

SUPPORT GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE VERIFICATION REPORT FOR OFFICIAL DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

July 2026

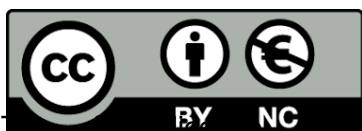


**VALENCIAN AGENCY FOR
ASSESSMENT AND
FORESIGHT**





© Valencian Agency for Assessment and Foresight



<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-ncnd/3.0/es/legalcode.es>

The contents of this work are subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 3.0 licence. Reproduction, distribution and public communication are permitted provided that no commercial use is made of them. be viewed at: [http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-ncnd/3.0/es/legalcode.es)

Document produced in July 2026 v.3



Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	5
GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ANNUAL REPORTS	6
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	8
GENERAL CRITERIA: GUIDING PRINCIPLES	10
DIMENSION 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME	11
1.1 BASIC INFORMATION	12
1.1.1. <i>Name of the doctoral programme</i>	12
1.1.2. <i>Identification of the applicant and collaborating organisations</i>	12
1.1.3. <i>Joint or inter-university degrees</i>	12
1.2 CONTEXT	13
1.3 UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONS WHERE THE COURSE IS TAUGHT	15
1.3.1 <i>Languages of instruction</i>	15
1.3.2 <i>Number of places available on the degree programme</i>	15
1.3.3. <i>Retention regulations</i>	1c
1.4 PARTNERSHIPS	16
DIMENSION 2. SKILLS	17
DIMENSION 3. STUDENT ACCESS AND ADMISSIONS	20
3.1 INFORMATION PRIOR TO ENROLMENT. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	20
3.2 ENTRY AND ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND CRITERIA	21
3.3. ENROLLED STUDENTS AND THEIR BACKGROUNDS	23
3.4. SUPPLEMENTARY TRAINING	23
DIMENSION 4. TRAINING ACTIVITIES	25
4.1. ORGANISATION OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES	26
4.1.1. BASIC INFORMATION	26
4.1.2. DETAILS OF CONTROL PROCEDURES	27
4.1.3. <i>Mobility Measures</i>	28
DIMENSION 5. ORGANISATION OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME	26
5.1. SUPERVISION OF DOCTORAL THESES	29
5.2. MONITORING OF PHD STUDENTS	29
5.3. THESIS EXAMINATION REGULATIONS	30
DIMENSION 6. HUMAN RESOURCES	31
6.1. RESEARCH AREAS AND TEAMS	32
6.2. METHODS FOR CALCULATING THE WORK INVOLVED IN SUPERVISING AND DIRECTING DOCTORAL THESES	35
DIMENSION 7. MATERIAL AND SUPPORT RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO PhD Students	36
7.1. MATERIAL RESOURCES	36
7.2. SUPPORT SERVICES	37
DIMENSION 8. REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND RESULTS OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME	38
8.1. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM (SAIC)	38
8.2. PROCEDURE FOR TRACKING PHD GRADUATES	39
8.3. RESULTS AND FORECAST	40

REVIEW RECORD	41
----------------------------	-----------

INTRODUCTION

Royal Decree 99/2011 of 28 January, which regulates official doctoral programmes, as amended by Royal Decree 576/2023 of 4 July, stipulates in Article 10 that doctoral programmes leading to the award of the official degree of Doctor must be verified by the Council of Universities and authorised by the relevant Autonomous Communities, in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 822/2021 of 28 September, establishing the organisation of university education and the procedure for ensuring its quality, as amended by Royal Decree 905/2025 of 7 October, subject to the specific provisions referred to in the aforementioned Royal Decree 99/2011.

In accordance with the aforementioned Royal Decree 822/2021, as amended by Royal Decree 905/2025, it is the quality assurance agencies of the Autonomous Communities registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) which, having successfully passed an external evaluation in accordance with the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education* (ESG), shall be responsible for carrying out the quality assurance procedures for the university system within their territorial jurisdiction.

The Valencian Agency for Assessment and Foresight (AVAP) is an external evaluation body listed in the EQAR Register and is therefore responsible for carrying out all quality assurance procedures for the university system within its territorial jurisdiction, that is, in the Valencian Community.

This guide has been drawn up on the basis of Royal Decree 99/2011, as amended by Royal Decree 576/2023 of 4 July, which states in Article 10 that doctoral programmes leading to the award of the official degree of Doctor must be verified by the Council of Universities, and on the basis of the document drawn up by the National Agency for Evaluation and Accreditation (ANECA) "SUPPORT GUIDE: Evaluation for the Verification of Official Doctoral Programmes". This revised edition of the Guide has also drawn on documents produced by other quality assurance agencies, specifically AQU Catalunya and the Madri+d Foundation.

The aim of this guide is to advise universities on interpreting the information required in Annex I of Royal Decree 99/2011 of 28 January, which regulates official doctoral programmes, as well as to provide recommendations and/or suggestions on elements that will improve proposals for official degrees, facilitate their evaluation and enable their more appropriate development.

The structure of the guide follows the assessment criteria set out in Annex II of Royal Decree 99/2011, providing guidance on how to complete each of these criteria.

GENERAL RULES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Deadlines for the submission of applications:

- The period for submitting applications is:
 - Verifications and substantial amendments: throughout the year.
 - Non-substantial amendments: from 1 September to 31 May, both inclusive.
- For reasons of institutional organisation, economy and good management of public resources, universities must adhere to the following timeframe: the date of application for a new verification or amendment of a programme must be at least six months after the date of issue of the last verification/amendment report for the same programme, in order to ensure its proper implementation. This timeframe includes degree programmes withdrawn by the university following a provisional or final report. Non-substantial amendments are excluded from this provision.
- A programme that has not been previously implemented and taught within a period of two years from the date of obtaining the corresponding favourable decision from the Council of Universities may not be resubmitted for verification or modification.
- The provisions of Article 34.11 of Royal Decree 822/2021 shall apply: a university whose official programme has not applied for renewal of accreditation within the relevant timeframe or which, having done so, has not obtained such renewal, may not, within the following two years from the date on which the programme's accreditation expired, submit a curriculum report for a new verification process if this is similar in name and fundamental content to the curriculum of the programme for which accreditation has not been renewed.
- Programmes that are currently undergoing, or are due to undergo (at least eight months in advance), an accreditation renewal process may not be submitted for modification.

Formats and documentation to be provided:

- The reports on official programmes submitted by universities for evaluation must comply with the provisions of Royal Decree 99/2010, Annex I ("ANNEX I. Report for the verification of doctoral programmes").
- Reports requesting a substantial amendment must be submitted in an updated form; that is, they must not contain highlighted or crossed-out text from previous amendments that have been approved and incorporated into the verified report. In order to carry out this action in those sections that are not being amended, it must be clearly specified on the amendment form: 'Updated without including amendments'. It shall be the responsibility of the university and the person submitting the amendment not to make any changes to the content of those sections.
- Comments should be submitted in the Annex to section 6.1 (PDF document). Comments relating to previous amendments will be removed; or, if it is deemed

important to retain them, they shall be placed at the end of the document and duly identified.

