which may or may not be structured in the form of ECTS credits.

Doctoral studies are organised into programmes. A doctoral programme is a set of organised activities that leads to the acquisition of the competencies and skills needed to obtain a doctoral degree. Programmes are aimed at providing doctoral candidates with training in various areas and must establish procedures and lines of research for the writing of doctoral theses. Doctoral studies are completed when candidates have defended their doctoral thesis, which must include original research findings.

3.2. Duration

The maximum period of study for full-time doctoral studies is three years, counted from the date of admission to the programme until the doctoral thesis is submitted. The academic committee of the doctoral programme may authorise a candidate to pursue doctoral studies on a part-time basis. In this case, the maximum period of study is five years, counted from the date of admission to the programme until the doctoral thesis is submitted. For the purpose of calculating the period of study, the date of admission is the date on which a candidate first enrolls in the programme, and the thesis submission date is the day on which he/she submits the doctoral thesis to the Doctoral School.

For full-time doctoral candidates, the minimum period of study is two years, counted from the date of an applicant’s admission to the programme until the date on which the doctoral thesis is submitted; for part-time candidates it is four years.

When there are justified grounds for doing so, and the thesis supervisor and academic tutor have given their authorisation, candidates may request that the academic committee of their doctoral programme exempt them from the requirement to complete this minimum period of study.

The calculation of periods of study will not include periods of absence due to illness, pregnancy, or any other reason provided for in the regulations in force. Students who
find themselves in any of these circumstances must notify the academic committee of the doctoral programme, which, where appropriate, must inform the Doctoral School.

Doctoral candidates may also interrupt their studies for up to one year, and this period may be extended for an additional year. Any candidate who wishes to interrupt his/her studies must submit a justified request to the academic committee of the doctoral programme, which will decide whether or not to approve the request. Each programme will establish conditions for readmission to doctoral studies.

3.3. Extension
If a full-time doctoral candidate has not applied to submit his/her thesis by the end of the three-year period of study, the academic committee of the programme may authorise an extension of up to one year. In exceptional circumstances, a further one-year extension may be granted, subject to the conditions established by the corresponding doctoral programme.

In the case of part-time candidates, an extension of two years may be authorised, and in exceptional circumstances, a further one-year extension may be granted.

4. Access
In general, to be eligible for admission to an official doctoral programme, an applicant must hold an official Spanish bachelor's degree (or equivalent) and a master's degree.

Applicants who meet one or more of the following conditions are also eligible for admission:

a) Holders of an official degree issued by a university in Spain or any other country in the EHEA which, pursuant to the provisions of Article 16 of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, qualifies the holder for admission to a master's degree, provided they have also completed a minimum of 300 ECTS credits on an official university degree, of which at least 60 must be at the master's degree level.

The academic committees of the doctoral programmes are responsible for determining whether the academic records of applicants who hold pre-EHEA degrees fulfil the requirements set out in this section.

b) Holders of an official Spanish bachelor's degree which, in accordance with EU regulations, carries at least 300 ECTS credits. Holder of degrees of this kind must complete the bridging courses specified in Article 7(2) of Royal Decree 99/2011 unless the curriculum of the degree in question included research training credits equivalent in value to those which would be earned on a master's degree.

c) University graduates who have passed the entrance examination for specialised medical training and successfully completed at least two years of a training course leading to an official degree in a health science specialisation.
d) Holders of a degree issued under a foreign education system. In these cases, homologation is not required but the university that awarded the degree must verify that it certifies a level of training equivalent to an official Spanish master's degree and qualifies the holder for admission to doctoral studies in the country where it was issued. Admission on this basis does not imply homologation of the foreign degree or its recognition for any purpose other than admission to doctoral studies.

e) Holders of a Spanish doctoral degree issued under previous university regulations.

f) Holders of a pre-EHEA degree who have obtained the Diploma of Advanced Studies, awarded pursuant to the provisions of Royal Decree 778/1998, of 30 April, or achieved research proficiency, regulated by Royal Decree 185/1985, of 23 January.

g) Holders of an official university degree that has been deemed equivalent to Level 3 of the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES) in accordance with the procedure set out in Royal Decree 967/2014, of 21 November.

5. Admission

5.1. Admission and selection
The academic committee of the doctoral programme may establish requirements and criteria for the selection and admission of students, which must be specified in the validation report for each doctoral programme.

Admission systems and procedures must include support and advisory services for students with special educational needs related to disability. If necessary, the need to adapt the curriculum or academic pathway or offer alternative studies will also be assessed.

