

IE UNIVERSITY

**DOCTORAL PROGRAMS: REGULATIONS FOR
PREPARATION AND DEFENSE OF DOCTORAL
THESES**

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REGULATIONS FOR THE PREPARATION AND DEFENSE OF DOCTORAL THESES

PREAMBLE

Royal Decree 99/2011 of January 28, which regulates official doctoral programs determines the rules for university academic organization regarding these programs.

In order to develop the provisions of these regulations for IE University, the following rules are adopted:

Article 1. “Doctoral studies”

1.1. Doctoral studies conclude with the preparation and defense of a doctoral thesis. This consists of an original research project prepared by a doctoral student in any field of knowledge within the University’s doctoral program, following the format determined by the Academic Committee for Doctoral Programs.

1.2. Successful completion of doctoral studies gives one the right to obtain the official degree of “doctor.”

1.3. The Academic Committee will be responsible for the organization, design and coordination of the doctoral programs. Each program will have a coordinator, appointed by the Rector, who has overseen at least two doctoral theses and has at least two periods of recognized research activity in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1086/1989, of August 28 on remuneration of university faculty.

1.4. Doctoral theses written in a language other than Spanish, which must be authorized by the Academic Committee, must contain a sufficient section in Spanish that will be part of the printed doctoral thesis itself, where the following must be included:

- Research objectives
- Approach and methodology
- Original contributions
- Conclusions and, when appropriate, future lines of research

1.5. In the event that the doctoral student wishes to include the mention “international” in front of their degree of “doctor,” they must present the thesis in an unofficial language in Spain (except when the stays, reports and experts take place in or come from a Spanish-speaking country). Additionally, they must prove the following in the Doctoral Student Activities Document:

- a) Having completed a minimum stay of three months outside of Spain, studying or researching at a higher education institution or prestigious research center. These activities must have been endorsed by their director and authorized by the Academic Committee.
- b) Having reports that support the doctoral thesis from at least one expert doctor belonging to a non-Spanish higher education institution or prestigious research center.

1.6. In the event that the doctoral student wishes to include the mention of Industrial Doctorate, the following aspects should be accredited:

- a) The existence of a work or commercial contract between the doctoral student and a company from the private or public sector or a public administration entity.
- b) The doctoral student should participate in an industrial research or experimental development project, which will take place in a company or a public administration entity that offers this opportunity. The project cannot be conducted at a university. The industrial research or

experimental development project in which the doctoral student participates must have a direct link with the thesis they are writing. This direct link will be accredited with a report, which will have to be approved by the University.

If the industrial research or experimental development project is completed collaboratively involving the University and the company or the public administration entity where the doctoral student is developing the project, a framework agreement will be signed between the parties. This agreement will indicate the obligations of the University, those of the company or the public administration entity, as well as the selection procedure of doctoral students.

The doctoral student will have a thesis tutor designated by the University and an equivalent person designated by the company or a public administration entity, who could be, if applicable, the Director of the thesis.

Article 2. *“Research plan: project and development of the doctoral thesis”*

2.1. Before the end of the doctoral student’s first year in the program, they will prepare a research plan presenting their doctoral thesis project. The plan will include the proposed methodology and objectives, the means and time needed to achieve them, and the language in which the thesis will be written, according to the conditions of the doctoral program.

2.2. The research plan must be endorsed by the Director of the Doctoral Thesis and the student’s tutor (if different from the director). It should also be approved by the Academic Committee, which will incorporate it into the Doctoral Student Activities Document.

2.3. The Academic Committee will annually evaluate the Doctoral Student Activities Document, the thesis research plan and the development status of the thesis. For this purpose, the tutor and the director of the thesis will both issue reports. If the tutor and the director are the same person, there shall only be one report.

2.4. A positive evaluation by the Academic Committee will be required to continue in the program. In the event of a negative evaluation—which will be duly motivated—the doctoral student will need to draft a new research plan to be evaluated again within six months. In the event of a subsequent negative evaluation, the doctoral student will be permanently withdrawn from the program.

