

POINTS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY EVALUATORS OF THE ACCREDITATION RENEWAL PROGRAMME FOR OFFICIAL DOCTORAL DEGREES

June 2026



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CRITERION 1 – ORGANISATION AND STANDARDISED DEVELOPMENT

Standard: The doctoral programme is student-centred, up to date and has been implemented in accordance with the conditions set out in the verified programme proposal and/or any subsequent amendments

Guideline 1.1 The programme has mechanisms in place to ensure that the entry profile of doctoral students is appropriate and that their numbers are consistent with the characteristics and distribution of the programme's research areas and the number of places offered.

Points to consider:

The admission criteria ensure that students have the appropriate entry profile to commence their studies in line with the programme's characteristics and research areas, as well as the number of places offered in the approved programme description and/or its subsequent amendments.

The supplementary training modules fulfil their purpose in terms of enabling students from different entry disciplines to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge.

Guideline 1.2: The programme has adequate mechanisms in place for the supervision of doctoral students and, where applicable, of training activities

Points to consider:

The academic committee monitors the progress of PhD students using the documents set out in Royal Decree 99/2011 (research plan and record of activities carried out by each student).

The procedure used by the academic committee for the appointment of academic staff to supervise and direct doctoral theses, as well as for any subsequent changes to these appointments, is appropriate.

Measures have been put in place to prevent fraud and ensure the originality of the research.

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Where the doctoral programme is delivered across several institutions and/or is inter-university in nature, the coordination arrangements between the institutions and/or universities participating in the programme.

The university's regulations on the submission and defence of doctoral theses are in line with current national legislation.

In the case of inter-university doctoral programmes, the regulations governing the submission and defence of the doctoral thesis set out the same requirements at all participating universities.

In the case of an international placement, the necessary coordination and supervision of the placement at a prestigious foreign higher education institution or research centre has been ensured.

In the case of theses under an international joint supervision arrangement, the periods of study and activities have been set out in the joint supervision agreements and are being duly carried out.

In the case of industrial placements, the necessary coordination and supervision have been ensured so that the activities carried out within the company enable students to acquire the relevant skills.

Guideline 1.3: The institution addresses any recommendations made in the verification report and, where applicable, in any amendment reports, as well as those that may be contained in subsequent follow-up reports.

Points to consider:

Where applicable, the extent to which the recommendations set out in the verification report and/or in any subsequent amendments thereto, in the authorisation report, and in any subsequent follow-up reports have been implemented.

Guideline 1.4: Where applicable, changes made to the doctoral programme which have not been subject to amendment do not alter MECES Level 4 and allow for its updating in accordance with the requirements of the discipline.

Points to consider:

Where applicable, the nature and outcomes of the changes introduced that have not been the subject of a programme amendment report.

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CRITERION 2. INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY

Standard: Institutions must publish clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date and easily accessible information on their activities and programmes.

Guideline 2.1 The university publishes objective, comprehensive and up-to-date information on the doctoral programme, its characteristics, its development and the results achieved.

Points to consider:

The approved doctoral programme prospectus and/or any subsequent amendments to it are published on the website and are freely available.

The final evaluation report for the accreditation process and the various reports on amendments to the PhD programme, as well as the accreditation decision by the Council of Universities, are published on the website and are freely available

The monitoring reports on the PhD programme produced by the AVAP are published on the website and are openly accessible.

The internal monitoring reports for the PhD programme are published on the website, albeit with restricted access.

A direct link to the PhD programme in the Register of Universities, Centres and Qualifications is available on the website.

The correspondence between the name of the doctoral programme as advertised and the name listed in the RUCT.

A description of the main aspects relating to admission to the PhD programme (objectives, entry profile, exit profile, number of places available, enrolment period and procedure, admission requirements and criteria, the body responsible for the admission process and its composition, the procedure for and allocation of a supervisor and thesis director, supplementary training, and scholarships and other financial support) are published on the website and are freely accessible.

A description of the main aspects relating to the organisation of the PhD programme (research areas, training activities, and the procedure for drawing up and defending the research proposal) is published on the website and is freely available.

Details of the main aspects relating to the operational planning of the PhD programme (composition of the academic committee, duration of studies and enrolment period, academic calendar and learning resources) are published on the website and are freely available.

Details of the academic and research staff involved in the PhD programme are published on the website and are freely available

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Where applicable, details of the key aspects relating to mobility programmes (objectives, regulations, and scholarships and grants) are published on the website and are freely available.

The academic regulations governing doctoral theses (assessment, submission and defence, international distinction, theses under international co-supervision, and industrial distinction) are published on the website and are openly accessible.

The main outcomes of the PhD programme (defended doctoral theses and stakeholder satisfaction) are published on the website and are openly accessible.

Where information about the doctoral programme is available on several websites belonging to the university (or universities, if it is an inter-university programme) or to the institutions offering the programme, the information does not contain any contradictions.

Where applicable, the extent to which the recommendations for improvement included in the doctoral programme's monitoring reports have been implemented.

Guideline 2.2 The institution ensures that all stakeholders have easy access to relevant information about the doctoral programme.

