



Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

Consolidated version

Governing Council Decision no. [CG/2023/02/11](#), which approves the changes in the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies

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Governing Council Decision no. [CG/2019/05/19](#), which approves the changes in the Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies

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Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies

Introduction

Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, which amends Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, divides university courses of study into three cycles—bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees—and states that doctoral studies lead to a doctoral degree that is officially valid throughout Spain. It also states that doctoral studies must be organised in accordance with the statutes of each university and government criteria for awarding the degree.

Royal Decree 1393/2007 lays down basic regulations regarding the structure of university degrees that are fully adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It also regulates the validation of programmes and their subsequent accreditation. Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, which regulates official doctoral studies, repeals Chapter V of Royal Decree 1393/2007 and regulates doctoral studies specifically. 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 foresees that the programmes regulated by previous royal decrees 185/1985, 778/1999, 56/2005 and 1393/2007 will be phased out. From the 2017-2018 academic year, doctoral programmes are regulated only by Royal Decree 99/2011.

Article 34 of the UPC Statutes regulates the Doctoral School and recognises it as an academic unit with specific functions, which are outlined in the Regulations on the Organisation and Functions of the Doctoral School. The Doctoral School 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.

These regulations, in addition to incorporating the changes mentioned above and adapting procedures to the structure of the Doctoral School, include the directives of the Directorate General for Universities approved by the Board of the Interuniversity Council of Catalonia and other regulations in force, in accordance with the provisions that follow.

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 in front of 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 degree studies offered at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) that have been validated in accordance with the regulations on official university courses 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. The Doctoral School can organise, coordinate and certify cross-disciplinary training activities designed for a specific doctoral programme or a range of them.

Doctoral studies are divided 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.

The programmes aim to provide 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, counting from the date of admission to the programme until the doctoral thesis is submitted. For calculating these periods, the date of admission is considered to be the date of the first enrolment for tutorials, and the date of submission the moment at which the Doctoral School officially deposits the doctoral thesis.

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 deposited; 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 temporarily withdraw from the programme for up to one year, and this period may be extended for an additional year. Candidates who wish to interrupt their 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 of studies

If a full-time doctoral candidate has not applied to deposit the 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.

3.4 End of the maximum period of study

Doctoral candidates who exhaust the maximum period of study and any authorised extensions thereof in accordance with their full- or part-time status are withdrawn from the doctoral programme.

Dismissal from the programme implies the end and closure of doctoral candidates' academic records.

They may, however, apply for admission to other doctoral programmes at the UPC. Admission to the same doctoral programme may be sought when at least two years have passed since the date of withdrawal. A new research plan must be submitted in both cases.

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 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 course 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 who have 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 for each doctoral programme must include an additional 5% of places to be reserved for persons with a proven disability. In the case of students with special educational needs related to a disability, the programme must ensure adequate support and advisory services, and the need for adaptations must be considered if necessary.

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 they 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 must recognise the candidate's academic record in full or in part.

The doctoral candidate must re-sign the doctoral student activity report, the research plan (if it has not been recognised) and the commitment agreement referred to in Section 7.4 of these regulations.

When students are admitted in this way, the academic committee of the programme may exempt them 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 a 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. This status is maintained as long as the student enrolls every year.

Failure to pay the enrolment fee or any of its instalments before the deadlines set by the University entitles the University to temporarily suspend a student's rights and, if applicable, to cancel their enrolment and its attendant effects without the right to a refund.

Paying outstanding enrolment fees on any degree or in any academic year is a condition for enrolment and the issuing of degrees and certificates.

If a candidate has been admitted and does not enrol before the deadline, the admission expires and the candidate must enrol again.

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 in the academic calendar for doctoral studies.

Subsequent enrolments must be completed within the periods specified in 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 they are admitted or enrol 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 bodies (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, they 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 the 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 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. Supervisors and co-supervisors have the same responsibilities and academic recognition.

The maximum number of supervisors of a doctoral thesis is two: a supervisor and a co-supervisor.

For theses carried out under a cotutelle agreement or as part of an Industrial Doctorate, if necessary and if the agreement foresees it this maximum number of supervisors may not apply. This notwithstanding, the maximum number of supervisors belonging to the UPC is two.

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.

Doctoral candidates' full- or part-time status must be indicated on the commitment agreement and research plan.

They may apply just once to the academic committee of the programme to change this status before the maximum period of study ends and as long as no extension thereof has been authorised, if they can justify the need for it.

