

**DISCLAIMER - Automatic translation:** This document is an unofficial translation to facilitate the understanding of the university regulatory framework in Spain. The University is not responsible for it. The official version of this document is available in Spanish at the following link: [BOE-A-2011-2541 Real Decreto 99/2011, de 28 de enero, por el que se regulan las enseñanzas oficiales de doctorado.](#)

**NOTA ACLARATORIA – Traducción automática:** *El presente documento es una traducción no oficial para facilitar a los interesados la comprensión del marco regulatorio universitario en España. La Universidad no se hace responsable de la misma. Puede consultar en castellano la versión oficial del presente documento en el siguiente enlace: [BOE-A-2011-2541 Real Decreto 99/2011, de 28 de enero, por el que se regulan las enseñanzas oficiales de doctorado.](#)*

---

Ministry of Education  
"BOE" No. 35, of February 10, 2011  
Reference: BOE-A-2011-2541

---

Organic Law 6/2001, of December 21, 2001, on Universities, as amended by Organic Law 4/2007, of April 12, 2007, which modifies the previous law, defines the structure of university education in three cycles: Undergraduate, Master's and Doctorate. Doctoral studies, corresponding to the third cycle, lead to the award of the official title of Doctor, which is official and valid throughout the national territory. According to the Law, doctoral studies will be organized and carried out in the manner determined by the statutes of the universities, in accordance with the criteria approved by the Government for the award of the degree of Doctor, after a report from the Council of Universities.

The development of the third cycle within the construction of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) must take into account the new bases of the Revised Lisbon Agenda, as well as the construction of the European Research Area (ERA) and the objectives set for it in the 2007 Green Paper. Thus, the doctorate must play a fundamental role as an intersection between the EHEA and the ERA, both fundamental pillars of the knowledge-based society. Research should have a clear importance as an integral part of university higher education and mobility should be valued both at the doctoral and postdoctoral stage, as an essential part of the training of young researchers.

The process of changing the production model towards a sustainable economy needs PhDs as the main actors of society in the generation, transfer and adaptation of R&D&I. Doctors must play an essential role in all institutions involved in innovation and research, so that they lead the transfer from knowledge to the welfare of society.

From the European point of view, from the Berlin Communiqué in 2003 to the latest Leuven Communiqué in 2009, the European ministers responsible for higher education have been making progress in the development of those aspects that should characterize a doctoral program within the framework of the European Higher Education and Research Areas. Similarly, the various meetings and activities of the European University Association (EUA) have produced a series of studies and recommendations for the development of doctoral programs.

The Berlin Communiqué (2003) deals, within the additional actions, with the role of the doctorate in the relationship between the EHEA and the ERA. The process of making the doctorate a third cycle is clearly perceived from the pilot project "Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society" promoted by the European University

Association (EUA), which is used as the basis for the Communiqué of the Bergen Conference (2005), where the doctorate is definitively established as a third cycle of European studies, differentiated from the master's degree. In this communiqué, the European ministers responsible for higher education emphasize the importance of university higher education in improving R+D+i and the importance of research in supporting the university teaching function, all of this to improve the economic and cultural development of our societies, as well as fundamentally defending its role as an element of social cohesion. The fundamental component of doctoral training is the advancement of scientific knowledge through "original research". Furthermore, it is considered that in this third cycle the participants in doctoral programs are not only students but researchers in training. Thus, at this point in the Bologna Process, doctoral training, research careers and the transmission of knowledge to society are linked.

The meeting-seminar held in Salzburg in February 2005 drew up a set of 10 recommendations or principles for the future development of doctoral programs in the different countries.

The rights of doctoral students as researchers in training are set out in the bases described in the European Charter for Researchers and in the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers of March 2005, which are widely accepted in Europe by Universities.

Spain, as an active member of the processes leading to the creation and development of a European Knowledge Space, has been incorporating the legislative reforms that have made it possible to consolidate a teaching offer in accordance with the principles of the EHEA. Similarly, progress has been made in the regulation of the figure of the researcher in training, through the Statute of Research Staff in Training approved by Royal Decree 63/2006, of January 27.

Likewise, in a living process that continues to specify and deepen the elements conducive to making Europe a knowledge-based, attractive, open and cooperative space with other regions of the world, with a high quality educational offer in teaching and research, it is necessary to continue advancing especially in the doctorate as a fundamental element of encounter between the EHEA and the ERA and the support for seeking new sustainable growth engines. The European process has achieved considerable international notoriety since one of its main consequences is to achieve a clear definition of the standard of competencies, requirements and contribution to society of a doctorate in the national and European framework. In this way, the mission of doctors in the new knowledge society is clearly defined, which will result in professional recognition and social prestige, the suitability of their job prospects and their contributions to the new growth model.

Institutional strategies for R&D and innovation in universities must have the doctorate at the center of their actions, allowing for broad flexibility and autonomy, but at the same time achieving high levels of quality, internationalization, innovation, recognition and mobility.

The training of researchers is, at present, a key element of a knowledge-based society. The social recognition of the skills acquired in this training stage, the need to substantially increase the number of people with competence in research and innovation and the promotion of their influence and employment both within and outside the academic spheres is one of the main Spanish and European challenges. The European documents also highlight the need to boost R&D&I in all social sectors, particularly through collaboration in the doctorate of industries and companies, so that they play a substantial role in their innovation strategies and future.

