

REGULATIONS GOVERNING OFFICIAL DOCTORAL STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MURCIA

Approved by the university Governing Board on the 22nd July, 2022

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

ARTICLE 1. Objective

In accordance with the applicable basic state regulations, and in the scope of the University of Murcia, the aim of this document is to develop and specify the regulations of:

- a) The structure and organisation of doctoral studies.
- b) The development of doctoral studies.
- c) The rights and duties of doctoral students, tutors, and thesis supervisors.
- d) The doctoral thesis, its nature, competences to be acquired by the student, elaboration, modalities, title denomination and associated mentions, procedure for the presentation, deposit, and defence of the thesis.
- e) Extraordinary doctoral prizes.
- f) Resolution of conflicts, claims, appeals, and controls regarding thesis elaboration.

ARTICLE 2. Definitions

1. A doctorate is deemed to be the third cycle of official university studies, leading to the acquisition of competences and skills related with high-quality scientific research.
2. A doctoral programme is deemed to be a set of activities leading to the acquisition of the necessary competences and skills to obtain the qualification of doctor. The objective of said programme shall be the development of the different educational aspects of the doctoral student and the programme shall set out the procedures and research lines for the preparation of doctoral theses.
3. A doctoral student is deemed to be a person who, after proof of compliance with the requirements established in these regulations, has been accepted and has enrolled on a doctoral programme.
4. The supervisor is the person ultimately responsible for directing the research tasks of the doctoral student, in accordance with the terms set forth in Article 15 of these regulations.
5. The tutor is responsible for the appropriateness of the training and the research activity at the beginning of the programmes and, where appropriate, of the International School for Doctoral Studies at the University of Murcia (hereinafter, EIDUM), under the terms of Article 13 of these Regulations.
6. The Academic Committee of each programme is responsible for its definition, updating, quality and coordination, as well as for the supervision of the progress of the training and research of each doctoral student on the programme, and for authorising the presentation of the doctoral thesis.
7. A document of the doctoral student's activities is understood to be the individualised control record of these activities, materialised in the corresponding support. The thesis supervisor and the tutor will review this document. It will be assessed by the Academic Committee annually.
8. The EIDUM is the unit of the University of Murcia in charge of the teachings and activities of the studies of those programmes integrated in it, within its scope of management.

CHAPTER 1 STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

ARTICLE 3. Doctoral Studies Bodies

The following are the doctoral studies bodies of the University of Murcia:

- a) General Committee for Doctoral Studies.
- b) Academic Committee of each doctoral programme.
- c) Doctoral programme coordinators.
- d) The EIDUM

ARTICLE 4. General Committee for Doctoral Studies

1. The General Committee for Doctoral Studies is made up by:

- a) The deputy rector with authority regarding matters pertaining to the third cycle, or the civil servant in whom they delegate, who will be the chair.
- b) The deputy rector with authority regarding matters pertaining to research.
- c) Five coordinators of the doctoral programme committees representing the fields of knowledge of Arts and Humanities, Sciences, Social and Legal Sciences, Health Sciences, and Engineering and Architecture, who will be elected in the EIDUM Steering Committee for a period of four years.
- d) The EIDUM director.
- e) If applicable, the coordinator responsible for doctoral studies, who will act as secretary.
- f) A representative of the Area for Academic Management.

2. The duties of the General Committee for Doctoral Studies are as follows:

- a) Report on the proposals for new doctoral programmes formulated by the EIDUM.
- b) Authorise the defence of doctoral theses, after approval by the academic committee of the doctoral programme and appointment of the thesis examination board, according to Articles 35 and 36.
- c) Propose the common admission and enrolment periods relating to doctoral studies.
- d) Ensure compliance with the terms established in these regulations which are necessary to proceed to reading the doctoral thesis.
- e) Report on the framework rules applicable to the awarding of extraordinary doctoral prizes, prior to their approval, if applicable, by the Governing Board.
- f) Resolve the incidents, proceedings or matters that are not attributed to or that exceed the scope of the EIDUM, as well as any other that may be submitted to its consideration.
- g) Any other matter that may be attributed to it by legislation or, in the framework thereof, by the governing bodies of the University.

3. The General Doctoral Committee will have as its support body, in the academic management of doctoral studies, the Postgraduate Section of the Academic Management Area of the University of Murcia or the body that replaces it

ARTICLE 5. Academic Committee of the Doctoral Programme

1. Each doctoral programme must have an academic committee, comprised as follows:

- a) The chair, who shall be the coordinator of the doctoral programme appointed by the rector, according to what is set out in Article 8.4 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January.
- b) A maximum of six incumbent members and two alternate members, elected by and from among the doctors who are part of the programme. To be eligible it is necessary

to meet the conditions necessary to be a doctoral thesis supervisor, according to the provisions of Articles 14.

c) One representative of the EIDUM who meets the same conditions of aptitude as those required to supervise doctoral theses.

A representative of the student body and, where appropriate, a representative of the companies and institutions involved in the programme shall attend as guests, with the right to speak but without voting rights.

2. The General Committee for Doctoral Studies may authorise the inclusion of a higher number of members on the academic committee if so required due to the size and complexity of the programme.

3. The members referred to in paragraph 1.b) shall serve for a term of four years. Adequate representation must be sought in the composition of this group by means of the proportional participation of the different departments, centres or university research institutes that intervene in the programme.

4. The students' representative shall hold office for a period of two years.

5. All the members of the academic committee, who act in representation of the different departments or institutes, must be listed in the specifications of the qualification, and they must be dedicated full-time to the University of Murcia with a permanent connection. In the case of inter-university programmes, their configuration shall be governed by the provisions of the agreement.

6. The duties of the academic committee of each doctoral programme are as follows:

- a) To assist the doctoral programme coordinator in the management of the programme.
- b) To approve the proposal for the selection of students.
- c) To authorise extensions for completion of the thesis.
- d) To authorise a change in the system of dedication of studies.
- e) To authorise temporary leave from the programme that may be requested by doctoral students.
- f) To assign a tutor to each doctoral student, after admission to the programme.
- g) At the request of the doctoral student, to assign him/her a thesis supervisor or co-supervisors within three months from enrolment onto the programme.
- h) After a hearing with the doctoral student, the supervisor, and the tutor, amend the appointment of the doctoral thesis supervisor, with justifiable reasons. No changes may be made to the thesis supervision after the third year of full-time or fourth year of part-time enrolment or during extensions, except in the case of unforeseen situations in which the academic committee of the doctoral programme will justify its proposal to the EIDUM standing committee or its steering committee. In order to recognise the co-supervision of a doctoral candidate incorporated in this exceptional way, at least one year must have elapsed from the date of authorisation by the Academic Committee to the date of deposit of the thesis; otherwise, this co-supervision will not be recognised.
- i) To annually assess the research plan and the activity document of the students, together with the reports that must be issued for such purpose by the tutor and the supervisor.
- j) To authorise the submission of doctoral theses.
- k) To formulate the proposal for the appointment of members of the thesis examination board.
- l) To establish the criteria for the use of the economic resources allocated to the funding of the doctoral programme, in accordance with the guidelines established by the University.

m) To appoint subcommittees, if deems appropriate for the optimum functioning of the doctoral studies offered; the activities and proposals of which shall be subject to approval by the academic committee.

n) To analyse, in cooperation with the quality coordinator of the centre, the results of the programme indicated by the quality assurance system and report to the quality assurance committee of the EIDUM.

Any other matter that may be assigned to them by legislation, by the governing bodies of the University of Murcia or by the General Committee for Doctoral Studies.

ARTICLE 6. Doctoral programmes coordination

1. Each doctoral programme must have a coordinator. The coordinator is appointed by the rector, after a hearing with the academic committee; or by an agreement among rectors, in the event of joint programmes; or, if applicable, in accordance with the indications in the agreement with other institutions when a doctorate is developed in cooperation.