- Once the verified report is ready, with 'marks' from previous amendments removed, the proposed changes shall be highlighted as follows:
 - Text to be deleted shall be struck through and the proposed text shall be highlighted in colour.
 - Within a single amendment, different colours shall be used for each stage of the process (amendment, first comment, etc.).
 - The changes must be incorporated into the report or the relevant annexes, as well as being cited and justified in the document setting out the arguments.
- Changes not specified as such in the initial application and/or in the justification and response document will not be accepted. Furthermore, all amendments cited in these documents must be incorporated into the report.
- Reports must not contain links unless expressly permitted in this guide, as set out below:
 - ✓ Documentation must not be submitted via links to online repositories (Drive or others). Should the documentation to be provided not be able to be attached as an annexe in the Ministry's application system, it may be included in section 6.1, provided it is properly identified and linked to the relevant section.
 - ✓ To display regulations relating to the institutions or the university, links must be used that function correctly and lead to the official websites of the degree programme, institution or university.
- Where it is necessary to submit agreements whose size exceeds the limit permitted in the SOLRUCT application, they may be submitted as attachments within a single PDF file (a feature also referred to as 'Collection', 'Package', 'Portfolio' or 'Cartera'), but this must always be clearly stated on the first page, as some browsers do not read them and only allow the cover page to be viewed.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This section sets out the terms established in Article 2 of Royal Decree 99/2011, as amended by Royal Decree 576/2023, and other provisions of the Royal Decree:

1. **Doctoral studies:** pursuant to the provisions of Article 9 of Organic Law 2/2023 of 22 March on the University System, these constitute the third cycle of official university education in Spain, the purpose of which is the acquisition of the competences and skills relating to high-quality research and its development.
2. **Doctoral programme:** a set of activities leading to the award of the degree of Doctor. The purpose of such a programme shall be to develop the various educational aspects of the doctoral candidate and to establish the procedures and lines of research for the preparation of doctoral theses.
3. **Doctoral candidate:** a person who, having met the requirements set out in this Royal Decree, has been admitted to a doctoral programme and has enrolled in it.
4. **Thesis supervisor:** the person with ultimate responsibility for guiding the doctoral candidate's research activities, in accordance with the provisions of Article 12 of Royal Decree 99/2011. This shall be any Spanish or foreign Doctor with proven research experience (Article 11.4).

The Academic Committee may authorise the co-supervision of the thesis by PhD holders who do not meet the requirements set out in Article 2.9 of Royal Decree 99/2011. Under no circumstances shall the number of supervisors exceed three. Prior authorisation from the Academic Committee is required for the co-supervision of the thesis. Such authorisation may be revoked at a later date if, in the opinion of the Academic Committee, co-supervision does not benefit the progress of the thesis (Article 12.1).

Universities, through the Doctoral School or the relevant unit responsible for the doctoral programme, may establish additional requirements for acting as a thesis supervisor (Art. 12.2).

5. **Supervisor:** responsible for ensuring that the student's training and research activity comply with the principles of the programmes and, where applicable, of the Doctoral Schools. The supervisor must be a PhD holder with proven research experience, affiliated with the programme, and shall be responsible for facilitating the doctoral candidate's interaction with the Academic Committee. The supervisor may or may not be the same person as the doctoral thesis supervisor (Art. 11.4).
6. **Programme Academic Committee:** responsible for defining, updating, ensuring the quality of, and coordinating the programme, as well as for supervising the progress of research and training, and for authorising the submission of the thesis of each doctoral candidate on the programme.

Each doctoral programme shall be organised, designed and coordinated by an Academic Committee responsible for its training and research activities. This Academic Committee shall be composed of PhD holders and shall be appointed by the University, in accordance with its regulations, statutes and collaboration agreements,

and may include researchers from public research organisations, as well as from other bodies and institutions involved in R&D&I at both national and international level (Art. 8.3).

7. **Doctoral Student's Activity Record (DAD):** an individualised record of these activities, documented in the appropriate format. The thesis supervisor and the tutor will review this document. The Academic Committee will assess it annually.
8. **Doctoral School:** A unit established by one or more universities, possibly in collaboration with other organisations, centres, institutions and bodies engaged in R&D&I, whether national or international, whose primary purpose is to organise, within its sphere of management, doctoral programmes in one or more branches of knowledge or of an interdisciplinary nature. These are regulated by Article 9 of Royal Decree 99/2011.
9. **Accredited research experience:** for the purposes of Royal Decree 99/2011, accredited research experience is defined as having undertaken at least one period of research activity recognised by the National Commission for the Evaluation of Research Activity (CNEAI) pursuant to Royal Decree 1086/1989 of 28 August, on the remuneration of university teaching staff, or, where it is not possible to provide such evidence, to have equivalent research merits, as set out in the university's own regulations.
10. **Programme coordinator:** each doctoral programme shall have a coordinator appointed by the university rector or by agreement between rectors in the case of joint programmes, or in the manner specified in the agreement with other institutions where a doctoral programme is run in collaboration. This role must be held by a leading researcher and be supported by a track record of having supervised at least two doctoral theses and evidence of having completed at least two periods of recognised research activity in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1086/1989 of 28 August on the remuneration of university teaching staff. Should the researcher in question hold a position to which the aforementioned assessment criteria do not apply, they must demonstrate merits equivalent to those specified (Art. 8.4).
11. **Extraordinary Award:** universities may award an Extraordinary Doctoral Award to those theses that are particularly meritorious and have obtained the highest mark, with one nomination for the Extraordinary Award for every ten doctoral theses defended or fraction thereof (Art. 14 bis).
12. **International distinction on the Doctor's degree certificate and theses under an international co-supervision arrangement:**
 - 1) the Doctor's degree certificate may bear the words 'International Doctorate' on the front, provided that the conditions set out in Article 15.1 of Royal Decree 99/2011 are met.
 - 2) Universities shall encourage doctoral degrees under international co-supervision in accordance with the provisions of Article 26.2 of Organic Law 2/2023 of 22 March. To this end, the Doctor's degree certificate shall bear on the front the endorsement 'Thesis under a joint supervision arrangement with University U', provided that the conditions set out in Article 15.2 of Royal Decree 99/2011 are met.

13. Industrial Distinction on the Doctor's degree certificate: this shall be awarded upon completion of doctoral studies in collaboration with the social and economic sectors, with the aim of fostering collaboration and the transfer and exchange of knowledge between the academic world and the social and economic sectors, whether in the public or private sphere. The "Industrial Doctorate" distinction may be awarded provided that the conditions set out in Article 15 bis.1 of Royal Decree 99/2011 are met.

The doctoral candidate shall have a thesis supervisor appointed by the university and a designated representative appointed by the organisation, company or public administration, who may, where applicable, act as the thesis director in accordance with the provisions of this Royal Decree. Under no circumstances may the representative appointed by the company form part of the thesis assessment panel (Article 15 bis.2).

GENERAL CRITERIA: GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The doctoral programme must ensure respect for democratic principles and values and the Sustainable Development Goals. Specifically, in accordance with Article 4 of Royal Decree 822/2021, the doctoral programme must be guided by:

- a) respect for human rights and fundamental rights; democratic values – freedom of thought and academic freedom, tolerance, and the recognition of and respect for diversity, equality for all citizens, the elimination of all discriminatory content or practices, and a culture of peace and participation, amongst others;
- b) respect for gender equality in accordance with the provisions of Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March on the effective equality of women and men, and the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination on grounds of birth, national or ethnic origin, religion, belief or opinion, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, sexual characteristics, illness, socio-economic status or any other personal or social condition or circumstance;
- c) respect for the principles of universal accessibility and design for all, in accordance with the provisions of the second final provision of the Consolidated Text of the General Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and their Social Inclusion, approved by Royal Legislative Decree 1/2013 of 29 November;
- d) the consideration of sustainability and climate change, in accordance with the provisions of Article 35.2 of Law 7/2021 of 20 May on Climate Change and the Energy Transition.

The provisions of Title III of Organic Law 10/2022 of 6 September on the Comprehensive Guarantee of Sexual Freedom shall also be observed, with a view to including content relating to gender equality and the prevention and eradication of sexual violence.

DIMENSION 1. DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

The following will be assessed:

Whether the title of the doctoral programme is consistent with the research areas proposed therein.

The involvement of other participating institutions in the programme.

The programme's integration into the R&D&I strategy of the university or, where applicable, of other institutions. This aspect will be reflected in its affiliation with a Doctoral School, whether belonging to the university proposing the doctoral programme, inter-university, or in collaboration with other bodies and institutions.

The existence of international networks or agreements.

Each doctoral programme proposal must include an adequate description that is consistent with the research areas, so as not to cause confusion regarding its content.

The doctoral programme proposal must include a description of its general characteristics (name, applicant university, participating universities, centres, and others), as well as the circumstances surrounding the doctoral programme and the context (scientific, economic, social, etc.) that justifies it.

Furthermore, the doctoral programme must include a description of its collaborations—whether or not governed by an agreement—with other universities, organisations or institutions, both national and international.