The special characteristics of doctoral studies and the variety of needs and methods of research training in the different fields of knowledge suggest a high degree of flexibility in the regulation of these studies. In this way, a doctoral training model is promoted, based in the university but integrating the collaboration of other organizations, entities and institutions involved in R&D&I, both nationally and internationally, in which the Doctoral Schools, whose creation is provided for in this regulation, are called to play an essential role.

In this area of collaboration, a special role should be played by the Public Research Organizations as national public institutions which, together with the universities, form the basic nucleus of the Spanish public system of scientific research and technological development. The accumulated experience, especially with the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, speaks of the enormous benefits expected from a balanced collaboration for the training of researchers and doctors.

Likewise, mention should be made of the equally important role to be played by other institutions that channel research into society, such as companies, hospitals, foundations, etc., which must become actors and allies in doctoral training and then in the inclusion of doctors in their daily activities.

In line with European recommendations, it is essential to emphasize the important, appropriate and necessary role of supervision and monitoring of doctoral activities, in terms of the objectives of doctoral programs and Doctoral Schools. Although personal responsibilities in this aspect are emphasized, they are shared by the institutions managing the program themselves, through the corresponding Academic Commissions, and, where appropriate, by the Doctoral Schools through various mechanisms.

In accordance with the above, this royal decree pursues the objective of collaborating in the training of those who must lead and cooperate in the transfer of knowledge towards the welfare of society, in coordination with the incorporation of the main recommendations arising from the different European and international forums. All of them refer to the structure and organization of doctoral studies, the competences to be acquired, the conditions of access and the development of the research career in its initial stage, the fundamental role of supervision and tutoring of research training, the insertion of this training in a research environment that encourages communication and creativity, the internationalization and mobility essential in this type of studies and the evaluation and accreditation of quality as a reference for its recognition and international attractiveness.

In accordance with the above, this regulation provides for the creation of Doctoral Schools and establishes academic commissions for doctoral programs, as well as the figure of the program coordinator. It introduces as a novelty the document of activities of the doctoral candidate, providing for a system of supervision and monitoring of the same, and establishes for the first time a maximum term of duration of doctoral studies with the possibility of part-time and full-time dedication.

On the other hand, the new regulation establishes a clearer distinction between the second cycle of university studies, the Master's degree, and the third, the doctoral degree, also determining the specific criteria for the verification and evaluation of doctoral programs.

The main new features also include the provision that the tribunals in charge of evaluating doctoral theses must be made up of a majority of doctors from outside the University and collaborating institutions. Also included are aspects relating to the protection of confidential data and guarantees of eventual patents on research work, and the possibility of including the mention "International Doctor" in the title.

The basic nature of this regulation is justified, in accordance with the doctrine of the Constitutional Court, by the very nature of the regulated matter, which constitutes an indispensable complement to ensure the complete organization of official university education established by Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, 2007, as amended by Royal Decree 861/2010, of July 2, 2010.

Thus, the regulation of official doctoral studies undertaken in this Royal Decree is, due to the nature of the subject matter and in accordance with the doctrine of the Constitutional Court, a necessary complement to guarantee the achievement of the objective purpose to which the state competence responds, without such compliance being an obstacle to the exercise of the competences of regulatory development that correspond to the autonomous communities.

This Royal Decree has been reported by the Council of Universities, by the General Conference on University Policy and by the Ministry of Territorial Policy.

By virtue thereof, at the proposal of the Minister of Education, with the prior approval of the First Vice-President of the Government and Minister of the Presidency, in agreement with the Council of State and after deliberation of the Council of Ministers at its meeting held on January 28, 2011,

PROVIDED:

**Article 1. *Object.***

The purpose of this Royal Decree is to regulate the organization of doctoral studies corresponding to the third cycle of official university studies leading to the degree of Doctor, which will be official and valid throughout the national territory.

**Article 2. *Definitions.***

1. Doctorate is understood as the third cycle of official university studies, leading to the acquisition of competencies and skills related to quality scientific research.

2. A doctoral program is a set of activities leading to the acquisition of the competencies and skills necessary to obtain a doctoral degree. This program will have as its objective the development of the different formative aspects of the doctoral student and will establish the procedures and lines of research for the development of doctoral theses.

3. A doctoral student is a person who, having accredited the requirements established in this Royal Decree, has been admitted to a doctoral program and has enrolled in the same.

4. The Thesis Director is the person in charge of conducting all the research tasks of the doctoral student, in accordance with the terms set forth in article 12 of this regulation.

5. The tutor is responsible for the adequacy of the training and research activity to the principles of the programs and, where appropriate, of the Doctoral Schools.

6. The Academic Committee of each program is responsible for its definition, updating, quality and coordination, as well as for supervising the progress of research and training and for authorizing the presentation of theses of each doctoral student in the program.

7. A doctoral student's activity document is understood to be the individualized record of control of such activities, materialized in the corresponding support. The thesis director and the tutor will review this document. The Academic Committee will evaluate it annually.

8. A Doctoral School is understood to be the Unit created by one or more Universities and in possible collaboration with other organizations, centers, institutions and entities with R&D&I activities, national or foreign, whose main purpose is the organization within its management area of the Doctorate, in one or more branches of knowledge or with an interdisciplinary character.

**Article 3. *Structure.***

1. Doctoral studies will be organized through programs, in the manner determined by the statutes of the universities and in accordance with the criteria established in this Royal Decree. These studies will end in any case with the preparation and defense of a doctoral thesis incorporating original research results.

2. The duration of the doctoral studies will be a maximum of three years, full time, counting from the admission of the doctoral student to the program until the presentation of the doctoral thesis.