2. The doctoral programme coordinator must be a relevant researcher, who must previously have supervised at least two doctoral theses and who can justify the completion of at least two recognised periods of research activity recognised by the CNEAI applying Royal Decree 1086/1989, of 28 August (Official State Gazette on 09-09-1989), on the remuneration of university teaching staff. Should said researcher hold a position that is not subject to the aforementioned assessment criterion, they must have proven merits equivalent to those stated, the recognition of which corresponds to the General Committee for Doctoral Studies.

3. The functions of the doctoral programme coordinator are as follows:

- a) Act on behalf of the respective academic committee.
- b) Inform the EIDUM about the planning of the doctoral programme.
- c) Chair the academic committee of the corresponding doctoral programme.
- d) Communicate the list of students accepted onto the doctoral programme to the management unit authorised for that purpose, within the established periods.
- e) Coordinate the development and monitoring of the programme.
- f) Assist the EIDUM quality coordinator in quality assessment processes of the qualification.
- g) Disseminate any relevant information relating to the doctoral programme's academic management to the teaching staff.
- h) Mediate in the event of possible conflicts due to non-compliance or disagreements regarding the commitment document regulated in article 16 of these regulations or other controversies regarding the development of the doctoral programme, under the terms set out in article 44 of these regulations.
- i) Any other matter that may be assigned to them by legislation, by the governing bodies of the University of Murcia or by the General Committee for Doctoral Studies.

ARTICLE 7. International School for Doctoral Studies of the University of Murcia.

1. The EIDUM was created by Decree no. 112/2012, of 7 September, of the Governing Council of the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia at the request of the University of Murcia and is governed by the provisions of Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, on Universities, by Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, by the Statutes and Doctoral Regulations of the University of Murcia and by its own Regulations.

2. The EIDUM shall have internal regulations which shall establish, among other aspects, the rights and duties of doctoral students, in accordance with the University Students' Statute, approved by Royal Decree 1791/2010, of 30 December, and those of the tutors and the thesis supervisors, as well as the composition and duties of the academic committees and their programmes. The internal regulations shall be

approved, if applicable, by the Governing Board at the proposal of the General Committee for Doctoral Studies of the University of Murcia.

3. The EIDUM shall draw up and adopt a code of good practices. All members of the committee must subscribe their commitment to comply with the adopted code of good practices.

4. Other universities, organisations, centres, institutions, and entities with R&D activities, whether public or private, national, or foreign, may participate in or cooperate with the EIDUM. Participation by these bodies shall require the approval of the Governing Board, following a report by the General Committee for Doctoral Studies.

5. The EIDUM will plan the offer of activities needed for training doctoral students. The training offer at the doctoral level will be related to its research strategy.

6. The EIDUM and the programmes ascribed to it must guarantee leadership and a sufficient critical mass of lecturing doctors and of doctoral students in the scope of its knowledge.

7. To ascribe a doctoral programme to the EIDUM the following shall be valued as priority:

a) All participating lecturers have proven research experience.

b) That the lecturers who participate accredit public or private funding in their lines of research as well as quality scientific production. It shall be positively assessed that research groups participating in a programme have at least one competitive project (at international, national, or regional level) in the topics of the lines of research of the programme. Funding for one programme may not be used in the proposal of any other. In order for funding to be accepted as ascribed to a programme, the principal researcher or person responsible must be a lecturer on said programme or on the staff of an entity that collaborates with it.

c) That among the lecturers of each doctoral programme there should be at least five who meet the minimum requirements established to be a coordinator of a doctoral programme in accordance with Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January.

d) As a general rule, no lecturer of a doctoral programme ascribed to the EIDUM may participate in other doctoral programmes of the EIDUM itself or of the University of Murcia. When there are reasons that justify it, the General Doctoral Committee, following a favourable and justifying report from the corresponding Academic Committees of the doctoral programmes concerned, may waive this limitation. This authorisation shall not be necessary in the event of participation in inter-university doctoral programmes.

e) The following shall also be valued:

i) That the research lines of the programme include the participation of national and international external teaching staff of recognised prestige, who are supported by accredited research.

ii) That it is an inter-university programme that represents a relevant critical mass within an entire area of knowledge.

iii) That it is an international programme with the presence of universities of recognised prestige.

8. The EIDUM shall have a management committee, which shall perform the duties relating to the organisation and management of the school and which shall be formed by, at least, the management team of the school (director, vice-director, and academic secretary), the coordinators of its doctoral programmes and representatives of the cooperating bodies. This management committee will also include representatives of the Research Committee, the vice-rectorate responsible for international relations and the vice-rectorate responsible for doctoral studies; doctoral students; administration

and service staff linked to the EIDUM itself and staff from the Academic Management Area who carry out the functions of student records management.

9. The director of the EIDUM shall be appointed by the rector, or at the consensus of the rectors when several universities participate in the school. He/she must be a researcher of recognised prestige who belongs to the University of Murcia. This condition must be endorsed by the justification of the possession of at least three research activity periods recognised by the CNEAI in application of Royal Decree 1018/89, of 28 August (Official State Gazette on 09-09-1989).

CHAPTER II DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

Section 1. Organisation of doctoral studies

ARTICLE 8. Doctoral programme

Doctoral studies are organised via programmes, in the manner determined by the Statutes of the University of Murcia, and according to the criteria established in Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, which regulates official doctoral studies, and with the current regulations.

ARTICLE 9. Development of doctoral training

1. Doctoral programmes shall take into account the general principles that should inspire the design of the new qualifications, established in Article 4.1 of Royal Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, which establishes the organisation of official university studies and the quality assurance procedure.

2. Doctoral programmes shall include organised aspects of research training that do not require structuring into ECTS credits and which shall include both transversal training as well as training that is specific to the scope of each programme, and when applicable, the transversal, although in any case the essential activity of the doctoral student will be research.

3. The organisation of said training and the procedures for its control must be expressed in the specifications for the verification of doctoral programmes included in Appendix I of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January which, in accordance with Article 4.2 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, shall be part of the subsequent assessment for the purposes of renewal of the accreditation of said programmes.

4. The training activities carried out by the doctoral student shall be recorded in the activity document defined in Article 2 of these Regulations, which constitutes the individualised record of control of these activities, materialised in the corresponding support. This document will be regularly reviewed by the tutor and the thesis supervisor and evaluated by the academic committee responsible for the doctoral programme.

Section 2. Access, admission, and enrolment

ARTICLE 10. Access requirements

1. Generally:

1.- In order to access an official doctoral programme, it will be necessary to hold an official Spanish bachelor's degree, or equivalent, and a university master's degree, or equivalent, provided that at least 300 ECTS credits have been passed in these two studies.

2.- Additionally, those who meet the following requirements may also be granted access to the programme:

a) Have an official Spanish university degree, or of another country belonging to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), giving access to a master's degree programme as per the provisions of Article 16 of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, and have

passed a minimum of 300 ECTS of official university studies, of which at least 60 must be at master's degree level.

b) Have an official Spanish Graduate Diploma containing, according to EU law, at least 300 ECTS. These graduates must compulsorily complete the training supplements referred to in article 7.2 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of January 28, unless the syllabus of the corresponding degree includes credits in research training that are equivalent in training value to research credits in master's degree programmes.

c) University graduates who, after obtaining a training place in the corresponding test to access specialised health training, have successfully passed at least two years training in a programme to obtain the official title of one of the specialities in Health Sciences.

d) Have a qualification obtained in accordance with foreign education systems, it need not be officially recognised, the General Doctorate Committee will verify that this qualification accredits a training level equivalent to that of the official Spanish Master's degree and gives access to doctoral studies in the country where it was issued. This admission does not imply, in any case, the official recognition of a student's previous degrees nor its recognition for purposes others than accessing doctoral education.

e) To be in possession of another Spanish title of doctor obtained according to previous university regulations.

f) Be in possession of an official university degree that has obtained the correspondence to level 3 of the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES in Spanish), in accordance with the procedure established in Royal Decree 967/2014, of 21 November, which establishes the requirements and procedure for the homologation and declaration of equivalence to an official university qualification and academic level and for the validation of foreign higher education studies, and the procedure for determining the correspondence to the levels of the MECES of the official qualifications of architect, engineer, graduate, technical architect, technical engineer and diploma holder.