The proposal drawn up must take into account the guiding principles (Article 4 of Royal Decree 822/2021 of 28 September). Furthermore, these study programmes must be guided by democratic principles and values and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, Organic Law 10/2022 of 6 September on the comprehensive guarantee of sexual freedom lists among its main objectives the strengthening of public awareness-raising and prevention measures, promoting effective awareness-raising and training policies in the fields of education, employment, digital technology, advertising and the media, amongst others (Article 1).

Furthermore, the aforementioned Act promotes the use of a gender-based approach—grounded in an understanding of gender stereotypes and gender relations—to combat violence against women, calling on public institutions to promote and implement policies ensuring equality between women and men.

Therefore, prevention and awareness-raising in this area is an aspect that must be included in universities' institutional strategies. Furthermore, it must be understood as a guiding principle and a cross-cutting issue affecting all official university degree programmes offered by the university, regardless of their field of study.

this very reason, evidence must be provided that the proposed programme is aligned with the university's strategy.

These values and objectives must be incorporated as cross-cutting content or competences, in the format decided by the centre or the university, into the various official programmes on offer, as appropriate, and always taking into account their specific academic nature and the learning objectives of each programme.

1.1 BASIC INFORMATION

1.1.1. Name of the doctoral programme

The proposal must include a title for the doctoral programme, bearing in mind that this must be consistent with its research areas and with existing titles in the national and international context. It must not be misleading as to its content, level or academic implications (the research areas will be detailed in section 6.1. Human Resources Criteria).

The name of the doctoral programme shall be: **Doctoral Programme in T at University U**, where **T** is the name of the programme and **U** is the name of the university awarding the degree.

The name of the doctoral programme must be provided in Spanish. If the doctoral programme is taught exclusively in English or another language, a translation into Spanish must also be included.

1.1.2. Identification of the applicant and collaborating institutions

The proposal must identify the applicant university and the centre or centres responsible for the teaching leading to the degree or, where applicable, the department or institute.

One type of centre authorised to offer official doctoral programmes is a **doctoral school**, as regulated by Article 9 of Royal Decree 99/2011. These centres, like all others, must be registered in the Register of Universities, Centres and Qualifications (RUCT). Doctoral schools may be established by a single university or jointly with other universities, organisations, centres, institutions or bodies engaged in R&D&I, whether public or private, national or foreign.

1.1.3. Joint or inter-university degrees

Where several universities jointly organise a single doctoral programme, a single joint application for accreditation must be submitted; this application must be accompanied by the relevant agreement currently in force. This agreement must clearly specify the university or universities responsible for holding students' academic records, for awarding the degree and the procedure for enrolment. It must also set out the procedure for amending or terminating the doctoral programme and the responsibilities of each of the participating universities within the consortium.

A brief description of the purpose of the aforementioned agreement must also be provided, along with information on the mechanisms for academic coordination, student mobility (where applicable), and the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS-SAIC) adopted for the degree – which may be that of one of the participating universities or one designed specifically for the doctoral programme, etc.

In the case of agreements with foreign universities, the agreement must be accompanied by certification or accreditation of the official status of the participating university or universities issued by the competent authority or, where applicable, by the accrediting body. In all cases, the Spanish university shall retain the records of the degrees it awards.

In addition to the above, should a joint doctoral programme be established with a foreign university, it is recommended that the guidelines of the *European University Association (EUA)* and the European Approach for Quality Assurance (<https://www.eqar.eu/kb/joint-programmes/>) on the organisation of joint doctoral programmes be followed.

If the foreign university is not included in the list provided by the application system, a request must be submitted under the section 'Regarding data in the application sourced from the RUCT' to the Ministry responsible for universities, requesting the inclusion of that university. Please consult the 'User guide for completing the application for the verification of official doctoral programmes' available within the application system.

Erasmus Mundus

Joint doctoral programmes established through international consortia involving Spanish and foreign higher education institutions, which have been assessed and selected by the European Commission under the Erasmus Mundus programme, shall be deemed to have received the favourable verification report referred to in Article 10 of Royal Decree 99/2011.

However, the applicant university must submit to the Ministry responsible for universities the proposed curriculum approved by the European Commission, together with the relevant consortium agreement and the letter notifying that the Erasmus Mundus seal has been awarded, as well as a modified form providing the necessary details for the registration of the relevant doctoral programme in the University Register of Centres and Qualifications (RUCT). All this information must also be submitted via the Ministry's online system for the official recognition of qualifications.

1.2 CONTEXT

The ISCED-1 and ISCED-2 codes (*International Standard Classification of Education*) will be included at the start of this section. The use of these codes is an international recommendation for identifying the subject areas within which

a particular degree falls. Information on these codes, their function and levels can be found at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000229320>

The doctoral programme must be justified by the context, the overall range of programmes on offer and the potential of the institution or institutions proposing it. Its subject area must be supported by similar programmes abroad. Furthermore, the doctoral programme must be coherent and integrated into the institution's R&D&I strategy.

Firstly, the institution must state the educational objective of the doctoral programme it proposes to implement. It is important to reflect, in a few lines, on the programme's approach and objective so that – by way of an introduction, if you will – it guides prospective students regarding the educational profile and the outcomes to be achieved.

The programme's rationale must be set out by considering the following aspects:

1. The relevance of the programme to the planning needs within the Valencian university system, specifically in terms of how the proposal links to priority policies and strategic lines of research, and to the need for highly qualified R&D&I professionals within the industrial sector of the Valencian Community.
2. The institution's internal capacity to deliver the programme. The institution must demonstrate that it has research staff with proven experience and high-quality results, stable and well-established lines of research, competitive national and international research projects, participation in research networks, and sufficient material resources to implement the programme. In this regard, the institution must clearly set out its R&D&I strategy or policy and how the proposed doctoral programme fits into it, so that its coherence can be assessed.
3. Endorsement of the programme by external references. The institution must provide a comparison with other domestic and international doctoral programmes of similar characteristics that may serve as an endorsement. It may also indicate, where applicable, consultations with researchers and lecturers external to the programme, with researchers at other institutions, or with reference documents, etc.
4. Results. For existing doctoral programmes, the programme's most notable results must be provided: enrolment-to-place ratio, theses defended, grants obtained, graduation rate (theses defended/theses registered), average duration, etc.

If the body responsible for the doctoral programme is a doctoral school, the report must contain a specific sub-section dedicated to that body. This sub-section must include, as a minimum, the following information:

1. Its R&D&I strategy, which must be linked to that of the university or institutions involved.
2. Its field of expertise and the university programmes it offers.
3. The administrative and support staff demonstrating adequate capacity to manage the programmes.

4. The academic and research staff necessary to demonstrate leadership and sufficient critical mass within its field of knowledge.

In addition, a link must be provided to the website where the following information is published:

- The steering committee, including its composition and functions.
- The school's internal regulations, which must set out, amongst other aspects, the rights and duties of PhD students, supervisors and thesis directors, as well as the composition and functions of the academic committees for its programmes.
- The code of good practice adopted by the school, to which all members must subscribe.

Innovative programmes

In the case of proposals for programmes that are unprecedented in Spanish universities and have very few international precedents, the proposal must be endorsed by a reputable research team. Furthermore, the university's strategic interest in undertaking such an initiative must be justified.

Full-time and part-time students

The total number of new student places must be specified in this section 1.2. *Context*, indicating those allocated to full-time and part-time students.

1.3 UNIVERSITIES AND CENTRES WHERE THE COURSE IS TAUGHT

In this section, the participating universities must be listed, specifying the applicant university. The centres where the programme is taught must also be listed. For each centre, the information requested in sections 1.3.1, 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 must be provided.

1.3.1 Languages of instruction

The language(s) used throughout the programme must be specified.

Furthermore, to ensure that doctoral students on the programme can follow the programme's progression appropriately, it must be borne in mind that these languages of instruction must be reflected in the admission criteria and clearly specified in the programme's teaching activities.

1.3.2 Number of places offered on the programme

The maximum number of places available for new intake in the first two years of the doctoral programme must be stated, specifying the number of places allocated to part-time students.

The places offered must be totalled regardless of whether students are part-time or full-time. This information must be provided for each of the centres where the doctoral programme will be delivered.

1.3.3. Regulations on continued enrolment

Each university shall include a link to the regulations on enrolment status, which shall set out the definition of full-time and part-time students, where applicable. These regulations must comply with the regulations currently in force (Royal Decree 99/2011, as amended by Royal Decree 576/2023).