Notwithstanding the above, and with the prior authorization of the academic committee responsible for the program, doctoral studies may be carried out on a part-time basis. In this case, such studies may have a maximum duration of five years from admission to the program until the presentation of the doctoral thesis.

If after the aforementioned period of three years the application for the deposit of the thesis has not been submitted, the committee responsible for the program may authorize the extension of this period for one more year, which may exceptionally be extended for another additional year, under the conditions established in the corresponding doctoral program. In the case of part-time studies, the extension may be authorized for two more years, which, exceptionally, may also be extended for another additional year.

For the purposes of calculating the above period, leaves of absence due to illness, pregnancy or any other cause provided for by current legislation shall not be taken into account.

Likewise, the doctoral student may request a temporary leave of absence from the program for a maximum period of one year, extendable for up to one more year. This request must be addressed and justified to the academic committee responsible for the program, which will decide whether the student's request can be granted.

#### **Article 4. Organization of doctoral training.**

1. The doctoral programs will include organized aspects of research training that will not require structuring in ECTS credits and will include both transversal and specific training in the field of each program, although in any case the essential activity of the doctoral student will be research.

2. The organization of such training and the procedures for its control shall be expressed in the report for the verification of the doctoral programs included in Annex I of this regulation and shall be part of the subsequent evaluation for the purposes of the renewal of the accreditation of such programs.

3. The training activities carried out by the doctoral student shall be included in the document of activities referred to in article 2.5.

#### **Article 5. Competencies to be acquired by the doctoral student.**

1. The doctoral studies will guarantee, as a minimum, the acquisition by the doctoral student of the following basic competencies as well as those others that appear in the Spanish Framework of Qualifications for Higher Education:

a) Systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of research skills and methods related to that field.

b) Ability to conceive, design or create, implement and adopt a substantial process of research or creation.

c) Ability to contribute to the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge through original research.

d) Ability to critically analyze, evaluate and synthesize new and complex ideas.

e) Ability to communicate with the academic and scientific community and with society in general about their fields of knowledge in the modes and languages commonly used in their international scientific community.

f) Ability to promote, in academic and professional contexts, scientific, technological, social, artistic or cultural progress within a knowledge-based society.

2. Likewise, obtaining a PhD degree should provide a high level of professional training in various fields, especially in those requiring creativity and innovation. PhDs will have acquired, at least, the following personal abilities and skills to:

a) To develop in contexts where there is little specific information.

b) Find the key questions to be answered to solve a complex problem.

c) Design, create, develop and undertake novel and innovative projects in their field of knowledge.

d) Work both in a team and autonomously in an international or multidisciplinary context.

e) Integrate knowledge, deal with complexity and make judgments with limited information.

f) Intellectual criticism and defense of solutions.

**Article 6. Requirements for access to the doctorate.**

1. In general, in order to access an official doctoral program, it will be necessary to hold an official Spanish Bachelor's degree or equivalent, and a Master's degree or equivalent, provided that at least 300 ECTS credits have been earned in these two courses.

2. Those who are in any of the following situations are also eligible:

a) Hold an official Spanish university degree, or from another country of the European Higher Education Area, which qualifies for access to a Master's degree in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, 2007, and have passed a minimum of 300 ECTS credits in the official university studies, of which at least 60 must be at the Master's degree level.

b) Be in possession of an official Spanish Graduate Degree, the duration of which, in accordance with the rules of community law, is at least 300 ECTS credits. Such graduates must take the training complements referred to in Article 7.2 of this rule, unless the curriculum of the corresponding undergraduate degree includes research training credits, equivalent in training value to the research credits from Master's studies.

c) University graduates who, after obtaining a place in training in the corresponding entrance exam to specialized health training positions, have passed with a positive evaluation at least two years of training in a program for obtaining the official degree in any of the specialties in Health Sciences.

d) To be in possession of a degree obtained in accordance with foreign educational systems, without the need for its homologation, after verification by the university that it accredits a level of training equivalent to that of the official Spanish Master's degree and that it qualifies in the country issuing the degree for access to doctoral studies. This admission will not imply, in any case, the homologation of the previous degree held by the interested party nor its recognition for purposes other than access to doctoral studies.

e) Be in possession of another Spanish doctorate degree obtained in accordance with previous university regulations.

f) Be in possession of an official university degree that has obtained the correspondence to level 3 of the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, in accordance with the procedure established in Royal Decree 967/2014, of November 21, establishing the requirements and procedure for the homologation and declaration of equivalence to degree and official university academic level and for the validation of foreign studies in Higher Education, and the procedure for determining the correspondence to the levels of the Spanish Framework of Qualifications for Higher Education of the official degrees of Architect, Engineer, Graduate, Bachelor, Technical Architect, Technical Engineer and Diploma.

**Article 7. Admission criteria.**

1. The Universities, through the Academic Commissions referred to in Article 8.3 of this Royal Decree, may establish additional requirements and criteria for the selection and admission of students to a specific doctoral program.

2. Admission to Doctoral Programs may include the requirement of specific training complements.

For the purposes of public prizes and the granting of scholarships and study aids, these specific training complements will be considered as doctorate level training and their development will not be counted for the purposes of the limit established in article 3.2.

3. The admission requirements and criteria referred to in section one, as well as the design of the training complements referred to in section two, shall be included in the verification report referred to in article 10.2.

4. The admission systems and procedures established by the universities must include, in the case of students with special educational needs derived from



The student will be provided with the appropriate support and counseling services, which will evaluate the need for possible curricular adaptations, itineraries or alternative studies.