2. Special cases.

Those students who seek to access official doctoral studies, who are in possession of a higher education degree obtained in accordance with educational systems outside the EHEA, without the need for prior recognition of the degree, must apply for proof of a level of education equivalent to the corresponding Spanish studies.

3. Other cases

Graduates, architects, or engineers in possession of the diploma for advanced studies obtained in accordance with that set forth in Royal Decree 778/1998, of 30 April, or those who have obtained the research sufficiency regulated by Royal Decree 185/1985, of 23 January, may be admitted onto doctoral studies, when they have not obtained the title of doctor with these studies, and it is foreseen in the doctoral programme applied for.

ARTICLE 11. Selection and admission criteria.

1. Notwithstanding that established in Article 7 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, selection and admission to a doctoral programme is subject to the following rules:

a) Selection for a doctoral programme shall be carried out by the academic committee of the corresponding doctoral programme.

To perform the selection process, the academic committee shall use the criteria previously established in the verification specifications which must consider, without prejudice to other matters, the following:

i) An assessment of the academic curriculum vitae.

ii) An appraisal of the merits of special relevance or significance with regard to the doctoral programme applied for.

iii) Any other criterion or procedure previously specified and reasoned which in the opinion of the academic committee enables the verification of the applicant's suitability to undertake said studies.

b) The ruling regarding admission to a doctoral programme shall be issued by the rector, at the proposal of the academic committee of the corresponding doctoral programme and without prejudice to the delegations of authority or signature that may be issued in favour of the director of the EIDUM.

2. Admission to doctoral programmes may include the requirement for specific compulsory training complements, the design of which must be included in the corresponding verification specifications and completion of which shall not count for the purposes of the limit established for its duration in Article 3.2 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January. For the purposes of public prizes and the awarding of grants and study aids, said training complements shall have the consideration of education at doctoral level, where appropriate.

3. The lists of those admitted to the doctoral programme shall be published on the notice board of the EIDUM. Other means of publication may be established by a resolution of the rector.

4. The admissions procedure shall be subject to that which is established in the admission and enrolment regulations and instructions of the University of Murcia approved for the academic year in question.

5. In the case of students with special educational needs deriving from a disability, the selection and admissions systems and procedures must include the appropriate support and assessment services, which shall assess the need for possible curricular or itinerary adaptations or alternative studies.

ARTICLE 12. Enrolment

1. Students admitted onto a doctoral programme shall enrol annually at the University of Murcia, for the concept of academic tutoring of the doctorate. In the event of joint doctorates with another university or institution authorised for such a purpose, the agreement shall determine the form in which enrolment will take place.

2. Enrolment shall be completed at the management unit authorised for that purpose, in accordance with the requirements established in the complementary rules and instructions for admission and enrolment approved by the University of Murcia for each academic year.

3. Once enrolled on the doctoral programme, each doctoral student will be assigned a thesis supervisor by the corresponding academic committee; if this is not done at that time, a thesis supervisor must be appointed within a maximum period of three months after enrolment. The thesis supervisor may be the same person as the tutor. The academic committee, after a hearing with the student and, if applicable, the supervisor and the tutor, may modify the appointment of the tutor or of the director at any time during the period of completion of the doctorate, provided that the reasons are justified as set forth in article 5.6.h.

Section 3. On the tutor and thesis supervisor

ARTICLE 13. Thesis supervision

1. The tutor must be a doctor, professor of the doctoral programme, with accredited research experience, linked to the International Doctoral School of the University of Murcia. The tutor is responsible for safeguarding the student's interaction with the corresponding academic committee.

2. The duties of the tutor are as follows:

- a) To regularly review the student's personalised activity document, together with the thesis supervisor.
- b) To approve the research plan prepared by the doctoral student, together with the thesis supervisor, before the end of the first year.
- c) To sign the commitment document, together with the university, the student, and the supervisor.
- d) To annually issue and communicate the report contemplated in Article 11.7 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, to the academic committee.

ARTICLE 14. Thesis supervision

1. When admitted onto the doctoral programme, each doctoral student will be assigned a thesis supervisor by the corresponding academic committee at the request of the student. Any doctor, Spanish or foreign, with accredited research experience may be the thesis supervisor or co-supervisor, at the discretion of the programme's academic committee, regardless of the university, centre, or institution in which he/she works. In the event of thesis co-supervision, the requirement of three years at the level of doctor will only be demanded of one of the co-supervisors. Professors' emeritus may co-supervise doctoral theses. (The text of this point was approved by Governing Council on 15/3/2019) The tutor may be the same person as the thesis director. In the event that a thesis supervisor is not assigned at the time of admission, the Academic Committee must appoint a thesis supervisor within a maximum period of three months after enrolment.

2. The academic committee of the doctoral programme or, if applicable, the EIDUM, may establish additional requirements, which must be published, for the position of thesis supervisor or co-supervisor.

3. After authorisation by the academic committee, the thesis may be co-supervised by other doctors owing to reasons of an academic nature, such as the case of interdisciplinary topics or programmes developed with national or international cooperation. The authorisation to intervene as a co-supervisor and the corresponding appointment may be revoked by the academic committee at any time throughout the programme, after a hearing with the student, the tutor, and the co-supervisors, if there are justified reasons for doing so, such as the co-supervision not being beneficial to the development of the thesis.

4. In the event of co-supervised theses, the maximum number of supervisors shall be three, of which only two may be from the University of Murcia. The decisions and reports of the co-supervisors must be adopted and issued unanimously.

5. The thesis supervisor has overall responsibility for ensuring the coherence and suitability of the training activities, the impact and innovative nature of the theme of the doctoral thesis in its field and for providing guidance in planning and adaptation, if applicable, to that of other projects and activities for which the student is enrolled.

6. The duties of the thesis supervisor are:

- a) To regularly review the student's personalised activity document, together with the tutor.
- b) To approve, together with the tutor and prior to the end of each enrolment year, the research plan prepared by the doctoral student.
- c) To sign the commitment document together with the university, the doctoral student, and the tutor.
- d) To issue and communicate the report contemplated in Article 11.7 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, to the academic committee annually.

- e) To validate, where appropriate, the doctoral student stays and activities required for the inclusion, if applicable, in the mention "International Doctoral Research Component" in accordance with the provisions of Article 15.1.a of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January.
- f) To helping the doctoral student to define the subject of his/her doctoral research that will culminate in the doctoral thesis, face the different aspects related with the research and establish the specific details with regard to such research, as well as the means required and, if applicable, the design of experiments.
- g) To orient the doctoral student on the most suitable training activities for the research.
- h) To communicate to the doctoral student any rule or ethical aspect that may bear a relationship on their research.
- i) To establish the programme for supervision of the research work undertaken, and to schedule regular meetings.
- j) To read, correct, and comment on the draft versions of the thesis, in its successive versions, prior to the date agreed for submission.
- k) To know the administrative and academic requirements for the defence of the thesis and the deadlines corresponding to the entire process as well as ensuring that the doctoral student is aware of them.

Section 4. Development of doctoral studies

ARTICLE 15. Activities document

- 1.** After enrolment on the programme, a personalised activities document must be prepared for each doctoral student for the purpose of the individual control record referred to by Article 2.5 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January. That document must record all the activities of interest for the completion of the doctorate in accordance with the rules of the university, the school, or the academic committee itself and it must be regularly reviewed by the tutor and the thesis supervisor and assessed by the academic committee responsible for the doctoral programme.
- 2.** The personalised activities document must be prepared as per the form designed for such purpose in accordance with a ruling by the rector.

ARTICLE 16. Commitment document and supervision of doctoral students

- 1.** The duties of supervision of doctoral students are established by means of a commitment document signed by the deputy rector competent for doctoral studies, the doctoral student, the tutor and the supervisor or co-supervisors. The commitment must be signed as soon as possible after admission and enrolment and, in any case, within three months from the appointment of the tutor and supervisor.
- 2.** The commitment document must include the unconditional acceptance of the doctoral student and the supervisor with regard to the system of respective rights and duties contemplated in these regulations. It must likewise include a procedure for conflict resolution, pursuant to the provisions of Article 17, and 22 of these Regulations, and must contemplate the aspects relating to intellectual or industrial property rights that may be generated in the scope of the doctoral programme.
- 3.** The commitment document, once signed by the parties, is filed in the student's academic record.
- 4.** The commitment document must comply with the form established by virtue of a ruling by the rector.

