

APPLICABLE DOCTORAL STUDIES REGULATION OF THE UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA SAN ANTONIO DE MURCIA

Explanatory statement.

The Spanish Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, on universities, in its new wording given by Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, which modifies the previous one, defines the structure of university education in three cycles: Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctorate. As established by the aforementioned Law, doctoral studies shall be organised and conducted in the manner determined by the statutes of the universities, in accordance with the criteria approved by the Government for the award of the Doctorate degree, following a report from the Council of Universities.

The Spanish Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, as amended by Royal Decree 576/2023, of 4 July, regulates official doctoral studies, constituting an essential complement to ensure the complete organisation of official university education established by Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, as amended by Royal Decree 861/2010, of 2 July. Thus, it aims to regulate the organisation of doctoral studies corresponding to the third cycle of official university education leading to the award of the title of Doctor, which shall be official and valid throughout the national territory.

Universities have the fundamental duty to design and implement official doctorate programmes to enable the training of doctoral students, who play a key role in society in the generation, transfer and adaptation of R&D&I, so as to facilitate the process of shifting the production model towards a sustainable economy. Doctors must be at the heart of all institutions involved in innovation and research, leading the transfer of knowledge for the welfare of society.

Article 1. Purpose.

The purpose of these Regulations is to develop the structure of doctoral studies at the Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia, in accordance with *Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January*, as amended by Royal Decree 576/2023 of 4 July, which regulates official doctoral studies, following the general lines emanating from the European Higher Education Area and in accordance with the provisions of article 37 of Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, on universities, in its new wording given by Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, amending the previous one.

Article 2. Definitions.

1. A **doctorate** is defined as the third cycle of official university studies, leading to the acquisition of skills and abilities related to quality scientific research.
2. A **doctoral programme** refers to a set of activities leading to the acquisition of the necessary skills and abilities for the award of the title of Doctor. This programme shall aim to develop the different training aspects of the doctoral student and shall establish the procedures and research areas to develop the doctoral theses.
3. A **doctoral or PhD student** is considered as such when, once the requirements established in the aforementioned royal decree have been accredited, he or she has been admitted to a doctoral programme and has enrolled in it.
4. A **Doctoral School** is defined as the unit created by one or more universities – possibly in collaboration with other bodies, centres, institutions and entities with national or foreign R&D&I activities –, whose essential purpose is the organisation and management of doctorates, in one or several branches of knowledge or with an interdisciplinary character.
5. The **activities report** of the doctoral student is the individualised record of these activities, materialised in the corresponding format, which shall be regularly reviewed by the Thesis Tutor and Supervisor and evaluated by the Academic Committee in charge of the doctoral programme.
6. The **Thesis Supervisors** are responsible for the overall management of the research work of their doctoral students.
7. The **Thesis Tutors** are responsible for ensuring that the training and research activity is in accordance with the principles of the Doctoral Programmes and Schools.
8. The **Academic Committee** of each programme is responsible for its definition, updating, quality and coordination, as well as for the progress of the research and training. This Committee also authorises the presentation of the thesis of each doctoral student in the programme.

Article 3. Structure of university education.

University education leading to the award of officially recognised degrees valid throughout the national territory is structured in three cycles, called Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree and Doctorate respectively, in accordance with the provisions of Article 37 of Organic Law 6/2001, of 21 December, on universities, as reworded by Organic Law 4/2007, of 12 April, which amends the previous law, and this Royal Decree.

a) The Bachelor's Degree is the first cycle of university education, with the purpose of providing the students with general training, as well as aimed at preparing them to exercise professional activities.

b) The Master's Degree is the second cycle of university education. Its purpose is to provide students with advanced training, specialised or multidisciplinary, oriented towards an academic or professional specialisation, or to promote the pursuit of research tasks.

c) The Doctorate constitutes the third cycle of university education and its purpose is the advanced training of the student in research techniques. The Doctorate may include courses, seminars or other activities aimed at research training, as well as the preparation and presentation of the corresponding doctoral thesis, consisting of an original research work.

Article 4. Doctoral studies.

As stated in article 3 of the R.D. **99/2011**, doctoral studies must be structured in programmes, with the final objective being the preparation and defence of a doctoral thesis containing original research results.

Thus, a *doctoral programme* refers to a set of activities leading to the acquisition of the necessary skills and abilities for the award of the title of Doctor. This programme shall aim to develop the different training aspects of the doctoral student and shall establish the procedures and research areas to develop the doctoral theses.

The aforementioned article establishes the maximum duration of doctoral studies, as well as the extensions that may be authorised, distinguishing between full-time or part-time studies. The procedure of withdrawal from the studies is also included therein.

4.1.- Modes of study for Doctoral Students

A) Modes of study.

1. Depending on their time commitment, doctoral students may enrol full-time or part-time.
2. As a general rule, doctoral students shall be considered full-time.
3. Notwithstanding the above, and in accordance with Art. 3 of Royal Decree 99/2011, doctoral students may request the change to part-time status in order to complete their doctoral thesis, provided that any of the following requirements are met at the time of the request:
 - Being employed and able to provide documentary proof of the employment relationship.

- Being affected by a degree of physical, sensory or mental disability.
 - Undertaking other specialised training on a part-time basis.
 - Being considered the main caregiver of dependent persons and able to justify it through supporting documentation.
 - Having dependent children under the age of three.
 - Being a high-level competitive athlete.
 - Others duly justified reasons (e.g.: victim of gender-based violence, victim of terrorism, etc.).
4. This request may be made:
- a) At the time of pre-registration, attaching the supporting justification. In this case, the Academic Committee of the doctoral programme shall be considered to authorise this condition if it expressly states so when admitting the doctoral student.
 - b) Once enrolled, a doctoral student may request the modification of their time commitment – from full time to part time or vice versa – duly accrediting it. The Academic Committee of the doctoral programme shall assess this request and dictate the corresponding resolution by informing the EIDUCAM Academic Registry in order for it to be notified to the student and registered in his/her file.
5. Students shall only be authorised to change their timetable once per academic year and this change shall take effect from the date on which it is approved by the Academic Committee.
6. When a doctoral student makes changes of time dedication in a doctoral programme, the total duration of their doctoral studies shall be calculated in full-time terms, with each part-time day being counted as 0.6 full-time days.
7. No changes of mode of study can be requested during the extension period.

B) Procedure for modifying the mode of study:

1. The doctoral student must complete the application form for change of mode of study attaching the supporting justification, through the Doctoral Student Portal:
<https://investigacion.ucam.edu/portal-doctorando/cambio-dedicacion>

2. Upon review of the application, the corresponding Academic Committee shall issue a resolution and inform the EIDUCAM Academic Registry in order for it to be notified to the student and registered in his/her file.

4.2.- Maximum duration of doctoral studies. Request for extensions, leaves and withdrawals.