Points to consider:

The ease of access to the description of the doctoral programme.

The ease with which pupils can access information about the skills they need to acquire.

The ease of access to information on the entry and admission requirements for the PhD programme and, where applicable, any supplementary training that must be undertaken.

The ease of access to information prior to enrolment (documents to be submitted, places available, etc.).

The ease of accessing information on the organisation and operational planning of the PhD programme.

In this case, easy access to information on what the 'international specialisation', the thesis under an international co-supervision arrangement and the 'Industrial' specialisation entail.

The ease of access to information regarding student support programmes or services and the learning resources available.

Easy access to the regulations applicable to students on the PhD programme.

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Where applicable, the extent to which the recommendations for improvement included in the doctoral programme's monitoring reports have been implemented.

Guideline 2.3 The institution publishes the SAIC within which the doctoral programme is framed.

Points to consider:

The Internal Quality Assurance System (SAIC), within which the PhD programme is framed and which sets out those responsible for it, the procedures and, where applicable, the improvement measures implemented, is published on the website and is freely accessible.

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CRITERION 3 – INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM (IQAS)

Standard: The institution has a formally established and implemented internal quality assurance system that effectively ensures the continuous improvement of the doctoral programme.

Guideline 3.1. The IQAS in place ensures the collection of information and results relevant to decision-making and the efficient management of the doctoral programme, particularly regarding learning outcomes and stakeholder satisfaction.

Points to consider:

The implemented internal quality assurance system ensures the continuous collection of information and the analysis of learning outcomes.

The SAIC that has been implemented ensures the continuous collection of information and the analysis of results relating to employment placement.

The SAIC system in place ensures that information is collected on an ongoing basis and that the level of satisfaction amongst the various stakeholder groups is analysed.

Procedures for continuously collecting information, analysing the results and using them to inform decision-making and improve the quality of the PhD programme have been developed in accordance with the relevant guidelines.

In the case of inter-university doctoral programmes, whether the measures implemented as a result of the introduction of the SAIC are coordinated across all the universities or centres participating in the programme.

Guideline 3.2. The SAIC in place has procedures in place to facilitate the evaluation and improvement of the doctoral programme.

Points to consider:

The recommendations contained in the evaluation reports for the review, modification and monitoring of the PhD programme have been analysed within the SAIC, and the relevant actions have been put in place by those responsible for the PhD programme.

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Based on an analysis of objective and reliable data, the SAIC provides information to support the processes of monitoring, modifying and accrediting the degree programme, and has generated useful information for the groups involved in the doctoral programme.

In this case, changes have been made to the originally planned design of the doctoral programme as a result of the information provided by the SAIC, and monitoring of these changes confirms that they have been effective and have achieved the objectives set.

Guideline 3.3. The SAIC system in place has appropriate procedures for dealing with suggestions, complaints and compliments.

Points to consider:

The implemented SAIC has appropriate procedures in place to deal with suggestions, complaints and compliments.

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CRITERION 4 – ACADEMIC STAFF

Standard: Institutions must ensure the competence of their teaching staff. They must also use fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of their staff.

Guideline 4.1. Academic staff meet the academic qualification requirements for participation in the doctoral programme and can demonstrate their research experience.

Points to consider:

The teaching and research staff involved in the PhD programme and the research experience they have demonstrated.

The involvement of teaching staff in research, development and innovation activities, and the impact of these on the PhD programme.

Changes to the academic staff structure during the period under review.

The extent to which the commitments set out in the audited annual report and/or subsequent amendments have been fulfilled.

Where applicable, the extent to which the recommendations set out in the authorisation and monitoring reports for the doctoral programme have been implemented.

Guideline 4.2. There are sufficient academic staff, and they have the necessary time commitment to carry out their duties properly, taking into account the number of students in each research area and the nature and characteristics of the doctoral programme.

Points to consider:

The extent to which the commitments set out in the verification report and/or subsequent amendments have been fulfilled.

Changes to the academic staff structure during the period under review.

The level of student satisfaction with the supervision they have received and the guidance provided for their theses and, where applicable, the improvement measures put in place.

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Where applicable, the extent to which the recommendations contained in the verification, authorisation and monitoring reports on the doctoral programme have been implemented.

Guideline 4.3. The doctoral programme has mechanisms in place to recognise the work involved in supervision and thesis guidance.

Points to consider:

The PhD programme has mechanisms in place to recognise the work of supervisors, and these are appropriate.

The PhD programme has mechanisms in place for the assessment of thesis supervision, and these are appropriate.

The level of satisfaction amongst academic staff with the mechanisms for recognising their work in supervising and directing doctoral theses.

Guideline 4.4. The level of participation by international experts on monitoring committees and thesis examination boards is appropriate to the programme's scientific field.

Points to consider:

The extent to which the commitments set out in the verification report and/or subsequent amendments have been fulfilled.

The level of involvement of international experts in the supervisory committees and thesis examination boards is appropriate, taking into account the programme's scientific field and the commitments set out in the verification report or any subsequent amendments.