7.4 Commitment agreement

Once a doctoral candidate has been assigned a thesis supervisor, and before they submit a research plan, a commitment agreement will be drawn up. This document will be signed by the director of the Doctoral School, the candidate, the thesis supervisor and the tutor (if there is one). 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 from 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 they will not be entitled to a refund of enrolment 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 the activities that contribute to the candidate's development.

A doctoral student activity report is generated when a student first enrolls. The doctoral candidate 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.

Members of the academic committee of the doctoral programme must be able to consult the activity report 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

In the period established to this effect in the academic calendar for doctoral studies for each academic year, the academic committee of the doctoral programme will assess

each candidate's progress on the doctoral thesis research plan, as well as the candidate's activity report and reports issued by the thesis supervisor, the co-supervisor and the 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. The reading and public defence take place on the University's or the collaborating entity's premises and may not be carried out by videoconference.

The academic committee of the doctoral programme is responsible for communicating the assessment results to doctoral candidates within one month from the date on which the assessment took place and for informing them of the deadline and the procedure. Doctoral candidates can consult the result in their academic record in the e-Secretaria.

9.2 Consequences of assessment

A positive assessment is essential for the doctoral candidate to continue on a programme. If the academic committee identifies significant deficiencies, it may require that the doctoral candidate submit a new research plan within six months. The month of August does not count towards this deadline. If these deficiencies are not remedied, the academic committee will issue a reasoned report and the doctoral candidate will be dismissed from the programme. Any student who does not attend a follow-up meeting without justification will be dismissed from the programme.

Dismissal from the programme implies the end and closure of doctoral candidates' academic records.

They may, however, apply for admission to other doctoral programmes at the UPC. Admission to the same doctoral programme may be sought when at least two years have passed since the date of withdrawal. A new research plan must be submitted in both cases.

9.3 Review of assessment results

A doctoral candidate may appeal against reports issued by the thesis supervisor and/or tutor and against assessment reports issued by academic committees by lodging a duly substantiated written claim with the academic committee of the relevant programme, which will reach a decision within 15 teaching days. Assessment reports issued by an academic committee may be challenged by lodging an appeal with the rector.

9.4 Dismissal from the doctoral programme

A doctoral candidate may be dismissed from a doctoral programme for the following reasons:

- The doctoral candidate submitting a justified application to withdraw from the programme.
- The doctoral candidate not having formalised annual enrolment or applied for a temporary interruption.
- The doctoral candidate not having formalised annual enrolment on the day after the end of the authorisation to temporarily interrupt or withdraw from the

programme.

- The doctoral candidate failing two consecutive assessments.
- The doctoral candidate not passing the bridging courses.
- The doctoral candidate having disciplinary proceedings filed against them that rule that they must be dismissed from the UPC temporarily or permanently.
- A refusal to authorise the extensions applied for, in accordance with the provisions of Article 3.3 of these regulations.
- The doctoral candidate not having submitted the research plan in the period established in Article 8.2 of these regulations.
- The maximum period of study for the doctoral degree having ended, in accordance with the provisions of Article 3.4 of these regulations.
- The research plan not being accepted by the academic committee of the doctoral programme, in accordance with the provisions of Article 8.2 of these regulations.

Dismissal from the programme implies that the doctoral candidate cannot continue studying at the UPC and the closing of their academic record. This notwithstanding, they may apply to the academic committee of the programme for readmission, and the committee must reevaluate the candidate in accordance with the criteria established in the regulations.

Dismissals due to the maximum period of study and any authorised extensions thereof ending or an unsatisfactory assessment are regulated in articles 3.4 and 9.2 respectively of these regulations.

10. Doctoral theses

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, candidates request permission to write and/or defend their thesis in another language, the academic committee of the doctoral programme may authorise them to do so.

10.2 Article-based theses

Each doctoral programme must have its own regulations and these must be approved by the Doctoral School's Standing Committee, which must ensure the homogeneity of the doctoral programmes. Once these regulations have been approved, a thesis may be submitted as an article-based thesis. It corresponds to the academic committees of the doctoral programmes to authorise the submission of an article-based thesis. If it is



authorised, this must be communicated to the Doctoral School's Standing Committee when the thesis is deposited.

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

- a) Documents to be submitted. As a general guide, these documents may include the report by the thesis supervisor, a list of the articles, copies of the articles, quality indicators, etc.
- 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 the candidate started doctoral studies are not included.
- e) A rule concerning whether papers submitted or accepted at the time of application may be included in an article-based thesis.
- f) Indicators attesting to the quality of the publication. 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 Theses containing confidential material

In exceptional circumstances—if, for example, companies have been involved in developing a thesis, confidentiality agreements have been entered into with companies or there is the possibility that the content of a thesis may lead to a patent—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.