A) General issues:

1. The duration of the doctoral studies shall be computed from the date of admission to the programme until the date of submission of the application for the doctoral thesis deposit.
2. Full-time doctoral students shall have four years to submit the application for the doctoral thesis deposit. Should the application for the thesis deposit not have been submitted within the aforementioned period, the Academic Committee of the programme may grant an extension of this period for a further year at the request of the doctoral student. This decision shall be notified to the EIDUCAM Academic Registry.
3. Part-time doctoral students will have seven years to present their doctoral thesis. Should the application for the thesis deposit not have been submitted within the aforementioned period, the Academic Committee of the programme may grant an extension of this period for a further year at the request of the doctoral student. This decision shall be notified to the EIDUCAM Academic Registry.
4. In the case of doctoral students with a disability of 33 per cent or more, their doctoral studies will last for a maximum of six years full-time and nine years part-time.
5. The application for the deposit of the doctoral thesis must be submitted while the academic tutelage registration is active, during the academic year in which the procedure is initiated. The deadline established to apply for the deposit of the Doctoral Thesis is 30 September of each academic year. If the deposit process is not initiated before that date, a new academic tutelage registration shall be required for the following academic year.

B) Procedure to apply for an extension of the deadline to submit the application for the deposit of the doctoral thesis:

Procedure:

1. [Download the application](#) form and fill it out properly.
2. Send the application form through the [UCAM Doctoral Student Portal](#).
3. The Academic Committee of the programme shall assess the application and issue (within a maximum period of 30 calendar days) a resolution in terms of favourable or unfavourable – in which case it shall be duly justified.
4. The Academic Registry of the Doctoral School shall register the new status of the student on the [Laurea Academic](#) platform and inform the Tutor and Supervisor(s).

C) Temporary leaves

Doctoral students may request a temporary leave from the programme for a certain period of time for different reasons:

1. **Temporary leave due to unforeseen circumstances:** Illness, maternity or paternity, serious or long-term illness of first-degree relatives, particularly relevant socio-economic causes, accidents or any other cause provided for in current regulations (Art. 3 of the Royal Decree 99/2011). The duration of the temporary leave shall correspond to that derived from its cause and must be justified by documentary evidence.

In these cases and regardless of the duration of the leave, fees shall be paid on a regular basis and in no case shall the corresponding course fees be refunded once they have been paid.

In the event that this type of withdrawal is applied for during the 6-month period to rectify an unfavourable report by the programme's Academic Committee, the doctoral student shall be obliged to submit the necessary reports to be re-assessed by the Academic Committee in due course and proper form. The Committee shall take this circumstance into account when assessing these students.

2. **Voluntary temporary leave:** As stated in RD 99/2011, the doctoral student may request a voluntary temporary leave for a maximum period of 1 year, extendable for a further year.

In this case, the doctoral student shall submit the application before 30 October of each year and shall be entirely justified. In case of approval by the Academic Committee of the

programme, the doctoral student shall be exempt from paying the academic tutorship fees during that academic year.

This type of voluntary leave shall only be requested as of the second year in the programme and always after having obtained a favourable report in the annual assessment of the preceding course. In other words, students who had an unfavourable report in the previous course cannot request it.

In any case, the Academic Committee shall approve a period of one academic year. After this period, the doctoral student shall re-enrol following the regular enrolment scheme; otherwise, they shall be permanently withdrawn from the programme. Should the student wish to apply for an additional year's extension, a new application must be submitted to the Academic Committee.

In this case, it must once again be duly justified.

In both cases of temporary leave, this period will not be taken into account for the calculation of the deadlines established for the submission of the thesis, regardless of full-time or part-time studies.

Procedure:

1. [Download the application form](#) and fill it out properly.
2. The student must send the application via the [form Submission of Temporary Withdrawal Request](#), which shall be validated by the EIDUCAM Academic Registry.
3. The Academic Committee of the programme shall assess the application and issue (within a maximum period of 30 days) a resolution in terms of favourable or unfavourable – in which case it shall be duly justified.
4. The Academic Registry of the Doctoral School shall register the new status of the student on the [Laurea Academic](#) platform and inform the Tutor and Supervisor(s).

D) Withdrawal from the doctoral programme.

Every student may communicate his or her voluntary withdrawal from the doctoral programme through the Withdrawal Request application by submitting it at:

<https://investigacion.ucam.edu/portal-doctorando/solicitud-baja-voluntaria>

A student shall be considered to have withdrawn from the doctoral programme when they do not proceed to renew their enrolment within the established deadlines.

Withdrawal from doctoral studies implies closing the doctoral student's academic transcript. From that moment on, doctoral students shall not be able to continue with their doctoral studies at the University. However, all the activities carried out so far will be recorded and may be recognised if they are ever admitted to a future academic year.

Readmission to doctoral studies might be requested in the following circumstances:

1. If the withdrawal occurs in a favourable annual report situation, to be readmitted doctoral students shall formalise a new application for admission to the corresponding programme, which shall require payment of the academic transcript opening fee.
2. If the withdrawal is due to an unfavourable first annual report, you may request admission to a different doctoral programme or wait two years to reapply for admission to the same programme. In both cases, a new research proposal must be submitted.

4.3.- Definitive withdrawal from the doctoral programme

Definitive withdrawal from a doctoral programme shall imply the non-continuation of studies in the doctoral programme in which the student was enrolled.

A doctoral student shall be permanently withdrawn from a doctoral programme in the following cases:

- a) Permanent withdrawal due to exhaustion of the maximum time of study established, according to the doctoral student's time commitment.**
- b) Permanent withdrawal due to failure to re-enrol for academic supervision in the current academic year.**
- c) Definitive withdrawal due to double unfavourable report:** The programme's Academic Committee shall annually assess the Research Proposal and the activity report together with the reports to be issued by the Tutor and the Supervisor(s) for this purpose. A positive assessment shall be an essential requirement to continue in the programme. In the event of a negative assessment, the doctoral student must be evaluated again within a period of six months, for which purpose a new research

proposal may be drawn up. A second negative assessment shall result in the doctoral student's permanent withdrawal from the programme.

- d) Permanent withdrawal due to non-submission of the Research Proposal:** When a student has not submitted his or her Research Proposal within one year of admission to the programme, the Doctoral Programme Committee may decide – taking into account the circumstances that have arisen and where appropriate – to terminate the student's enrolment in the doctoral programme.

Readmission to doctoral studies could be applied for in another doctoral programme or the student could wait two years to reapply for admission to the same one. In both cases, a new research proposal must be submitted as a new doctoral student.

Article 5. Structure of doctoral programmes.