The academic committee of the doctoral programme must ensure that applicants have secured a thesis supervision commitment before they are admitted.

5.2. Admission due to change of programme
A doctoral candidate may request a change of programme, in which case, he/she must apply for readmission. The academic committee of the programme will determine whether or not the candidate is readmitted, and admission will be conditional on successful completion of any bridging courses required. The coordinator of the programme the candidate was previously enrolled in must sign a document authorising the change and, if applicable, accept the transfer or cancellation of the doctoral candidate’s research plan.

If the change is accepted by the academic committee of the doctoral programme the candidate is switching to, the coordinator of that programme will recognise the candidate’s academic record in full or in part.
The doctoral candidate must re-sign his/her doctoral student activity report, research plan (if it has not been recognised), and the commitment agreement referred to in Section 7.4 of these regulations.

When a student is admitted in this way, the academic committee of the programme may exempt him/her from the requirement to complete the minimum period of study specified in Section 3.2 of these regulations.

This procedure for changing programme also applies to doctoral candidates who wish to switch from doctoral studies governed by previous provisions to a programme covered by these regulations.

5.3. Bridging courses

Doctoral programme admission processes may include the requirement to pass specific bridging courses (depending on the student's prior learning). Bridging courses will be based on official postgraduate courses offered by the University.

For the purpose of determining fees and awarding grants and scholarships, bridging courses will be treated as doctoral-level training and will not be counted as part of the maximum period of study specified in Section 3.2 of these regulations.

Enrolment for academic supervision (thesis supervision and tutoring) will be conditional on successful completion of any bridging courses required.

The design of bridging courses must be specified in the doctoral programme validation report.

5.4. Admission and assignment of a tutor

An applicant seeking admission to a doctoral programme must submit an application to that programme’s academic committee.

In accordance with the admission and selection requirements in effect, the academic committee will propose that the application for admission be accepted or rejected, and if the applicant is admitted, it will assign a tutor.

Admission procedures and information on documents required and deadlines must be made public.

Admission to a doctoral programme will be officially confirmed by a decision issued by the programme coordinator. Unless otherwise specified, admission decisions will remain in effect until the end of the next ordinary enrolment period. Admission is conditional on the doctoral candidate enrolling within the prescribed period.
6. **Enrolment**

6.1. **Completion of enrolment**
A doctoral student is an individual who has been admitted to a doctoral programme and has completed the enrolment process. A student will retain this status as long as he/she enrolls each year and pays applicable fees, and provided the academic committee of the doctoral programme has issued a favourable report on his/her progress.

If an applicant does not complete his/her enrolment within the prescribed period, the offer of admission will expire and he/she will have to reapply.

Doctoral candidates are subject to the legal framework determined by the specific legislation that applies (the framework for contracted employees, where appropriate).

6.2. **Procedure and calendar**
Doctoral students must complete their first enrolment within the period specified in their admission decision, and, in any event, within the period for ordinary enrolment specified on the academic calendar for doctoral studies.

Subsequent enrolments must be completed within the periods specified on the academic calendar for doctoral studies.

7. **Supervision**

7.1. **Thesis supervisor**
The academic committee of the programme will assign a thesis supervisor to each doctoral candidate when he/she is admitted or enrolls for the first time, taking account of the thesis supervision commitment referred to in the admission decision.

The thesis supervisor will ensure that training activities carried out by the doctoral candidate are coherent and suitable, and that the topic of the candidate’s doctoral thesis will have an impact and make a novel contribution to knowledge in the relevant field. The thesis supervisor will also guide the doctoral candidate in the planning and tailoring of any other projects or activities undertaken. The thesis supervisor will generally be a UPC professor or researcher who holds a doctoral degree and has documented research experience. This includes PhD-holding staff at associated schools (as determined by the Governing Council) and UPC-affiliated research institutes (in accordance with corresponding collaboration and affiliation agreements). When a thesis supervisor is a UPC staff member, he/she may also act as the doctoral candidate’s tutor.

PhD holders who do not meet these criteria (as a result of their contractual relationship or the nature of the institution to which they are attached) must be approved by the UPC Doctoral School's Standing Committee in order to participate in a doctoral programme as researchers with documented research experience.

The academic committee of the doctoral programme may approve the appointment of a PhD-holding expert who is not a UPC staff member as a candidate’s thesis supervisor.
In such cases, the prior authorisation of the UPC Doctoral School's Standing Committee is required. A UPC staff member who holds a doctoral degree and has documented research experience must also be proposed to act as a co-supervisor, or as the doctoral candidate’s tutor if one has not been assigned.