ARTICLE 17. Monitoring

- 1.** Prior to completion of the first year, the doctoral student must prepare a research plan, in accordance with the form designed for that purpose, approved by the tutor and by the supervisor. The student may improve and add to the research plan throughout their time on the programme and it must include at least the following sections:

- a) Identification details of the doctoral student and the supervisor or co-supervisors of the proposed thesis.
- b) Title of the thesis proposal.
- c) Summary of the proposal.
- d) Intended objectives.
- e) Work plan with an estimate of the time and resources needed to achieve the proposed objectives and with an express mention, where appropriate, of the specific training complements to be carried out.
- f) Methodology to be used.
- g) Bibliography.

2. Annually, the academic committee of the programme will assess the research plan and the activities document of the students, together with the reports that must be issued for such purpose by the tutor and the supervisor. The result of the assessment, whether favourable or unfavourable due to significant shortcomings, will be signed by the president of the committee and will be included in the student's file. A favourable assessment is a prerequisite for continuation in the programme. In the event that the academic committee detects significant shortcomings, it may request that the doctoral student submit a new research plan within six months. Should the shortcomings continue to occur, the academic committee must issue a reasoned report and the doctoral student will be definitively withdrawn from the programme.

To this end, the rector shall issue the appropriate decision, at the proposal of the academic committee responsible for the doctoral programme and after hearing the doctoral student and after a report from the General Doctoral Committee.

ARTICLE 18. Duration and continuation of studies

1. In accordance with Article 3.2 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, the maximum duration of doctoral studies shall be three years, full time, from admission of the student onto the programme until submission of the doctoral thesis.

2. Notwithstanding the above, and subject to authorisation by the academic committee responsible for the programme, doctoral studies may be completed on a part-time basis. In that case such studies may have a maximum duration of five years from admission onto the programme until submission of the doctoral thesis.

3. If upon completion of said term of three years the application for submission of the thesis has not been presented, the academic committee responsible for the programme may authorise an extension to this term for one more year, which may exceptionally be extended by another additional year, in the conditions established in the corresponding doctoral programme. In the case of part-time studies, the extension may be authorised for two more years which may likewise, exceptionally, be increased by another additional year.

4. Calculation of the above period shall not consider leave for illness, pregnancy, or any other cause contemplated by the regulations in force.

5. Likewise, the doctoral student may request temporary leave from the programme for a maximum period of one year, which may be extended by one further year. Said request must be addressed and justified to the academic committee responsible for the programme, which shall pronounce on the appropriateness of agreeing to the student's request.

CHAPTER III

RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS, TUTORS, AND SUPERVISORS

Section 1. Rights

ARTICLE 19. Rights of doctoral students

Doctoral students have the following rights:

- 1.** The common rights of university students and the specific rights of doctoral students established in the University Students' Statute, approved by Royal Decree 1791/2010, of 30 December.
- 2.** The rights that, in their capacity as students at the University of Murcia, are recognised in the Statutes of the University of Murcia, insofar as they are applicable to students of the third cycle.
- 3.** The doctoral student will have the right to be recognised as the holder of the intellectual or industrial property rights that may correspond to him/her in accordance with current legislation and to appear as co-author in all the works, articles, or communications that the research work in which the doctoral student has participated in a relevant way are presented.

With regard to any industrial property rights that the doctoral student may have over the results of the research, the student will be subject to the provisions of the legislation on university patents and the regulations approved by the University of Murcia.

ARTICLE 20. Rights of tutors

Tutors have the following rights:

- 1.** Recognition by the University of Murcia of the tutoring of doctoral students as part of their teaching dedication under the terms established in the applicable regulations.
- 2.** Participation in the training activities organised by the EIDUM or the doctoral programme to promote the responsible fulfilment of the duties assigned to them in these regulations and in the other provisions in force.
- 3.** Withdraw from thesis tutoring when, in the opinion of the General Doctoral Committee, following a reasoned report from the Programme's Academic Committee, there is a justified cause in accordance with the terms set out in these regulations.
- 4.** All others that are legally recognised.

ARTICLE 21. Rights of supervisors

Thesis supervisors have the following rights:

- 1.** Recognition by the University of Murcia of the work of supervising doctoral theses as part of their teaching dedication under the terms established in the applicable regulations.
- 2.** Participation in the training activities organised by the EIDUM or the doctoral programme to promote the responsible fulfilment of the duties assigned to them in these regulations and in the other provisions in force.
- 3.** Withdraw from the supervision of the thesis when, in the opinion of the General Doctoral Committee, following a reasoned report from the Programme's Academic Committee, there is a justified cause in accordance with the terms set out in these regulations.
- 4.** All others that are legally recognised.

Section 2. Duties

ARTICLE 22. Duties of the doctoral students

1. Doctoral students have the following duties:

- a) Those of a general nature established in Article 13 of the University Students' Statute and in the Statutes of the University of Murcia, insofar as they are applicable to doctoral students.
- b) Those that specifically result from the contractual legal system to which they are subject, if applicable.

2. In particular, doctoral students, as third cycle students, are subject to the following specific duties:

- a) Carry out the training activities established in the doctoral programme.
- b) To present the completed work to the supervisor, in the format and with the frequency previously agreed upon, and to present the manuscript of the thesis to the supervisor for final review, sufficiently in advance of the date agreed upon for submission.
- c) To consult with their supervisor prior to performing any other additional activity in the university, in order to jointly assess the possible repercussions of this on the student's dedication to the doctoral thesis.
- d) To comply with occupational safety requirements or any other specific requirements of the workplace where the research is carried out.
- e) To maintain the secrecy of all data and information provided or revealed to them in any form or means of dissemination by the thesis supervisor, tutor, or any other member of the research team of which they may be a member, and which may be considered confidential information; not to reveal, communicate, transfer, or divulge it to third parties, and to use the information obtained solely and exclusively for the purpose of carrying out their doctoral thesis. To this end, the doctoral student will sign any confidentiality commitments that may be required by the thesis supervisor, project supervisor or tutor.
- f) To comply with the ethical rules established by the university.
- g) To complete, if applicable, the specific compulsory complementary training included in the specifications of the programme.

ARTICLE 23. Duties of thesis tutors

Tutors have the following duties:

- 1.** Subscribe to, together with the supervisor of the doctoral thesis and the doctoral student, the document of commitment and supervision provided for in these regulations.
- 2.** To endorse, together with the thesis supervisor, the research plan drawn up by the doctoral student.
- 3.** Guiding the doctoral student during the preparation of the thesis, supervising their work, and ensuring that the objectives set are met.
- 4.** To ensure that the doctoral student's training and research activity are in line with the principles of the programme, and to act as intermediary between the doctoral student and the academic committee.
- 5.** To issue the reports entrusted to it in these regulations and any others that the academic committee or the General Doctoral Committee may request in relation to the activity of the doctoral student on the doctoral programme.
- 6.** Comply with the code of good research practices of the University of Murcia.
- 7.** To submit any controversies that may arise during the completion of the doctoral thesis to the conflict resolution procedure approved by the University of Murcia and subscribed to in the document of commitment.
- 8.** All those arising from the exercise of his/her duties as the tutor.

ARTICLE 24. Duties of thesis supervisors

Thesis supervisors have the following duties:

- 1.** To endorse, together with the tutor of the doctoral thesis and the doctoral student, the document of commitment and supervision provided for in these regulations.

