

Academic regulations for Doctoral Studies

(Regulations approved by the Executive Direction Committee on 24 October 2012 and by the Permanent Commission on 9 April 2013)

Article 1. Objectives and structure of doctoral studies

1.1. Objectives

The main objectives of the doctoral studies are the following:

- a) To ensure doctoral students acquire the key competences linked to research activity in a given area of knowledge and to offer a high level of professional training, especially in areas that call for creativity and innovation.
- b) To help doctoral students prepare, present and defend an original piece of scientific research work that contributes to the existing knowledge in this field: the doctoral thesis.

1.2. Structure

Doctoral studies at the UOC are divided into programmes in accordance with current legislation and the provisions of the university's governing bodies.

Doctoral programmes offer a series of educational and research activities aimed at equipping candidates with the necessary competences and skills to obtain a doctoral degree. These activities, which include some that cut across different areas and others which are specific to the area of knowledge in question, are not necessarily structured in terms of ECTS credits. The specific organisation for each programme is included in the report to be verified and later assessed and accredited.

Article 2. Organisation of the doctoral programmes

2.1. Oversight bodies for a doctoral programme.

The oversight bodies for a doctoral programme are the Academic Committee for the programme and the programme coordinator.

The Academic Committee for each programme is appointed by the university's governing bodies and is made up of doctorate holders with expertise in the programme's areas of knowledge and officially certified or otherwise demonstrable research experience. The Academic Committee organises, designs and coordinates the programme and is responsible for the educational and research activities. It is also

responsible for selecting doctoral students, monitoring the progress of their research and ensuring the quality of the processes for carrying out, monitoring and assessing doctoral thesis.

The members of the Academic Committee for each programme play an active role in coordinating and supervising the programme through the following procedures:

- agreeing and implementing the academic regulations for doctoral studies,
- setting up procedures to ensure the quality of doctoral theses and in general introducing and carrying out initiatives to help improve doctoral studies,
- selecting doctoral students and providing them with access to the programmes,
- appointing tutors and thesis directors to each doctoral student
- setting up the doctoral thesis committee if applicable, and appointing professors or researchers outside the committees to take part in assessing research plans,
- approving doctoral students' education pathways,
- assessing each student's document of activities and research plan,
- setting up perceptive reports on thesis projects, research plans or other assessment procedures for monitoring doctoral theses,
- appointing external experts to carry out tasks for assessing doctoral theses,
- deciding whether doctoral students remain on the programme,
- admitting doctoral theses for oral defence,
- setting up the thesis examining board,
- designating a place for the thesis to be orally defended,
- assessing doctoral theses put forward to be homologated,
- appointing the assessment board for awarding extraordinary Doctorate prizes
- awarding a "cum laude" mention to doctoral thesis defended.

All the members of the Academic Committee for the programme should maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the contents of the doctoral projects and theses and respect any deliberations that take place within the Academic Committee.

Each Doctoral programme has a coordinator appointed by the university president (or by agreement between presidents in the case of joint programmes), who acts as chair of the programme's Academic Committee. This position must be held by a member of faculty at the University who meets the criteria established by art.8.4 of the Royal Decree 99/2011, 28 January, regulating official doctoral programmes.

2.2. Doctoral tutorials

Doctoral students admitted to the doctoral programme are tutored by a lecturer or researcher at the UOC with a doctorate and officially certified or otherwise demonstrable research experience, linked to the same area of knowledge or subject, and with sufficient knowledge of the programme. All tutors must meet the requirements for accredited experience (active six-year period) established by the Catalan University System Quality Agency.

Bearing in mind the criteria set out for each programme and the candidate's education and previous research experience, the doctoral tutor is responsible for setting out a personalised pathway to the Academic Committee. The tutor has to ensure interaction between the doctoral student and the Academic Committee and collaborate with this committee to select the lecturer(s) or researcher(s) who will supervise the thesis. The Academic Committee may modify the appointment of a tutor if there are justifiable circumstances.

The doctoral tutor is responsible for informing the doctoral student of their pathway once it has been approved by the Academic Committee and to guide the doctoral student and help them adapt to the learning environment. They should provide the necessary advice for carrying out their activity and regularly revise the document of activities in order to ensure the goals set out in the pathway are reached.

The tutor should endorse the research plan prepared by the doctoral student before the end of the first year. Afterwards, at least annually, the tutor should prepare a report for the Academic Committee on how the doctoral student is progressing within the framework of the agreed research plan.

Article 3. Supervision and monitoring of the doctoral thesis|

3.1. Supervision and monitoring

During the first term, the Academic Committee for the programme appoints a doctoral thesis supervisor for each doctoral student; this supervisor may or may not be the same person as the tutor. The letter of commitment is also signed at this time.

Thesis supervision is carried out by a UOC lecturer or researcher with a doctorate and, preferably, from the UOC. All supervisors must meet the requirements for accredited experience (active six-year period) established by the Catalan University System Quality Agency. When appointing the thesis supervisor, the Academic Committee for the programme considers the proposal made by the doctoral student's tutor, the doctoral student's educational goals and the potential supervisor's research interests. Any previous doctoral theses successfully supervised by the potential supervisor will be very highly valued.