A thesis supervisor may step down from this role if there are justified reasons (recognised as valid by the committee) for doing so. If this occurs, the academic committee of the doctoral programme will assign the doctoral candidate a new thesis supervisor.

Provided there are justified reasons for doing so, and after hearing any relevant input from the doctoral candidate, the academic committee of the doctoral programme may assign him/her a new thesis supervisor at any time during the period of doctoral study.

7.2. Co-supervision
If there are academic reasons for doing so (an interdisciplinary topic, joint or international programmes, etc.) and the academic committee of the programme gives its approval, an additional thesis supervisor may be assigned. In such cases, both co-supervisors will have the same responsibilities and recognition.

If the co-supervisors are UPC staff members, in no case may there be more than two. In the case of jointly supervised theses, this limit applies only to UPC staff.

7.3. Full- or part-time study
Doctoral candidates must decide whether they are going to study full-time or part-time when they are assigned a thesis supervisor, and this decision must be authorised by the doctoral programme committee.

A doctoral candidate’s full- or part-time status must be indicated on his/her commitment agreement and research plan.

A doctoral candidate may apply to the academic committee of the programme to request a change from full-time to part-time study or vice versa provided adequate justification for the proposed change is given.

7.4. Commitment agreement
Once a doctoral candidate has been assigned a thesis supervisor, and before he/she submits a research plan, a commitment agreement will be drawn up. This document will be signed by the vice-rector responsible for doctoral studies at the UPC, the candidate and the thesis supervisor. It will include a procedure for settling disputes and cover issues related to intellectual/industrial property rights and confidentiality. Any external company or institution involved will also be included in the commitment agreement.

If any changes are made to the thesis supervision (or co-supervision) arrangements, the commitment agreement must be updated within 10 teaching days of the day on which the new thesis supervisor is assigned.
If for reasons attributable to the doctoral candidate a commitment agreement is not drawn up and signed, the candidate’s admission and enrolment in the doctoral programme will be cancelled, and he/she will not be entitled to a refund of enrolments fees.

8. Follow-up

8.1. Doctoral student activity report
The doctoral student activity report is an individual record of activities carried out by a doctoral candidate. It is used to record all activities that contribute to the candidate’s development.

A doctoral student activity report is generated when a student first enrolls. The doctoral student is responsible for keeping this record up to date by providing evidence of training activities that develop research skills and cross-disciplinary competencies. Where appropriate, the thesis supervisor will provide certifications for activities carried out.

The activity report must be regularly reviewed by the student’s thesis supervisor and academic tutor, and assessed by the academic committee of the doctoral programme using whatever procedure has been agreed internally.

The academic committee of the doctoral programme may change the type or number of activities planned, which must be approved by the thesis supervisor and academic tutor and added to the doctoral student activity report.

Doctoral student activity reports must be available for consultation by members of the academic committee of the doctoral programme at any time.

The University will establish mechanisms so that this document is in electronic format.

8.2. Research plan
Each doctoral programme will specify the content of the research plan, which must in all cases include the methodology used, the objectives pursued, the resources to be used, and a timeline for achieving objectives.

Within one year of completing their first enrolment, doctoral candidates must prepare a research plan and submit it to the academic committee of their programme. The research plan must be endorsed by the thesis supervisor and academic tutor, and may be improved and made more specific over the course of the candidate’s period of study.

9. Assessment

9.1. Assessment procedure
Each year, in accordance with the criteria it establishes, the academic committee of the doctoral programme will assess each candidate’s progress on his/her doctoral thesis
research plan, as well as the candidate's activity report and reports issued by the thesis supervisor and academic tutor (if applicable).

At least one of these annual assessments will include a public presentation and defence of the research plan and work done before a committee composed of three PhD holders, which will be conducted in the manner determined by each academic committee.

Assessment results will be communicated to the doctoral candidate within one month. Assessments will be carried out by the academic committee in accordance with the academic calendar for doctoral studies.

9.2. Consequences of assessment
A positive assessment is essential for the doctoral candidate to continue on his/her programme. If the academic committee identifies significant deficiencies, it may require that the doctoral candidate submit a new research plan within six months. If the deficiencies are not remedied, the academic committee will issue a reasoned report and the doctoral candidate will be asked to withdraw from the programme. Any student who does not attend a follow-up meeting will be asked to withdraw from the programme.

9.3. Review of assessment results
A doctoral candidate may appeal against reports issued by his/her thesis supervisor and/or tutor, or assessment reports issued by academic committees by lodging a duly substantiated written claim with the academic committee of the relevant programme, which will decide the appeal within 15 teaching days.

