

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



<b>Version Information:</b>			
<b>Description</b>	<b>Person in charge</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>
Version approved by the CTEyA	University Evaluation and Accreditation Area	21/07/2022	V04
Version approved by the CTEyA	University Evaluation and Accreditation Area	22/06/2017	V03
	University Evaluation and Accreditation Area	09/11/2012	V02
	University Evaluation and Accreditation Area	27/03/2012	V01



## Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	4
<b>2. EVALUATION REPORTS</b> .....	6
<b>3. Assessment dimensions, criteria and guidelines for doctoral programmes.</b> .....	8
<b>Criterion I. Description of the doctoral programme [ESG 1.2]</b> .....	9
<b>Criterion II. Competences (see Annex I. Competences) [ESG 1.2]</b> .....	13
<b>Criterion III. Access and admission of doctoral students and doctoral candidates [ESG 1.4]</b> .....	15
<b>Criterion IV. Training activities [ESG 1.3]</b> .....	18
<b>Criterion V. Programme organisation [ESG 1.3]</b> .....	21
<b>Criterion VI. Human Resources [ESG 1.5]</b> .....	24
<b>Criterion VII. Material and support resources available to doctoral students [ESG 1.6]</b> .....	27
<b>Criterion VIII. Review, improvement and results of the doctoral programme [ESG 1.1/1.7/1.8/1.9/1.10]</b> .....	29
<b>4. Evaluation Committees: Composition and Functions.</b> .....	32
<b>5. Regulations</b> .....	33
<b>6. Changes made in this latest version</b> .....	33
<b>Annex I. Competences to be acquired by doctoral students in accordance with Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January 2011, regulating official doctoral studies.</b> .....	33
<b>Annex 2. Human resources of the doctoral programme under evaluation</b> .....	35



## 1. Introduction

Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January 2011, regulates official doctoral studies and provides a framework for their structure. It adapts to the guidelines of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the revised Lisbon agenda. Additionally, it considers the construction of the European Research Area (ERA) and the objectives established in the 2007 Green Paper.

From a European perspective, the Ministries responsible for higher education have made significant strides in developing the key characteristics of a doctoral programme in the context of the European Higher Education and Research Area, as highlighted in the Berlin Communiqué of 2003 and the Leuven Communiqué of 2009. Similarly, the numerous meetings and activities conducted by the European University Association (EUA) have resulted in a range of research and proposals for the enhancement of doctorate programmes.

The Berlin Communiqué (2003) highlights, among other actions, the significance of the doctorate in the connection between the EHEA and the ERA. The establishment of the doctorate as a third cycle is evident in the pilot project "Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society" endorsed by the European University Association (EUA). This project serves as a foundation for the Bergen Conference (2005) Communiqué, which definitively establishes the doctorate as a third cycle of European studies, distinct from the Master's degree. In this statement, the ministries in charge of higher education in Europe emphasise the significance of university education in progressing R&D&I and the role of research in aiding teaching; all with the aim of enhancing the economic and cultural growth of our society, as well as, crucially, safeguarding its function as an agent of social unity. The primary aspect of doctoral training is the progress of scientific understanding via "original research". Enrolments in the third cycle are considered as trainee researchers, creating a connection between doctoral training, research careers, and knowledge transfer to society within the Bologna Process. Another significant resource is the Salzburg seminar (2005), which put forward ten suggestions or general principles for the advancement of doctoral programmes in different countries.

The rights of doctoral students as researchers in training are specified in the European Charter for Researchers and the March 2005 Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, both of which are widely recognised by European universities.

Spain, as an active member in the creation and development of the European Knowledge Area, has implemented legislative reforms that have allowed for the consolidation of a teaching programme aligning with the principles of the EHEA. Similarly, developments have been made in governing the position of research trainees through the approval of the Statute of pre-doctoral research staff in training by Royal Decree 103/2019 of 1 March.<sup>1</sup>

Royal Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, outlines the structure of higher education and quality assurance procedures in universities. According to this decree, syllabuses leading to recognised university degrees must be reviewed by the Council of Universities and approved for implementation by the relevant Autonomous Community. The responsibility of evaluating the syllabuses lies with external assessment bodies of the Autonomous Communities, who must meet the quality criteria and standards set by the

---

<sup>1</sup><https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2019-3700>.



European Commission.<sup>2</sup> The doctoral programmes' degree titles must be recorded in the Register of Universities, Centres and Degrees (RUCT) in accordance with Royal Decree 1509/2008 of 12 September.

**In line with the aforementioned Royal Decree, the Directorate of Evaluation and Accreditation of the Andalusian Knowledge Agency (DEVA-AAC) and corresponding evaluation agencies have developed an Evaluation Protocol for the validation of official PhD degrees. This protocol is available for review on the agency's website ([www.deva.aac.es](http://www.deva.aac.es)).** The DEVA-AAC has created this guide to support universities in designing study plans for the verification of official doctoral programmes. The guide is drafted in accordance with Royal Decree 822/2021 of 28 September, Royal Decree 99/2011 of 28 January, and the *Protocol for the evaluation of official doctoral programmes (REACU, 03/02/2022)* to ensure objectivity and precision.<sup>3</sup> This Guide is aligned with the Ministry's IT tool for universities to include information regarding the verification report of doctoral programmes and their potential revisions.

The indications provided in this document therefore refer to official university doctoral degrees.

The aim of this Guide is to assist universities in composing proposals for official degree programmes and providing the necessary information for the verification of official doctoral degrees. Furthermore, it encourages the inclusivity of elements that enhance official degree projects, streamline their evaluation, and enable their effective execution.