If there is sufficient academic justification for interdisciplinary or complementary opportunities or for working with other institutions, the doctoral thesis may be co-directed by more than one doctorate holder with officially certified or otherwise demonstrable research experience, up to a maximum of two co-directors. In such cases, at least one of these two people must be a lecturer or member of the research staff at the UOC.

Each programme may appoint doctoral thesis supervisory committees or set up other mechanisms for monitoring and assessing the activity set out in the research plan. If a supervisory committee is appointed, it will be set up by the Academic Committee for the programme, with the assistance of the thesis supervisor. The committee is made up of the person supervising the thesis, who chairs the committee, and two additional lecturers with doctorates with officially certified or otherwise demonstrable research experience. One of the three members of this committee must come from outside the academic and research staff at the UOC. In collaboration with another doctorate holder with officially certified or otherwise demonstrable research experience appointed by the Academic Committee for the programme, the doctoral thesis supervisory committee endorses the doctoral student's research plan and takes part in the assessment process. If a co-director is appointed for the thesis, the second co-director should join the supervisory committee and carry out the monitoring and assessment tasks that are their responsibility. The members of the doctoral thesis supervisory committee are bound to strict confidentiality with regard to the contents of the research they are monitoring. This confidentiality agreement also applies to all the doctorate holders taking part in assessing the research plan.

The tasks involved in tutoring the doctoral student, supervising the thesis and taking part in the processes for monitoring and assessing the thesis are recognised as part of the UOC teaching and research staff's work.

3.2. Changes to doctoral thesis supervision and monitoring

The Academic Committee, the supervisor, a member of the doctoral supervisory committee, any monitoring body set up by the programme, or the doctoral student may request changes to the thesis supervision (replacing a supervisor or co-supervisor, adding a co-supervisor, dropping a co-supervisor) or ask to replace a member of the doctoral thesis supervisory committee or the monitoring body set up by the programme, at any time before the thesis is submitted.

These changes should be set out and justified in writing to the Academic Committee for the programme and should be accompanied by the written agreement of the supervisor or members of the supervisory committee, and the doctoral student, as well as the doctorate holder put forward to join as a supervisor or member of the doctoral thesis supervisory committee. These changes shall only come into effect if they are agreed by the Academic Committee.

Article 4. Admission to and joining doctoral studies

4.1. Admission requirements for courses

To join the doctoral programme students should fulfil the general university admission requirements, as well as those for the specific programme in question.

Firstly, students should show that they fall into one of the following categories:

- They have an official university master's degree awarded by a higher education institution within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and passed a minimum of 300 ECTS credits in their official university studies as a whole.
- They have an official Spanish university degree, or one from another country in the EHEA, that grants them admission to the master's degree course and have accumulated at least 300 ECTS credits over the course of their official university studies, 60 of which should be at master's level.
- They have an official Spanish graduate degree from a course that lasts at least 300 ECTS credits, in accordance with EU standards.
- Candidates with degrees from education systems outside the EHEA need not have their degrees homologated, but should have a level of education equivalent to the Spanish degrees corresponding to a university master's degree and which grants them admission to doctoral studies in the country where the degree was awarded.
- They have a university degree and have successfully completed at least two years of education on a course to obtain the official degree in one of the specialities in Health Sciences.
- They have a Spanish Doctorate awarded in accordance with previous university arrangements.
- They have an architecture or engineering bachelor's degree and an Advanced Studies Decree obtained in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 778/1998, of 30 April 1998, or have acquired the research proficiency stipulated in Royal Decree 185/1985, of 23 January 1985.

If candidates have not acquired sufficient credits for starting research on a university master's degree course, they should take the additional education courses set by each programme.

If candidates only have an official university degree with a length of 300 ECTS credits, in accordance with EU standards, or have not studied and acquired the minimum credits for starting research on a university master's degree course, they will only be able to remain on the doctoral programme provided they complete the additional education courses corresponding to the module, specialisation or subjects for starting research in the corresponding education period.

In addition to the legal admission requirements and additional requirements stipulated by the university, each doctoral programme sets its own specific admission requirements as it sees fit. These requirements include basic competence in the use of information and communication technologies.

As an additional selection criterion, the different doctoral programmes may also require candidates to have a certificate showing a given level of competence in a foreign language.

Candidates should submit their formal admission application and related documentation in accordance with the terms and conditions in force.

Admission to each doctoral programme is granted once during each academic year. The maximum number of places on offer and the selection criteria are made public beforehand.

4.2. Admission criteria

Each Doctoral Programme has a report establishing the criteria for selection and admission of students.

The number of places on offer each year is made public at the call for applications and does not necessarily mean that all the places will be filled.

