

# Regulations of the Joint UPC, UPCT, UOC, and UPM Doctoral Programme in Business Administration and Management

Academic Committee of the Doctoral Programme

18 May 2024

## 1. Preamble

The purpose of these regulations is to specify the rules that regulate the activities of all participants in the joint doctoral program in Business Administration and Management offered by the UPC, the UPCT, the UOC, and the UPM.

The following initialisms are used in this document:

- **CAPD** Academic Committee of the Doctoral Program
- **DAD** Doctoral Student Activity Report
- **PD** Doctoral program
- **UOC** Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
- **UPC** Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
- **UPCT** Universitat Politècnica de Cartagena
- **UPM** Universitat Politècnica de Madrid

## 2. Governing bodies of the doctoral program

The CAPD is responsible for coordinating and managing the doctoral program.

### 2.1. Composition of the Academic Committee of the Doctoral Programme

The CAPD is made up of the following people:

- The doctoral program coordinator appointed by joint agreement between the rectors of the participating universities based on a proposal made by the CAPD through the doctoral schools involved.
- Two representatives from each university, from among the participating teaching and research staff, appointed by the respective doctoral schools.
- A representative of the students enrolled in the doctoral program.
- The person responsible for the administrative management of the program who has the right to speak but not to vote.

The coordinator, the representatives of each university, and the student representative are renewed every four years.

## **2.2. Duties of the Academic Committee of the Doctoral Programme**

The CAPD has the following duties:

- Define guidelines for organizing the offering and delivery of the doctoral program in such a way as to ensure its academic excellence, and submit proposed guidelines to the governing bodies of all the participating universities for their approval.
- Propose a doctoral program coordinator.
- Promote the international profile of the program.
- Encourage the carrying out of joint training, research, dissemination, and strategic activities and actions, and, in particular, encourage students to use the instrumental means and infrastructure made available by all of the institutions supporting the doctoral program.
- Establish specific requirements for admission to the doctoral program in accordance with the criteria established, which must be in line with current regulations.
- Promote joint training activities on specific topics of interest to students participating in the doctoral program to support and achieve more comprehensive, advanced, and interdisciplinary training.
- Encourage the mobility of academic staff and students, using the tools available at any given time.
- Carry out any other function related to the doctoral program that is not assigned to any other body of the respective universities.

## **2.3. Functioning of the Academic Committee of the Doctoral Programme**

The CAPD meets periodically to coordinate and manage the doctoral program. The CAPD may adopt decisions by consensus. In the event of a tied vote, the CAPD coordinator has the casting vote.

## **3. Teaching and research staff of the doctoral program**

The program's teaching and research staff includes all individuals who are attached or affiliated to the units responsible for the program and who have a *sexenio* or equivalent in effect (obtained in the last seven years). Academic staff from other units may also participate in the program if they can demonstrate recent research experience in the field it covers. The CAPD considers and, where appropriate, approves applications to join the doctoral program.

## **4. Admission to the doctoral program**

The CAPD is responsible for admitting new students in the periods established in the academic calendar.

### **4.1. Doctoral program entry profile**

Given the program's interdisciplinary nature, students may come from a wide range of disciplines, including the social sciences, the arts and humanities, technological disciplines, and the natural sciences area. Two entry profiles are envisaged:

- Applicants with training and/or research experience in economics and/or management.
- Applicants without training or research experience in economics and/or management.

### **4.2. Documents required to apply for admission to the doctoral program**

The following documents are required to apply for admission to the doctoral program:

- A cover letter in English that includes (1) the reasons for applying, (2) a description of the applicant's research interests in accordance with the program's research lines and groups, (3) the mode of delivery (distance or face-to-face) and the reasons for this choice, and (4) a statement of whether the applicant wishes to study full-time or part-time and the reasons for this choice.
- A curriculum vitae, also in English, indicating the master's or postgraduate programs and courses completed that are relevant to the research interests stated in the cover letter and, if applicable, previous research output.
- The names of three referees and their institutional affiliations, postal addresses, and e-mail addresses.
- A document certifying a level of English equivalent to Level B2.2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. (Native speakers of English are not required to submit this document.)
- An example of academic or research work recently completed by the student.

### **4.3. Criteria for admission to the doctoral program**

The CAPD evaluates applications based on two types of criteria: excellence (academic) and degree of fit (between the thesis proposal and one of the research groups linked to the doctoral program). These criteria are used to prioritize applications if the demand for places exceeds the number offered. The minimum score required based on the degree-of-fit and excellence criteria is 60 out of 100. If the CAPD deems it appropriate to obtain additional information beyond that provided by the applicant, it may ask the applicant to participate in a personal interview (in person or by telephone) with an academic staff member whose work is related to the field of knowledge or subject area in which the applicant's research interests are framed.