**Article 8. Doctoral Programs.**

1. The university, in accordance with the provisions of its regulations, will define its strategy for research and doctoral training, which will be articulated through doctoral programs developed in Doctoral Schools or in its other competent research units, in accordance with the provisions of the university statutes, in the respective collaboration agreements and in this Royal Decree.

2. The aforementioned strategy will preferably rely on external allies for its implementation by virtue of complementarities, sharing of excellence or synergies with the R&D&I strategies of other institutions. In this sense, doctoral programs can be carried out jointly by several universities and have the collaboration, expressed through an agreement, of other organizations, centers, institutions and entities with R+D+i activities, public or private, national or foreign.

3. Within the framework of the aforementioned strategy, each doctoral program will be organized, designed and coordinated by an Academic Committee responsible for its training and research activities. This academic committee will be made up of PhDs and will be appointed by the University, in accordance with the provisions of its regulations, statutes and collaboration agreements, and may include researchers from Public Research Organizations as well as from other entities and institutions involved in R&D&I, both nationally and internationally.

4. Each doctoral program will have a coordinator appointed by the rector of the university or by agreement between rectors in the case of joint programs or in the manner indicated in the agreement with other institutions when a doctorate is developed in collaboration. This condition must be held by a relevant researcher and be endorsed by the previous direction of at least two doctoral theses and the justification of the possession of at least two periods of research activity recognized in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1086/1989, of August 28, on the remuneration of university professors. In the event that said researcher occupies a position in which the aforementioned evaluation criterion does not apply, he/she must accredit merits comparable to those indicated.

5. All faculty members in a doctoral program must hold a doctoral degree, without prejudice to the possible collaboration in certain specific activities of other persons or professionals by virtue of their relevant qualifications in the corresponding field of knowledge.

**Article 9. Doctoral Schools.**

1. Universities may create Doctoral Schools in accordance with the provisions of their Statutes, the regulations of the respective Autonomous Community and this Royal Decree, with the aim of organizing, within their sphere of management, the teaching and activities of the doctorate. Its creation must be notified to the Ministry of Education through the Directorate General for University Policy, for the purpose of its registration in the Registry of Universities, Centers and Degrees (RUCT), regulated by Royal Decree 1509/2008, of September 12.

2. Doctoral Schools may be created individually by a university, or jointly with other universities or in collaboration of one or more universities with other organizations, centers, institutions and entities with R+D+i activities, public or private, national or foreign.

3. The Doctoral Schools must guarantee that they develop their own strategy linked to the research strategy of the university or universities and, where appropriate, of the Public Research Bodies and other entities and institutions involved. They must also accredit an adequate management capacity for their purposes ensured by the promoting Universities and institutions.

4. The Schools will plan the necessary offer of activities inherent to the training and development of doctoral students, carried out either by collaborators of the universities and promoting entities or with the help of external professionals, professors or visiting researchers. In any case, the Doctoral Schools will have to guarantee a



leadership in their field and a sufficient critical mass of PhDs and doctoral students in their field of knowledge.

5. Doctoral Schools may be organized by focusing their activities on one or more specialized or interdisciplinary fields. Likewise, in accordance with the provisions of the university statutes and the regulations of the corresponding autonomous community, they may include official Master's degree courses with a fundamentally scientific content, as well as other open research training activities.

6. The Doctoral Schools will have a Steering Committee, which will carry out the functions related to the organization and management of the same and which will be formed by, at least, the director of the School, the coordinators of its doctoral programs and representatives of the collaborating entities. The director of the School will be appointed by the Rector, or by consensus of the rectors, when established by aggregation of several universities. He/she must be a researcher of recognized prestige belonging to one of the promoting universities or institutions. This condition must be endorsed by the justification of the possession of at least three periods of research activity recognized in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1086/1989, of August 28, previously mentioned. In the event that said researcher occupies a position in which the aforementioned evaluation criterion does not apply, he/she must prove merits comparable to those indicated.

7. The Doctoral Schools will have internal regulations that will establish, among other aspects, the rights and duties of doctoral students, in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1791/2010, of December 30, which approves the Statute of the University Student, and of the tutors and thesis supervisors, as well as the composition and functions of the academic committees of their programs.

8. All members of a Doctoral School must sign a commitment to comply with the code of good practices adopted by said School.

**Article 10. *Verification, monitoring and renewal of the accreditation of the Doctoral Programs.***

1. Doctoral programs leading to the official degree of Doctor must be verified by the Council of Universities and authorized by the corresponding Autonomous Communities, in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, which establishes the organization of official university education, with the particularities referred to in this Royal Decree.

2. For the purposes of their verification, doctoral programs shall comply with the report that appears as Annex I of this Royal Decree.

3. Doctoral programs must undergo an evaluation procedure every six years for the purpose of renewing the accreditation referred to in Article 24 of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, 2007.

4. In order to guarantee the quality of the doctorate and the correct development of doctoral training, the university must justify the existence of solvent and experienced research teams in the corresponding field.

5. In accordance with the provisions of Annex II, the evaluation criteria for the verification and accreditation of doctoral programs will take into account the percentage of researchers with accredited experience, the competitive projects in which they participate, recent publications and the funding available to doctoral students. Likewise, the degree of internationalization of the doctoral programs will be evaluated, with special attention to the existence of networks, the participation of international professors and students, the mobility of professors and students, and results such as co-supervision, European and international mentions, joint publications with foreign researchers, organization of international seminars, or any other criteria determined in this regard.