In the case of joint degrees, the regulations on continued enrolment must be the same for all students enrolled on the doctoral programme. It must be ensured that the conditions for continued enrolment are the same for all students.

There must be a minimum regulatory framework governing the processes of enrolment, withdrawal and retention.

1.4 COLLABORATIONS

The doctoral programme's collaborations with other universities, organisations or institutions, both national and international, must be detailed. Details must be provided both for collaborations governed by a specific collaboration agreement and for those that the doctoral programme undertakes on an informal basis.

The collaborations detailed must be directly related to the doctoral programme; for each one, the purpose and scope of the collaboration, the participating universities or organisations along with their nature, and any other information that may be of interest for the assessment of these collaborations must be specified.

For **collaborations governed by an agreement**, the relevant collaboration agreement (in PDF format) must be uploaded via the application.

Likewise, **ad hoc collaborations** linked to a specific aspect of the programme's development with universities and other organisations (e.g. research institutes, industry-academic chairs, etc.) must be described. In such cases, supporting evidence must be provided, such as:

- The doctoral programme's links with thematic research networks and centres of excellence. Include the date the network was established and the person responsible for it.
- Decisions awarding mobility grants, grants for short-term research stays, pre-doctoral research contracts and similar schemes.
- Certificates from international universities confirming the research stays undertaken or the designed research programme.

DIMENSION 2. COMPETENCIES

The following will be assessed:

Whether the competencies to be acquired by the PhD candidate are assessable and guarantee, as a minimum, the basic competences detailed in Article 5 of Royal Decree 99/2011, or are consistent with those corresponding to the doctoral level.

Within this section, an assessment will be made as to whether the competencies to be acquired by doctoral candidates are in line with those required for the award of the Doctorate and with the qualifications set out in the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES) at Level 4 and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Royal Decree 1027/2011 of 15 July, establishing the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education). To this end, these competencies must be assessable and consistent with the doctoral level. The proposed competencies must include, as a minimum, the core competencies and the personal skills and abilities set out in Royal Decree 99/2011 of 28 January, regulating official doctoral programmes, as amended by Royal Decree 576/2023.

Definition and types

This section must include a description of the competencies that doctoral students must acquire during their doctoral training and which are required for the award of the Doctorate.

The competencies that define a programme and which must be included in this section are those that all students on the programme must attain, regardless of whether they are studying part-time or full-time or of the line of research in which they have worked.

The proposed doctoral programme must therefore ensure that doctoral students acquire the competencies related to high-quality scientific research, in accordance with standard R&D&I practices. Consequently, all activities designed throughout the research training (primarily those referred to as 'Training Activities') must be aimed at enabling doctoral candidates to acquire the competencies defined in this section. Furthermore, these must be assessable, allowing for verification of their acquisition.

The competencies can be classified, according to their focus, as set out in the Register of Universities, Centres and Qualifications (RUCT), into:

- **Basic or general competencies:** these are common to all doctoral programmes, are essential and must be attained by all PhD students on the programme.
- **Personal abilities and skills:** these are geared towards various areas of professional development, particularly those requiring creativity and innovation. They are common to all doctoral programmes and must be attained by all PhD students.

For both categories of competencies, the computer application will automatically display the basic competencies that must be guaranteed, as set out in points 1 and 2 of Article 5 of Royal Decree 99/2011 of 28 January, respectively, as amended by Royal Decree 576/2023, as set out below:

Article 5. Competencies to be acquired by doctoral candidates.

1. Doctoral programmes shall ensure, as a minimum, that doctoral candidates acquire the following basic competencies, as well as any others set out in the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education:
 - a) A systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the research skills and methods related to that field.
 - b) The ability to conceive, design or create, implement and carry out a substantial research or creative project.
 - c) The ability to contribute to the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge through original research.
 - d) The ability to carry out critical analysis and to evaluate and synthesise new and complex ideas.
 - e) The ability to communicate with the academic and scientific community and with society at large about their fields of knowledge, using the methods and languages commonly employed within their international scientific community.
 - f) The ability to promote, in academic and professional contexts, scientific, technological, social, artistic or cultural progress within a knowledge-based society.
 - g) The ability to promote Open Science and Citizen Science, in accordance with Article 12 of Organic Law 2/2023 of 22 March, as a means of contributing to the recognition of scientific knowledge as a common good, through the assessment of cross-cutting activities carried out by the doctoral candidate relating to different dimensions of Open Science and Citizen Science, as well as the skills acquired in these disciplines in the form of micro-credentials or similar.
2. Furthermore, the award of a Doctorate must provide a high level of professional competence in diverse fields, particularly those requiring creativity and innovation. Doctoral graduates shall have acquired, at a minimum, the following personal abilities and skills to:
 - a) Operate effectively in contexts where there is little specific information.
 - b) Identify the key questions that need to be answered in order to solve a complex problem.
 - c) Design, create, develop and undertake novel and innovative projects within their field of expertise.
 - d) Work both as part of a team and independently in an international or multidisciplinary context.
 - e) Integrate knowledge, tackle complexity and make judgements based on limited information.
 - f) The critical evaluation and intellectual defence of solutions.

Other competencies:

Should the doctoral programme wish to include competencies in addition to those mentioned above, there is a section **entitled 'Other competencies'**, where these may include, for example, other competencies specific to a particular research area within

the doctoral programme. These competencies must be limited to the educational aspects and fields of knowledge covered by the degree and must not duplicate the core competences or personal skills and abilities.

The appropriate number of competencies to be defined will depend on the doctoral programme in question. However, as a general rule and based on experience gained from evaluation processes, it is recommended that the number should not be too high, so that monitoring their acquisition is not overly complex.

When formulating these competencies, it must also be borne in mind that they must be consistent with those corresponding to the doctoral level and, therefore, take into account the level of complexity of the context in which the competence is to be applied.

Furthermore, the following should be included in the programme description under **'Other competencies'**:

- Competencies relating to fundamental rights, equal opportunities between women and men, universal accessibility, the Sustainable Development Goals and the values inherent in a culture of peace and democratic values, in accordance with the provisions of Article 4 of Royal Decree 822/2021, concerning the guiding principles for the design of curricula for official university degrees.
- Competencies linked to Organic Law 10/2022 of 6 September on the comprehensive guarantee of sexual freedom through training and awareness-raising mechanisms in those degree programmes where this is required, in compliance with the provisions of Title III.

All learning outcomes must relate to the educational activities of Dimension 4.

DIMENSION 3. STUDENT ACCESS AND ADMISSION

The following will be assessed:

The clarity and appropriateness of student admission and selection procedures.

The adaptation of specific supplementary training modules to the various entry profiles, where these exist.

The number of students (domestic and international) enrolled on the doctoral programme over the last 5 years, or an assessment of the projected figure.

This section assesses whether the doctoral programme has systems in place that clearly regulate and provide information on the various entry requirements and admission criteria, and whether these are appropriate. Furthermore, where applicable, the programme must offer specific supplementary training modules tailored to the various defined entry profiles other than the recommended one.

3.1 Pre-enrolment information. Entry profiles

The entry profile consists of a brief description of the set of personal, academic and research characteristics which are generally considered suitable or ideal for commencing the doctoral programme, and which provide reasonable evidence of the ability to achieve satisfactory results.

When establishing and drafting the entry profile in the proposal, the following should be taken into account:

- The characteristics of the cohort of new students associated with achieving the training profile within the envisaged timeframe must be identified.
- In line with the previous point, the heterogeneity of the intake (variety of entry routes or restrictions, etc.) must be clearly identified.
- The characteristics of the entry profile must be clearly identifiable (types of qualifications, languages, specific knowledge, prior experience, etc.), so that a rapid initial assessment can be made of the difference between the entry profile and the 'actual' profile, and the relevant actions can be taken (supplementary training, induction measures, etc.).
- The recommended entry profile should be defined in such a way that it does not require the provision of supplementary training.

By making this recommended entry profile explicit, the aim is to guide prospective doctoral candidates regarding the characteristics considered suitable for commencing the doctoral programme, as well as to facilitate remedial measures in the event of any shortcomings.