Each Academic Committee handles the selection and admission process for the candidates for its programme. This selection is based on scientific and academic criteria. In addition to the admission requirements that candidates should meet, the following admission criteria are also taken into account:

1. Candidates' academic excellence (academic record of university bachelor's and master's degrees)
2. Suitability of candidates' education, experience and research interests in the areas of knowledge or related subjects linked to the doctoral programme.

Candidates' previous scientific production will also be borne in mind as an additional advantage. However, the selection process also promotes admission to each doctoral programme for candidates who have recently completed a university master's degree course and finished a research specialisation and who generally have not produced much previous research.

4.3. Access and admission documentation

To apply for admission to the doctoral programme, candidates should fill in the admission application form and provide the following documentation in electronic format:

- A covering letter, of no more than 1000 words, stating:
 - ✓ the candidate's specific motivations,
 - ✓ a description of their research interests.
- A CV including the following information:
 - ✓ candidate's full physical address, contact phone number and email address;
 - ✓ the master's degree or postgraduate courses and courses taken and completed by the candidate and related to the research interests set out in the covering letter;
 - ✓ if necessary, the candidate's previous scientific production.
- Graduate and postgraduate academic record (in English, Spanish or Catalan).
- If candidates do not yet have the official certificate granting them admission to the doctoral programme when they are submitting their application, candidates should provide a signed statement, following the model provided, stating that they will have the certificate in question when they begin the academic year. They will only be admitted onto the doctorate if they present the corresponding certificate (or a receipt for having paid the fees for issuing the certificate) before starting the academic year.
- If proven competence in a foreign language at a given level is required, the corresponding certificate should be provided.
- Referees' full name, institution they belong to, postal address and email address.
- Example of recent academic work or details of the activity requested in the call for applications (in English, Spanish or Catalan).
- Identity card or passport.

The process of assessing candidates may include interviewing candidates and, if necessary, they may be asked to provide additional documentation.

Once the selection process is complete, the results of the admission process for the doctorate programme are made public through the usual channels for this purpose, which are clearly stated in the call for applications.

The initially accepted candidates should communicate their acceptance before the given deadline. Should they fail to do so, they will not be admitted onto the doctorate programme.

Once admitted, doctoral students should provide the following documentation before the deadline set by the university:

- Personal identity document: an attested copy of their identity card or passport.
- Academic documentation:

- a) Attested copy of their official bachelor's degree or certificate showing that the degree was issued.
- b) An attested copy of their official university master's degree or academic certificate showing they have completed at least 60 credits at university master's level.
- c) An attested copy of the academic certification of their education to obtain their bachelor's degree including at least the official length (in academic years) of the programme of study followed, the subjects taken, the time devoted to each subject and the qualifications obtained.
- d) An attested copy of the academic certification of their education at university master's degree level including at least the official length (in academic years) of the programme of study followed, the subjects taken, the time devoted to each subject and the qualifications obtained.
- e) In the case of degrees awarded in foreign education systems outside the EHEA that have not been homologated, an attested copy of the certificate issued by the Ministry of Education of the country that issues the documents or the competent authority certifying that the degrees presented grant admission to doctoral studies in said country.

Should candidates fail to provide these documents or should the details therein not match those given in the application, they will be automatically dismissed from the programme.

In the case of non-homologated university degrees awarded in higher education systems outside the EHEA, the university degree should be authenticated by diplomatic means (or, if necessary, with a Hague Convention apostille).

Any certificates, degrees and academic reports that are not in English, Spanish or Catalan should be accompanied by a sworn translation into one of the said languages.

4.4. Joining doctoral studies

The Academic Committee for the corresponding programme appoints a doctorate tutor for the accepted candidates (or doctoral students) in accordance with their previous education and academic experience in order to orientate doctoral students, support them and oversee their interaction with the Academic Committee.

The Academic Committee for the programme also receives tutors' proposals and provides doctoral students with a personalised pathway prepared to take account of previous university studies (especially the methodological modules, pathways or subjects for starting research) and their research interests.

This pathway should include the additional education courses and other seminars and educational activities that doctoral students have to take and complete during the first term or year of the doctoral course.

If this pathway includes seminars and educational activities splint into different academic years, they should be taken and completed by doctoral students within the set timeframe.

Article 5. Enrolment, length and remaining on doctoral studies

5.1. Enrolling

Doctoral students should complete the first registration within the timeframe set by the university. Should they fail to do so, they will be automatically dismissed from the programme and will have to reapply for admission.

Once they have registered, candidates become doctoral students at the UOC.

Doctoral students should enrol for each of the subsequent academic years within the timeframes set by the university's academic-administrative calendar.

In the case of joint programmes, the agreement will stipulate how the enrolment is to be carried out.

5.2. Length of courses

Full-time courses will last a maximum of three years and part-time courses will last a maximum of five years, counting from when the doctoral student is admitted to the programme until they present their doctoral thesis. This period of time does not include maternity or paternity leave or any long-term sick leave considered pertinent by the Academic Committee for the programme.