- 2.** To endorse, together with the tutor of the thesis, the research plan drawn up by the doctoral student.
- 3.** Guiding the doctoral student during the preparation of the thesis, supervising their work, and ensuring that the objectives set are met.
- 4.** Approve the proposals for stays in other institutions, national or foreign, that the doctoral student submits to the academic committee, when appropriate.
- 5.** Verify the coherence and suitability of the training activities, the impact and novelty in the scientific field in which the doctoral thesis is framed.
- 6.** To ensure that the practical work carried out by the doctoral student complies with current safety regulations and occupational risk regulations.
- 7.** To ensure that doctoral students comply with their duty not to engage in academic fraud or deviations in the exercise of their research, in particular by avoiding plagiarism and respecting the rights derived from intellectual and industrial property. In order to facilitate the fulfilment of this duty, the University of Murcia will provide specific technical means and, in particular, anti-plagiarism computer applications.
- 8.** To ensure compliance with the data protection and confidentiality requirements of the rules in force.
- 9.** To guide the doctoral student in the planning and adaptation of other projects and activities in which he/she is enrolled.
- 10.** Regular monitoring of the doctoral student's activities, reviewing his or her research plan and the doctoral student's activities document.
- 11.** Comply with the code of good research practices of the University of Murcia.
- 12.** To submit any controversies that may arise during the completion of the doctoral thesis to the conflict resolution procedure approved by the University of Murcia and subscribed to in the document of commitment.
- 13.** To issue the reports entrusted to it in these regulations and any other reports that the academic committee or the General Doctoral Committee may request in relation to the activity of the doctoral student on the doctoral programme.
- 14.** All those arising from the exercise of his/her functions as thesis supervisor, without prejudice to others:
 - a) Communicating to the doctoral student any rule or ethical aspect that may bear a relationship on their research.
 - b) Establishing the programme for supervision of the research work undertaken, and to schedule regular meetings.
 - c) Reading, correcting, and commenting on the thesis manuscript, in its successive versions, prior to the date agreed for submission.
 - d) Knowing the administrative and academic requirements for the defence of the thesis and the deadlines corresponding to the entire process and ensuring that the doctoral student is aware of them.

CHAPTER IV DOCTORAL THESIS

Section 1. The thesis, guarantees of competences acquired by the student and its preparation

ARTICLE 25. Nature of the doctoral thesis

The doctoral thesis consists of an original research study conducted by the candidate in any field of knowledge.

ARTICLE 26. Competences to be acquired by the doctoral student

1. Doctoral studies will ensure, as a minimum, the acquisition by the doctoral student of the following basic competences, as well as those others that appear in the MECES (Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education):

- a) Systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of research skills and methods related to that field.
- b) Ability to conceive, design or create, implement, and adopt a substantial research or creative process.
- c) Ability to contribute to the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge through original research.
- d) Ability to critically analyse, evaluate and synthesise new and complex ideas.
- e) Ability to communicate with the academic and scientific community and with society in general about their fields of knowledge in the modes and languages commonly used in their international scientific community.
- f) Ability to promote, in academic and professional contexts, scientific, technological, social, artistic, or cultural progress within a knowledge-based society.

2. The doctoral degree should also provide a high level of professional training in different fields, especially those requiring creativity and innovation. Doctors will have acquired at least the following personal skills and abilities:

- a) Deal with contexts in which there is little specific information.
- b) Find the key questions that need to be answered to solve a complex problem.
- c) Design, create, develop, and undertake novel and innovative projects in their field of knowledge.
- d) Work both in a team and autonomously in an international or multidisciplinary context.
- e) Integrate knowledge, deal with complexity, and make judgements with limited information.
- f) Intellectual critique and defence of solutions.

ARTICLE 27. Thesis preparation and writing

1. The doctoral student may opt to write and, if applicable, defend the thesis in Spanish or in English.

2. At the request of the doctoral student, the EIDUM may authorise the writing and, if applicable, defence of the thesis in a language other than Spanish or English, if it can be justified that said language is habitually used for scientific communication in the field of knowledge in question. For this, a favourable report is required from the academic committee responsible for the doctoral programme.

3. The request to write and, if applicable, defend the thesis in a language other than Spanish or English must be presented to the EIDUM prior to the arrangements for submission of the thesis.

4. As an exception, and without the need for prior authorisation, doctoral theses prepared in the fields of philology other than Spanish or English or of translation and interpreting may be written and, if applicable, defended in the language corresponding to the specialisation in question.

5. The title of the thesis must appear in the original language in which it is written and in Spanish, on the cover and on the title page.

6. If the thesis is written in a language other than Spanish, it must include an abstract in Spanish. This abstract must be at least two thousand words in length and must be bound as part of the thesis.

ARTICLE 28. Format of the doctoral thesis.

The preparation of the doctoral thesis must comply with the formal requirements determined by virtue of a ruling by the rector, which shall establish rules that guarantee uniformity of presentation, title pages, electronic formats of theses, permissions for access to their contents and any other aspects considered relevant.

Section 3. Modalities

ARTICLE 29. Thesis by compendium of publications

1. The option of submitting their thesis in the mode of compendium of publications is available to doctoral students who, in the period between the approval of their research plan in accordance with Article 11.6 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, and the submission of their thesis and with the express authorisation of their thesis supervisor or co-supervisors, have had a minimum of three studies published or accepted in journals indexed in international databases of recognised prestige or in scientific journals or published books of justified importance, according to the quality guidelines established by the National Agency for Quality Evaluation and Accreditation of Spain (ANECA) for each of the five branches of knowledge in the assessment of research activity and whose instructions, guidelines and directives will be determined by the General Doctoral Commission. In addition to these three works, the thesis may include other unaccepted or unpublished contributions, which are in the process of being evaluated by a journal or publisher and which preserve the coherence of the project. All studies that form part of the compendium must have intrinsic scientific value and, at the same time, must configure scientific unity.

2. Prior to submission of the thesis and together with a favourable and reasoned report by the academic committee of the doctoral programme and the approval of the EIDUM as quickly as possible, the doctoral student must request from the General Committee for Doctoral Studies the authorisation for submission of the doctoral thesis as a compendium of publications.

3. To obtain the authorisation of the General Committee for Doctoral Studies, the student must provide the following documents:

- a) Copies of the studies published.
- b) A report by the thesis supervisor, justifying the presentation of the compendium of publications as a doctoral thesis.
- c) A report by the doctoral student specifying his or her contribution to each article, which shall be approved by the thesis supervisor.
- d) Signed documentation showing:
 - i) The approval of the co-authors of each of the articles submitted with the submission of the corresponding article by the doctoral student for the purpose of formulating the thesis as a compendium of publications.
 - ii) The commitment of each of the co-authors not to submit the articles they have co-authored as part of another doctoral thesis.
 - iii) The declaration of each of the co-authors regarding the relevance of the contribution of the doctoral student in the research for which the results were included in the co-authored articles.

4. The provisions of Article 27 regarding the writing of theses and the language to be used are applicable to theses formulated under the mode of compendium of publications.

5. Theses submitted under the mode of compendium of publications must necessarily contain the following additional sections:

- a) A general introduction, which presents the studies and justifies the scientific unity of the thesis.
- b) An overall summary of the aims of the research and the final conclusions, which shall unify the partial results presented in each of the studies.

- c) A complete copy of the studies (articles, book chapters, books, etc.). This must include the complete reference of the studies, the personal details of all the authors and of the journal in which they were published. The doctoral student must specify his/her contribution to the studies included.
- d) Copies of the acceptance letters for the publications that comprise the thesis, in the event of studies pending publication.
- 6.** Each doctoral programme may establish in its specifications any additional criteria considered appropriate for the admission of doctoral theses in the form of a compendium of publications.
- 7.** The co-authors of the studies presented may not be part of the examination board of the thesis.
- 8.** Exceptionally, and without having to apply for the thesis modality by compendium of publications, up to two works published or accepted in journals indexed in international databases of recognised prestige or in scientific journals may be included in doctoral theses in ordinary format. The following documentation must be provided for this purpose:
- a) Report by the thesis supervisor, justifying the inclusion of the publication(s) in the doctoral thesis.
 - b) The approval of the co-authors of each one of the articles submitted with the submission of the corresponding article by the doctoral student for the purpose of formulating the thesis.
 - c) Report from the academic committee of the doctoral programme justifying suitability, as referred to in article 46.2 of these regulations.