Assessment reports issued by an academic committee may be challenged by lodging an appeal with the rector.

10. Doctoral thesis

10.1. Definition
A doctoral thesis is original research carried out by a doctoral candidate and is intended to develop the skills needed to carry out independent R&D work.

A doctoral thesis must include, at minimum, an introduction to the topic of study, the objectives to be achieved, a presentation of the key research carried out, a discussion of findings, conclusions and a references section. It may also include as many annexes as the candidate deems appropriate. Candidates may write and defend the thesis in Catalan, Spanish or English. If, for justified reasons, a candidate requests permission to write and/or defend his/her thesis in another language, the academic committee of the doctoral programme may authorise him/her to do so.

10.2. Article-based thesis
Each doctoral programme will develop its own specific rules concerning article-based theses. Rules must be approved by the Doctoral School's Standing Committee, which will seek to ensure a uniform approach across the UPC's various doctoral programmes. Once these rules have been approved, candidates may submit a thesis in this format
provided they have been authorised to do so by the academic committee of the doctoral programme. When authorisation to submit a thesis in this format is given, this will be communicated to the Doctoral School’s Standing Committee upon submission of the thesis.

Theses of this kind must include the basic elements indicated in the previous section. Rules governing article-based theses must address the following points:

a) Documents to be submitted. Required documents may include a report from the thesis supervisor, a list of articles, copies of the articles, quality indicators, and so on.

b) Procedure and deadlines.

c) Measures to ensure that publications submitted as part of the thesis cannot be presented as an integral part of any other thesis.

d) Measures to ensure that research papers written before a candidate started doctoral studies are not included.

e) A rule concerning whether papers submitted or accepted at the time of application can be included in an article-based thesis.

f) A rule that clearly specifies what indicators will serve to confirm the quality of publications. Specifically, for journal articles, the rules should establish a minimum impact factor or a particular quartile. In the case of conference papers, candidates should be required to specify the conferences and cite indicators which demonstrate that the quality of such papers is comparable to that of journal articles.

g) The rules should include a guide to the preparation of an article-based thesis, which should specify the length (in pages) of the introduction and the content (summary in English and in Catalan or Spanish, justification of the thematic unity of the thesis, discussion of findings, conclusions, etc.). The introduction must be accompanied by a copy of the papers published.

10.3. Thesis containing confidential material

In exceptional circumstances—for example, if companies have been involved in developing a thesis, confidentiality agreements have been entered into with companies, or patents related to the content of a thesis may be generated—a doctoral candidate may request a specific procedure to ensure that the relevant information is not made public in the thesis defence or when the thesis is deposited in institutional repositories.

In such cases, the doctoral candidate must expressly request the application of this procedure before submitting his/her thesis, in accordance with guidelines established by the Doctoral School’s Standing Committee, and must submit the following documents with his/her application:
a) A favourable report from the candidate's thesis supervisor concerning the desirability of applying a process aimed at protecting patentable material or safeguarding technology/knowledge transfer.

b) A favourable report from the doctoral programme coordinator.

c) A copy of the full text of the doctoral thesis, signed by the doctoral candidate, the thesis supervisor and the tutor (if applicable).

d) An encrypted copy of the thesis, signed by the doctoral candidate and the thesis supervisor, which should allow readers to get an idea of the research work carried out. (It is only necessary to encrypt elements as required to ensure the protection or transfer of findings.)

e) Originals or certified copies of documents which prove that the thesis is subject to protection or technology/knowledge transfer processes.

The Doctoral School's Standing Committee may require that the candidate modify the content or format of the encrypted copy of the thesis, or provide any additional documents it deems necessary to assess the application.

The application will be approved only if it is demonstrated that secrecy is absolutely essential for the success of the protection or transfer process.

If the submission of the doctoral thesis is authorised, the doctoral candidate must provide the Doctoral School with all the required documents, along with a copy of the full text of the doctoral thesis and an encrypted copy, which will be kept by the Doctoral School until the dissemination of the entire content is authorised.

When the submission of a doctoral thesis subject to this procedure is announced, the Doctoral School will inform the university community that the thesis is being treated as confidential. PhD holders who wish to consult the thesis must submit a written request to the Doctoral School's Standing Committee.

Anyone who wishes or needs to have access to the full text of the doctoral thesis will be expressly informed that the thesis is subject to a protection or transfer process, and that they have an obligation to strictly maintain the secrecy and confidentiality of its content. To this end, anyone who has access to the doctoral thesis must first sign a confidentiality agreement and submit it to the Doctoral School.