However, the Academic Committee responsible for each programme may authorise these timeframes to be extended by the maximum periods stipulated by the corresponding legislation and in accordance with the terms of conditions set out by the corresponding doctoral programme:

- In the case of full-time doctoral students who have not requested to submit their thesis within the aforementioned three-year period, the Academic Committee may authorise this period to be extended by up to a year, which may in turn, under exceptional circumstances, be extended by an additional year.
- In the case of part-time doctoral students who have not requested to submit their thesis within the aforementioned five-year period, the Academic Committee may authorise this period to be extended by up to two years, which may in turn, under exceptional circumstances, be extended by an additional year.

Doctoral students also have the right to request temporary leave from the programme for a maximum period of one year, which may be extended by an additional year. This request should be duly justified and addressed to the Academic Committee for the programme, which will take the corresponding decision.

5.3. Requirements for remaining on courses

Once doctoral students have enrolled on the programme, they will be given a document of activities. This document sets out all the activities the Academic Committee has established for the doctoral student to carry out.

Before the end of the first year, doctoral students should prepare a research plan including the methodology to be used and the objectives to be pursued, as well as the means and timetable for carrying out the thesis. The plan should be endorsed by the tutor and the supervisor.

Every year, the Academic Committee assesses the research plan and document of activities for each doctoral student together with the relevant reports from the tutor, the thesis supervisor and, if applicable, the other members of the thesis supervisory committee. This research plan must receive a positive assessment if the doctoral student is to continue on the programme. If they receive a fully justified negative assessment, the doctoral student should prepare a new research plan, which will then be reassessed within a period of six months. If this new research plan also receives a negative assessment, the doctoral student will be definitively dismissed from the programme.

The university sets out a letter of commitment signed by the university, the doctoral student, the tutor and the supervisor, This agreement should be signed as soon as possible after admission and should set out the procedure for resolving disagreements and should take account of any aspects related to copyright and patent rights that might arise while carrying out the doctoral research.

In addition, the assessment mechanisms also include monitoring the process for writing the thesis within the set timeframe and the procedures in the case of disagreements and any aspects concerning copyright in accordance with the above paragraph.

Any doctoral students who fail to comply with any of the aforementioned requirements will be automatically dismissed from the doctoral studies.

5.4. Dismissal processes and consequences

- Course dismissal

Course dismissals are automatically issued by a doctoral programme when a doctoral student fails to comply with any of the requirements for remaining on the course set out in the above paragraph of regulations.

Course dismissals do not mean that the doctoral student in question may not reapply for admission to the same programme in accordance with the set procedures and timeframes. Should they be readmitted, they will have to complete a new pathway designed for them, sign the letter of commitment and prepare a new research plan for assessment.

- Dismissal for non-payment

Failure to pay the registration fee in full or in part within the given timeframe, both in the first year of enrolment on the programme and the following years, will lead to the doctoral student in question being automatically dismissed from the corresponding doctoral programme.

- Dismissal for inaccuracies or irregularities

Any irreparable inaccuracy or irregularity found in the details given for admission or any other data provided by the doctoral student to the university that the university considers to be sufficiently serious or to be a very severe breach of the regulations concerning the rights and duties of students at the UOC will mean the doctoral student will be automatically dismissed from the corresponding doctoral programme.

- Requested leave

Requested leave is when the doctoral student decides they want to leave the courses they are taking in one of the following cases:

- ✓ Giving up the full registration fee paid during the first academic term.
- ✓ Transferring the record.

Leaving doctoral studies, for any of the above reasons, has consequences for the doctoral student's academic record and/or any teaching materials the doctoral student may have received, as well as the economic consequences.

- Consequences for the academic record: in all cases, leaving a course means the corresponding record is closed. If the reason is irreparable inaccuracies or irregularities in the admission data, the doctoral student's record will be closed with the effect that they will not be able to continue the same courses or request admission to any other course without authorisation from the university president.
- Consequences for teaching materials: if the doctoral student has received any material and made the corresponding payment, they will not be required to return the material and the payment will not be returned.

- Economic consequences: no amount paid will be returned to any doctoral student who leaves a course.

Article 6. UOC community regulations and letter of commitment

6.1. Regulations applicable to members of the UOC community

People who form part of the UOC belong to a community governed by a series of rules and regulations designed to facilitate, boost and grant access to knowledge, the learning process and interpersonal relationships in general.

As members of the UOC community, doctoral students are bound by the following regulations:

- regulations on UOC students' rights and duties,
- letter of commitment to access and use the Virtual Campus,
- the regulations concerning the organisation and operation of the UOC,
- the regulations on UOC associations.

6.2. Letter of commitment for the doctoral programme

The doctoral student, the thesis supervisor and the tutor sign a letter of commitment for the doctoral programme and agree to work together to prepare the research plan and doctoral thesis and to defend it. The chair of the Academic Committee for the programme will also sign this document as a representative of the university.

In addition, the doctoral student agrees not to reveal any data or confidential information provided to them for the doctoral thesis. Furthermore, the doctoral student has the right of ownership of the copyright or patent rights that belong to them as the co-author of any work to which they have made a relevant contribution.