The doctoral candidate must expressly request that the academic committee of the programme apply this procedure, before the deposit and in the manner stipulated by the committee. The application must include the following documents:

- 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 full copy of the doctoral thesis.
- c) 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 results.)

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

Both the academic committee of the programme and the Standing Committee may require the doctoral candidate to modify the content or format of the encrypted copy of the doctoral thesis and to provide any supporting documents that they deem necessary to review the application or the deposit.

The application will be approved only if it is demonstrated that secrecy is absolutely essential for the success of the protection or transfer process. The members of the academic committee of the doctoral programme are required to maintain full confidentiality of the content of the doctoral thesis and must sign the confidentiality agreement.

If the deposit of the doctoral thesis in this format is authorised, the doctoral candidate must deposit it officially by providing the Doctoral School with all the documents required in the procedure, a full copy of the thesis and an encrypted copy.

When the deposit 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 deposited must apply in writing to the Doctoral School's Standing Committee, which can provide access to the encrypted thesis. 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 must be conducted in two parts: a public session and one conducted behind closed doors. The latter 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.

10.4 Temporary embargo of the publication of the doctoral thesis

In exceptional circumstances, such as the participation of companies in the writing of the thesis, the existence of confidentiality agreements with companies, the eminent publication of a work stemming from the thesis or the possibility of generating patents related to the content of the doctoral thesis, the doctoral candidate may request that the publication and archiving of the doctoral thesis in the institutional repositories be deferred for a maximum of 24 months from the date of the defence of the doctoral thesis.

The application must be submitted together with the rest of the documents required for the thesis deposit. It can also be submitted later, until the day before the scheduled date of the public thesis defence.



11. Authorisation of the thesis deposit

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 write up a report in which the reasons for it being deemed of sufficient quality are given, which must be submitted to the academic committee of the programme for them to authorise the defence. If the supervisor changes or a new one is added, the thesis may not be deposited until a year after the change or addition.

The academic committee of the programme reviews the thesis before deciding whether to authorise the thesis deposit. 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 of 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.

When it authorises the thesis deposit, 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. Deposit

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

- i. The thesis deposit enrolment 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. In this case, the administrative unit of the programme is in charge of keeping and transferring the physical file.
- 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. The doctoral student's activity report, signed by the thesis supervisor and by the tutor, if applicable.
- v. The authorisation of the deposit by the thesis supervisor or supervisors and the academic committee of the doctoral programme, to which must be attached, if applicable, the original external expert reports or the report by the academic committee endorsing the quality of the thesis.
- vi. The proposal, in order of priority, of the composition of the committee that will assess the thesis.
- vii. A statement from the author approving the incorporation of the doctoral thesis into the TDX institutional repository.
- viii. Optionally (depending on the kind of thesis that is being submitted and whether the doctoral candidate has already submitted these documents previously):
 - Application for the International or Industrial Doctorate mention.
 - Application to submit an article-based thesis.
 - Request to restrict access to the thesis in accordance with confidentiality protection processes and/or confidentiality agreements.
 - Request to embargo the thesis.
 - Communication that the thesis will be defended in the framework of a cotutelle agreement.

The academic committee of the programme, with the assistance of the administrative unit, will request that the Standing Committee of the Doctoral School deposit the thesis 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 documents listed below, following the established procedure:

- i. A copy of the thesis in electronic format (PDF).
- ii. An encrypted copy of the thesis in electronic format, if the thesis is subject to confidentiality protection processes and/or agreements.

Once the Doctoral School has authorised and announced the thesis deposit, the academic committee of the programme, with the assistance of the administrative unit, will inform the teaching and research staff of the unit or units promoting the programme.

The deposit of the doctoral thesis must be publicised on the Doctoral School's website for 10 teaching days, counted from the day it is announced. During this period, PhD holders may ask to consult or comment on the content of the doctoral thesis by writing to the Standing Committee of the Doctoral School, following the procedure established by the Standing Committee. If authorisation to consult the thesis is given, applicants must accept and sign a confidentiality agreement in which they undertake not to disseminate information related to the thesis, during the period established, or the full or partial content of the thesis by any means. If any claims are submitted, the Doctoral School must communicate them to the doctoral candidate, the thesis supervisor and the academic committee of the programme. The academic committee will have five teaching days to inform the Doctoral School of its position on the content of the claim and whether it will allow the thesis defence to go forward or, on the contrary, it must be suspended.

13. Authorisation of the thesis defence and appointment of the examination committee

Once the 10 working days of the deposit period have elapsed with no observations having been put forward, or any observations that have been put forward have been dealt with, the Doctoral School's Standing Committee will authorise the thesis defence, announce it on the Doctoral School website and validate the examination committee so that the rector, or the person this task is delegated to, can appoint the examination committee in accordance with the prioritised list put forward by the academic committee (chair, secretary and members). Decisions on the observations put forward during the deposit must be taken within 15 working days.