Should the doctoral programme provide for other entry profiles in addition to the recommended one, these must be described in this section, and the supplementary training associated with these profiles must be included in section 3.4.

Furthermore, the dissemination channels to be used to inform prospective students about the doctoral programme and the enrolment process must be described. The information provided must be sufficient.

Likewise, the induction and orientation procedures for newly enrolled doctoral students must be set out to facilitate their integration into the programme and, where applicable, into the university. The induction procedures must include, as a minimum:

- the main steps to be taken, described in detail;
- an indicative timetable; and
- the bodies or units responsible for carrying them out.

3.2 Entry and admission requirements and criteria

'Access' is understood to mean the right of a qualified candidate to apply for possible entry to a specific level of higher education. Under the terms of the Lisbon Convention, it means the right to apply for admission to a specific university to undertake specific studies.

'Admission' is understood to mean the action, on the part of the relevant university, of allowing a qualified candidate to enrol on the aforementioned higher education programme at that institution. It represents the effective acceptance of a student onto a specific programme at a specific university.

When establishing entry requirements and admission criteria, due regard must be given to the provisions of Article 6 (Entry requirements for doctoral programmes) and Article 7 (Admission criteria) of Royal Decree 99/2011 of 28 January.

The doctoral programme must clearly define the pathways, criteria and requirements for entry and admission, which must not be misleading and must be consistent with the programme's scientific field.

The requirements for entry to doctoral programmes are set out in Royal Decree 576/2023 of 4 July, which stipulates that, in order to be admitted, applicants must hold official Spanish bachelor's degrees, or equivalent, and a master's degree.

Admission to doctoral programmes may also be granted if any of the following conditions are met:

- a. Hold official Spanish university qualifications or equivalent Spanish qualifications, provided that at least 300 ECTS credits have been earned across these programmes and that a Level 3 of the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education is demonstrated.
- b. Hold a qualification obtained under foreign education systems belonging to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), without the need for equivalence recognition, which demonstrates Level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), provided that such a qualification entitles the holder to access doctoral studies in the country of issue. Under no circumstances shall this admission imply the recognition of the applicant's prior qualification or its recognition for any purpose other than access to doctoral programmes.

- c. Hold a qualification obtained under foreign education systems outside the EHEA, without the need for equivalence recognition, subject to verification by the university that it attests to a level of education equivalent to that of the official Spanish university master's degree and that it entitles the holder, in the country where the qualification was awarded, to access doctoral studies. Under no circumstances shall this admission imply the recognition of the applicant's previous qualification or its recognition for any purpose other than admission to doctoral programmes.
- d. Hold a doctoral degree.
- e. Similarly, university graduates who, having secured a training place through the relevant entrance examination for specialist healthcare training places, have successfully completed at least two years of training on a programme leading to the official qualification in one of the health sciences specialisms, may also be admitted.

In addition to the regulatory requirements for admission to doctoral programmes, institutions may establish additional requirements and criteria for the selection and admission of students to a specific doctoral programme. These requirements and criteria must be publicly available, clear, in accordance with the regulations, consistent and relevant, and sufficient to ensure that the educational profile is achieved. In particular, the endorsement of a researcher as a potential supervisor for the doctoral thesis may be required.

Where languages other than the official languages are used in the educational process, the admission requirements must include the level of proficiency in those languages required of students, in accordance with the European standards established for this purpose. A minimum level of B2 on the CEFR or equivalent must be required for proficiency in these languages within doctoral programmes.

Furthermore, for programmes taught in Spanish and/or Valencian, students who have not previously studied in these languages or for whom they are not their usual language must demonstrate proficiency at B2 level.

Appropriate admission criteria cannot be set without first establishing the student's entry profile. Furthermore, a careful definition of the entry profile allows for a better assessment of the relevance of supplementary training and also facilitates the implementation of subsequent induction and guidance measures.

With regard to procedures for student access and admission, the admissions body must be identified and its functions and composition specified (it cannot consist of a single person, and at least one of its members must hold a management position).

The admission systems and procedures established by universities must include, in the case of students with special educational needs arising from a disability, appropriate support and advisory services, which must assess the need for possible curricular adaptations, alternative pathways or courses of study.

Part-time students

The university's academic regulations (on enrolment, assessment, etc.) must specifically address the case of part-time students.

The admission criteria and procedures must be set out, as well as the conditions under which, where applicable, students may change their mode of study.

3.3. Enrolled students and their origin

For newly established doctoral programmes, the projected total number of students to be enrolled in the first year and the total number of enrolled students from other countries must be specified.

If the doctoral programme already existed, the programme from which it originates must be selected. If, in this case, the doctoral programme is also inter-university, the doctoral programme at each of the participating universities must be selected.

You must also indicate the total number of students admitted and the total number of students from other countries over the last 5 years.

3.4. Supplementary training modules

Depending on the additional entry requirements defined, doctoral programmes must establish specific supplementary training modules which must be completed once the student has been admitted and has enrolled on the doctoral programme. These specific supplementary training modules may be included within the doctoral programme or organised separately from it.

As set out in Article 7.2 of Royal Decree 99/2011, admission to doctoral programmes may include the requirement to undertake specific supplementary training modules. These specific supplementary training modules must be completed during the initial phase of the thesis, within a maximum period of one academic year, and shall be regarded, for the purposes of public tuition fees and the award of study grants, as doctoral-level training.

It is essential that the supplementary training modules are determined on the basis of the additional entry profiles defined in section 3.1 above, rather than on the basis of the doctoral student's line of research or the subject matter of their thesis, so that students with the same entry profile undertake the same supplementary training modules. Should a doctoral student require further training once assigned to a specific line of research, they should be able to acquire it through the training activities.

The inclusion in the doctoral programme of the requirement for specific supplementary training modules must, by definition, be clearly '*supplementary*' in nature, so as not to detract from the central role that, in the organisation of doctoral studies, is accorded to the training activities themselves and to research activity; therefore, these modules should preferably be undertaken by doctoral students during the first year of the doctoral programme and must not exceed 20 ECTS. In exceptional cases, a higher number, though close to these 20 ECTS, may be accepted where the programme provides justification for doing so.

The verified programme description must clearly specify which supplementary modules each student profile must undertake, excluding the recommended entry profile from undertaking them, as it is understood that, being 'recommended', this profile has no prior educational gaps.

For each supplementary module, information must be included regarding the content, learning outcomes, learning activities, assessment methods, number of credits, etc.

DIMENSION 4. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The following will be assessed:

The organisation of the training provided to doctoral students, in particular regarding disciplinary and methodological knowledge (seminars, courses, workshops, etc.), cross-cutting skills, training experiences (doctoral student conferences, national or international conferences, etc.) and its planning throughout the programme.

Doctoral programmes must necessarily include structured elements of research training aimed at enrolled students. Furthermore, these activities must encompass both cross-disciplinary training and training specific to the field of each programme. Therefore, in this dimension, the organisation of the training provided to doctoral candidates and its consistency with the training profile will be assessed, in particular with regard to disciplinary and methodological knowledge (seminars, courses, workshops, etc.), the competencies to be acquired, training experiences (doctoral student conferences, congresses, etc.) and their scheduling throughout the course of the programme.

The competencies described in Dimension 2 must be acquired through training activities and research work leading to the defence of the doctoral thesis. Consequently, the competencies to be acquired through training activities must be described, along with the means by which these learning outcomes will be achieved and demonstrated.

The planning must include a description of the activities and their content, their sequence, and the assessment activities. Furthermore, an estimate of the human and material resources required for their delivery must be provided.

The allocation of ECTS credits to training activities is not a legal requirement. Institutions may, however, find it useful to award ECTS credits to training activities of a predominantly academic nature, particularly in joint programmes, as ECTS credits serve to quantify the total time or effort devoted to a training activity.

The following standards are set out under this heading:

- The training activities comprising the doctoral programme are consistent with the training profile.
- The timetable is appropriate for the training activities and consistent with the expected time commitment for the student cohort as a whole.
- The assessment procedures are appropriate.
- Mobility activities are appropriate and consistent with the objectives of the proposal.