The doctoral student should bear the ethical implications of their research activity in mind and respect the UOC's Code of Good Practice in Research and Innovation.

Article 7. Admission and monitoring the research plan

The research plan is a document prepared by the doctoral student with the agreement of their supervisor and endorsed by their tutor, following the criteria set by the Academic Committee for the programme. This plan describes the original research work to be done by the doctoral student to obtain their doctoral degree.

Before the end of the first year, provided they have completed the educational activity set out in their specialisation for this period, signed the letter of commitment for the doctoral programme and had a thesis supervisor appointed, doctoral students should ask the Academic Committee for the programme to assess their research plan.

During this process, the Academic Committee has to take account of the document of activities and the reports received to assess the content of the research plan and approve it. Approval is needed for the doctoral student to remain on the doctoral programme. Every year, the corresponding Academic Committee assesses the progress of the research plan and the document of activities based on the reports received. A positive assessment is needed for the doctoral student to remain on the doctoral programme.

If there is a thesis supervisory committee, its members take part in assessing the research plan and annual assessments to monitor the doctoral student's activity at the end of the academic year. With this purpose in mind, each member has to prepare the corresponding report for the Academic Committee to justify the request that the doctoral student either remain on the programme or be dismissed. In these cases, as far as assessing the research plan presented at the end of the first year is concerned, another doctorate holder with officially certified or otherwise demonstrable research experience appointed by the Academic Committee, together with the thesis supervisory committee, will also take part in the assessment process by issuing the corresponding report on whether or not to approve the plan.

The document of activities is a personal register keeping track of progress that shows to what extent the research competences have been reached. This document includes all the activities to be carried out by the doctoral student and should be regularly reviewed by the tutor, the thesis supervisor and the Academic Committee and, the supervisory committee (if applicable).

Provided the doctoral student continues to meet the requirements for remaining on the course, all the annual monitoring assessments should take account of the educational and research activity carried out by the doctoral student during the period in question.

Up until the legal deadline for presenting theses for doctoral programmes governed by Royal Decrees 778/1998 and 56/2005, the Academic Committee for the programme may set out specific measures to monitor thesis projects registered on these programmes. If these doctoral students and their thesis supervisors fail to provide sufficient evidence of the progress of their thesis to ensure it will be presented within the deadline, the Academic Committee will take the necessary measures.

Article 8. The doctoral thesis

8.1. The doctoral thesis

The doctoral thesis is a piece of original research work prepared by the doctoral student in one of the areas of knowledge of the doctoral programme that makes a contribution to accumulated knowledge in fields and lines of research at the UOC and which equips the doctoral student for independent work in the field of research, development and innovation.

The doctoral thesis may be prepared, presented and defended in English, Spanish or Catalan. It may only be written and defended in a different language if this is justified and authorised by the Academic Committee for the corresponding programme. The thesis defence must take place at the UOC premises designated by the Academic Committee for the programme.

The doctoral thesis may be presented as a compendium of different publications, provided the additional requirements for this kind of thesis are met, as set out in these regulations.

8.2. Formal characteristics of a thesis as a compendium of publications

A doctoral thesis as a compendium of publications should follow the same procedures for being deposited, admitted and defended before an examining board set out in Article 9 in these regulations.

Characteristics concerning the content of the doctoral thesis:

- A doctoral thesis as a compendium of publications is presented and defended based on a report accompanying the articles that make it up. This report must include an introduction justifying the relevance and pertinence of the doctoral students' contributions to their area of research, a section justifying the coherence between the publications and the thesis's object of research, a complete copy of all the publications and a series of conclusions based on the results obtained in the published research.
- Other publications by the doctoral student on the subject may be included as an appendix.

Characteristics concerning the publications:

- The doctoral student should be the first or second author of the publications presented and should have stated their position at the university.
- The publications should be articles published in journals indexed in the Journal Citation Reports (JCR). Other publications with a peer-review process may also be admitted if they are included in other indexes, provided these indexes are considered to be a reference in the area of knowledge and are borne in mind in the assessment processes by the quality accreditation agencies.
- In the case of publications that do not meet the above requirement, the doctoral student should provide a justification describing the process by which the originals were accepted and considering

the relevance of this process in the area of knowledge of the thesis. This report should include details of the members of the scientific committee or equivalent body that accepted the publication. This publication process should include a peer review of the accepted publications.

- The Academic Committee should validate the admission and pertinence of these publications, either based on prior consultation by the doctoral student or when the thesis is deposited.

Characteristics concerning the age and number of publications:

- The publications provided should have been published or accepted for publication within the last four years before the thesis is submitted.
- There should be a minimum of three publications in the case of articles published in JCR journals or a recognised reference index and a minimum of five publications if they do not meet the above requirement. In the latter case, there must be at least one publication in an indexed journal.