ARTICLE 30. Theses subject to confidentiality proceedings

In exceptional circumstances, the General Doctoral Committee may decide to proceed with the processing of doctoral theses without public exhibition of the protected results or susceptible to protection, in accordance with the procedure established by the Governing Council of the University of Murcia, of the results, such as, among others, the participation of companies in the programme or the EIDUM, the existence of confidentiality agreements with companies or the possibility of generating patents that fall on the content of the thesis, procedures will be enabled to develop the evaluation, defence and archiving that ensure the non-publicity of these aspects.

ARTICLE 31. Co-supervised theses

- 1.** Co-supervised doctoral theses shall be governed by that which is established in the Regulations for co-supervision of doctoral theses, approved by the Governing Body of the University of Murcia, and the rules by which they are implemented, amended, or replaced.
- 2.** The certificate of Doctor will include on the front the statement "Thesis in co-supervision with the University U", and the following circumstances must be met:
- a) The doctoral thesis must be supervised by two or more doctors from two universities, one Spanish and one foreign, who must formalise a co-supervision agreement.
 - b) During the period of training required to obtain the doctoral degree, the doctoral student must have spent a minimum of six months at the institution with which the co-supervision agreement is established, carrying out research work, either in a single period or in several periods. Stays and activities will be reflected in the co-supervision agreement.

Section 4. Qualification denomination and associated mentions to it

ARTICLE 32. Qualification denomination

Successful completion of doctoral studies at the University of Murcia shall entitle the student to obtain the qualification of Doctor. The designation of the qualification shall be Doctor awarded by the University of Murcia. The certificate shall additionally include the information specified by the discipline for which the doctoral thesis has been prepared and the information regarding the doctoral programme taken.

ARTICLE 33. Theses qualifying for the International Doctorate mention

1. In accordance with Article 15.1 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, the doctoral certificate may include the mention "International Doctorate" on the front side, provided that the following circumstances apply:

a) During the training period required for obtaining the qualification of doctor, the doctoral student must have spent at least three months at a prestigious higher education institution or research centre outside Spain, taking a course or conducting research work. The stay and the activities must be endorsed by the supervisor and authorised by the academic committee and shall be added to the student's activities document. The minimum length of stay may be undertaken over different periods, provided that each stay is for a minimum of one month.

b) Part of the doctoral thesis, at least the abstract and the conclusions, must be written and submitted in a language that is customarily used for scientific communication in the field of knowledge, other than any of the official languages of Spain. This rule shall not apply when the stays were taken in, and the reports and experts are from, a Spanish-speaking country.

c) At least two expert doctors belonging to a higher education institution or research institute outside Spain must have submitted a report on the thesis. Said reports must state the suitability of the thesis to be considered for a doctorate degree.

d) At least one expert doctor belonging to a higher education institution or research centre outside Spain, other than the coordinator of the stay referred to in section 1.a, must have been a member of the thesis examination board.

2. For the administration of the mention of international doctorate, the interested parties must present the following when submitting the thesis:

a) An application, as per the form approved by a ruling of the rector, with the approval of the programme coordinator.

b) Certification of the stay referred to in section 1.a, issued in Spanish or English by the institution or centre where it has been verified.

3. The General Committee for Doctoral Studies shall assess the documents presented and, if applicable, shall authorise the processing of the thesis with the mention.

4. The thesis must be defended at the Spanish university at which the student was enrolled or, in the case of joint doctoral programmes, at any of the participating universities or in the terms set forth in the appropriate collaboration agreement.

5. Upon completion of the defence, the secretary of the doctoral thesis examination board must certify that the board has been constituted in accordance with the requirements established in this article.

ARTICLE 34. Theses qualifying for the Industrial Doctorate mention

1. The mention "Industrial Doctorate" will be awarded provided that the following circumstances are met:

a) The existence of an employment or commercial contract with the doctoral student. The contract may be made by a private or public sector company as well as by a public administration.

b) The doctoral student must participate in an industrial research or experimental development project carried out in the company or public administration in which the service is provided, which may not be a university. The industrial research or

experimental development project in which the doctoral student participates must be directly related to the thesis he/she is carrying out. This direct relationship will be accredited by means of a report that will have to be approved by the university.

2. In the event that the industrial research or experimental development project is carried out in collaboration between the university and the company or public administration in which the doctoral student works, a framework collaboration agreement will be signed between the parties. This agreement will indicate the obligations of the university and the obligations of the company or public administration, as well as the selection procedure for doctoral students.

The doctoral student will have a thesis tutor appointed by the university and a supervisor appointed by the company or public administration, who may also be the thesis supervisor, should they meet the requirements of the doctoral regulations.

3. The General Doctorate Commission will establish the procedure for the presentation of theses that intend to opt for the Industrial Doctorate mention, will examine the documentation presented and, where appropriate, will authorise the thesis to be processed with the mention.

4. Once the doctoral thesis has been completed, the doctoral student shall request in the thesis authorisation letter provided for in Article 35 of these regulations that the thesis be authorised with a mention of Industrial Doctorate.

Section 5. Procedure for the presentation and defence of the doctoral thesis

ARTICLE 35. Presentation and submission

1. Upon completion of the doctoral thesis, the doctoral student shall request authorisation for its submission to the academic committee of the doctoral programme, together with:

a) A copy of the thesis in digital format.

b) A favourable report by the thesis supervisor or by all the co-supervisors. Should none of these have an academic connection to the University of Murcia, the favourable report by the tutor shall also be required.

From that moment on, the Postgraduate Section of the Academic Management Area of the University of Murcia will proceed to the evaluation of coincidences with the electronic anti-plagiarism tools at its disposal and will send the corresponding report within a maximum of seven days.

2. Once authorisation has been requested, the academic committee of the doctoral programme must draw up a report and make a proposal for the composition and suitability of the examining board that will assess the thesis, in accordance with the provisions of Article 36 of these regulations, indicating the chairperson and secretary. The academic committee of the doctoral programme or, if applicable, the school for doctoral studies, may establish additional requirements which must be published to be a member of the board that is to judge the thesis.

3. Upon examination of the student's complete academic record, which shall include the activities document, the academic committee of the doctoral programme shall authorise, if applicable, the submission of the thesis, issuing a resolution within at most fifteen days, notifying the doctoral student, the tutor, and the thesis supervisor of its decision.

If any defects that can be rectified by the doctoral student are found during the process, the provisions of article 68 of Law 39/2015, of 10 October, on Common Administrative Procedure for Public Administrations, will apply. Should authorisation be denied, the

doctoral student may lodge an appeal with the rector, who shall rule following a report by the General Committee for Doctoral Studies.

4. Upon authorisation for submission of the doctoral thesis, the academic committee of the doctoral programme shall communicate its decision to the General Committee for Doctoral Studies by sending the following documentation:

- a) The doctoral student's activities document, with the training activities they have completed.
- b) The proposal for the appointment of members of the thesis examination board.
- c) The resolution authorising the presentation of the thesis.

5. Once the Academic Committee of the doctoral programme has been notified of the authorisation to present the thesis, the doctoral student must confirm the presentation, paying the corresponding fees, if applicable.

6. Once the file has been received, the General Doctoral Committee, with the support of the Postgraduate Section of the Academic Management Area of the University of Murcia, will proceed to:

- a) Check the formal regularity of the file.
- b) Verify that the doctoral student has paid the corresponding public fees.
- c) Communicate the submission of the thesis to all the doctors of the university community.
- d) Ensure, via the competent administrative services, that the copy of the thesis is submitted to the General Library of the University of Murcia for a period of seven days, so that it may be inspected by any doctor. For the purposes of calculating this period, the provisions of the Second Additional Provision of these regulations shall apply.

7. Once the regulatory period of public dissemination has passed, and after communication by the academic committee responsible for the doctoral programme, the General Committee for Doctoral Studies shall rule on the authorisation for defence of the thesis. For such a purpose, it shall consider the administrative or non-academic aspects of the file, unless pleas have been formulated in the period of public dissemination, in which case it shall resolve as it considers legally appropriate, after a report by the academic committee responsible and following a hearing with the doctoral student. Should authorisation be denied, the doctoral student shall be notified, and the decision shall be communicated to the thesis supervisor or co-supervisors and the academic committee of the doctoral programme. The doctoral student may appeal to the rector, who shall rule after a report from the General Committee for Doctoral Studies.