Article 3. *“Deadline for submitting the doctoral thesis”*

3.1. The doctoral student may enroll full-time or part-time in the doctoral program if authorized by the Academic Committee. For part-time doctoral students, work, family and personal factors will be taken into account.

3.2. The Academic Committee may also authorize temporary withdrawals from the program, for which a justified request must be submitted for evaluation by the Academic Committee.

3.3. Full-time students have three years to present their thesis, starting as soon as they are admitted to the program. For part-time students, the final deadline is five years from being admitted to the program.

3.4. If the doctoral student has requested an extension to prepare their thesis, the thesis director’s status report—either in the student’s third year since admission or the fifth year for part-time students—must assess the consistency of the thesis work and inform the Academic Committee about the extension request.

3.5. The Academic Committee should decide if a one-year extension can be granted when evaluating the thesis director's status report on the progress of the doctoral thesis. Finalized the one-year extension, the doctoral student can obtain an additional year only under exceptional circumstances. In the case of part-time studies, the Academic Committee may authorize a two-year extension. Under exceptional circumstances, this can be extended for an additional year.

Article 4. *“Request for evaluation and defense of the thesis”*

4.1. Once the doctoral thesis is prepared, the doctoral student will present the University Registrar with a request for evaluation and defense of the thesis, in order to begin the procedures for its defense and evaluation. This should be accompanied by a favorable report from the thesis director(s), a proposal for composition of the Evaluation Committee and one digital copy of the thesis. It should also indicate if the student is opting for the mention of “International Doctor.”

4.2. The University Registrar will then register the entry of the thesis and immediately open a public hearing period of at least one month so that any doctor can examine the thesis, and, where appropriate, direct any observations or concerns regarding its content to the Academic Committee. The University Registrar will guarantee maximum institutional dissemination of the public hearing.

4.3. In order to guarantee the quality of doctoral theses, the University Registrar will also inform the Academic Committee that it may request two specialists to prepare individual reports on the presented projects, particularly on whether they are well suited for defense at the University. These specialists may be part of the thesis Evaluation Committee.

Article 5. *“Appointing the Evaluation Committee and assembling the defense”*

5.1. The Academic Committee will appoint the Thesis Evaluation Committee in accordance with institutional criteria and guidelines, most of whom will be external to IE University and unrelated to the participating doctoral program faculty. It will be comprised of three doctors and one substitute doctor, Spanish or otherwise, with accredited research experience. The Academic Committee will designate a President and Secretary of the Evaluation Committee among the doctors.

5.2. The thesis director or directors (if applicable) and tutor will not be part of the Evaluation Committee.

5.3. In the event that the doctoral thesis opts for the mention of “International Doctor,” at least one expert with a doctorate—belonging to a non-Spanish higher education institution or prestigious research center—must be part of the Evaluation Committee. This person should be different from the one in charge of the student's time abroad.

5.4. Once the members of the Evaluation Committee have been appointed, the University Registrar will provide each member with the thesis defense date, time and place, as well as:

- A copy of the thesis.
- The Doctoral Student Activities Document, with the training activities carried out by the student.
- Individual forms to propose possible recognitions. This form will contain a grade between 0 and 10 points for the purposes of meeting the extraordinary doctorate awards, as well as a favorable or unfavorable vote for the thesis qualification to obtain a “cum laude” recognition.

5.5. Defense of the thesis must be carried out within 60 days of its registration. In any case, there must be at least 15 calendar days between the date of the defense call and the act of defense.

5.6. The defense call will be made public on the University's official notice boards.

5.7. The three appointed members must be present in the Evaluation Committee as well as at the defense itself. In the event that a member of the Evaluation Committee resigns with justified cause, the President of the Academic Committee shall call on the substitute.

5.8. From the moment of their appointment, the members of the Evaluation Committee have one month to send the Academic Committee an individual and detailed report assessing the thesis. The report should also indicate whether the defense should be approved and if the report is favourable, the acceptance to be part of said Committee.

5.9. If after the one-month period, the Academic Committee has not received some of the reports referred to in the previous paragraph, the President of the Academic Committee will call on the substitute member. They will send them the student's doctoral thesis and curriculum vitae and grant them a 15-day period to issue an individual and detailed report, and, where appropriate, acceptance to join the committee.