8.3. Requirements for requesting an international mention

The doctoral student may request an international mention on their doctoral degree. This means including "international Doctorate" on the front of the certificate, provided the following circumstances are met:

- a) During the period of education required to obtain the doctoral degree, the student should have spent at least three months outside Spain at a prestigious higher education institution or research centre and should have completed courses or carried out research work recognised as theirs by the university. The time spent there and the activities carried out should have been endorsed by the thesis supervisory committee and authorised by the Academic Committee for the doctoral programme and should be included in the doctoral student's document of activities.
- b) Part of the doctoral thesis, at least the abstract and conclusions, should have been written and presented in one of the usual languages for scientific communication in the area of knowledge. This language must not be any of the official languages in Spain, unless the candidates spent time in countries where one of these languages is an official language.
- c) At least two experts belonging to a higher education or research centre in a country other than Spain should have issued a report on the thesis.
- d) At least one expert from a higher education institution or research centre in a country other than Spain, with a doctoral degree, should have formed part of the assessment board for the thesis; this person should not have been responsible for the time spent abroad mentioned in Section (a) of this article.

8.4. Extraordinary doctorate prizes

Every academic year, each doctoral programme may award extraordinary doctoral prizes in accordance with the scientific value of the thesis defended.

This prize may be awarded to all thesis graded as excellent *cum laude*, even though the doctoral students who prepared them might not have requested it.

A maximum of one extraordinary prize may be awarded for every ten theses defended in each programme or fraction. The prizes may be declared void, and no joint prizes may be given.

The proposal for awarding the prize is made by a board appointed by the Academic Committee and made up of three lecturers or researchers at the UOC with doctorates and officially certified or otherwise demonstrable research experience who take part in the doctoral programme. Exceptionally, the board may request the collaboration of expert doctorate holders, should the nature of the thesis so require.

The board should present its proposal for extraordinary prizes to the university's governing bodies for definitive approval.

Article 9. Procedures for submitting and orally defending doctoral theses

9.1. Depositing procedure

Once the research paper is complete and authorisation has been obtained from the thesis supervisory committee and other members of the monitoring committee or body, the procedure for submitting and reading the thesis gets under way. In this case, the doctoral student should request the Academic Committee for the programme for permission to submit and orally defend the thesis. The decision by the Academic Committee for the programme should be duly justified and set out in a reasoned report on the thesis.

In addition to the heading and name of the doctoral student, the doctoral thesis should also include the name and surname(s) of the supervisor and, if applicable, the other members of the supervisory committee, the name of the university and, if necessary, the research centre housing the programme.

When depositing their thesis, doctoral students should include the following documents (in electronic format):

- their doctoral thesis,
- a summary of the thesis, up to a maximum of 4000 characters, written in English, Spanish or Catalan.
- a CV including the doctoral students' publications and stating which ones are derived from the doctoral thesis.

The Academic Committee should check that the doctoral student meets all the requirements for depositing their doctoral thesis and should verify that they have authorisations from the doctoral student's thesis supervisor and tutor. Doctoral students will then be told whether or not their thesis will be accepted for submission; reasons will be given if it is not accepted.

In particular, the Academic Committee for the programme also has to review the doctoral student's document of activities before the thesis can be accepted for submission. The tutor has to present the corresponding Academic Committee with a report validating the doctoral student's document of activities.

In the case of theses as a compendium of publications, for the Academic Committee to authorise deposit, the doctoral student should also provide the documentation indicated in the following section.

9.2. Requirements for submitting a thesis as a compendium of publications

To submit a doctoral thesis as a compendium of publications, doctoral students should provide a report signed by the thesis supervisor and the thesis supervisory committee or another monitoring body, putting the case for presenting the thesis in this format.

These reports should take account of the degree of coherence and unity of the publications presented, the level of originality and the contribution made to knowledge on the subject in question. In addition, they should also state the relevance of the publications provided by the doctoral student (for example, by giving the impact factor of the journals in which the articles are published). In the case of co-authored publications, the report should also state the doctoral student's contribution.

If the thesis includes articles written in collaboration with other authors, the doctoral student should provide the following additional documentation:

- the co-authors' written agreement for the doctoral student to present the work as part of their doctoral thesis,
- the co-authors' written agreement not to present the same articles as part of another doctoral thesis.

Once the doctoral thesis as a compendium of publications has been submitted, the regulations governing reading the thesis should be followed.

9.3. Request for an international mention on the doctoral degree

Doctoral students who fulfil the requirements for requesting an international mention on their doctoral degree should provide the following additional documentation when submitting their thesis:

- request for an international mention on the certificate (following the set model),
- a certificate of having spent at least three months outside Spain at a higher education institution or research centre to carry out study or research work,
- the doctoral thesis supervisor's justification of the relevance and use made of the time spent abroad.

The Academic Committee for the programme should confirm that the doctoral student fulfils the requirements for requesting an international mention on their doctoral degree, as well as the requirements concerning the prior reports, the makeup of the examining board and the act of defending the thesis.

9.4. Procedure for reading theses

Once theses have been deposited, they become public and for a period of fifteen working days anyone with a doctoral degree may examine the doctoral thesis and, if necessary, formulate any arguments they see as relevant. These arguments should be presented in writing to the programme coordination, which will pass them on to the Academic Committee.