The announcement of the doctoral thesis defence will indicate that the thesis is subject to a confidentiality agreement. The defence of theses subject to confidentiality measures will be conducted in two parts: a public session and one conducted behind closed doors. The latter part will be attended only by the candidate and the examiners, who must have signed the relevant confidentiality clause when they agreed to serve on the examination committee.
11. Authorisation to submit a thesis

When the results of assessments have been satisfactory and the thesis is deemed to be complete and ready for public defence, the thesis supervisor will record this in the doctoral student’s activity report and the thesis will be submitted to the academic committee of the programme, which will decide whether to authorise the defence. If a candidate’s supervisor has been changed or a co-supervisor has been assigned, the thesis may not be submitted until one year after the change or assignment of the new supervisor.

The academic committee of the programme reviews the thesis before deciding whether to authorise the thesis defence. If it is deemed necessary to confirm the quality of the thesis, the academic committee may request that two or more PhD holders—experts on the relevant subject and external to the programme and to the UPC—review the thesis and produce a reasoned report on whether the work done is of the standard expected for a doctoral thesis.

If the thesis does not meet the quality requirements of the doctoral programme, it will be returned to the candidate together with a report with comments from the reviewers, which the candidate must take into account.

Once the changes indicated in these comments have been made, the academic committee will validate the thesis based on quality indicators that are internationally recognised in the relevant field of study. The conclusions of the academic committee of the programme and reports from external experts will be included in the doctoral student’s activity report.

When it authorises the submission of a thesis, the academic committee of the doctoral programme will provide the Doctoral School’s Standing Committee with a prioritised list of five or seven proposed examiners. Three or five of those proposed will serve as committee members and the other two as substitutes. The majority of proposed examiners must be external to the University and to any company or other institution involved in the programme.

12. Submission

Once the academic committee of the doctoral programme has authorised the submission of a doctoral thesis, the candidate must submit the following documents to the administrative unit:

i. Thesis submission form. The administrative unit must arrange for payment of the corresponding fee.

ii. A copy of the thesis in electronic format (PDF). The academic committee of the programme may request that a paper copy also be provided.

iii. A summary of the thesis in electronic format (PDF) written in Catalan or Spanish and in English, and no more than 4000 characters in length.

iv. Optional: An application for an International Doctorate or Industrial Doctorate mention, together with the documents specified in Section 16.2 or in Transitional Provision No. 2.
The academic committee will submit the documents listed below to the administrative unit, which is responsible for keeping the doctoral candidate’s academic record. These documents are required to complete the thesis submission process.

i. The doctoral student’s activity report, signed by the thesis supervisor and by the tutor (if applicable).

ii. The thesis defence authorisation of the thesis supervisor(s).

iii. The thesis defence authorisation issued by the academic committee of the doctoral programme, together with original copies of reports from external experts or a statement from the academic committee indicating that the quality of the thesis has been externally verified and that it has been deemed to be of a sufficient standard to be defended (e.g., the candidate’s work has been published).

iv. A prioritised list of proposed members of the examination committee that will assess the thesis, together with their curricula vitae in electronic format.

v. The decision authorising the submission of a thesis with measures to maintain the confidentiality of part of its content (if applicable).

vi. The decision authorising the submission of an article-based thesis (if applicable).

The academic committee of the programme, with the assistance of the administrative unit, will inform the Doctoral School that the thesis has been submitted in order to ensure that it is properly publicised and that other PhD holders have the opportunity to comment on its content. To this end, it will send the Doctoral School the following documents by whatever procedure it establishes:

i. A copy of the thesis in electronic format (PDF).

ii. The decision authorising the submission of a thesis containing confidential material (if applicable).

iii. The decision authorising the submission of an article-based thesis (if applicable).

iv. A prioritised list of proposed members of the examination committee that will assess the thesis, together with their curricula vitae in electronic format.

Once the Doctoral School has authorised and announced the submission of the thesis, the academic committee of the programme, with the assistance of the administrative unit, will publicise its submission among teaching and research staff of the unit(s) responsible for the programme.

The submission of the doctoral thesis must be publicised on the Doctoral School’s website for 10 teaching days, counted from the day it is announced. PhD holders may consult the doctoral thesis at the Doctoral School and submit any written comments or claims concerning its content to the Doctoral School’s Standing Committee, in accordance with the procedure
established by the Standing Committee. If any claims are submitted, the Doctoral School will communicate them to the doctoral candidate, the thesis supervisor, and the academic committee of the programme, and the academic committee will have five teaching days to inform the Doctoral School of its position on the claim(s), and whether it will allow the thesis defence to go forward or, on the contrary, it must be suspended.