4.1. Organisation of Training Activities

The training activities included in the doctoral programme must constitute a coherent training proposal, designed in a coordinated manner and in line with the training and entry profiles.

4.1.1. Basic Information

Doctoral programmes shall include organised aspects of research training that do not need to be structured in terms of credits and shall comprise both cross-disciplinary and programme-specific training within the scope of each programme.

In order to make it easier to understand the range of training activities, an initial activity entitled 'Summary of activities' will be created in the SOLRUCT application, in which a list of the activities will be entered, specifying their status (optional/compulsory), hours, language, delivery method and associated skills.

For each of the proposed doctoral training activities, the following must be specified:

- **Name of the activity.** This information is required when registering a new training activity in the software application and is linked to a numerical code that allows it to be easily identified.
- **Duration.** The number of hours allocated to the training activity must be specified.
- **Details and schedule of the activity.** The following must be included:
 - A justification of how the various training activities – both cross-disciplinary and subject-specific – within the doctoral programme constitute a coherent and feasible proposal (taking into account the students' time commitment) so that they contribute to the acquisition of the degree's competencies.
 - A brief description of the content of the proposed training activities.
 - Specify, for each activity, whether it is optional or compulsory.
 - The timetable for these activities throughout the doctoral student's programme.
 - The competencies described in Dimension 2 that the doctoral student will acquire after completing the aforementioned training activities.
 - Language(s) in which they will be delivered.
 - Format of the activity (face-to-face/online).
 - Monitoring procedures/assessment systems.
 - Mobility.
 - Any other clarifications deemed appropriate.

In the case of cross-disciplinary activities, a justification for these must be provided in the report, and a link must be included to the website of the programme or doctoral school showing the details and schedule of each activity. Furthermore, a table must be included at the end of the Annex to section 6.1 (PDF document), showing at least the following details:

Activity	Type: Optional / Compulsory	Hours	Language	Delivery method	Timetable	Justification	Content	Competencies	Assessment procedures / Assessment system

Training activities must demonstrate that the disciplinary aspects involved in training and competence development are appropriate or, in other words, that the design of these activities, together with the student's own research activities, enables them to acquire the competencies described in the training profile. Furthermore, all activities must feature up-to-date content that meets international standards.

The guiding principles (Art. 4 of Royal Decree 822/2021) and Organic Law 10/2022 (for those programmes covered by the Act) must be included as cross-cutting activities, as set out in Dimension 2, with the aim of achieving the competences described therein.

4.1.2. Details of Control Procedures

The supervision and monitoring of doctoral students is regulated by Article 11 of Royal Decree 99/2011.

All training activities undertaken by the student must be recorded in the doctoral student's activity log (DAD), which is an individualised record for monitoring these activities. The DAD is maintained in the appropriate format, which must be reviewed regularly by the tutor and thesis supervisor and assessed by the academic committee responsible for the doctoral programme.

The procedures for monitoring and assessing the development of competencies must be appropriate and consistent with the training profile and the planning of activities.

During the training period, the student undertakes two key tasks:

- the presentation and, where applicable, defence of their annual research plan, and
- the presentation and defence of the doctoral thesis.

The research plan must include, as a minimum, the methodology to be used, the objectives to be achieved, the resources required and the timetable. This plan may be updated throughout the training period and, in this regard, it would be advisable for it to also include the extent to which the planned objectives have been achieved. The research plan must be assessed favourably each year by the academic committee, together with the DAD, taking into account the reports to be issued by both the supervisor and the thesis director.

All assessments arising from the monitoring of the DAD and the outputs it produces (research plan and doctoral thesis) must be included in an evaluation of the doctoral candidate (IED). It should be noted that the mandatory benchmark for the evaluation is the competence profile established as a result of the doctoral programme's training plan. Consequently, the set of training activities must be geared towards the acquisition

and development of the training profile.

As set out in Article 11 of Royal Decree 99/2011, the assessment must be carried out annually. The focus of the assessment must be on the level of development achieved for each of the competencies included in the learning profile.

In short, the scope of the assessment of training activities to be included in the doctoral candidate's assessment report (IED) covers:

- the completion, in accordance with the established requirements, of the training activities included in the DAD;
- where applicable, specific supplementary training;
- the research plan;
- the annual progress made against the competence profile, as determined by the student's performance in relation to the DAD and the research plan; and
- the doctoral thesis.

However, in the context of the assessment for the accreditation of official doctoral programmes, this training pathway refers to an intensified curriculum consisting primarily of training activities.

4.1.3. Mobility Activities

The mobility activities to be carried out by the doctoral programme, as well as their organisation, must be described in order to ensure that both full-time and part-time doctoral candidates acquire the required competences. The duration of the mobility activity must be the same for all doctoral candidates, regardless of whether they are full-time or part-time. However, the timing of such a stay does not necessarily have to coincide.

For the purposes of completing this section in the online application system, a training activity entitled 'Mobility' must be created, containing the relevant information on this matter, whilst leaving the text box corresponding to the mobility associated with each of the training activities blank.

All relevant information on this matter must be described: the activities, criteria and procedures for carrying it out, where applicable, so as to ensure that the required competencies are achieved. A distinction must be made between compulsory and recommended mobility. Where mobility is compulsory, the expected duration, the types of placement, the approximate percentage of doctoral students undertaking mobility, the indicative stage within the doctoral programme, the anticipated sources of funding, the validation procedures and their link to the award of the international distinction must be specified, where applicable. The time allocation for this activity must allow for the recognition of the hours spent abroad required to achieve the international distinction.

DIMENSION 5. ORGANISATION OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

The following will be assessed:

The alignment of the planned activities to support the supervision of doctoral theses with the programme's development.

The alignment of the procedures described above with the programme's objectives.

The involvement of international experts on monitoring committees, in preliminary reports and on thesis examination boards.

During the accreditation renewal phase, the estimates provided under this criterion will be reviewed, taking into account the justifications provided and the actions resulting from their monitoring.

The procedures for monitoring doctoral students and supervising doctoral theses must be adequate to ensure that each student acquires the competencies defined in the doctoral programme.

5.1. Supervision of Doctoral Theses

The activities planned by the doctoral programme/university to support the supervision of doctoral theses must be detailed. Where the doctoral programme/university has a guide to good practice for the supervision and monitoring of training activities and the doctoral thesis, explicit mention must be made of this in the application, including a brief summary of its content. This guide should be publicly available and, at the very least, the web link where it can be consulted must be provided.

Likewise, the activities planned by the doctoral programme/university to promote multiple supervision, in academically justified cases—such as those involving interdisciplinary topics or doctoral programmes developed through national or international collaboration—must be listed.

This section must also state whether the involvement of international experts is envisaged on monitoring committees, in the preparation of reports prior to the submission of the thesis, and on the examination boards for doctoral theses.

5.2. Monitoring of doctoral candidates

The procedures for monitoring doctoral candidates must be appropriate to the programme's objectives, comply with current legislation and ensure that the doctoral candidate acquires the competences defined in the doctoral programme.

This monitoring must cover, at a minimum, the following aspects:

- The composition of the Academic Committee of the doctoral programme, which must not have more than 10 members in order to ensure its effectiveness; should this limit be exceeded, the programme must provide the relevant justification. Furthermore, to avoid future updates to the programme description, the profile and institutional affiliation of the committee members must be stated, rather than their full names.

In the case of doctoral programmes involving several universities, the Academic Committee must be a single body and its composition must be specified in the collaboration agreement between those universities.

- The procedure used by the programme's Academic Committee for the appointment of the doctoral student's supervisor and thesis director, as well as the procedure established for amending this appointment, after consulting the doctoral student. Furthermore, the deadlines established for these appointments must be specified; in all cases, these must comply with the provisions of Royal Decree 99/2011.
- The procedure used for monitoring each doctoral student's activity record (DAD) and certifying its details, as well as the procedure for its annual assessment.
- Plans for doctoral students' placements at other national and international educational institutions, joint supervision arrangements and international specialisations.

The aforementioned procedures must comply with the provisions of Article 11. Supervision and monitoring of doctoral students, of Royal Decree 99/2011.

5.3. Regulations on Thesis Defence

The university's regulations governing the submission and defence of doctoral theses must be publicly available, up to date and in accordance with current legislation.