The thesis defence must take place within three months of the date on which it is authorised, except for theses under a cotutelle agreement, for which it may be six months. Once this period has ended, if the defence has not taken place, the thesis must be enrolled and deposited again in accordance with the standard procedure.

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. Most of the members must be external to the UPC, to the universities participating in the doctoral programme if the examination committee is an interuniversity committee, and to the collaborating body at which the thesis has been written or at which the doctoral candidate has carried out training activities.
- iii. Thesis supervisors must not serve on the examination committee.
- iv. Steps should be taken to encourage balanced representation of women and men 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 (ii) 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 an examiner is the co-author of a publication arising from the thesis, the academic committee will ensure that their participation on the committee is fully justified.

The academic committee of the programme will provide the examination committee with the following information and documents, at least ten academic calendar days before the thesis defence date:

- i. The notification of their appointment to the committee.
- ii. The proposed date, time and location of the defence.
- iii. An electronic copy of the thesis (the same version that has been deposited at the Doctoral School), so that they can assess it.
- iv. The doctoral student activity report.

14. Actions of the examination committee

The programme coordinator, or the programme's administrative unit on their behalf, will officially summon the doctoral candidate and all the members of the examination committee (including the substitutes) to the thesis defence, and will also inform the Doctoral School and the rest of the members of the academic committee of the doctoral programme at least 10 working days in advance. 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 they cannot be substituted from among the members of the committee appointed, the academic committee of the programme must submit a new prioritised proposal for the committee's composition to the Standing Committee.

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.

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 the defence is to take place outside the UPC, the academic committee must submit an



application to the Doctoral School's Standing Committee giving details of the proposed venue and guaranteeing that it complies with these regulations and the assessment procedures.

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

The academic committee may establish mechanisms to enable the chair and members of the examination committee to participate by videoconference, as long as the room in which the defence is held has the equipment and technical conditions required for an effective connection. In any event, the secretary and the doctoral candidate must be physically present at the thesis defence.

For each defence, the academic committee of the doctoral programme may decide whether to allow the audience to attend via videoconference in addition to the venue at which it has been convened. In both cases, it is the responsibility of the secretary of the examination committee to set up and moderate the online session.

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

Once the defence and discussion of the thesis ends, the examination committee deliberates and issues a written, reasoned assessment report on the thesis using the Doctoral School's standard form. The assessment report must allow examiners to express individual opinions (with supporting arguments).

Finally, the examination committee will award the overall mark that it considers appropriate from the following: Fail, Pass, Good and Excellent. The mark is recorded in the doctoral thesis assessment results, which must be signed by all the members of the examination committee.

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 doctoral thesis assessment results, to the Doctoral School. This can be delegated to the staff of the administrative unit of the doctoral programme or the coordinator, or they can be sent by registered post (as long as the sender is the secretary of the committee).

The doctoral candidate may request full certified copies of the doctoral thesis assessment results and the reasoned report.

15.3 *Cum laude* distinction

When a candidate is awarded a mark of Excellent, the examination committee may award 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 by the Doctoral School's Standing Committee following the established procedure.

15.4 Filing 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 the 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 they are transferring the 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 degree certificates



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 certificate 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

The doctoral degree certificate may include the International Doctorate mention on the front. In this case, the doctoral candidate must meet the following requirements:

- 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 institution or research centre outside Spain to complete courses or do research work. The stays and activities carried out must be endorsed by the thesis supervisor and authorised by the academic committee of the programme. The candidate must provide a certifying document issued by the person responsible for the research group of the body or bodies where the stay or activity 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 and reports in Spanish or to experts from Spanish-speaking countries.
- iii. At least two PhD-holding experts belonging to a higher education institution or research centre 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 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 has participated in an industrial research or experimental development project carried out at the company or public administrative body (which may not be a university) where they provide services. The industrial research or experimental development project in which the doctoral candidate participates must be directly related to the 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, the parties must enter into a framework collaboration agreement. 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 announce 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 degree holders who have obtained a *cum laude* distinction for the defence of their thesis in the academic year specified in the call.
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 and ratified by the UPC's Governing Council. The corresponding diplomas are presented at the doctoral degree's inauguration ceremony the following academic year.

18. Joint programmes, agreements and cotutelles

Joint and cotutelle doctoral programmes are governed by the agreements between the participating institutions and by these regulations.