Once the period for publicising the submission of the thesis has elapsed, the Doctoral School's Standing Committee will authorise the public defence of the thesis and announce the event on the Doctoral School's website.

13. Admission to the thesis defence and appointment of the examination committee

Once 10 teaching days have passed following submission of the thesis and any comments have been addressed, the Doctoral School's Standing Committee will accept the thesis for defence and appoint an examination committee based on the prioritised list of proposed examiners. Members of the committee (the chair, secretary and ordinary members) will be appointed by the rector. The thesis defence must take place within six months of the date on which it is accepted.

Examiners must provide a brief curriculum vitae that can be published. Curricula vitae should comply with the standard format established by the Doctoral School's Standing Committee, and examiners must meet the following requirements:

i. They must be PhD holders who are recognised in their field and have documented research experience. If they are members of university teaching and research staff, their research experience must be demonstrated in the manner specified in the Doctoral School's internal regulations.

ii. The majority of examiners should be external to the UPC, to participating universities in the case of interuniversity programmes, and to any company or institution collaborating in the programme.

iii. Thesis supervisors may not serve on the examination committee.

iv. Steps should be taken to encourage balanced representation of men and women on examination committees.

Honorary doctoral degrees, or doctoral degrees that were not awarded for the preparation and successful defence of a doctoral thesis (as defined in Section 10.1), will not qualify their holders to serve on an examination committee.

For the purpose of calculations related to point (iii) above, the attachment of academic staff to their home university will be considered even if they are not currently in active employment at that institution.
In the exceptional event that any examiner is a co-author of a publication arising from the thesis, the academic committee will ensure that his/her participation on the committee is fully justified.

Once the examination committee has been appointed, the academic committee of the doctoral programme will send the examiners the following at least 10 teaching days before the thesis defence:

i. Notification of their appointment to the committee.

ii. The date, time and location of the thesis defence.

iii. A copy of the thesis to examine (or details of the website where it is available).

iv. The doctoral student activity report.

The academic committee of the programme will also notify the Doctoral School of the date, time and location of the thesis defence.

14. Actions to be taken by the examination committee

Once the examination committee has been appointed, the chair will convene the candidate’s doctoral thesis defence and communicate the relevant details to the Doctoral School and the academic committee of the doctoral programme at least 10 teaching days before the defence is scheduled to take place. This information, together with the composition of the examination committee, will be published on the Doctoral School's website.

Once the defence has been convened, the chair of the examination committee must take steps to ensure that any examiners who resign from the committee or are unable to attend the defence are replaced by substitutes. If on the day of the defence a member does not appear a substitute must be incorporated. If, on the day set for the public defence of the thesis, any of the members do not attend, the substitutes must be included on the committee. If this is not possible, the chair must suspend the defence and set another date that must have been agreed by the committee members, the doctoral candidate and the academic committee of the programme. The Doctoral School must be notified of this change. In the case of examination committees with five members, if it is not possible to incorporate substitutes, the chair may reduce the number of members to three, provided the majority are external members. In no case may a thesis defence be conducted with fewer than three examination committee members.

If the chair must be replaced due to unforeseen circumstances, the academic committee of the programme will select and assign a replacement from among the other examiners and substitutes.

At any time up to immediately before the defence and public presentation of the thesis, the Doctoral School's Standing Committee may suspend the procedure due to serious unforeseen circumstances. If it is necessary to take this step, the suspension of the thesis defence must
be communicated to the chair of the examination committee, the doctoral candidate, and the academic committee of the programme.

15. Public thesis defence

The academic committee of the programme must establish suitable mechanisms to conduct the thesis defence at its own facilities or others belonging to the UPC. If a thesis is to be defended outside the UPC, express authorisation is required from the UPC's Doctoral Studies Committee and subsequent reassurance will be required from the academic committee of the programme that the defence was conducted in compliance with these regulations and the established assessment processes.

The thesis defence must take place in a public session on a teaching day.

The academic committee may establish mechanisms to enable examiners to participate by videoconference. In any event, the chair, the secretary and the doctoral candidate must be physically present at the thesis defence.

15.1. Reading and defence

The defence consists of the doctoral candidate's presentation of the research conducted, the methodology used, the content of the thesis, and the conclusions drawn. Particular attention should be given to original contributions.