Article 6. *"Authorizing the defense"*

6.1. Considering the documentation received and the reports issued by the external evaluators, the Academic Committee will decide whether to admit the doctoral thesis for processing or to withdraw it. In the latter case, the Academic Committee will communicate this decision in writing to the doctoral student and thesis director. It will include a reasoned report justifying the decision and, as much as possible, the appropriate channel to correct the observed flaws before making a new presentation request.

Article 7. *"Defending the doctoral thesis"*

7.1. The defense of the doctoral thesis will take place in a public session during the academic year. The doctoral student will present the work they've carried out, including the methodology, content and conclusions, with a special mention of their original contributions. Prior to the defense, the President of the Evaluation Committee will indicate the amount of time available for the presentation.

7.2. The Evaluation Committee members will pose any considerations and questions that they deem appropriate to the doctoral student, who must answer them.

7.3. In addition, any doctors at the event can formulate questions in the manner indicated by the President of the Evaluation Committee that the doctoral student must also answer. The thesis director may also intervene.

7.4. After the defense, the Evaluation Committee will issue its evaluation of the thesis through a collective report. It will take into account the work carried out, the content, methodology and the results as a scientific work. The Doctoral Student Activities Document and the defense itself will also be considered. The Evaluation Committee will also prepare a qualification certificate that will grant a global grade of: fail, pass, good, or excellent, resolving any possible discrepancies.

7.5. Each Evaluation Committee member will also provide the Secretary with a sealed envelope containing their own private report regarding the recognitions that the thesis may be eligible for.

7.6. The Evaluation Committee Secretary will send the overall thesis qualification certificate, collective report and sealed envelopes with the individual reports to the University Registrar, who will have 5 working days to open them. In the event of an overall "excellent" grade and unanimous favorable votes for a "cum laude" recognition, such mention will be granted by the Evaluation Committee. This will be communicated to the doctoral student, thesis director, Academic Committee and doctoral administrative service, indicating that the student's qualification be modified in the corresponding records to include this mention.

7.7. The President of the Academic Committee will incorporate the evaluation report, qualification and, where appropriate, “cum laude” mention to the Doctoral Student Activities Document, which will close this record.

Article 8. *“Archiving the doctoral theses”*

8.1. The Evaluation Committee Secretary will be in charge of delivering all documentation generated by the defense to the University Registrar. Within 30 days, the University Registrar will send the corresponding thesis file to the higher education administration established by regulation.

8.2. Once the doctoral thesis has been approved, the Academic Committee will send a copy of the thesis to the University’s library for consultation.

Article 9. *“Issuing the degree of doctor”*

9.1. The degree of “doctor” will be issued in the King’s name by the University Rector after verifying compliance with the general regulations by which the doctoral student began their studies and with these regulations.

9.2. The degree of “doctor” will include the mention “doctor by IE University” and, where appropriate, “International Doctorate” or “Industrial Doctorate”.

First final provision. *“Legislative power”*

These Regulations are adopted in accordance with the provisions of Article 9 of the IE University Organization and Operation Regulations, approved by Agreement 131/2009 of December 10th of the Junta de Castilla y León.

Second final provision. *“Right to policy development”*

After deliberating with the Rector’s Committee, the Rector is empowered to adopt the rules and provisions when implementing and developing these regulations. The Rector may also proceed with their interpretation and partial revision of the provisions together with the Academic Committee.

Third final provision. *“Modifications”*

The Academic Committee may propose modifications to these regulations, which will be reviewed by the Rector. After deliberating with the Rector’s Committee, the Rector may proceed to adopt the modifications by virtue of the competence qualification granted by the Steering Committee.

Fourth final provision. *“Implementation and publication”*

The modifications of these regulations will take effect the day they are approved by the Rector following the favorable opinion by the Rector’s Committee and will be applied immediately. Its content will be published immediately and fully disseminated to the University community, through the usual media and communication channels, in both Spanish and English. The original Spanish text is the only authentic and valid version of these regulations for legal purposes.