**Article 11. Supervision and monitoring of the Doctorate.**

1. Doctoral students admitted to a Doctoral program shall enroll annually in the corresponding University, in its School of Doctoral Studies or in the Unit responsible for the program under the concept of academic supervision of the Doctorate. In the case of joint programs, the agreement shall determine the manner in which such registration shall be carried out.

2. The persons incorporated to a Doctorate program shall be subject to the legal regime, if applicable, resulting from the specific legislation applicable to them.

3. At the time of admission to the Doctoral Program, each doctoral student will be assigned a Thesis Director by the corresponding Academic Committee. This assignment may be made by any Spanish or foreign Doctor, with accredited research experience, regardless of the University, center or institution in which he/she renders his/her services. Likewise, a tutor will be assigned, a Doctor with accredited research experience, linked to the Unit or School that organizes the program, who will be responsible for ensuring the interaction of the doctoral student with the Academic Committee. The tutor may or may not coincide with the Director of the doctoral thesis.

In the event that a Thesis Director is not assigned at the time of admission, the Academic Committee must appoint a Thesis Director within three months after enrollment.

4. The Academic Committee, having heard the doctoral student, may modify the appointment of the tutor or thesis supervisor of a doctoral student at any time during the doctoral program, provided that there are justified reasons.

5. Once enrolled in the program, a personalized activity document will be drawn up for each doctoral student for the purposes of the individualized control record referred to in Article 2.7 of this Royal Decree. All the activities of interest for the development of the doctoral student as regulated by the University, the School or the Academic Committee itself will be registered in it and will be regularly reviewed by the tutor and the Thesis Director and supervised annually by the Academic Committee responsible for the Doctoral program referred to in article 8.3.

6. Before the end of the first year, the doctoral student will prepare a research plan that will include at least the methodology to be used and the objectives to be achieved, as well as the means and time schedule to achieve them. This plan may be improved and detailed throughout his stay in the program and must be endorsed by the Director and the tutor.

7. Annually, the Academic Committee of the program will evaluate the research plan and the document of activities together with the reports to be issued by the Director and the tutor. In the event that the Academic Committee detects important deficiencies, it may request that the doctoral student submit a new research plan within six months. In the event that the deficiencies continue to occur, the Academic Committee must issue a reasoned report and the doctoral student will be definitively withdrawn from the program.

8. The Universities will establish the functions of supervision of doctoral students by means of a documentary commitment signed by the University, the doctoral student, his tutor and his Director in the form to be established. This commitment shall be initialed as soon as possible after admission and shall include a conflict resolution procedure and shall contemplate the aspects related to intellectual or industrial property rights that may be generated in the field of doctoral programs.

9. The Universities, through the Doctoral School or the corresponding Unit responsible for the Doctoral program will establish the evaluation and monitoring mechanisms indicated above, the completion of the thesis within the projected time and the procedures foreseen in cases of conflict and aspects affecting the field of intellectual property in accordance with the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

**Article 12. Thesis direction.**

1. In accordance with the provisions of Article 11.3, the University will assign the doctoral candidate a Director for the preparation of the doctoral thesis, who will be responsible for the coherence and suitability of the training activities, the impact and the quality of the doctoral thesis.

novelty in the field of the subject of the doctoral thesis and the guide in the planning and its adequacy, where appropriate, to that of other projects and activities where the doctoral student is enrolled. The thesis may be co-directed by other PhDs when there are reasons such as academic or thematic interdisciplinarity or when the programs are developed in national or international collaboration.

For the co-direction of the thesis, prior authorization from the Academic Committee will be required. Such authorization may be revoked at a later date if, in the opinion of the Academic Committee, co-direction does not benefit the development of the thesis.

2. The universities, through the Doctoral School or the corresponding unit responsible for the doctoral program, may establish additional requirements for thesis supervisors.

3. The work of tutoring the doctoral student and supervising the thesis must be recognized as part of the teaching and research dedication of the faculty.

#### **Article 13. *Doctoral thesis.***

1. The doctoral thesis will consist of an original research work elaborated by the candidate in any field of knowledge. The thesis must enable the doctoral candidate to work independently in the field of R+D+i.

2. The Universities shall establish the procedure for the presentation of the doctoral thesis, including the determination of a maximum time limit for the subsequent reading of the thesis.

The universities, through the Doctoral School or the corresponding unit responsible for the doctoral program, will establish control procedures in order to guarantee the quality of the doctoral theses, with special emphasis on the quality of the doctoral student's training and supervision.

3. The university will guarantee the publicity of the finished doctoral thesis so that during the evaluation process, and prior to the defense ceremony, other doctors may submit comments on its content.

4. The thesis may be developed and, if necessary, defended in the usual languages for scientific communication in your field of knowledge.

#### **Article 14. *Evaluation and defense of the doctoral thesis.***

1. The tribunal that evaluates the doctoral thesis shall be composed in accordance with the requirements set by the university and in accordance with the provisions of this article.

2. All members of the panel must hold a PhD degree and have accredited research experience. In any case, the panel will be formed by a majority of members external to the University and to the institutions collaborating in the School or program.

3. The examining board that evaluates the thesis will have at its disposal the document of the doctoral student's activities, referred to in article 2.5 of this royal decree, with the training activities carried out by the doctoral student. This monitoring document will not give rise to a quantitative score but will constitute a qualitative evaluation instrument that will complement the evaluation of the doctoral thesis.