In particular cases, the academic committee of the doctoral programme may take measures to ensure that aspects of the thesis liable to be patented are not disclosed during the defence, as laid out in Section 10.3.

Based on the candidate's presentation, examiners may ask any questions and request clarification as they deem appropriate. Any PhD holder present at the defence may also ask questions at the time and in the manner indicated by the chair of the examination committee.

15.2. Assessment

Following the defence and discussion of the thesis, the examination committee will deliberate in private and prepare a written assessment report (using a standard form), which will be attached to the doctoral student's activity report. The assessment report must allow examiners to express individual opinions (with supporting arguments).

Lastly, the examination committee will award the final mark it deems most appropriate: Fail, Pass, Good or Excellent. This mark will be recorded on the candidate's official doctoral degree results form, which must be signed by all of the examiners present at the thesis defence.

Before adjourning the session, the chair of the examination committee will verbally communicate the mark awarded to the doctoral candidate and to the rest of the people present.
The secretary of the examination committee will submit all documents related to the assessment of the thesis, together with the official doctoral degree results form, to the administrative unit for the programme.

A doctoral candidate may request full certification of his/her thesis assessment report. If there is an administrative unit for the programme, it will be responsible for the thesis file and will send a copy to the general archive.

15.3. **Cum laude distinction**

When a candidate is awarded a mark of Excellent, the examination committee may award him/her a *cum laude* distinction. The award of this distinction requires a unanimous vote by secret ballot. The academic committee must ensure that secrecy is properly maintained during voting. Votes will be counted in a separate session using the procedure established by the Doctoral School's Standing Committee.

15.4. **Deposit of a doctoral thesis**

To enhance the visibility of theses and increase the citation impact of their authors, once a doctoral thesis has received a positive assessment, it will be published in the UPC's open-access repository for doctoral theses (UPCommons) and in the repository for Catalan universities (TDX).

To this end, the author must sign a document containing a declaration of authorship and provisions related to the regulation of rights, and any other authorisations required for the dissemination of the thesis. The administrative unit will provide these documents to the doctoral candidate when his/her thesis is deposited.

If the thesis contains any confidential material, or if the author has signed a contract or undertaking with a publication to which he/she is transferring his/her copyright, it will be published in the TDX repository when the thesis protection or copyright transfer process ends.

For the purposes laid down in Royal Decree 99/2011, the Doctoral School must send a copy of the thesis in electronic format, along with any additional information required, to the Ministry of Education.

If errors are detected in the copy of the thesis, or the examination committee believes changes should be made based on its recommendations or those made by other PhD holders during the public defence of the thesis, the secretary of the examination committee will draw up a report to this effect, make note of this on the official thesis defence record, and send the signed original of the report to the Doctoral School. The Doctoral School will attach the report drawn up by the secretary to the copy of the thesis held in the repository.

16. **Doctoral degrees**

16.1. **Issuing of degrees**
Any candidate who has successfully completed doctoral studies may be awarded a doctoral degree, the name of which is indicated in the Register of Universities, Centres and Qualifications (RUCT). The doctoral degree issued is an official qualification that is recognised throughout Spain.

A doctoral degree certificate will be issued at the request of the person concerned and upon payment of the corresponding fee.

16.2. International Doctorate mention

An International Doctorate mention will be included on the front of the doctoral degree certificate if the following requirements are met:

i. During the period of study leading to the doctoral degree, the doctoral candidate must have spent at least three months at a respected higher education or research institution outside Spain to complete courses or do research work. Stays and activities carried out must be verified by the thesis supervisor and authorised by the academic committee of the programme. The candidate must also provide a document certifying each stay, issued by the person responsible for the research group or the institution/centre where the stay was completed. This information will be added to the doctoral student’s activity report.

ii. Part of the thesis (at least the summary and conclusions) must be written and presented in one of the languages commonly used for science communication in the relevant field of knowledge, which must not be an official language of Spain. This rule does not apply to stays, reports and experts from Spanish-speaking countries.

iii. At least two PhD-holding experts affiliated with a higher education or research institution outside Spain must have issued officially certified reports on the thesis.

iv. The thesis examination committee must include at least one PhD-holding expert from a higher education or research institution outside Spain who was not responsible for a stay abroad by the candidate (point [i] above).

v. The thesis defence must take place on UPC premises or, in the case of joint programmes, at the location specified in the relevant collaboration agreement.