Those responsible for authorising the submission should issue a reasoned report assessing the thesis, as a necessary prior step to authorising it to be defended. In turn, the Academic Committee for the programme has to request that two experts in the area of the thesis draw up an assessment report on the thesis. These experts must not be the thesis supervisor, tutor or, if applicable, any other members of the thesis supervisory committee.

If the Academic Committee deems it necessary, it will pass on the comments and recommendations to the doctoral student to help them improve their research paper, as a prior step to admitting the thesis to be defended; in this case, the doctoral student will have to reapply for this procedure.

If the doctoral student has fulfilled the requirements for requesting an international mention on their doctoral degree, and has so requested, two experts from a higher education institution or research centre outside Spain are to be asked to draw up an assessment report.

The Academic Committee for the programme should ask the thesis supervisor for a reasoned proposal for seven candidates to make up the thesis jury, which should include at least two members from another institution. This proposal should be accompanied by their normalised CVs and their acceptance to form part of the examining board.

Once the period for submitting theses is over and all the corresponding reports have been received, the Academic Committee for the programme should decide whether to accept the doctoral thesis for oral defence, based on criteria of academic quality and should communicate their decision to the doctoral student.

9.5. Accepting theses to be defended

Once doctoral theses have been accepted to be orally defended, the Academic Committee for the corresponding programme should decide on the makeup of the examining board and communicate its decision to all the members, the doctoral student, the thesis supervisor, and if applicable, the other members of the thesis supervisory committee.

Once their doctoral thesis has been accepted to be defended, the doctoral student has a maximum period of six months to present and defend their thesis. This period may only be extended by the Academic Committee if it is given sufficient duly justified reasons. Should the maximum set period pass without the doctoral student orally defending their thesis, they should take the steps for restarting the processes for submitting and reading theses.

Doctoral students should have paid all the necessary fees before their thesis is accepted for reading. The doctoral student should also provide the programme coordination with six copies of the doctoral thesis in its final binding for the university to give to the members of the examining board.

If the thesis is not accepted for reading, the Academic Committee should prepare a reasoned report setting out the reasons why it has not been accepted for reading. This report should be given to the doctoral student, the thesis supervisor and, if applicable, to the other members of the supervisory committee. In these cases, depending on the reasons justifying an unfavourable resolution, the Academic Committee may set a minimum period for the doctoral student to redo their research paper before reapplying to deposit the thesis.

Article 10. Examining board, defence and assessment of the doctoral thesis

10.1. Thesis jury

Once the doctoral thesis has been authorised to be orally defended, the Academic Committee for the programme decides on the makeup of the thesis jury. This examining board is made up of three regular members and two additional members who are independent experts with a doctorate. The three regular members are from three different institutions; a maximum of one of them may form part of the academic and research staff at the UOC. The Academic Committee also decides where the thesis will be orally

defended and decides which members of the examining board to appoint as chair and secretary. In turn, the chair of the thesis jury is responsible for setting the date for the orally defending and constituting the examining board.

If a member of the examining board has good reason to decline their place, the chair will replace them with the corresponding substitute member.

If the doctoral student has fulfilled the requirements for requesting an international mention on their doctoral degree, at least one of the members of the examining board (and not the person responsible for the doctoral student's time spent abroad) should belong to a higher education institution or research centre outside Spain.

The doctoral thesis supervisor may not form part of the examining board, nor may the co-authors of the published work derived from the thesis research. However, if applicable, one of the members of the thesis supervisory committee other than the supervisor may form part of the thesis jury.

In order for it to assess the thesis, the thesis jury has access to the doctoral student's document of activities. This document does not allow for a quantitative grade, but can be a qualitative assessment tool to complement assessment of the doctoral thesis.

10.2. Defence and assessment of the doctoral thesis

The doctoral thesis is assessed at the public act of defending the thesis, which is set by the chair of the examining board and communicated to the direction of the doctoral programme by the secretary of the examining board at least fifteen calendar days before the day set for the act. It is held in public and involves the doctoral student setting out and defending the work undertaken, the methodology, the contents and the conclusions, with particular emphasis on the original contributions made.

The members of the examining board formulate the questions they wish to put to the doctoral student. Those with a doctoral degree present at the public act may formulate questions at the time and in the format indicated by the chair of the examining board. Once the thesis has been defended and discussed, each member of the examining board gives a written assessment of the defence of the thesis.

The examining board issues a report and overall rating that finally declares the thesis to be either: "accepted" or "not accepted". The examining board may decide to include a *cum laude* mention if there is a unanimous, secret vote in favour by each and every member of the examining board. The Academic Committee for the programme receives the secret votes from each member of the examining board and makes public the final decision regarding the *cum laude* mention, where applicable.

Each programme may set out the criteria it deems necessary for awarding a *cum laude* mention. In this case, guideline criteria should be forwarded to the members of the thesis jury.