8. Once authorisation has been given for defence of the thesis, no more than six months may elapse between the registration date of the application for submission and the date for the viva. The resolution will be notified to the doctoral student, tutor, and thesis supervisor and to the academic committee.

ARTICLE 36. The doctoral thesis examination board

1. The doctoral thesis assessment board, appointed by the General Doctoral Committee, once the defence of the thesis has been authorised, in accordance with the appointment proposal made by the academic committee of the doctoral programme, shall be made up of three full members and three substitutes. The following requirements must be respected in the composition of the selection board:

- a) All members must hold a doctoral degree and have proven research experience.
- b) In any case, the examining board will be formed by a majority of members from outside the University of Murcia and the institutions collaborating with the EIDUM or doctoral programme. Every effort shall be made to ensure that the duties of secretary are performed by the member of the selection board who has links with the university. Doctors contracted by companies may participate in thesis tribunals, when their professional activity is related to R&D.

c) In no case may the tutor, supervisor or co-supervisors of the thesis be part of the board, except in the event of a thesis presented on a joint doctoral programme with a foreign university or universities, for which the requirements contemplated in the corresponding agreement must be met.

d) The majority of the members of the selection board will have permanent links with universities, research centres or companies, even if they are on leave of absence or retirement. Retired and emeritus professors may therefore sit on panels and count as external.

e) Wherever possible, a balanced presence of women and men on the selection board shall be sought, except for well-founded and objective reasons, duly motivated.

3. In the event of a member of the board withdrawing for a justified cause, the chair of the board must proceed to replace that member with the corresponding alternate member.

4. The ruling of the General Committee for Doctoral Studies by which the board is appointed must be notified to the body responsible for the doctoral programme, the doctoral students, the tutor, and to the thesis supervisor. The Postgraduate Section of the Academic Management Area of the University of Murcia will send the thesis to the members of the examining board within five days, together with the doctoral activities document.

ARTICLE 37. Defence and examination of the thesis

1. The doctoral thesis will be examined at the viva.

2. The viva for the thesis:

a) Must take place on a day or days considered working days according to the academic calendar of the University of Murcia.

b) Must be called by the chair of the board and communicated by its secretary to the other members, to the doctoral student and to the General Committee for Doctoral Studies at least seven days in advance of the viva, in accordance with the definition established in Article 35.6.d.

3. Once the board has been constituted, the defence and examining must take place in a public session and will consist of the presentation by the doctoral student of the work performed, the methodology, the contents, and the conclusions, with special mention to their original contributions.

4. The doctoral student's training activities document may not give rise to a quantitative score but may constitute an instrument of qualitative assessment that complements the examination of the doctoral thesis.

5. The members of the board may formulate any questions they consider appropriate, which the doctoral student must answer. Likewise, the doctors present at the viva may formulate questions at the time and in the manner stated by the chair of the board.

6. Upon completion of the defence and discussion of the thesis, each member of the board must issue a written report on it.

7. The board shall issue a report and the overall grade given to the thesis according to the following scale: Fail, pass, good, and excellent.

8. The board may grant the mention "cum laude" if the overall qualification is excellent and if, by means of specific voting, the positive secret ballot is unanimously cast in this respect. The vote issued by each member of the board shall be safeguarded by the secretary of the board. The board must proceed to examine the secret votes cast in this respect at a different meeting.

9. The result of the examination must be included in the minutes which shall be addressed to the deputy rector's office competent for doctoral studies, and it shall include the results of the examination and be accompanied by the votes cast.

ARTICLE 38. Presentation and defence of the thesis by videoconference

1. Exceptionally, and subject to the discretionary appreciation and prior approval of the General Committee for Doctoral Studies, the thesis may be defended by the doctoral student remotely, without their being physically present at the place where the board has met, but in a remote event and also public (with live broadcasting link). In that case, the student will intervene by means of telecommunication technologies such as videoconferencing or others that enable the necessary immediacy and simultaneous exchange of information via image and sound and, if applicable, the transmission of other data.

2. For this purpose, upon authorisation of the defence and the appointment of the examination board, the student must send an application to the General Committee for Doctoral Studies, at least 15 days in advance of the date set for the viva. The application must be accompanied by documentation justifying the following circumstances:

a) That the habitual place of residence or professional occupation of the doctoral student is in a place from which travel is especially onerous in financial terms or that the student is affected by a pathology or disability that seriously hinders or impedes such travel.

b) Have the approval of the university or higher education or research institution from the premises of which, and by virtue of the technical resources of which, the intervention is to take place.

c) That the technical resources enabled for that purpose by the institution from which the intervention of the student is to take place meet the technical specifications stated for such a purpose by the General Committee for Doctoral Studies.

3. The General Committee for Doctoral Studies must rule on the application within ten days. An appeal against denial may be brought before the rector, although the appeal shall in no case suspend the process.

4. Once authorisation for the remote intervention of the doctoral student has been granted, this must be communicated without delay to the latter and to the board, as well as to the administrative unit responsible for providing the necessary technical assistance.

5. On the date and at the time stated, the doctoral student must appear before the board by virtue of the appropriate technical media for remote communication. The board must then confirm the identity of the doctoral student, for which purpose it may rely on its members knowing them personally or on specific accreditation given for such purpose by the institution from where the intervention takes place. Signing of the certificate of reading must take place according to the general instructions issued for that purpose by the General Committee for Doctoral Studies.

6. The supervening occurrence of technical impediments authorises the chair of the board to suspend the viva for the time strictly necessary for its recommencement. The chair of the board shall likewise resolve as applicable at their best discretion, regarding any technical incidents that may interfere with the performance of the viva.

7. The defence of the thesis by the doctoral student according to this article is otherwise subject to the same requirements and produces the same effects as defence with personal attendance.

ARTICLE 39. Participation in the defence of members of the selection board via videoconference

1. In the same exceptional conditions as those stated in Article 38, the General Committee for Doctoral Studies may agree that a maximum of one member of the board, not the secretary, may verify their attendance at the viva by electronic media.

2. For this purpose, the interested party must send an application to the General Committee for Doctoral Studies via, if applicable, the chair of the board, at least fifteen days in advance of the date set for the viva.
3. The application must be based on any justified cause of relevant professional occupation, pathology, disability, or special expense of the travel from a financial point of view.
4. The General Committee for Doctoral Studies shall rule and proceed in similar terms to those stated in Article 38. Should more than one application have been made, authorisation will be given, if applicable, to the one considered a priority owing to the personal and professional circumstances.
5. In accordance with the general instructions to be prepared for that purpose by the General Committee for Doctoral Studies, the board must adopt appropriate measures to confirm the identity of the interested party and so that the signing of the certificate of the viva, the preparation of the report that the board must issue and the secret ballot can be verified adequately and remain, if applicable, at the disposal of the secretary of the board.

ARTICLE 40. Thesis archive

1. Upon approval of the doctoral thesis, the university will file it in open electronic format in the institutional DIGITUM repository and will send a copy thereof, in electronic format, together with all the complementary information that may be necessary, to the Ministry competent for university matters and for the appropriate purposes.
2. For the purposes of filing and conservation, a copy of each doctoral thesis approved must be kept in the General Library of the University of Murcia. Furthermore, the corresponding file of the thesis should be sent to the Ministry competent for university matters, according to that which is established by the regulations.

CHAPTER V EXTRAORDINARY PRIZES

ARTICLE 41. Extraordinary doctoral prizes

1. Doctoral theses that possess exceptional merits may opt for an extraordinary doctoral prize in the programme in which they have been read.
2. One extraordinary prize may be awarded per ten doctoral theses, or fraction of ten comprising five or more, that have been read in the corresponding period. When the minimum number of theses is not submitted an extraordinary doctoral prize may be awarded every two years.
In no case may the number of prizes be increased, or accumulated with those of other programmes, or those of previous programmes that have been declared vacant. Prizes may not be awarded *ex aequo*.
3. Only those theses which, among those read within the programme, have obtained "cum laude" may opt for the extraordinary prize.
4. Theses verified in accordance with the University of Murcia Doctoral Thesis Co-supervision Regulations are not eligible for the extraordinary doctorate prize when the thesis was read at a foreign university and the thesis was supervised or co-supervised by the person or persons who participated in the thesis examining board.