Each UCAM doctoral programme shall be organised, designed and coordinated by the corresponding Academic Committee and shall be constituted by the training specified in Art. 8 of this Regulation and by the research areas recognised in the verification report of each programme. Annually, the Vice-Rector's Office for Research shall open a call for the inclusion of new areas in the aforementioned record, as regulated in the Regulations of UCAM Research Groups.

The following aspects must be clearly defined in each doctoral programme:

- Research lines in which the research proposals for the doctoral theses will be included. These lines must have adequate research activity, confirmed through research projects, scientific production and technology transfer.
- List of doctors proposed as tutors and supervisors of doctoral theses, linked to each of the research lines, according to the criteria defined in Art. 7 of these regulations.
- Maximum number of doctoral students (and, therefore, of theses) admitted in each research line.

The UCAM doctoral programmes may include the collaboration, expressed by means of an agreement, of external bodies, centres, institutions and organisations with R&D&I activities, whether public or private, national or foreign.

Article 6. Characteristics and composition of the Academic Committees of the doctoral programmes.

The Academic Committee of each doctoral programme is responsible for the definition, updating, quality and coordination of the programme. It shall also ensure the research

progress and the training of doctoral students. Furthermore, it shall authorise the doctoral theses presentation and shall be responsible for organising, designing, and coordinating the training and research activities of the corresponding doctoral programme, with the supervision of the Vice-Rector's Office for Research and the approval of the Governing Board of the UCAM International Doctoral School.

The Academic Committee will be made up of a minimum of 5 doctors, 20% of whom may be researchers from other organisations and institutions involved. The official UCAM Master's Degrees in areas of knowledge related to the programme, as well as each of the departments involved in this programme shall be represented on the committee.

The members of the committee, President, Secretary, and Board Members shall be proposed by the Vice-Rector's Office for Research and approved by the University Council, based on their merits – mainly in research. The President of the committee, coordinator of the doctoral programme, shall be appointed by the UCAM President from among the researchers of the programme who have previously supervised at least two doctoral theses and who hold at least two periods of recognised research activity or equivalent merits.

Article 7. Thesis Tutors and Supervisors.

7.1 Each doctoral student shall be assigned a Tutor and, at least, a Supervisor whose functions are described in Art. 11 and Art. 12 of RD 99/2011. Once admitted to the doctoral programme, the corresponding Academic Committee shall assign each doctoral student with a Tutor from among the University's doctors related to the programme who have demonstrated research experience. The Tutor shall be responsible for ensuring the interaction of the doctoral student with this committee and for their comprehensive training. Furthermore, the Tutor shall be responsible for recording and monitoring the training activities in the *doctoral student's activity report*.

7.2 Within a *maximum of three months* from enrolment, the Academic Committee responsible for the programme shall assign each PhD student with a doctoral Thesis Supervisor who may or may not be the Tutor referred to in the preceding paragraph. This assignment may fall to any Spanish or foreign doctor with demonstrated research experience, regardless of the university, centre or institution in which they provide their services. The thesis may be co-supervised by other doctors – up to a maximum of three – when so required for academic reasons, for reasons of thematic interdisciplinarity or in case of national or international collaborative programmes. Co-supervisions must have the authorisation of the

Academic Committee. This authorisation may be revoked later if, in the opinion of the Academic Committee, the co-supervision does not benefit the development of the thesis.

In order to be a Doctoral Thesis Supervisor at UCAM, an essential requirement is to accredit the completion of at least one period of research activity recognised by the Spanish National Commission for Research Evaluation (CNEAI) or, otherwise, to demonstrate equivalent research merits.

(5 most relevant publications related to the area of knowledge of the thesis. Included in the CNEAI evaluation criteria for the Assessment of Sexenios (six-year research terms)).

Doctors who do not meet this requirement may only co-supervise theses.

The Doctoral Thesis Supervisor shall be responsible for the coherence and suitability of the training activities, the impact and novelty of the subject matter of the doctoral thesis and the Research Proposal.

The Academic Committee, upon hearing the Supervisor and/or the doctoral student, may modify the appointment of the Tutor and/or the Thesis Supervisor at any given time during the doctoral studies programme, provided that there are justified reasons. The student tutoring and doctoral thesis supervision shall be recognised as part of the teaching and research activity of the academic staff.

Article 8. Training activities.

In order to guarantee the competences that doctoral students must acquire, as established in Art. 5 of Royal Decree 99/2011, UCAM doctoral programmes shall offer both transversal and specific training, although the main activity will be research.

Transversal training shall be offered in all doctoral programmes – in the form of the Research Methodology Module – whose organisation, content, and assessment and control procedures are detailed in Appendix 1. Doctoral students who must take and pass this module shall do so, as a general rule, during the first year of the doctoral so as not to be excluded from the programme.

This training may also be included within the content of the official postgraduate Master's Degrees. In this case, the students will not need to take it again as it shall be recognised. Transversal training may also be recognised if the doctoral student demonstrates the level of research training or equivalent experience, by providing the relevant documentation to be approved by the Academic Committee.

Each doctoral programme shall offer specific training in its knowledge area through:

- Scientific seminars.

- Specialised courses in scientific methodology and analytical techniques.
- Lecture series.
- Organisation and participation in conferences.
- Other activities specific to the area.

As defined in Art. 4.2 of RD 99/2011, the organisation of this training and the procedures for its control will be defined by each Academic Committee and included in the report for the verification of the doctoral programme.

All training activities carried out by the doctoral student shall be included in the activities report referred to in Art. 2.5 of RD 99/2011.

Mobility actions and criteria shall be defined in each doctoral programme based on its characteristics.

Furthermore, with the aim of promoting Open Science and Citizen Science, the International Doctoral School shall annually propose different transversal activities, which may consist of micro-credentials and which may optionally be taken by doctoral students and recorded in their activities report as doctoral level training.

Article 9. Lecturers in doctoral studies.

The entire academic staff of a doctoral programme must hold a doctorate degree, notwithstanding the possible collaboration – in certain specific activities – of other professionals, on account of their relevant qualifications in the corresponding field of knowledge.

Article 10. Proposals for doctoral programmes.

In order to make a proposal for a doctoral programme, a report shall be submitted to the Academic Registry of the International Doctoral School, with the content required for the verification of the doctoral programmes detailed in Appendix 1 of RD 99/2011.

The programmes shall be assessed by the UCAM Planning and Accreditation Commission (CPA in Spanish) and approved for verification and implementation by the University Council.

Article 11. Doctoral Schools.

The Government Council of the Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia has approved by Decree 84/2013, of 26 July, the creation of the International Doctorate School of the Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia, with the aim to organise, the doctorate

training and activities, in one or several knowledge fields or with an interdisciplinary nature, within its management scope.

In accordance with the provisions of Art. 8.4 of Spanish Organic Law on Universities, amended by virtue of the Third Final Provision of Law 14/2011, of 1 June, on Science, Technology and Innovation, the creation of the International Doctorate School of the Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia has been notified to the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, for the purposes of its registration in the Register of Universities, Centres and Degrees.