If the doctoral student has fulfilled the requirements for requesting an international mention on their doctoral degree, the examining board secretary should prepare an additional record stating that the requirements stipulated by the regulations in force were fulfilled during the thesis defence.

If the thesis is declared to be "not accepted" after its defence, the doctoral student may still remain on the programme, provided that they are still within the maximum period set for remaining on the course. In this case, the doctoral student is obliged to redo and assess their research plan in accordance with the indications given in these regulations and within the previously established timeframe for remaining on the course.

10.3. Publishing the doctoral thesis

Once the doctoral thesis has been approved, the UOC takes responsibility for ensuring open access to it and for storing it in electronic format in the corresponding institutional repository, and sends an electronic copy of the thesis and complementary information to the competent bodies. In addition, it will undertake the procedures to include the doctoral thesis in the online catalogue of doctoral theses.

The doctoral thesis will be published on the Doctoral Thesis Network (TDX) and the UOC's institutional repository (O2). In order to store a digital version of their doctoral thesis, the author will have to sign the corresponding agreement authorising open access to their thesis.

If the thesis contains any aspects subject to confidentiality agreements or if the author has signed an agreement with a publisher to which they have transferred their rights, the thesis will only be published on the O2 and the TDX once the period covered by the confidentiality agreement or copyright-transfer agreement has expired.

Article 11. Doctorate certificate

11.1. Awarding the certificate

Doctoral students who complete all their doctoral studies are eligible to receive a doctoral degree.

The doctoral degree is awarded upon request of the interested party, once they have paid the public price set for this purpose and authorised dissemination of the thesis. The certificate includes the mention of Doctorate degree from the UOC. In addition, in accordance with regulations concerning the awarding of

certificates, it also includes the corresponding information for the subject in which the doctoral thesis has been prepared.

11.2. Honorary degrees

The UOC may award honorary degrees to anyone whose academic, scientific or personal achievements make them worthy of this distinction.

Proposals for awarding an honorary degree are made to the president, the heads of studies or the heads of research centres or institutes at the university and are approved by the governing council.

11.3. Homologation of foreign Doctorate certificates

The president of the UOC has the power to homologate foreign Doctorate degrees.

The procedure is started upon the request of the interested party addressed to the president in accordance with the model and procedures set by the university.

The request must be accompanied by the following documentation:

- a certificate accrediting the nationality of the person in question (an attested photocopy of their identity card or passport),
- an attested copy of the doctoral degree requested to be homologated or a certificate showing that the doctoral degree was awarded,
- an attested copy of the academic certificate stating the studies undertaken by the person in question to obtain their postgraduate degree, which should state at least the official length (in academic years) of the programme of study followed, the subjects taken, the time devoted to each subject and the qualifications obtained,
- an explanatory report of the doctoral thesis carried out (written in English, Spanish or Catalan), stating the members of the examining committee and the grade awarded,
- a copy of the doctoral thesis,
- accreditation of payment of the amount set by law for official fees,
- a statutory declaration, in accordance with the model provided, stating that the certificate has not been homologated in Spain, that the same certificate has not been requested to be homologated at another university at the same time, and that their studies corresponding to the certificate requested to be homologated have not been validated in order to continue further study in Spain.

In addition, other documents may be requested if they are considered necessary for accrediting the equivalence between the education that leads to obtaining the foreign certificate provided and that required to obtain the Spanish doctoral degree with which it is to be homologated, or for certification of

the university or competent body in the country of origin; these documents should state that the certificate is officially valid in said country and is integrated within its education system or is recognised as equivalent to those studies.

Documents issued abroad should meet the following requirements:

- They should be official documents issued by the competent authorities for this matter in accordance with legislation in the country of origin.
- If the authorities who issued the documents do not belong to European Union member states or to ones that have not signed the European Economic Area agreement, the documents should be legalised by diplomatic means or, if necessary, by using a Hague Convention apostille.
- If they have not been issued in English, Spanish or Catalan, they should be accompanied by a sworn translation into one of these languages.

Once all the general homologation requirements have been fulfilled and the documentation related to the request for the process in question has been received, the Academic Committee for the programme considered most suitable should carry out the corresponding assessment to confirm that they fulfil the requirements for doctoral theses completed within the framework of the doctoral programme, and, once checked and accepted by the doctoral programme board, prepare a report on whether the Doctorate certificate should be homologated.

Once the corresponding Academic Committee has validated it, the reasoned proposal should be sent for the president to make a decision.

The university's administrative bodies are responsible for communicating the decision to the applicant and, if favourable, the corresponding accreditation will be processed.

This homologation in no way implies the homologation or recognition of the foreign degree certificate or the equivalent academic level of the interested party.

Addenda / Additional regulations

In accordance with Royal Decree 99/2011, the sections corresponding to the doctoral thesis, the procedures and thesis oral defence, the examining board, the thesis defence and thesis assessment (set out in Articles 8, 9, 10 and 11 therein) also apply to students studying syllabuses governed by Royal Decrees 1393/2007, 56/2005 and 778/1998.