The agreements must be written in at least one of the official languages at the UPC or in English, a language recognised by the international scientific community.

The University has different types of model agreements that include the following:

18.1 Academic cooperation framework



An agreement that is strategic in nature or involves significant institutional commitments worldwide. A framework agreement acts as an umbrella for the activities that are already taking place between institutions.

A framework agreement is not a necessary precondition for specific agreements.

18.2 Joint organisation of interuniversity doctoral studies

An agreement that regulates the joint organisation by two or more universities of a doctoral programme, including the share of organisational, academic and financial responsibilities.

The joint proposal of a doctoral programme is valid when it is approved by the UPC's governing bodies and the competent administrations.

18.3 Cotutelle

An agreement signed by two universities concerning the cotutelle or joint supervision of a doctoral thesis that establishes the conditions for the universities to award the doctoral degree.

Doctoral candidates who are completing a jointly supervised thesis must comply with these regulations. Notwithstanding this, in order to adapt to the regulations and procedures of the other university, cotutelle agreements may regulate specific aspects of organisation related to enrolment procedures, the composition of examination committees and the deposit and defence of the thesis at the universities, as well as other specific aspects. Specific cotutelle agreements must comply with national regulations.

As a general rule—except in the case of cotutelles stemming from joint, collaboration and mobility programmes signed by the UPC that establish other directives—doctoral candidates must enrol the doctoral thesis every year and pay the corresponding administrative and academic fees for supervision, tutoring and continuous assessment, in addition to the fees for the thesis deposit and the issuing of the degree certificate.

In these cases, the doctoral degree certificate will indicate that the thesis was written under a cotutelle agreement and name the other university involved, provided the following requirements are met:

- i. The doctoral thesis has been supervised by two or more PhD holders from two universities, one Spanish and the other outside Spain, and the participating universities have entered into a cotutelle agreement.
- ii. During the period of study required to obtain the doctoral degree, the doctoral candidate has spent at least six months at the institution with which the cotutelle agreement is entered into, over a single period or several. The stay and the activities carried out must be included in the cotutelle agreement.
- iii. The doctoral candidate has spent at least six months at each university.

Under a cotutelle agreement, thesis examination committees must follow these general principles:

- The committee must include at least one member appointed by the UPC.
- The university hosting the thesis defence must cover the costs, unless the agreement stipulates another arrangement.
- If contradictions arise between the regulations of the participating universities, the procedures and the mark awarded by the university hosting the defence may be accepted, provided that the following conditions are met:
 - o The members from the UPC and the participating universities are in the minority.
 - o All the members are PhD holders.
 - o The cotutelle agreement specifies the equivalence of the assessment systems of the two institutions or, in the case of systems that cannot be deemed to be equivalent, the correlation procedure for awarding the mark.

Before the rector signs the agreement, it must have the approval of the following:

- The academic committee of the corresponding doctoral programme.
- The promoting unit of the corresponding doctoral programme.
- The thesis supervisor.

18.4 Collaboration on doctoral theses (research placements at companies or entities)

An agreement that regulates the writing of the doctoral thesis in a research environment of common interest, whether on the premises of the company or organisation or the UPC's.

18.5 Mobility (research placements at universities)

An agreement that regulates a doctoral candidate's research placement with the aim of it being recognised as part of the work carried out on the doctoral thesis.

18.6 Industrial Doctorate

The defining trait of an Industrial Doctorate is the strategic research project of a company at which the doctoral candidate carries out research training, in collaboration with the University, and which must be the object of the doctoral thesis.

Industrial Doctorates must comply with the provisions of Section 16.3 of these regulations.

The agreement regulates this collaboration and defines the parties' obligations, as well as the process of selecting the doctoral candidate, who has a thesis supervisor assigned by the University and a supervisor assigned by the company or the public administration, who may also supervise the thesis if the regulations' requirements are met.

19. Appeals system

Candidates may appeal against decisions taken by the academic committees of the doctoral programmes, examination committees and 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. Repealing provision no. 1

The Academic Regulations for Doctoral Studies approved by Governing Council Agreement no. 105/2011, of 20 July, and Governing Council Agreement no. 2/2014, of 6 February, establishing regulations concerning the admission to doctoral studies of holders of pre-EHEA degrees are hereby revoked.

22. Repealing provision no. 2

The regulations on agreements linked to doctoral studies approved by Governing Council Agreement no. 148/2007, of 23 July 2007, and amended by Governing Council Agreement no. 130/2012, of 5 September 2012, are hereby revoked.

23. Final provision no. 1: authorisation for the deployment of these 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.

24. Final provision no. 2: entry into force

These regulations will come into force the day after their approval by the Governing Council.