Article 12. Access to doctoral studies.

The access requirements to doctoral studies are those established in Art. 6 of RD 99/2011. As a general rule, admission to an official doctoral programme requires the possession of an official Spanish Bachelor's Degree or equivalent, and a Master's Degree or equivalent, provided that the student has passed at least 300 ECTS credits in total between these two programmes.

Admission applications shall be submitted to the Academic Committee of the corresponding programme, which shall issue a technical report. The application shall be processed in accordance with the rules and regulations for admission and enrolment.

Article 13. Enrolment in doctoral studies.

a) Admission and enrolment in doctoral studies.

Applicants may enter any doctoral programme taught at the Universidad Católica de Murcia which is scientifically related to their academic curriculum vitae, provided they meet the prerequisites and the merits required for admission.

The corresponding Academic Committee shall establish the necessary requirements and admission criteria to a doctoral programme, which must be included in the programme verification report. The endorsement of a researcher from the programme as possible Supervisor of the doctoral thesis will be particularly appreciated.

In the case of students with special educational needs arising from disability, appropriate support and counselling services shall be provided to assess the need for possible curricular adaptations, or alternative itineraries or studies.

Admission to a doctoral programme shall be approved by the Academic Committee of each doctoral programme. The Academic Registry of the Vice-Rector's Office for Research shall annually establish the calendar and directions to apply for admission and enrolment in the doctoral programmes. Communication regarding admissions and exclusions shall be on an individual basis to each applicant.

Applicants who have been excluded shall have a period of 10 working days from receipt of the notification to submit the corresponding appeal to the UCAM International Doctoral School, which shall have 30 calendar days to respond.

Admitted students must formalise their enrolment according to the directions provided by the Doctoral School Academic Registry. Enrolment shall be renewed automatically each academic year, generating the corresponding receipt, which is to be paid. In the case of joint doctoral programmes, the agreement shall determine how such enrolment is to be completed.

Graduates, Architects or Engineers who hold a Diploma de Estudios Avanzados (Diploma of Advanced Studies) obtained in accordance with the provisions of Spanish Royal Decree 778/1998, of 30 April, or who have reached research competence regulated in Spanish Royal Decree 185/1985, of 23 January, may be admitted to doctoral programmes. In the event of applicants who have only partially or totally passed the training period of doctoral programmes regulated by the aforementioned royal decrees, they must take a Master's Degree in order to be admitted, where their prior training may be recognised.

b) Enrolment cancellation.

1. As a general rule, the deadline for the payment of enrolment fees formalised during the ordinary enrolment period is 15 calendar days. In the event that the student does not comply with the aforementioned payment obligation, the University reserves the right to withdraw the student academically and/or administratively from the doctoral studies, considering that they renounce their place, thus leaving said place free and at the University's disposal.
2. Nevertheless, cancellation of enrolment in doctoral studies formalised in the ordinary period by new students shall be accepted with a refund of the amount paid – except for the amount set for the place reservation – when requested within a maximum of 15 calendar days following the formalisation of the enrolment. The place reservation fee in all doctoral programmes is 600 euros.
3. The payments made in concept of place reservation are not reimbursable in any case. Nonetheless, in the event of cancellation of a doctoral enrolment, the amounts paid for place reservation will remain available for the student, who may use said fee in the future for the payment of any other education programme at UCAM.

4. The cancellation shall be made ex officio by the University when the student does not meet any of the access and/or admission requirements necessary to formalise the enrolment or when the enrolment payment has not been met within the established deadlines.

Article 14. Supervision and follow-up of the doctoral student: personalised activity report.

Each doctoral programme shall determine the activities that doctoral students must complete every year. In general, the activities shall be the ones provided for in Art. 8 of this regulation.

Once enrolled in the programme, each doctoral student will be issued, a personalised activity report for the purposes of the individualised control record in electronic format. The Tutor shall record and verify the activities developed by the doctoral student in this report.

This activity report shall be monitored by the Thesis Tutor and Supervisor and shall be evaluated annually by the Academic Committee of the doctoral programme, together with the reports to be issued by the Tutor and the Supervisor.

Following the evaluation, the Academic Committee shall issue a report to the Vice-Rector's Office for Research with the overall grade awarded to the activities undertaken, which will be either 'pass' or 'fail'. A positive assessment shall be an essential requirement to continue in the programme. In the event of a negative assessment, which must be properly justified, the doctoral student shall be re-assessed within a maximum period of six months. In the event of a second unfavourable assessment, the Academic Committee shall issue a reasoned report, having heard the student concerned, and he or she will be permanently withdrawn from the programme.

Article 15. Research Proposal and Individual Learning Plan. Assessment and monitoring.

Every doctoral student, assisted by their Supervisor and Tutor, must prepare and submit a document that includes their Research Proposal and Individual Training Plan within the first 6 months of their enrolment in the programme.

The document to be submitted must include the research proposal, including a brief introduction, the methodology to be used and the objectives to be achieved – as well as the means and timetable to achieve them – and the personal learning plan, containing a timeline detailing the planning for the completion of the training activities of the programme.

When necessary, the research proposal must be approved by the UCAM Research Ethics Committee (to be requested at comite_etica@ucam.edu). Should the thesis project be carried out in a centre other than UCAM, it must receive a favourable report from the Ethics Committee of said centre before being assessed by the UCAM Ethics Committee. In general, the Thesis Supervisor must request this approval in the following cases:

- Biomedical research with humans or with samples of human origin.
- Animal research.
- Projects on the use of cells and tissues of human embryonic origin or cell lines derived therefrom.
- Research with genetically modified organisms.
- Projects on the use of biological agents that pose a risk to human, animal or plant health.
- Research with radioactive substances.
- Projects that use personal data.
- Projects that use genetic information.
- Projects on acquisition or exchange of genetic material.

Furthermore, the Individual Learning Plan shall include a forecast and planning for the development of the different training activities that are part of the doctoral programme. This plan shall include a timetable based on the established model.

The request for approval of the Research Proposal and Individual Learning Plan shall be submitted through the Laurea Academic platform, attaching the PDF files signed by the doctoral student, Tutor and Supervisor and, if applicable, with a favourable report from the UCAM Research Ethics Committee or from the centre where the research project will be carried out.

The doctoral student shall be the holder of the topic and proposed title of the thesis as long as they continue to annually enrol in the programme.

The Research Proposal shall contain:

- A cover page according to the model published on our website (available at the Academic Registry of the virtual campus) including :
 - Identification data of the doctoral student and the Thesis Supervisor(s).
 - The proposed title for the doctoral thesis.
- Table of contents
- Summary
- Scientific objectives pursued.
- Introduction, including background or status of the topic.
- Methodology and envisaged work plan with estimated timetable for completion (3 years for full-time students and 5 years for part-time students).