4. The doctoral thesis will be evaluated in the act of defense that will take place in a public session and will consist of the presentation and defense by the doctoral candidate of the research work prepared before the members of the examining board. The doctors present at the public act may ask questions at the time and in the manner indicated by the president of the examining board.

5. Once the doctoral thesis has been approved, the university will take care of its archiving in open electronic format in an institutional repository and will send, in electronic format, a copy of the thesis as well as all the necessary complementary information to the Ministry of Education for the appropriate purposes.

6. In exceptional circumstances determined by the academic committee of the program, such as, among others, the participation of companies in the program or School, the existence of confidentiality agreements with companies or the possibility of generating patents that fall on the content of the thesis, the universities will enable procedures to develop sections 4 and 5 above to ensure the non-publicity of these aspects.

7. The tribunal will issue a report and the overall grade awarded to the thesis according to the following scale: Failing, Passing, Remarkable and Outstanding.

The panel may award the mention of cum laude if the overall grade is outstanding and a unanimous positive secret ballot is issued in that sense.

The University will enable the necessary mechanisms for the materialization of the final award of this mention, guaranteeing that the scrutiny of the votes for this award will be carried out in a session different from the one corresponding to the defense of the doctoral thesis.

**Article 15. *International Mention in the Doctor's degree and thesis under international co-supervision.***

1. The title of Doctorate may include on its obverse side the mention "International Doctorate", provided that the following circumstances are met:

a) That, during the period of training required to obtain the title of Doctor, the doctoral candidate has spent a minimum of three months outside Spain in a prestigious higher education institution or research center, studying or carrying out research work. The stay and the activities must be endorsed by the Director and authorized by the Academic Committee, and will be included in the student's activities document.

b) Part of the doctoral thesis, at least the abstract and conclusions, must have been written and presented in one of the usual languages for scientific communication in their field of knowledge, other than any of the official or co-official languages of Spain. This rule will not apply when the stays, reports and experts come from a Spanish-speaking country.

c) The thesis must have been reported by a minimum of two PhD experts from a non-Spanish Higher Education institution or research institute.

d) At least one expert belonging to a Higher Education institution or non-Spanish research center, with the title of Doctor, and other than the person responsible for the stay mentioned in paragraph a), must have been a member of the thesis examining board.

2. The title of Doctor will include on its obverse side the statement "Thesis in co-supervision with the University U", provided that the following circumstances are met:

a) The doctoral thesis must be supervised by two or more Doctors from two Universities, one Spanish and one foreign, who must formalize a co-supervision agreement.

b) During the training period required to obtain the PhD degree, the doctoral student must have spent a minimum of six months at the institution with which the co-supervision agreement is established, carrying out research work, either in a single period or in several periods. Stays and activities will be reflected in the co-supervision agreement.

**Article 15 bis. *Industrial Mention in the Doctorate Degree.***

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

a) The existence of an employment or commercial contract with the doctoral candidate. The contract may be signed by a company in the private or public sector, as well as by a Public Administration.

b) The doctoral student must participate in an industrial research or experimental development project carried out in the company or Public Administration in which the service is provided, which may not be a University. The industrial research or experimental development project in which the doctoral student participates must be directly related to the thesis he/she is carrying out. This direct relation will be accredited by means of a report that will have to be approved by the University.

2. In the event that the industrial research or experimental development project is carried out in collaboration between the University and the company or Public Administration in which the doctoral student is working, a framework collaboration agreement will be signed with

between the parties. This agreement will indicate the obligations of the University and the obligations of the company or Public Administration, as well as the procedure for the selection of doctoral students.

The doctoral student will have a thesis tutor appointed by the University and a person in charge appointed by the company or Public Administration, who may be, where appropriate, the Director of the thesis in accordance with the regulations of the Doctorate.

**Article 16. *Promotion of doctoral training.***

1. The Ministry of Education may establish an annual call to award a seal of excellence to those doctoral programs that stand out for their results and their high level of internationalization. This call will establish the requirements for obtaining this seal and the evaluation criteria.

2. Likewise, the Ministry of Education may establish an annual call to award a mention of excellence to Doctoral Schools that stand out for their prestige and special international projection. This call will establish the requirements for obtaining the aforementioned mention and the evaluation criteria.

3. The Government, within the framework of current legislation on science, technology and innovation, may periodically call for grants to promote Doctoral Schools and quality doctoral training, aimed at doctoral programs, especially those that have obtained the seal of excellence and Doctoral Schools that have also obtained the mention of excellence.

4. Public administrations may establish mechanisms to promote and finance the internationalization of doctoral programs and support mobility.

**First additional provision: *Verification of Erasmus Mundus international joint doctoral programs.***

Joint doctoral programs created through international consortia in which Spanish and foreign Higher Education institutions participate and which have been evaluated and selected by the European Commission in competitive calls as programs of excellence with the Erasmus Mundus seal, will be understood to have the favorable verification report referred to in Article 10 of this Royal Decree.

For these purposes, the applicant university shall send to the Ministry of Education the curriculum proposal approved by the European Commission together with the corresponding consortium agreement and the letter of notification of having obtained the Erasmus Mundus seal referred to in the previous paragraph, as well as an adapted form providing the necessary data for the registration of the corresponding doctoral program in the RUCT.

The Ministry of Education will send the file to the Council of Universities for the purpose of issuing the corresponding resolution of verification in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, 2007.