The institution responsible for the doctoral programme must provide information regarding these regulations.

In the case of doctoral programmes involving several universities, it is accepted that the applicable regulations may be those of each university, provided that they comply with current legislation and there are no significant differences.

DIMENSION 6. HUMAN RESOURCES

The following will be assessed:

That at least 60 per cent of the PhD-holding researchers participating in the programme have proven experience (excluding short-term guests and visitors).

The number of foreign academic staff participating in the programme.

That the research groups incorporated into the doctoral programme have at least one competitive project in the programme's research areas.

The quality of the scientific contributions made by research staff participating in the programme over the last 5 years; having an active research grant; or having reached the maximum number of grants possible. Joint contributions with foreign researchers.

That the research staff participating in the programme have proven experience in supervising doctoral theses over the last 5 years.

The existence within the university of clear mechanisms for recognising the work involved in supervising and directing theses.

The academic staff must be sufficient in number and appropriate to the objectives of the doctoral programme, the competencies to be achieved and the number of doctoral candidates. Therefore, they must have the experience and training appropriate to the programme's objectives, and be sufficient in number and commitment to cover the programme's main tasks: thesis supervision and guidance, the delivery and assessment of the various training activities, programme management, etc.

The programme report must state that the university guarantees compliance with the principles of gender equality, non-discrimination and universal accessibility for people with disabilities through its plans, protocols and relevant departments (include institutional link).

The provisions of Article 24.3 of Organic Law 10/2022 of 6 September on the comprehensive guarantee of sexual freedom shall be observed, providing for the ongoing training of academic staff and administrative and support staff to incorporate content aimed at the prevention, awareness-raising and detection of sexual violence, in accordance with current legislation (Organic Law 10/2022, Article 24.3), and its dissemination within the framework of the institutional policies applicable to the programme. Applicable to degree programmes that must include cross-cutting training in this regard.

For the assessment of the section on human resources available to the programme, the following aspects shall be taken into account:

- the proven experience of teaching and research staff. At least 60 per cent of the PhD-holding researchers participating in the doctoral programme have current and proven research experience.

- the quality of scientific contributions,
- the number of active competitive research projects, and
- the internationalisation of the teaching staff.

The implementation of a doctoral programme requires planning for the necessary human resources throughout the entire training process.

The provisions of Royal Decree 99/2011 must be taken into account:

- Thesis supervisor: 1 six-year period or equivalent (Art. 11.3).
- Programme coordinator: 2 six-year periods and 2 doctoral theses supervised (Art. 8.4).

6.1. Research Areas and Teams

The staff associated with the doctoral programme must be sufficient to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved. The involvement of any one researcher in multiple research areas associated with the programme must be limited to a reasonable and realistic number. Therefore, there must be sufficient academic staff, and their qualifications and experience must be adequate to deliver the doctoral programme.

The doctoral programme must be supported by a team of research staff who can guarantee, from the outset, the programme's viability in terms of training new PhD graduates.

In this section, the institution responsible for the doctoral programme must demonstrate that the human resources available are adequate to achieve the objectives. Essentially, it must describe the research activity of the various research teams or, failing that, of the individuals associated with the programme. In the case of new doctoral programmes that do not stem from any existing programme, the information provided must relate to the research teams or the individuals who will form part of them.

To complete this section, the information requested must be entered via the text field provided for this purpose in the online application, and this must be supplemented in the PDF document for section 6.1.

The information requested, which must be provided in the report, is set out below. It is important that the documentation complies with the following requirements; no additional information beyond that required should be provided, as this will not be taken into account for assessment purposes.

- Description of the research teams associated with the doctoral programme. For each team, the following must be provided:
 - The associated lines of research.
 - The full names of the participating PhD-holding researchers, indicating for each of them:
 - The university to which they belong.
 - Academic rank.

The duration of the most recent research phase (start and end years of the phase) in accordance with Royal Decree 1086/1989 of 28 August on the remuneration of university teaching staff.

In the event that the lecturer, for administrative reasons, is unable to submit their research activity for assessment in order to obtain the corresponding research increments, in accordance with current legislation, they must state

this on the application, explaining their situation, and must submit five scientific contributions from the last five years, together with evidence of their quality. Likewise, this information must be submitted by researchers who do not have a current six-year period.

- Where a doctoral programme involves lecturers from outside the university or universities participating in the programme, a document (agreement, authorisation, memorandum of understanding, etc.) governing such participation must be provided.
- Full details of an active and competitively funded research project linked to each research team, covering topics related to the research areas. The project title, funding body, reference number, duration, type of call for proposals, participating institutions and the number of researchers involved must be provided. Furthermore, the Principal Investigator for each project must be identified; this person must necessarily be a researcher within the doctoral programme and at the university itself. For the purposes of assessment, a project will be considered active if it is active at the time the application for evaluation is submitted for verification.
- Full details of a total of 25 scientific contributions from the last 5 years (publications in journals, books or book chapters, patents and artistic works) by the research staff participating in the doctoral programme. The last 5 years are understood to be past years. It should be noted that the 5-year period must be the same for all 25 scientific contributions and for the 10 doctoral theses.

These scientific contributions must be distributed evenly amongst the different research teams forming part of the doctoral programme. Furthermore, the following data on the objective impact of the scientific contributions must be provided:

Scientific publications:

- In indexed journals with a relative quality index:
Title of the publication, name of the journal, ISSN, year, the journal's impact factor, number of journals in the field, and the journal's relative ranking.
- In non-indexed journals or those without a relative quality index:
Title of the publication, name of the journal, ISSN, year and indications of quality (where it must be stated whether the journal meets the following requirements):
 - External peer review of the articles prior to publication.
 - Existence of an international scientific committee.
 - Percentage of articles by authors not affiliated with the publishing institution.
 - Publication exclusively of research articles.
 - Inclusion in bibliographic databases and newsletters most closely related to its specialism.
 - Publication of articles in more than one language.

Books and book chapters in print or electronic format:

Title of the book and/or book chapter, ISBN, publisher, editors, series in which the work is published, reviews in specialist scientific journals, length, translations into other languages, year of publication.

In the case of works of artistic creativity:

Awards and honours received, either for their impact on national and international specialist criticism or for having been shown in exhibitions with a catalogue, and participation as an exhibition curator.

- Details relating to a total of 10 doctoral theses supervised by lecturers and researchers participating in the doctoral programme, including the title, first name and surname of the doctoral candidate, supervisor(s), date of defence, grade and the university at which it was defended.

It is not necessary for the doctoral theses provided to have been defended under programmes preceding the programme being submitted for the verification process; they may also have been defended under other doctoral programmes. These doctoral theses must have been defended within the last 5 years. The 5-year period in question must coincide with that considered for the 25 scientific contributions.

- Full reference for a scientific contribution (publications in journals, books or book chapters, patents and artistic works) derived from each of the 10 doctoral theses. Data on the objective impact of the contributions selected for this section must be provided.
- Please specify whether the participation of foreign academics in the doctoral programme is planned, as well as the nature of their involvement.

In this section, the following will be assessed:

- a. At least 60 per cent of the PhD-qualified research staff participating in the programme (point 1) have accredited experience (current six-year period). Visiting and guest lecturers are excluded from this category.
- b. Each research team has a competitive research project currently underway related to the field of the doctoral programme, and that the principal investigator of the project is a lecturer on the programme.
- c. The programme is supported by no fewer than 25 relevant scientific contributions over the last 5 years.
- d. The programme must be supported by the proven experience of its research staff in supervising theses (a minimum of 10 theses over the last five years).
- e. The programme must demonstrate a balance between the various research teams and researchers in terms of scientific contributions, competitive research projects and theses within the doctoral programme.
- f. The programme should include prominent international academic staff.

6.2. Mechanisms for Calculating the Work Involved in Supervision and the Direction of Doctoral Theses

The institution responsible for the programme must have clear and approved mechanisms for recognising the work involved in supervision and thesis guidance.

This section must include a description of the mechanisms for calculating the workload involved in supervising and directing doctoral theses as part of the teaching and research commitments of the researchers participating in the programme.