- Scientific interest of the project.
- Bibliography.

Procedure

1. Submission by the student through the LAUREA ACADEMIC application. This shall be validated by the Tutor and Supervisor.
2. In its annual assessment, the Academic Committee shall determine the viability of the submitted proposal and, if applicable, the favourable reports of the ethics committee.
3. In the event that shortcomings are detected by the Committee, the doctoral student shall be notified of the modifications to be made and the deadline for re-submission (6 months). Should the student fail to address the shortcomings, the Academic Committee shall issue a reasoned report and the student shall be permanently withdrawn from the programme.
4. In the event that the Committee validates the procedure, the EIDUCAM shall register it in the UCAM Research Proposals Registry and the procedure shall be marked as completed in the Laura Academic application.

Modifying the Research Proposal and/or Individual Learning Plan

The Research Proposal and/or Individual Learning Plan are subject to modification during the course of the programme. These modifications may be related to:

- Changes in the title of the Research Proposal.
- Changes in the structure of the Initial Research Proposal.
- Changes in the Individual Learning Plan due to modifications in the Planning for the development of the Training Activities.

Procedure:

1. Submission by the student through the Laurea Academic application. This shall be validated by the Tutor and Supervisor.

Depending on the assessment:

- Approved modifications that do NOT require Ethics Committee approval: the Secretary and Director shall validate the Research Proposal. The EIDUCAM Academic Registry shall register the modification in the UCAM Research

Proposals Database and shall notify the doctoral student. In case of modification in the thesis supervision, EIDUCAM shall officially communicate it to the Supervisor(s) and Tutor.

- In the event of substantial changes to the proposals that the Academic Committee of the programme considers require re-evaluation and approval by the Ethics Committee, the Secretary of the committee shall forward the proposal to the Ethics Committee. Once assessed, the Ethics Committee shall send its report back to the EIDUCAM Academic Registry and:
 - In case of a FAVOURABLE report: The modifications shall be registered on the Research Proposals Registry of UCAM and the doctoral student will be notified. In case of modification in the thesis supervision, EIDUCAM shall officially communicate it to the Supervisor(s) and Tutor.
 - In the event of an UNFAVOURABLE report: it shall be forwarded to the Academic Committee of the programme for them to inform the candidate of the required modifications.
- In case of unapproved proposals: The Academic Committee shall notify the doctoral student of the modifications to be made and the deadline for re-submission.

Modifying the Doctoral Thesis Supervisor(s)

In the initial admission resolution of each EIDUCAM student, at least one Supervisor shall be designated for the development of the doctoral thesis. However, the possibility of incorporating new Supervisors, up to a maximum of three, is envisaged.

The addition/change of Directors assigned to the Research Proposal may be applied for:

- a) Before the submission of the Research Proposal: In this case, the doctoral student shall request the incorporation of the new Supervisor(s) prior to the submission of his or her Research Proposal. Once the incorporation of the Supervisor(s) has been authorised, the procedure for the submission of the Research Proposal shall be available.
- b) After the submission of the Research Proposal: Once the Research Proposal has been approved, changes may be made in the supervision. These shall be approved by the corresponding Academic Committee.

Procedure:

1. Download the Thesis Supervision Modification Request form and fill it in accordingly.

2. Send the application via the form Submission of Thesis Supervision Modification Request, which shall be validated by the EIDUCAM Academic Registry upon reception. In the event that the chosen Supervisor does not belong to the Universidad Católica of Murcia (UCAM), you are required to provide a CVN (Normalised Curriculum Vitae) with the application.
3. The Academic Committee of the programme shall assess the application and issue (within a maximum period of 15 days) a resolution in terms of favourable or unfavourable – in which case it shall be duly justified.
4. The EIDUCAM Academic Registry shall register the modification in the Laurea Academic application and inform the Tutor and Supervisor(s).
5. In the case a third Supervisor is incorporated, a letter must be submitted justifying the reasons for the incorporation, signed by the Supervisors linked to the project and by the doctoral student.
6. When more than one document is to be provided, the documents shall be merged into a single PDF file.

Article 16. Doctoral Thesis.

The doctoral thesis shall consist of an original research paper conducted by the candidate in any field of knowledge, enabling the doctoral student to work independently in the field of R&D&I.

a) Guarantee of Originality

The Spanish University Student Statute, approved by Royal Decree 1791/2010, of 30 December, establishes (Art. 7) the right of students to recognition of the authorship of the works produced and to the protection of their intellectual property, as well as the duty to refrain from the use or cooperation in fraudulent procedures in its creation (Art. 13).

Beyond the protection granted to authors by the Spanish Law on Intellectual Property (Royal Legislative Decree 1/1996, of 12 April), and without going into the criminal offences that may be incurred by those who plagiarise a literary, artistic or scientific work (Art. 270 of the Spanish Criminal Code), the way in which information is sought must be governed by ethical rules that allow respect for others, congruence of actions and rigorous honesty in research to be maintained at all times.

In order to provide researchers with guidelines that will help them banish bad practices in the academic world, avoiding any damage to authorship and exploitation rights, the following preventive measures should be read prior to the deposit of the Thesis:

1. Upon deposition of the thesis, and together with the affidavit of originality, a report signed by the Supervisor(s) which guarantees the originality of the work shall be submitted. As a general rule, the PDF copy of the anti-plagiarism tool of the university,

together with an explanatory report from the Supervisor justifying the originality of the thesis, is considered a guarantee report – this report being mandatory, but not binding. In no case shall the deposit be considered definitive if any of these documents are not included.

2. The Supervisor(s), in case of difficulty, may request EIDUCAM to provide them with said report, for which they must provide the final text of the Thesis in PDF format.
3. Having received the reports, the Committee of the corresponding programme shall decide, in the act of approval of the Thesis deposit, whether or not to accept the final deposit. To do this, they may grant an audience to both the doctoral student and the Supervisor, or request a report from experts both on anti-plagiarism measures and on the subject under research.

b) Deposit procedure.

Upon completion of both the research proposal and the training activities plan, the doctoral student shall be able to start the procedures for depositing and assessing their doctoral thesis. For this, the deposit application must be submitted while the academic tutelage registration is active, during the academic year in which the procedure is initiated. The deadline established to apply for the deposit of the Doctoral Thesis is 30 September of each academic year. If the deposit process is not initiated before that date, a new academic tutelage registration shall be required for the following academic year.

The development of the deposit procedure involves the following steps:

- **Pre-deposit stage:** From the beginning of the application to the receipt of preliminary evaluation reports.
- **Deposit stage:** From the public presentation of the thesis deposit to the defence date.