ARTICLE 42. Procedure

1. At the end of each academic year, the academic committee of the doctoral programme must open a call aimed at the presentation of doctoral theses for the

extraordinary prize. The call must be published on the Official Notice Board of the University of Murcia (TOUM), via the deputy rector's office with authority with regard to the doctorate or, if applicable, via the school for doctoral studies.

2. The call must state the criteria for assessing merits. These must be at least the following:

a) A report prepared by the candidate, with the approval of the supervisor or co-supervisors of the thesis, which must highlight the main contributions of the work, the most relevant findings, and the possible repercussions that justify awarding the extraordinary prize.

b) Scientific production exclusively derived from the thesis presented during the doctoral enrolment period.

c) A confidential report prepared by the members of the board and addressed to the deputy rector's office with authority with regard to the doctorate, in which they register their reasoned opinion regarding the appropriateness of awarding the extraordinary prize to the thesis that they have examined, according to the original elements and the contributions made in the corresponding area of knowledge or discipline.

3. The confidential report prepared by the members of the board will be issued in the same conditions as those contemplated in Article 37 and, if applicable, in Article 39 for the case of remote intervention of a member of the board corresponding to the area of knowledge or discipline.

ARTICLE 43. Evaluation committee

1. The candidates for the award of the extraordinary doctoral prize are evaluated by a specific committee for each call, formed by three, five, or seven members. The members of the committee are appointed by the drawing of lots from among the lecturers that are part of the doctoral programme and who have not been tutors or supervisors of the theses opting for the extraordinary prize.

2. The members of the committee at their first meeting shall elect, from among their members, a chair and a secretary who must take the minutes with the approval of the chair.

3. Each member of the committee has one vote, and the president does not have the casting vote.

CHAPTER VI

CONFLICT RESOLUTION, APPEALS AND CONTROL OF ACTIVITIES IN THE PREPARATION OF THE THESIS

Section 1. Conflict resolution

ARTICLE 44. Procedure

1. In the event of a possible breach of anything included in the commitment document or the occurrence of any other disagreement related with the completion of the doctoral programme with regard to each doctoral student, any of the parties may communicate this to the doctoral programme coordinator, who shall act as mediator with a view to achieving unanimous agreement that puts an end to the controversy.

2. If the mediation has not enabled the conflict to be resolved within two months of the doctoral programme coordinator being informed, it shall be referred to the General Doctoral Committee, which shall issue a decision within three months, after hearing the parties and the coordinator of the doctoral programme.

Section 2. Appeals

ARTICLE 45. Appeals

An appeal may be lodged with the rector against the decisions of the doctoral teaching bodies, under the terms set out in Articles 121 and 122 of Law 39/2015, of 1 October, on the Common Administrative Procedure for Public Administrations.

Section 3. Control of fraudulent activities and deviations in the thesis writing process

ARTICLE 46. Control of academic fraud and research deviations in the preparation of doctoral theses

- 1.** The University of Murcia will act with the utmost rigour in cases where there are indications of academic fraud or deviations in the exercise of research that may have occurred in the preparation and presentation of doctoral theses.
- 2.** Deviations in the exercise of research include, among other possible conducts, the abusive interpretation of data, the falsification of data or evidence, the plagiarism of other people's work and self-plagiarism, as well as the lack of respect for the obligations relating to intellectual and industrial property established by law and the duties imposed by the codes of good practice in research by which the University of Murcia is governed. In situations of detected self-plagiarism, the academic committee will determine its suitability.
- 3.** The procedure for monitoring the activities described in paragraph 1 of this Article may cover doctoral theses submitted and those already defended, as well as publications submitted by doctoral students for assessment as part of their research plan or the doctoral student's activities document.

ARTICLE 47. Procedure

The control of alleged academic fraud and deviations in the exercise of research in the preparation of doctoral theses will be the responsibility of the EIDUM, under the following provisions:

- 1.** The procedure may be initiated ex officio, at the request of the tutor, the thesis supervisor, or the academic committee of the doctoral programme in which the doctoral thesis is being prepared, at the request of interested parties or at the request of the rector.
- 2.** In the event of a complaint from interested parties, the standing committee of the EIDUM may agree to carry out preliminary proceedings in order to ascertain the circumstances of the specific case and whether or not it is appropriate to initiate the procedure.
- 3.** The EIDUM standing committee may propose to the rector, both at the time of the initiation of the procedure as well as at any later stage of its proceedings, the adoption of those provisional measures that are necessary and proportionate in order to protect the rights of the interested parties or to ensure the effectiveness of the future resolution.
- 4.** Once the initiation of the procedure has been agreed upon, it will be the responsibility of the EIDUM management, which will transfer the decision to initiate the procedure to the author of the thesis and its supervisor, and will proceed to review the full text of the thesis with the electronic anti-plagiarism tools available to the University of Murcia and will include in the file the expert reports that, where appropriate, may have been requested during the processing of the defence of the doctoral thesis, as well as any other reports it deems appropriate.
- 5.** Once the procedures indicated in the previous sections have been completed, the EIDUM management will send all the documentation to the author of the doctoral thesis so that he/she may present the appeals that he/she deems appropriate within ten days,

as well as to the supervisor of the doctoral thesis so that he/she may issue a report on the file sent.

6. Within one month of the initiation of the procedure, the EIDUM management shall submit the file to its standing committee or steering committee. The latter, after its study, shall submit a resolution proposal to the rector.

7. The proposed resolution may include a request for the initiation of disciplinary measures against the author of the thesis, in accordance with the provisions of the law and the regulations of the University of Murcia and, where appropriate, a request for the initiation of the ex officio review procedure, as provided for in the law.

8. The time limit for deciding on the procedure shall be three months from the initiation of the procedure.

ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

FIRST. References to the feminine gender in the different precepts of these regulations

References to persons, groups, qualifications, academic posts, and members of the university community in these regulations are in the masculine gender, as an unmarked grammatical gender. Where appropriate, the citation of the relevant provisions in the feminine gender shall be valid.

SECOND. Calculation of time limits and non-working periods

For the purposes of said term of fifteen working days, Saturdays and Sundays, any bank holidays in the municipality of Murcia and the days corresponding to the Christmas, Easter, and spring holidays, as well as the month of August and those approved by the University of Murcia in its academic calendars for official studies, shall be considered non-working days.

In all matters not provided for in these regulations and those that develop them, all matters relating to procedures and deadlines shall be governed by the provisions of Law 39/2015, on the Common Administrative Procedure of Public Administrations.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

FIRST TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

In accordance with the second additional provision of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, doctoral students who began their doctoral programme under university regulations in force prior to Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, may access the doctoral studies regulated in said Royal Decree subject to acceptance by the University of Murcia.

SECOND TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

The Branch of Knowledge Commissions regulated in Article 34 of the Regulations of 27 January 2012, which regulate official doctoral studies at the University of Murcia, will maintain the function of issuing accreditation reports on the equivalent level of training for access to official master's degree courses or doctoral studies for graduates in university study systems outside the European Higher Education Area until 31 October of the academic year 2022/2023.

THIRD TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

The General Doctoral Committee shall remain in office until it is renewed as established in Article 4.1.c.

FOURTH TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

The task of sending copies of theses to the examining board established by Article 36.4 will continue to be the responsibility of the thesis supervisor until the implementation of the software that supports its telematic application.

SOLE REPEAL PROVISION

The Regulations of 27 January 2012 regulating official doctoral studies at the University of Murcia, the resolutions of the Rector that developed them, as well as the agreements of the General Doctoral Commission and the Steering Committee of the International Doctoral School that contradict the provisions of this Regulation are hereby repealed.

FINAL DISPOSITION

FIRST Policy development

The Rector of the University of Murcia may issue any resolutions that may be necessary for the fulfilment or development of the provisions of these regulations.

SECOND Entry into force

These regulations shall enter into force in the academic year 2022-2023, except for the implementation of the software that will support its telematic application.