**Degree-of-fit criteria:**

- Degree of fit with a research group: 100%

**Excellence criteria:**

- Motivation: 25%
- Academic record: 50%
- Research experience: 25%

#### **4.4. Bridging courses**

The CAPD may require that an applicant complete specific bridging courses. If this is the case, it keeps track of the bridging courses completed by the applicant and establishes appropriate criteria to limit their duration. Bridging courses may focus on either research or cross-disciplinary training, but a student may not be required to enroll for 60 or more ECTS credits. Considering a student's DAD, the CAPD may propose additional measures to those specified in these regulations, which may result in the exclusion of students who do not meet the established criteria. Any bridging courses must be completed during the first year of study.

### **5. Progress review for students enrolled in the doctoral program**

#### **5.1. Tutor and thesis supervisor**

The CAPD assigns a tutor to each admitted student. The tutor's role is to coordinate interaction between the student and the CAPD. The tutor must be a participant in the doctoral program. After hearing the student, the CAPD may assign a new tutor at any time during the doctoral study period, provided that there are justified reasons for doing so.

The CAPD assigns a thesis supervisor to each student no more than six months after enrolling for the first time. At this point, a commitment agreement is signed between the student and the supervisor(s), which includes a conflict resolution procedure and covers issues such as intellectual or industrial property rights and confidentiality. The thesis supervisor must be a participant in the doctoral program. In exceptional and justified cases, the CAPD may approve the appointment of a co-supervisor who is not a doctoral program participant or does not meet the requirements to participate in the program. In such cases, prior authorization from the CAPD is required. A thesis co-supervisor has the same responsibilities as a thesis supervisor. In any case, the number of thesis supervisors may not exceed two.

Thesis supervisors may supervise a maximum of three PhD students, regardless of whether they are enrolled full-time or part-time. Co-supervisors will count as half a supervising, regardless of the number of co-supervisors. PhD students who have deposited their doctoral thesis will not be included in the calculation.

In collaboration with the tutor, the thesis supervisor is primarily responsible for the coherence and suitability of a student's research and cross-disciplinary competencies training. The thesis supervisor and the tutor must prepare an annual progress report for

each student. If the supervisor and tutor are the same person, the CAPD may request an independent report on the student's progress from an expert in the field.

## **5.2. Doctoral student activity report**

The DAD is a tool for continuous assessment of trainee researchers that includes evidence of training in research and cross-disciplinary competencies. Students update their DAD continuously; the tutor and thesis supervisor review the reports, and the CAPD assesses them. If the supervisor and tutor are the same person, the CAPD may request an independent report on a student's progress from an expert in the field.

The DAD is a record of all activities related to a student's academic life and includes the following elements:

- Commitment agreement
- Specific research training
- Cross-disciplinary training
- Initial training plan
- Research plan
- Changes of tutor or thesis supervisor
- Annual reports prepared by the tutor or thesis supervisor
- Annual reports prepared by the CAPD
- Agreements
- Research visits
- Grants and scholarships
- Participation in conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.
- Publications

## **5.3. Initial training plan**

Students must draw up an initial training plan in collaboration with their tutor and thesis supervisor before the end of the first year, which will be included in the DAD. The initial training plan will forecast the training activities to be carried out during the thesis (courses, seminars, mobility, etc.).

## **5.4. Research plan**

Before the end of the first year of study, students must prepare a research plan, which must be included in their DAD. This plan, which must be improved over the doctoral study period, must be approved by the tutor and the thesis supervisor and then positively assessed by the CAPD.

Within the first 18 months of their doctoral studies, students must publicly present and defend their research plan and the progress they have made to date before a committee composed of three Ph.D. holders. The defense may be conducted in person or remotely. The examination committee awards a Pass or Fail mark. Students whose research plan is deemed to be unsatisfactory have six months to prepare and submit a new plan, which the CAPD assesses. Students whose research plan is deemed to be

unsatisfactory in two assessments are permanently excluded from the doctoral program.

If the assessment of a student's research plan is positive and the student decides to change their thesis topic, the student must submit a new research plan for approval by the CAPD.

Research plans must include the following:

- Identifying details of the doctoral program, university, student, thesis supervisor and tutor, and date of submission
- Title of the research plan
- Summary of the research plan (100–150 words)
- Definition of the research problem or topic
- Research question(s) and research objectives
- Working hypothesis, where appropriate
- Expected results and contributions
- Literature review
- Methodology, work plan, timeline, and resources for carrying out the research
- Bibliographical references

This document should be no longer than 30 single-spaced pages in 12-point font or equivalent.

## **5.5. Annual assessment of students**

Each year, the CAPD assesses students based on the progress report prepared by their thesis supervisor and tutor and their DAD. Students whose progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory have six months to remedy the situation. To verify that the identified issues have been addressed, the supervisor and tutor must submit a new progress report, and the student must submit a new DAD. Students whose research plan is deemed to be unsatisfactory in two assessments are permanently excluded from the doctoral program.

## **5.6. Duration of study**

For full-time students, the maximum duration of doctoral study is four years, counted from the date of admission to the program until the doctoral thesis is submitted (six years in case of disability). However, with the prior authorization of the CAPD, students may pursue part-time doctoral studies. In this case, the maximum duration of study is seven years, counted from the date of admission to the program until the doctoral thesis is submitted (nine years in case of disability).