Procedure:

1.- Send the following documentation to the Academic Registry of the Doctoral School by email at eiducam@ucam.edu:

- A PDF file of the doctoral thesis designed in accordance with the style guide established by the University.
- Deposit and defence of doctoral thesis application. Any change or modification requested in the final title of the doctoral thesis with regard to the initial title shall be stated in this document. In addition, if any mention is requested it should also be included.

- Report from the Thesis Supervisor(s) authorising its presentation. This document shall be included in the thesis and bound after the cover.
- Follow-up notebook of the doctoral student, signed by the Tutor and Supervisor.
- Documentation proving guarantee of originality
- Examiners proposal document prepared by the Thesis Supervisor(s), in accordance with the established model, and suitability reports for each of the proposed doctors, which shall include:

- Personal, academic and professional details of the two doctors who shall act as external reviewers (both doctors must be external to UCAM and to the doctoral programme in which the thesis is being developed).
- Personal, academic and professional details of the three doctors who will make up the Examination Board (two of which must not belong to UCAM). In addition, doctors who do not belong to UCAM shall submit a curriculum vitae. Furthermore, all the proposed doctors must have accredited research experience linked to the area of knowledge of the Thesis. As a general rule, the dates and area of knowledge of the current six-year research term (sexenio) should be detailed. In addition, the two most relevant publications that place them in the area of knowledge of the Thesis to be evaluated must be specified. In case the evaluating doctors are not in an active six-year research term at the moment the candidature is presented to the Examination Board, five relevant publications that place him/her in the area of knowledge of the Thesis to be evaluated must be included. At the same time, the principle of balanced gender representation must be guaranteed, as stated in the first additional provision of Organic Law 3/02007 of 22 March for the effective equality of women and men.

As a general rule, the doctor with the most seniority in the attainment of his or her degree and the highest academic rank shall act as President. However, the Academic Committee of each doctoral programme may assess other aspects related to the academic category of the proposed doctors in order to designate the President.

- Normalised curriculum vitae of the doctoral student.

2.- Registration of the Doctoral Thesis on the TESEO platform.

Through this link: <https://www.educacion.gob.es/teseo/irGestionarConsulta.do>, the doctoral student shall register as a Doctoral Student and fill in the information of the Thesis.

Thereupon, the following documents shall be submitted to the UCAM Doctoral School Academic Registry via email at eiducam@ucam.edu:

- Proof of registration.
- Summary of the doctoral thesis. (In Word or PDF.)
- At least 2 search terms from TESAURO (Maximum 4). The Academic Registry of EIDUCAM shall conduct a technical review of the documentation provided and save the date of the thesis deposit request. This date shall be valid for the purposes of calculating the maximum duration established for the development of the programme, taking into account if the student enrolled part-time or full-time. From this moment onwards, the Thesis shall go into pre-deposit status.

In the event that shortcomings are detected in the documentation provided, the Academic Registry of EIDUCAM shall request the missing documents via email, granting the doctoral student a maximum period of 15 calendar days – from the date of communication – to rectify their application. Failure to provide the requested documents will result in the initial registration of the deposit application being cancelled and a new procedure will need to be initiated.

In the event that the technical review conducted by the Academic Registry of EIDUCAM is favourable, all the documentation detailed in section 1 shall be submitted to the Academic Committee of the programme, which will undertake the following functions within a maximum period of 30 calendar days from the date on which the documents are sent by the Academic Registry:

- Verification of compliance by the doctoral student with the training activities plan of the doctoral programme.
- Review of the submitted thesis report, to ensure compliance with the quality criteria required for a scientific paper.
- Approval of the pre-deposit based on compliance with the style regulations and the reports by the Supervisor and Tutor.
- Approval of the external examiners and the panel proposed by the Thesis Supervisor(s), based on the suitability of their research profiles.
- Approval of modifications in the title of the doctoral thesis, if applicable. This approval shall be recorded in the comments section of the thesis deposit approval document.
- In the case of an application for an international or industrial mention, compliance with the provisions of Royal Decree 99/2011 shall be verified.

Should any shortcoming or defect be detected in the documentation submitted, the Academic Committee shall inform the Academic Registry of EIDUCAM (and, subsequently, the doctoral student) for these to be rectified, and shall paralyse the pre-deposit until its rectification and subsequent approval in a subsequent session of the Academic Committee. Doctoral students and Supervisors shall be granted a maximum of 30 calendar days from the date of the communication to make the requested changes. Should the established deadlines not be met or should any deficiencies or defects continue to be detected after the correction has been made, the initial registration of the deposit application shall be cancelled, and a new procedure will need to be initiated.

In case of a favourable report, the Committee shall forward it to the Academic Registry of EIDUCAM, which will proceed to:

- Send an appointment notification to external examiners together with a copy of the doctoral Thesis and the report model to be assessed with instructions on how to complete it and send it back to the EIDUCAM Academic Registry.
A period of one month will be granted for the completion and submission of the reports. In the event that these reports were not delivered within the deadline, the EIDUCAM Academic Registry shall proceed to request them, allowing 15 days for their dispatch. Failure to do so shall result in the cancellation of the initial registration of the deposit request, and a new procedure will need to be initiated.

Once the external assessment reports are received, the Academic Registry of EIDUCAM:

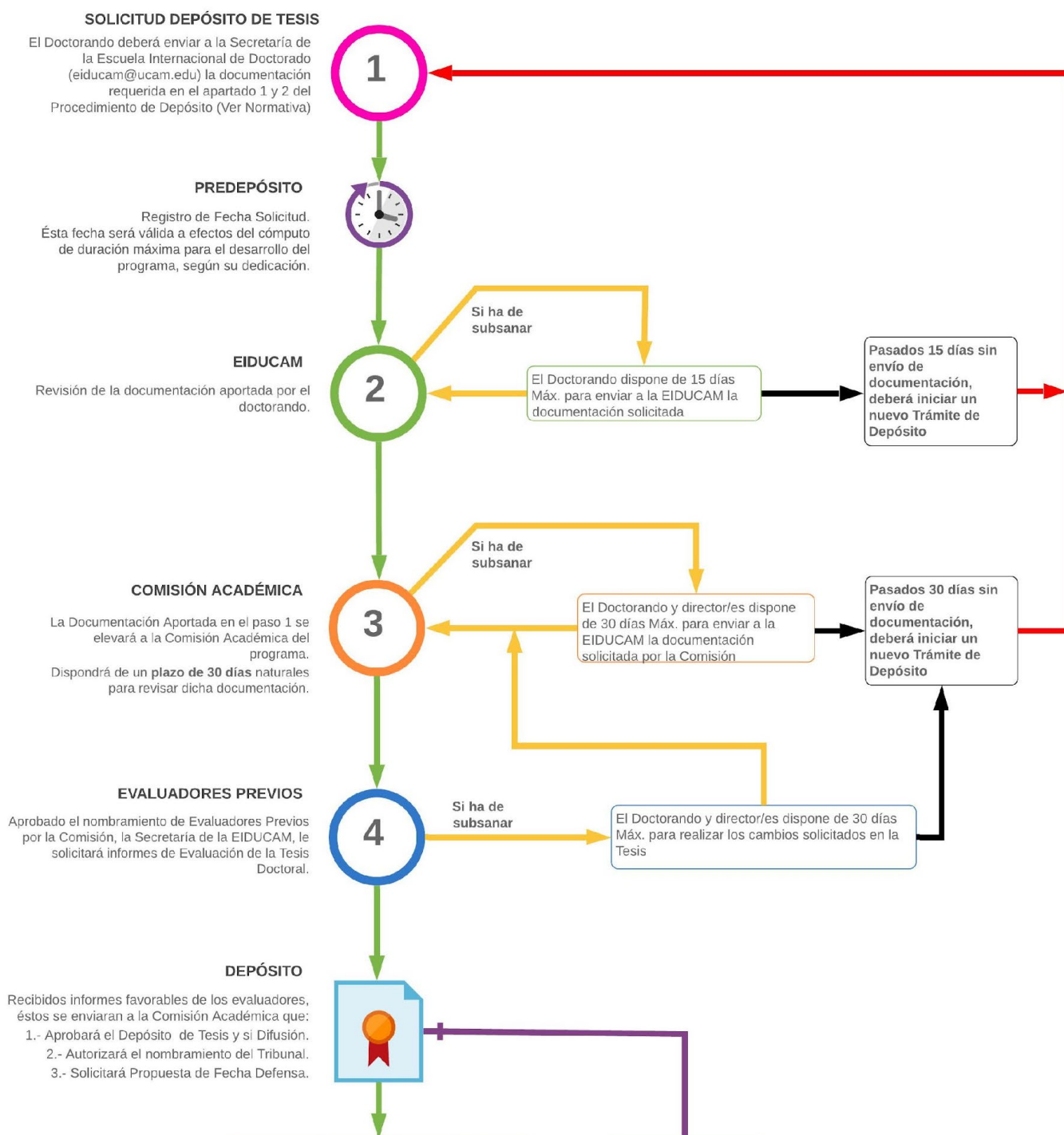
- a) Will send them to the President of the corresponding Academic Committee, requesting their approval so that the Thesis goes into Deposit status.
- b) Once the deposit has been confirmed, the preliminary assessment reports shall be sent to the doctoral student and the Thesis Supervisor.
- c) The information of the deposit of the doctoral Thesis shall be made public, via the EIDUCAM website, and shall be sent via email to the doctoral student, Supervisor(s), Tutor, EIDUCAM Governing Board, University Council, UCAM Communication Services, service departments and heads of research departments. The Thesis may be accessed by any doctor who requests it within 15 calendar days from its publication.
- d) The Thesis Supervisor(s) shall be asked to propose a date and time for its defence agreed with the members of the proposed Examination Board. This date shall always be after the statutory 15 days of deposit.

Upon expiry of the 15 calendar days of deposit, the Academic Registry of EIDUCAM shall raise any objections received to the corresponding Academic Committee, so that it can

approve the defence of the doctoral thesis, which must be performed within three months following the approval of the deposit of the doctoral thesis by the Academic Committee of the doctoral programme.

Should the Academic Committee of the doctoral programme determine that the prior assessment reports suggest that the deposit of the Doctoral Thesis be suspended due to shortcomings or defects detected in the Doctoral Thesis, the doctoral student and Supervisor(s) will be given a maximum of 30 calendar days from the date of notification to make the suggested changes. Should the established deadlines not be met or should any deficiencies or defects continue to be detected after the correction has been made, the initial registration of the deposit application shall be cancelled, and a new procedure will need to be initiated.

Outline of the procedure of depositing and defending the Doctoral Thesis



Article 17. Types of Doctoral Thesis.

17.1 Conventional thesis.

The thesis may be developed and, if applicable, defended, in the usual languages for scientific communication in its field of knowledge, following the rules of style, format and binding established by the Permanent Committee of the Doctoral School. The thesis must include a brief summary (1 or 2 pages) of the paper in Spanish and English.

17.2 Publications compendium thesis.

The doctoral thesis shall consist of a set of research papers published by the doctoral student and related to the registered Research Proposal.

For this type of thesis, any of the following options shall be accepted:

1º) A minimum of three papers published or accepted in a journal of their research field located, according to its impact factor, among the first two quartiles of the Journal Citation Reports (SCI and/or SSCI) or SCOPUS. The doctoral student must be the first or second author. In the latter case, the first must be the Thesis Supervisor, unless other guidelines are specified in the publication regulations. Two of the papers may have been accepted for publication within the three years prior to the start of the doctoral studies, but at least one of them must have been published after the registration of the Research Proposal.

2º) A minimum of 4 papers (at least three already published and the fourth accepted). These articles must be published in journals with impact indexes in any of the quartiles of the list of journals of the thesis research field. Said journals shall be indexed in the last list published by the Journal Citation Reports (SCI and/or SSCI), SCOPUS, or related databases by the Spanish National Commission for Research Evaluation (CNEAI) for the scientific fields corresponding to the knowledge areas of the doctoral programme. The doctoral student must be the first or second author. In the latter case, the first must be the Thesis Supervisor, unless other guidelines are specified in the publication regulations. Three of these articles may have been accepted for publication within the three years prior to the start of the doctoral studies, but at least one of them must have been published after the registration of the Research Proposal.

In any case, the specific requirements of the Activity 'Scientific Paper Publication' established in each programme must be met.

In order to proceed with the deposit of doctoral theses as a compendium of publications, the doctoral student shall submit the following additional documentation to that required in article 16:

- Report of the Thesis Supervisor(s), in which all the indications of quality of the work shall be evinced, such as the impact factor of the journal or the position it occupies in the field. All the alleged quality parameters shall be duly justified and demonstrated.
- A copy of the articles, book chapters, book or books that will make up the doctoral thesis, whether published or accepted for publication. These shall include the name and affiliation of the author and all co-authors, if applicable, as well as the full reference of the journal or publishing house in which the work has been published or accepted for publication, in which case proof of acceptance by the editor-in-chief of the journal or publishing house shall be provided.
- Written acceptance by the co-authors of the papers, so that the doctoral student can present them as part of their doctoral thesis.
- Waiver by the co-authors of the papers to present them as part of a different doctoral thesis.

The Doctoral Committee, after studying the documentation provided by the doctoral student, shall decide whether or not to accept the thesis defence in this format.