DIMENSION 7. MATERIAL AND SUPPORT RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO DOCTORAL STUDENTS

The following will be assessed:

Whether the material resources and other means available are adequate to ensure the successful conduct of the research to be carried out by the student.

External resources and travel grants provided to support attendance at conferences and stays abroad.

Funding for seminars, conferences and other national and international training activities.

The percentage of PhD students who secure grants or postdoctoral contracts.

7.1. Material resources

The material resources required for the activities set out in the doctoral programme and for the student's training must be sufficient and appropriate to the number of doctoral students and the characteristics of the programme, so as to enable the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Generic descriptions of the institution's resources, without specifying their application to doctoral programmes, should be avoided.

The material resources and other available means must be adequate to ensure the conduct of the research to be carried out by the student, taking into account the requirements of the different research areas. In particular, the necessary resources must be guaranteed to enable doctoral students to attend conferences, undertake stays abroad or fund seminars, workshops and other training activities. In many cases, these resources may be subject to conditions set by other institutions (mobility grants, travel grants, etc.). However, the institution responsible for the programme must indicate the expected availability of such resources.

The institution responsible must include the following information in this section:

- The material resources available. Depending on the type of programme, these material resources may vary considerably. Essentially, the institution must provide information on:
 - spaces for the accommodation and work of PhD students;
 - laboratories, specialised equipment and large-scale scientific and technical facilities;
 - infrastructure relating to documentation and access to information (library, databases, etc.), and network connectivity infrastructure.
- The plan for securing travel grants and external funding for attending conferences and undertaking stays abroad that will support students' training.
- The provision for funding seminars, conferences and other training activities.

- The projected percentage of students out of the total who would receive the aforementioned grants.
- The percentage of students who have secured grants or postdoctoral contracts over the last five years, in the case of substantial amendments.

7.2. Support services

The services required for student guidance must be sufficient and appropriate to the number of doctoral students and the characteristics of the programme, so as to enable students to progress successfully through the programme.

The institution must specify the services it provides with regard to:

- reception and other logistical support (accommodation, advice on legal matters concerning residence, etc.);
- detailed information on mobility, contracts, projects, etc.;
- career guidance and entry into the labour market.

DIMENSION 8. REVIEW, IMPROVEMENT AND OUTCOMES OF THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

The following will be assessed:

Whether the doctoral programme has a governing body, as well as procedures and mechanisms in place to monitor its progress, analyse its outcomes and determine appropriate measures for its improvement. The views of students and doctoral graduates will be of particular importance when defining and implementing improvement measures.

The existence of a procedure to analyse the results of the mobility programme, and mechanisms for publishing information on the programme, its progress and outcomes, will be assessed.

In the case of programmes involving more than one university, the existence of mechanisms and procedures ensuring coordination between the participating universities will be assessed.

Data covering the last five years or projected estimates, depending on the justification and context provided. During the accreditation renewal phase, these estimates will be reviewed, taking into account the justifications provided and the actions resulting from their monitoring.

The employability of PhD students during the three years following the defence of their thesis, or a forecast thereof in the case of new programmes.

8.1. Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS-SAIC)

The information requested in this section may relate either to an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) specific to the doctoral programme or to a general system of the University or the centre responsible for these courses that is applicable to the doctoral programme.

Where an application involves more than one university, an IQAS must be provided; this may have been designed specifically for the programme or may adopt that of the coordinating university. However, under no circumstances will more than one IQAS be accepted for the same programme. The existence of mechanisms and procedures ensuring coordination between the participating universities will be taken into account.

For information on how to approach the design and development of internal quality assurance systems at university level, please consult the guides and examples produced by the AVAP in support of the AUDIT-AVAP programme.

The IQAS must contain information relating to the following aspects, as set out in point 8 of Annex I to Royal Decree 99/2011 (the information may be provided by including a link to the SAIC website):

- The IQAS must specify the body, unit or person(s) responsible for managing, coordinating and monitoring the IQAS for the new doctoral programme. It must detail the structure and composition of the IQAS, as well as its regulations or operating rules. If responsibility for the IQAS is shared amongst several bodies or units, the responsibilities of each of them. It is

recommended that the IQAS sets out in detail how the participation of the stakeholders involved in the doctoral programme – research staff, doctoral candidates, academic supervisors, support staff and other external stakeholders – is organised within that body.

- The IQAS must specify the monitoring mechanisms and procedures that enable the progress of the doctoral programme to be overseen. In this regard, the procedure for analysing the satisfaction of the various groups involved in the programme (doctoral candidates, academic and administrative and services staff, employers, etc.) must be described. It is recommended that the planned method for collecting information, the frequency with which this will be carried out, and other relevant technical aspects be defined.
- Furthermore, the IQAS must describe the procedures for analysing the results obtained and for determining the appropriate measures for improving the doctoral programme.
- The IQAS must describe the procedures ensuring the proper implementation of mobility activities (relations with companies and other organisations, the establishment of agreements, the selection and monitoring of students, evaluation, etc.), specifying the planned procedures for evaluation, monitoring and improvement, as well as those responsible for and the planning of such procedures (who, how, when).
- The IQAS must specify the procedures for monitoring the programme's progress, analysing the results and determining the appropriate measures for its improvement.
- To ensure transparency and accountability towards stakeholders in the doctoral programme, the IQAS must include the publication of information on:
 - the programme
 - the entry profile
 - the results achieved
 - stakeholder satisfaction
 - the procedures for lodging complaints and grievances

So that it is accessible to PhD students, research staff, academic and administrative support staff, prospective students and the general public. This information can be accessed via the link to the programme's website.

8.2. Procedure for Monitoring PhD Graduates

The procedure for measuring and analysing the employment outcomes of future PhD graduates must be described. It is recommended that the planned method for collecting information, the frequency with which it will be carried out, and other technical aspects deemed relevant be defined.

Furthermore, a forecast of the percentage of students securing post-doctoral contracts and data relating to the employability of PhD candidates during the three years following the defence of their thesis must be included, in the case of existing

programmes, or projected data on such employability in the case of newly established programmes.

The procedure for measuring graduates' satisfaction with the training received must be described. It is recommended that the proposed method for collecting information, the frequency with which it will be carried out and other relevant technical aspects be defined.

Details must be provided on how the results obtained from the established procedures will be used to analyse graduates' entry into the labour market and their satisfaction with the training received, with a view to reviewing and improving the doctoral programme.

8.3. Results and Forecasts

Data must be provided covering the last 5 years or a forecast for the next 6 years (in the case of newly established programmes) on: theses produced, the success rate in completing doctoral theses, the quality of the theses and the resulting contributions. Justification of the data provided.

The proposal must specify, for each indicator, an estimated value and its justification. Please note that this Guide does not set any reference values.

The adequacy of the justification for the values will be assessed.

The forecast estimate for the six-year period from the programme's launch must be provided; in the case of programmes derived from previous ones, the data must relate to the last five years and be contextualised within their scientific field.

The following evidence must be provided:

- Number of doctoral theses.
- Number of doctoral theses with international recognition.
- Success rates: doctoral theses successfully defended and doctoral theses with international recognition as a proportion of the total number of doctoral students enrolled on the programme, for a specific cohort and according to the programme's research areas.
- Number of publications arising from defended doctoral theses, or an estimate of this figure. The publications to be counted are articles published or accepted for publication in journals indexed in JCR or SJR, or books published by publishers listed in SPI, in accordance with the criteria established by the CNEAI according to the areas of knowledge.
- Number of patents arising from doctoral theses.
- Other outcomes (depending on the field).

In the case of newly established doctoral programmes, the institution must submit an estimate of the above indicators for the six years following the programme's launch. In this case, figures from similar doctoral programmes at the same or other institutions may be used, adjusted to reflect the characteristics and research activity of the individuals and research teams that will make up the programme.

The institution may also consider it appropriate to include other indicators that enable the programme to be properly monitored and demonstrate its quality.

REVISION LOG

REVISION NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE
01	April 2024	Initial version of the guide
02	May 2026	Update: the wording of the entire document has been revised to clarify the various concepts. Regulatory update. Revision approved by the Qualifications Verification Committee on 25 May 2026 and by the Protocols and Resources Committee on 4 June 2026
3	July 2026	Revision of section 8.1. SAIC.