**Second additional provision. *Incorporation into the new doctoral programs established in this Royal Decree.***

1. Doctoral students who have begun their doctoral program in accordance with previous university regulations, may access the doctoral studies regulated in this Royal Decree, subject to admission by the corresponding university, in accordance with the provisions of this Royal Decree and the regulations of the university itself.

2. Graduates, Architects or Engineers in possession of the Diploma of Advanced Studies obtained in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 778/1998, of April 30, 1998, or who have reached the research sufficiency regulated in Royal Decree 185/1985, of January 23, 1985, may be admitted to the doctoral studies regulated in this Royal Decree.

**Third additional provision. *Honorary Doctorate.***

In accordance with the provisions of their regulations, universities may appoint as Doctor Honoris Causa those persons who, in view of their exceptional academic, scientific or personal merits, are worthy of such distinction.

**First transitory provision. *Doctoral students in accordance with previous ordinances.***

1. Doctoral students who, on the date of entry into force of this Royal Decree, had begun doctoral studies in accordance with previous regulations, shall be subject to the provisions governing doctoral studies and the awarding of the doctoral degree by which they had begun such studies. In any case, the regime relating to the board, defense and evaluation of the doctoral thesis provided for in this Royal Decree shall be applicable to such students one year after its entry into force.

2. In any case, those who at the entry into force of this Royal Decree are studying doctoral studies have 5 years for the presentation and defense of the doctoral thesis. Once this period has elapsed without the thesis having been defended, the doctoral candidate will be definitively withdrawn from the program.

**Second transitory provision. *Doctoral programs previously verified or in process.***

Doctoral programs already verified in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of 29 October, must adapt to the provisions of this Royal Decree prior to the start of the 2014-2015 academic year. In any case, such programs must be completely extinguished before September 30, 2017.

The universities responsible for doctoral programs which, on the date of entry into force of this Royal Decree, had initiated the verification procedure and had not yet obtained the corresponding resolution, may choose between continuing the procedure already initiated or availing themselves of the provisions of this Royal Decree.

**Sole derogatory provision. *Repeal of regulations.***

Chapter V of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, 2007, establishing the organization of university education and any other provisions of equal or lower rank that oppose the provisions of this Royal Decree are hereby repealed, without prejudice to the provisions of the second transitory provision of this Royal Decree.

**First final provision. *Modification of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, 2007, which establishes the organization of university education.***

1. Article 11 of Royal Decree 1393/2007, of October 29, 2007, is amended to read as follows:

**"Article 11. *Doctoral Education.***

1. A doctorate is understood to be the third cycle of official university studies, leading to the acquisition of competencies and skills related to quality scientific research.

2. Successful completion of doctoral studies will entitle the student to obtain the title of Doctor, with the name that appears in the RUCT.

3. The denomination of the degrees of Doctor shall be: Doctor by the University U, with U being the name of the University issuing the degree. Likewise, the material issuance of the degree will include information on the doctoral program completed, in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1002/2010, of August 5, 2010, on the issuance of official university degrees.

4. Without prejudice to the validity for these studies of the provisions of the additional, fourth, fifth, sixth and third transitory provisions of this Royal Decree, doctoral studies will be governed by their specific regulations."



2. Section 3.4 of the Report for the application for the verification of official degrees contained in the Annex to the aforementioned Royal Decree is hereby repealed.

**Second final provision.** *Modification of Royal Decree 1002/2010, of August 5, 2010, on the issuance of official university degrees.*

Paragraph 5 of Article 11 of Royal Decree 1002/2010, of August 5, on the issuance of official university degrees is hereby amended to read as follows:

"5. Likewise, on the front of the title of Doctor may appear the mention International Doctor, provided that the circumstances established for this purpose in its regulatory regulations are met."

**Third final provision.** *Competent title.*

This Royal Decree is of a basic nature and is issued under the provisions of Article 149.1.30 of the Spanish Constitution, which attributes to the State exclusive competence over the regulation of the conditions for obtaining, issuing and homologation of academic and professional degrees and basic rules for the development of Article 27 of the Constitution, in order to guarantee compliance with the obligations of the public authorities in this matter, and is applicable throughout the national territory.

**Fourth final provision.** *Entry into force.*

This Royal Decree shall enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Gazette.

"Boletín Oficial de Estado".

Given in Madrid, on January 28, 2011.

JUAN CARLOS R.

The Minister of Education,  
ÁNGEL GABILONDO PUJOL

## **ANNEX I**

### **Report for the verification of the doctoral programs referred to in Article 10.2 of this Royal Decree.**

[1] Description of the doctoral program, containing basic data: name, participating institutions (always at least one coordinating university) and collaborating institutions, whether or not the program is part of a doctoral school, the existence of international networks or agreements, etc.

[2] Competencies.

Description of the competencies to be acquired by students at the end of the doctoral program.

[3] Access and admission of students.

Pathways and requirements for student access and admission, as well as systems to make such information accessible to students prior to enrollment.

Admission systems and procedures adapted to students with special educational needs derived from disability.

Description of the specific training complements adapted to the various entry profiles, if any.

In the case that the doctoral program comes from an existing program, number of students admitted in the last 5 years identifying those coming from other countries. In the case of new programs, the estimated enrollment and forecast of foreign students shall be provided.

[4] Training activities.



Details of the cross-cutting and specific training activities in the program's scope. Planning of the same.

Control procedures. Mobility actions and criteria.

[5] Organization of the program.

5.1 Thesis supervision.

List of activities planned to promote the supervision of doctoral theses and the existence of a guide of good practices for their supervision.