Theses by compendium of publications shall meet minimum formal and style requirements, which will generally consist of:

- An initial page specifying that the thesis is a compendium of previously published or accepted for publication works, and on which the full references of the articles which constitute the body of the thesis shall be listed.
- Authorisation by the Supervisor for the thesis presentation in this format.
- A general introduction and the grounds for the compendium of publications, in which their thematic unit is justified.
- A global summary of the results obtained and a discussion. Furthermore, the possible conclusions drawn from it shall be included.
- A complete copy of the papers, whether published or accepted for publication, shall be included between the introduction and the summary, or as an annex.

- Finally, an appendix with all the data related to the quality of the comprised publications shall be included.

Under no circumstances may any of the co-authors of the comprised research works be part of the Examination Board.

Article 18. Doctoral Thesis Examination Board.

The Examination Boards shall be composed of three members and two substitutes (who may be the external reviewers). Should the thesis be related to more than one subject or field of scientific, technical or artistic knowledge, the participation of specialists in the different subjects or fields of reference shall be guaranteed in the Examination Board. The following requirements shall be fulfilled:

1. All members must be doctors and have proven research experience. In any case, the Examination Board shall consist of a majority of members from outside the University and the doctoral programme. Under no circumstances may the Thesis Supervisor(s) be part of the Examination Board.
2. Within a period that may not exceed fifteen calendar days from the approval of the defence date by the corresponding Academic Committee, the Academic Registry of the Doctoral School shall send each of the Examination Board members the corresponding appointment, a copy of the Thesis to be evaluated, the doctoral student's follow-up notebook, the curriculum vitae and the Thesis Assessment form, which must be delivered duly completed at the defence act.
3. In case of applying for the International Mention, the conditions established for this purpose in Royal Decree 99/2011 must be fulfilled.

Article 19. Doctoral Thesis Defence.

The doctoral thesis shall be assessed at a public reading, which will consist of the presentation and defence of the research work conducted by the doctoral student in the presence of the Examination Board members.

The Examination Board shall be constituted prior to the doctoral thesis reading in the presence of its three full members or their substitutes. Minutes shall be drawn up of the act of constitution.

The Doctoral Thesis Defence shall consist of an oral presentation by the doctoral student on the content of the Thesis, highlighting their original contributions.

The Examination Board members shall express their opinion on the Thesis presented and formulate as many questions and objections as they deem appropriate, to which the

doctoral student shall answer. In addition, the Examination Board shall have the PhD student's training activities report. This follow-up document shall not give rise to a quantitative score, but it shall constitute a qualitative assessment tool which shall complement the assessment of the doctoral thesis.

Furthermore, doctors present at the public event may formulate questions and objections, to which the doctoral student shall respond in due time and form indicated by the President of the Examination Board.

Upon completion of the defence of the thesis, the Examination Board shall issue both a report and the overall grade awarded to the thesis according to the following scale: Fail, Pass, Merit and Distinction. The Examination Board may propose the thesis to be awarded the *cum laude* mention when a unanimous positive secret vote is cast to this effect. The University shall set up the necessary mechanisms for the final awarding of said honour, ensuring that the votes for this award are counted in a different session from that corresponding to the defence of the doctoral thesis.

The speech order shall be in inverse order to the seniority of the Examination Board members in their corresponding categories or, alternatively, of their Doctor's Degree. The UCAM Rector shall be the President of all the Examination Boards of which she is a member.

Article 20. Doctoral thesis repository and archive.

Once the doctoral thesis has been successfully defended, the University will archive it (at the Doctoral School Academic Registry) and send a copy of the thesis and the necessary information to the relevant ministry. The thesis shall be part of the institutional repertoire of the University.

In exceptional circumstances determined by the programme's Academic Committee, such as the participation of companies in the doctoral programme, the existence of confidentiality agreements or the possibility of generating patents that fall within the content of the thesis, the university shall enable procedures that ensure that these parts are not made public.

Article 21. Issuance and receipt of a doctoral Degree Certificate

The Examination Board shall inform the Doctoral School Academic Registry of the University regarding the grade of the defended thesis, for the issuance of the doctoral degree.

The Doctor's Degree shall be issued in the name of the King, by the Rector of Universidad Católica de San Antonio, after verification of compliance with the requirements

established in Royal Decree 99/2011, and the specific regulations approved by the University Council.

The title of Doctor shall include the mention 'Doctor of the Universidad Católica San Antonio'. Furthermore, the material issuance of the degree shall include information on the doctoral programme completed, in accordance with the provisions in this regard in Royal Decree 1002/2010, of 5 August, on the issuance of official university degrees.

Upon passing the doctoral thesis, the interested party may request the issuance of the Doctor certificate at the Doctoral School Academic Registry, providing the following documentation:

- Application request of the doctor degree title.
- Attested photocopy of identity card or passport.
- Payment receipt of the title issuance fees, validated by the financial institution.
- Attested photocopy of the title with which the candidate accessed the doctoral programme and the date of publication in the Official Spanish Gazette (BOE in Spanish) of the study plan leading thereto.

Article 22. Extraordinary Awards.

Doctoral theses which have sufficient merit may be eligible for an Extraordinary Doctorate Award according to the rules established in the Regulations for granting Extraordinary Doctorate Awards of Universidad Católica San Antonio de Murcia (agreement 06/11/2007).

Article 23. International Mention in the doctoral degree and International Co-Supervision.

The doctor's degree certificate may include on the front the words 'Doctorado internacional' (International Doctorate) and/or 'Cotutela internacional' (International Co-Supervision), provided that the circumstances specified in Art. 15 of *Royal Decree 99/2011* are met.

The Thesis Defence must be held at UCAM or, in the case of joint doctoral programmes, at any of the participating universities or under the terms of the collaboration agreements.

Article 24. Industrial Mention in the doctoral degree.

The doctor's degree certificate may include the words 'Doctorado Industrial' (Industrial Doctorate) on the front, provided that the circumstances specified in Art. 15bis of *Royal Decree 99/2011* are met.

Article 25. Pre-doctoral training contracts.

In addition to the rights and obligations inherent to any employment relationship, during the period of writing their thesis, doctoral students holding pre-doctoral research training contracts linked to Research Groups of the Universidad Católica de Murcia shall be entitled to the following rights:

- A. To receive from UCAM the collaboration and support necessary for the normal development of their studies and research programmes.
- B. To be integrated in the faculties in which they are researching.
- C. To participate in the offers of the UCAM In-House Research Support Programme for grants to attend scientific conferences or for research stays.
- D. To obtain a 50% reduction in the tuition fees for academic tutelage and the defence of the doctoral thesis.
- E. In the case of being beneficiaries of state or regional R&D&I aid for University Lecturers Training, the reduction will be made according to the aid received.
- F. To exercise the intellectual property rights derived from their own training activity in research and in accordance with their contribution, following the provisions of the revised text of the Intellectual Property Law, approved by Spanish Royal Legislative Decree 1/1996, of 12 April, Law 24/2015, of 24 July, on Patents.