16.3. Industrial Doctorate mention

An Industrial Doctorate mention will be awarded when the following requirements are met:

i. The doctoral candidate has an employment or commercial contract with a private- or public-sector company or a public administrative body.

ii. The doctoral candidate must participate in an industrial research or experimental development project carried out at the company or public administrative body (which may not be a university), where he/she provides services. The industrial research or experimental development project in which the doctoral candidate participates must
be directly related to his/her thesis. This relationship must be certified by means of a report approved by the University.

If the industrial research or experimental development project involves collaboration between the University and the company or public administrative body where the doctoral candidate provides services, a framework collaboration agreement between the parties must be concluded. This agreement must specify the obligations of the University and those of the company or public administrative body involved, as well as the procedure for selecting doctoral candidates.

The doctoral candidate will have a thesis tutor assigned by the University and a supervisor assigned by the company or public administrative body, who, where appropriate, may also be the candidate’s thesis supervisor, in accordance with Section 7 of these regulations.

17. Special doctoral awards

During the second semester of each academic year, the Doctoral School will publicise a call for applications for special doctoral awards. The call will be approved by the board of the Doctoral School, and the conditions that apply must include at least the following:

1. The call is open to doctoral candidates who have obtained a cum laude distinction for the defence of their thesis in previous academic years, which must be specified.

2. A maximum of one special award may be given for every 10 theses (or fraction thereof) defended in each of the Doctoral School's areas of study. In exceptional cases, and at the proposal of the examination committee concerned, the Doctoral School's Standing Committee may give a higher number of special awards in one or more areas.

3. The awards will be judged by a specific jury for each area of knowledge. Each jury will be composed of five members and two substitutes, all of whom must be PhD holders with documented research experience.

4. The final decision concerning the awards will be taken by the Doctoral School's Standing Committee before the end of July, and they will be presented at the opening ceremony for the following academic year.

18. Joint programmes, agreements and joint supervision

Joint doctoral programmes will be governed by the agreement concluded between the participating institutions in each case, and by these regulations in any matters not covered by that agreement.

Doctoral candidates who are completing a jointly supervised thesis must comply with these regulations; however, joint supervision agreements may provide for specific arrangements with respect to the enrolment process, the composition of examination committees, submission and defence of doctoral theses, or any other specific matters. When a candidate
has successfully completed a jointly supervised thesis, his/her degree certificate will indicate that the thesis was developed under this arrangement and specify the other university involved, provided the following requirements are met:

i. The doctoral thesis must be supervised by two or more PhD holders from two universities, one Spanish and the other outside Spain, and the participating universities must conclude a joint supervision agreement.

ii. During the period of study required to obtain the doctoral degree, the doctoral candidate must have spent at least six months (in one or more stays) doing research work at the institution that is the co-signatory to the joint supervision agreement. The stay(s) and the activities carried out must be included in the joint supervision agreement.

19. Appeals system

Candidates may appeal against decisions taken by the academic committees of the doctoral programmes, examination committees, or the Doctoral School's Standing Committee. Appeals must be lodged with the rector within one month of notification or publication of the decision in question, in accordance with general regulations for common administrative procedures. Decisions taken by the rector exhaust administrative remedies and may be appealed by lodging an application for judicial review before an administrative court.

20. Additional Provision. Academic organisation and new doctoral programmes

Doctoral programmes will be governed by the provisions of their validation reports, which specify programme content and must be processed in accordance with Royal Decrees 1393/2007 and 99/2011.

The Doctoral School must ensure coordination between programmes. The Doctoral School's Standing Committee may establish instructions concerning the validation, monitoring and accreditation of existing doctoral programmes and the content of any new programmes proposed.

21. Transitional Provision No. 1. Doctoral candidates who started their studies when previous regulations were in effect


These doctoral candidates must enrol for thesis tutorials for the 2016-2017 academic year in accordance with the academic calendar for doctoral studies, and register the submission of their thesis by 1 June 2017.
Research plans, doctoral student activity reports, and the submission and defence of theses must be assessed in accordance with the provisions of these academic regulations.

22. Transitional Provision No. 2

Academic committees must approve the internal regulations referred to in Section 10.2 of these regulations by December 2016. Any academic committee that has not yet approved these internal regulations must submit duly justified proposals concerning article-based theses to the Doctoral School's Standing Committee, which will determine whether or not to authorise them.

23. Repealing Provision


24. Final Provision No. 1. Development of the Regulations

The Doctoral School's Standing Committee will have the power to establish rules and procedures to develop these regulations within the area of its competence.

25. Final Provision No. 2. Entry into force

These regulations will come into force at the start of the 2016-2017 academic year.