If, after the previous periods, a doctoral student has not applied to deposit their thesis, the CAPD may grant a one-year extension. The calculation of duration of study does not include periods of absence due to illness, pregnancy, or any other reason provided for in the regulations in force.

Students may also apply to temporarily withdraw from the program for a maximum of two years, which may be non-consecutive. The student concerned must submit a request stating the reasons for their request to the CAPD, which decides whether to grant the temporary withdrawal.

## **5.7. Withdrawal or exclusion of students**

In accordance with these regulations, a student may be withdrawn or excluded from the doctoral program in the following cases:

- If the student submits a request to withdraw.
- If the student's research plan receives two unsatisfactory assessments.
- If the student receives two unsatisfactory assessments on their progress report.

## **6. Thesis defense in the doctoral program**

### **6.1. The thesis**

A thesis is an original contribution to a field of research by a student that develops their ability to do independent RDI work. The thesis may be written and defended in English or any official language of the university where the student is enrolled. The CAPD may authorize students to write and present their thesis in another language if they request this and give justified reasons.

### **6.2. Preliminary assessment of the thesis**

When a thesis is considered complete and ready for public defense, the supervisor records this on the student's DAD, which must be submitted to the CAPD for authorization to proceed with the defense. The student must submit the following documents in electronic format (PDF):

- A copy of the thesis
- An abstract of 4,000 characters or less
- The DAD, signed by the tutor and the thesis supervisor
- The report and authorization to proceed with the thesis defense from the thesis supervisor(s) and the tutor

The CAPD must validate the formal quality of the thesis to authorize its defense. If a thesis does not meet the formal quality requirements of the doctoral program, it is returned to the student with a report specifying the issues to be resolved. Once the thesis has been modified in line with the comments provided in the report, the CAPD validates the thesis based on internationally recognized indicators of scientific quality in the field of the doctoral program. Two criteria are used to assess evidence of scientific quality:

On the one hand, the evaluation by two people who are experts in the subject of the thesis and external to the PD and the universities promoting the PD. The CAPD will be responsible for selecting these people. The two experts in the subject of the thesis will have a limit of one month to carry out the evaluation. After receiving the reports, the

CAPD will give the student a maximum of three months to respond and/or include modifications to the thesis in accordance with the content of the evaluation reports before deposit.

On the other hand, two publications corresponding to one or some of the following categories:

- Articles published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals
- Chapters of books indexed in Scopus or Web of Science bibliographic databases.
- Papers or presentations delivered at scientific conferences with a full-text review process

### **6.3. Composition of the thesis examination committee**

In the authorization to proceed with the thesis defense, the CAPD formulates a prioritized proposal to the Doctoral Studies Committee of five or seven members to form the thesis examination committee. Three or five of these individuals act as members, and the other two as substitutes:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Member or members
- Substitutes

Members of the examination committee must meet the following requirements:

- They must be Ph.D. holders who are recognized in their field and have a six-yearly increment or equivalent in effect.
- They must not be co-authors of publications derived from the thesis.
- The thesis supervisor, co-supervisor, and tutor may not be examination committee members.
- Most members must be external to the universities participating in the doctoral program.
- All members of the examination committee must provide a curriculum vitae that demonstrates their suitability.
- If the student has applied for an International Doctorate mention, the regulations in force at each university must be observed.

University academic staff who meet the requirements may serve on thesis examination committees, even if they are on leave or retired.

### **6.4. Thesis deposit**

Once a student has received authorisation to move forward with the final stages of the thesis process, they must enrol for the thesis deposit in accordance with the relevant regulations of the university where they are enrolled.



The CAPD sends the management unit its proposal for the examination committee and the curricula vitae of the required members in electronic format. The CAPD must also inform the academic staff members of the units responsible for the programme that the thesis has been deposited.

## **6.5. Thesis presentation and defense**

The presentation and defense of the thesis are governed by the university's regulations where the student is enrolled. The thesis defense must take place within six months of the date of its authorization.

## **6.6. Submission of article-based theses**

Article-based theses must satisfy the following requirements:

- The thesis must consist of at least three articles that have been published or accepted for publication in leading journals in the field that are indexed in the Journal Citation Reports (Clarivate Analytics) or SCImago (SCImago Lab).
- All of the articles must present a result or contribution of the doctoral thesis.
- Research presented as part of the thesis may not be presented again as an integral part of other theses.
- The articles must have been written after the start of the doctoral study period.
- The thesis submitted must contain, in addition to copies of the research papers published, an introduction that explains the subject of the thesis, a summary of the results, a discussion of the results, and the conclusions.

## **7. Final provisions**

As the highest authority responsible for the doctoral programme, the CAPD must decide on any situation not explicitly provided for in these regulations.

These regulations come into force on the day following their adoption by the CAPD.