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CRITERION 5 – SUPPORT STAFF, MATERIAL RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Standard: Institutions must have sufficient funding to carry out teaching and learning activities and ensure that students are provided with adequate and easily accessible support and resources for learning.

Guideline 5.1 The material resources available are appropriate to the number of students in each research area and the nature and characteristics of the doctoral programme.

Points to consider:

The characteristics, where applicable, of laboratories, workshops and experimental spaces in relation to the number of students and the scheduled teaching activities.

The characteristics of bibliographic and documentary resources in relation to student numbers and the scheduled teaching activities.

Where there are partner organisations participating in the research activities under an agreement, the nature of the material resources and other facilities they make available to the doctoral programme.

The availability of financial support provided by the PhD programme or the university itself, intended to enable PhD students to attend conferences and undertake stays abroad.

The extent to which the commitments set out in the verification report and/or subsequent amendments have been fulfilled.

Where applicable, the extent to which the recommendations set out in the verification, authorisation and monitoring reports for the doctoral programme have been implemented.

Guideline 5.2 Academic guidance services and support staff respond to the needs of students' training and learning process as researchers.

Points to consider:

The characteristics of academic and, where applicable, career guidance services and/or programmes.

The extent to which the commitments set out in the verification report and/or subsequent amendments have been fulfilled.

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Where applicable, the extent to which the recommendations included in the verification, authorisation and monitoring reports for the doctoral programme have been implemented.

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CRITERION 6 – LEARNING OUTCOMES

Standard: The learning outcomes achieved by doctoral students correspond to level 4 of the MECES (Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education).

Guideline 6.1 The teaching activities, their teaching methodologies and the assessment systems used are appropriate and aligned with the objective of achieving the intended learning outcomes.

Points to consider:

The training activities and their assessment are consistent with the learning outcomes defined for the doctoral programme.

The number of doctoral theses defended and the trend in this number are appropriate for the characteristics of the doctoral programme.

The standards required for doctoral theses to be awarded the *cum laude* distinction.

Guideline 6.2 The academic indicators of the doctoral programme and their trends correspond to level 4 of the MECES.

Points to consider:

The doctoral theses defended and the scientific contributions arising from them – both those made prior to defence and those made subsequently – demonstrate the acquisition of the core competences established by the MECES for doctoral programmes, as well as the competences and skills specific to the programme.

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CRITERION 7 – SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Standard: The results of the indicators for the doctoral programme are appropriate to its characteristics and to the socio-economic and research context, and meet the demands of its environment through regular evaluation.

Guideline 7.1 Satisfaction levels amongst students, teaching staff, graduates and other stakeholders are adequate.

Points to consider:

The reliability of the results of surveys or other methods used to assess the satisfaction of the various stakeholders.

Stakeholders' satisfaction with the skills developed by the students.

Stakeholders' satisfaction with the organisation and planning of the doctoral programme.

Stakeholders' satisfaction with the communication channels used by the PhD programme and the content of the information it provides.

Stakeholders' satisfaction with the material resources available.

satisfaction amongst stakeholders with academic and, where applicable, career guidance services and/or programmes.

Stakeholder satisfaction with the academic indicators of the PhD programme.

Guideline 7.2 The indicators are appropriate to the student profile, in accordance with the programme's scientific field.

Points to consider:

The trend in the number of new students per academic year compared with the forecasts set out in the audited annual report and/or subsequent amendments.

Where applicable, the results of applying the admission criteria in relation to the intake profile set out in the verification report and/or subsequent amendments.

Trends in the average duration of the programme and the drop-out rate, according to the programme's subject area and the context in which the doctoral programme is situated.

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Guideline 7.3 The trends in the indicators are consistent with the forecasts set out in the verified report.

Points to consider:

The progress of the indicators for the doctoral programme in line with the forecasts set out in the approved annual report and/or subsequent amendments.

Guideline 7.4 Graduates' entry into the labour market is consistent with the programme's socio-economic and research context.

Points to consider:

The reliability of the employability indicators.

The evolution of employability indicators in relation to the socio-economic and research context of the PhD programme.

Where applicable, the existence of university plans, programmes and/or services designed to facilitate and enhance the employability of graduates from the doctoral programme.

Graduates' satisfaction with the link between the education they have received and their employability prospects.

Employers' satisfaction with the relationship between the training received by graduates on the PhD programme and their employability prospects.

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CHANGE CONTROL

Edition	Date	Description of the change
V.2.	01/07/2024	Start of version control for the document Changes: The wording of guideline 7.4 has been amended to bring it into line with the other documents.
V.3.	1 July 2025	The columns referring to the assessment of each aspect to be considered, in terms of SA (Achieved), SAP (Partially Achieved) and NSA (Not Achieved), have been removed.
V.4.	15 June 2026	- The language has been adapted to reflect a gender perspective throughout the document. - The reference to AVAP has been amended by removing the preceding article 'la'. - The need to refer to specific information about the campuses where each degree programme is taught has been included, as until now the document only referred to the centres.

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* This document has been translated using DeepL, an automatic translation tool.



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