List of activities planned to encourage multiple supervision in academically justified cases (co-direction of theses by an experienced director and a new director, co-direction of interdisciplinary, collaborative, international theses, etc.) and the presence of international experts in the monitoring commissions, previous reports and thesis tribunals.

5.2 Follow-up of the doctoral student.

Description of the procedure used by the corresponding academic committee for the assignment of the student's tutor and thesis advisor.

Description of the procedure for the control of the document of activities of each doctoral student and the certification of their data.

Description of the procedure for the annual evaluation of the research plan and the doctoral student's activities document.

Regulations for the presentation and reading of doctoral theses.

Forecast of doctoral students' stays in other national and international training centers, co-tutelage and European mentions.

[6] Human resources.

Description of the equipment of research teams and faculty, detailing internationalization of the program.

Description of the mechanisms available for external collaborations.

Research lines of the program with an indication of the research teams associated with them.

Scientific production of research personnel in the last 5 years and joint contributions with foreign researchers.

Experience of research personnel in the direction of doctoral theses.

Mechanisms for calculating tutoring and thesis supervision as part of the teaching and research dedication of the faculty.

[7] Material resources and support available for doctoral students.

Description of the material resources and services available (laboratories and workshops, library, access to databases, connectivity, etc.).

Provision for obtaining external resources to support doctoral students in their training.

[8] Program review, improvement and results.

Body, unit or person responsible for the quality assurance system.

Description of the monitoring mechanisms and procedures to analyze the development and results of the doctoral program for its improvement.

Description of procedures to ensure the correct development of mobility programs and mechanisms to publish information on the program, its development and results.

In the case of programs involving more than one university, the mechanisms and procedures to ensure coordination among the participating universities must be described.

Description of the procedure for the follow-up of graduates.

Data for the last 5 years or estimated data for the next 6 years (in the case of newly created programs) on: theses produced, success rate in the

doctoral theses, quality of the theses and resulting contributions. Justification of the data provided.

## **ANNEX II**

### **Evaluation criteria for the verification of the doctoral programs referred to in article 10.5 of this Royal Decree**

[1] Description of the doctoral program. It

will be valued:

That the name of the doctoral program is consistent with the lines of research proposed therein.

The participation of other participating institutions in the program.

The integration of the program in the R+D+i strategy of the university or, where appropriate, of other institutions. This aspect will be reflected in its registration within a Doctoral School, whether it is the university itself that proposes the doctoral program, inter-university or in collaboration with other organizations and institutions.

The existence of international networks or agreements.

[2] Competencies.

It will be an asset:

If the competencies to be acquired by the doctoral student are assessable and guarantee, as a minimum, the basic competencies detailed in article 5 of this Royal Decree or if they are coherent with those corresponding to the doctoral level.

[3] Access and admission of students.

It will be an asset:

The clarity and adequacy of the procedures for admission and selection of students.

Adaptation of the specific training complements to the different entrance profiles, in case they exist.

The number of students (national and foreign) enrolled in the doctoral program in the last 5 years or assessment of the expected estimate.

[4] Training activities. It

will be an asset:

The organization of the training provided to doctoral students, in particular on disciplinary and methodological knowledge (seminars, courses, workshops, etc.), transversal competencies, training experiences (doctoral students' conferences, national or international congresses, etc.) and their planning throughout the development of the program.

[5] Organization of the

program. It will be an asset:

The adequacy of the activities planned to promote the supervision of doctoral theses to the development of the program.

The adequacy of the procedures described above to the objectives of the program.

The presence of international experts in the follow-up commissions, previous reports and thesis tribunals.

In the accreditation renewal phase, the estimates provided in this criterion will be reviewed, taking into account the justifications provided and the actions derived from their follow-up.

[6] Human Resources.

It will be an asset:

That a minimum percentage of 60% of the doctoral researchers participating in the program have accredited experience (excluding guests and short-term visitors).

Number of foreign professors participating in the program.

That the research groups incorporated to the doctoral program have at least one competitive project in the topics of the research lines of the program.

The quality of the scientific contributions of the research personnel participating in the program in the last 5 years/having a live research tranche/having reached the maximum number of tranches possible. Joint contributions with foreign researchers.

That the research personnel participating in the program have proven experience in the direction of doctoral theses in the last 5 years.

The existence in the university of clear mechanisms for recognition of the work of tutoring and thesis direction.

[7] Material resources and support available for doctoral students. It will be valued:

If the material resources and other available means are adequate to guarantee the development of the research to be carried out by the student.

External resources and travel grants dedicated to assistance for congress attendance and stays abroad.

The financing of seminars, conferences and other national and international training activities.

The percentage of doctoral students who obtain grants or post-doctoral contracts.

[8] Program review, improvement and results.

It will be an asset:

That the doctoral program has a responsible body and articulates procedures and mechanisms to supervise its development, analyze the results and determine the appropriate actions for improvement. The opinion of the students and of the doctoral graduates will be of special importance when defining and implementing improvement actions.

The existence of a procedure to analyze the results of the mobility program, mechanisms to publish information on the program, its development and results will be evaluated.

In the case of programs in which more than one university participates, the existence of mechanisms and procedures to ensure coordination among the participating universities will be evaluated.

Data relating to the last 5 years or the expected estimate based on their justification and context. During the accreditation renewal phase, these estimates will be reviewed, taking into account the justifications provided and the actions derived from their follow-up.

The employability of the doctoral students during the three years following the reading of their thesis or the anticipation of the same, in the case of new programs.