Moreover, to aid individuals collaborating with DEVA during the evaluation process of official university degree verification, the various components to be evaluated regarding the university's proposal are outlined in each corresponding section. The evaluation of each aspect will be based on a recognised assessment scale, which assessors will use to substantiate their evaluations in light of the degree proposal presented by universities. The rating scale has four categories: satisfactory, sufficient yet improvable, insufficient, and not applicable.

General consideration should be given during the evaluation of every doctoral degree to ensure the promotion and respect of fundamental human rights and equality, while also fostering democratic values and a culture of peace. In accordance with article 4 of Royal Decree 822/2021, the general principles that must inspire the curricula of official university degrees, including doctoral programmes, are as follows:

- the academic rigour of the training project involved in a university education;
- the significance for the generalist or specialist nature of the educational cycles where teaching occurs;
- the alignment of the educational objectives of the curriculum, pursued core competencies and established systems for evaluating student learning;
- its social comprehensibility.

**Doctoral programmes ought to be founded on democratic principles and values as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**

---

<sup>2</sup>By successfully completing an external evaluation, institutions are able to attain full membership status with the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and registration on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR).

<sup>3</sup> [http://deva.aac.es/include/files/universidades/verificacion/2022-02-03\\_REACU-ProtocoloEvaluaci%C3%B3n-VerificacionModificacionDoctorado.pdf](http://deva.aac.es/include/files/universidades/verificacion/2022-02-03_REACU-ProtocoloEvaluaci%C3%B3n-VerificacionModificacionDoctorado.pdf)



## 2. EVALUATION REPORTS

Article 26 of Royal Decree 822/2021 establishes the "Procedure for the verification of syllabuses for official degree courses" and the procedure for the substantial modification of official degrees is regulated in articles 32 and 33. This section develops the DEVA-AAC's assessment process, which applies to both verification and substantial modification processes.

1. The university requests the verification of an official degree from the Council of Universities through the unit of the General Secretariat for Universities responsible for processing this procedure.

*"The Autonomous Communities, in the exercise of their powers over university programming and the organisation of the map of official degrees in their territorial area, shall draw up a mandatory report on the academic and social need and viability of the implementation of the official university degree prior to the start of the verification procedure. In the event of a favourable report, the university may initiate the procedure for the verification of the degree".*

2. If the documentation needs to be corrected, the university will have a period of 10 working days. Once this period of time has elapsed, and the documentation has been corrected, the unit of the General Secretariat for Universities will have a maximum of 3 working days to send the syllabus report to the corresponding quality agency. For institutions with institutional accreditation, the syllabus report shall be sent simultaneously to the processing unit of the General Secretariat for Universities and to the agency in charge of evaluation. Failure to respond to the correction will result in the application being considered to be withdrawn.

3. Once the application has been received from the processing body, the DEVA will draw up a quality assessment report on the official university degree syllabus, in accordance with the specific protocols established by the REACU, this verification guide and the corresponding regulations. The report will be mandatory and carried out by the corresponding commissions appointed by DEVA for this purpose, as foreseen.

4. DEVA will assign the files received to the corresponding branch committees, which will propose a provisional report on the quality assessment of the syllabus report. The interim report shall be justified and may be favourable with conditions or unfavourable, with issues to be amended with the aim of reaching a final proposal for a favourable report. The interim report shall be sent to the university applying for the degree so that, within 15 working days of its receipt, it may make any corrections and modify any issues that have been requested in the report, or present any allegations it deems appropriate.

5. At the end of the period for the submission of corrections and allegations, DEVA will assess these allegations and issue a final assessment report, which will be favourable or unfavourable. This report shall be sent to the applicant university, to the Council of Universities, to the competent body of the Autonomous Community and to the Ministry of Universities. Even in the event of a favourable final report, it may incorporate some relevant aspects that administrations, universities and agencies will have to follow up on.

6. In accordance with article 12 of the Regulations of the Council of Universities, approved by Royal Decree 1677/2009, of 13 November, the Verification and Accreditation Committee of the Council of Universities, having received the final favourable report issued by the quality agency, will accredit that the proposed name of the degree is coherent with the syllabus and complies with the provisions of the regulations in force, issuing the resolution of positive verification of the degree. In the event



that the report is unfavourable, the Verification and Accreditation Committee of the Council of Universities will issue a negative verification outcome.

7. The syllabus verification procedure, which will culminate with the notification to the applicant university of the decision of the Council of Universities on the verification of the syllabus, must not last longer than six months (not including the possible complaints procedure). In the case of degrees proposed in institutions with institutional accreditation, this period shall not exceed four months. All public administrations shall ensure compliance with these maximum deadlines, after which the application shall be deemed to have been accepted and the study plan verified.

8. Once the decision has been issued, the Council of Universities shall notify the applicant university within a maximum period of 3 working days, and shall also notify the Autonomous Community or Autonomous Communities where these universities are located, the corresponding quality agency and the Ministry of Universities.

9. Once the applicant university has received notification from the Council of Universities, it may request a review of the verification resolution before the Presidency of the Council of Universities, for which it will have 10 working days from the moment of receipt of the notification. If the complaint is admitted for processing, it must be assessed by the University Council's Commission for Complaints on the Verification and Accreditation of Study Plans, in accordance with the provisions of Article 13 of the Regulations of the University Council. The committee shall be composed of academic and professional experts who have not been involved in the evaluation procedure so far. This committee shall assess the verification report, taking into account only the syllabus report submitted by the university. In the event that it has the necessary evidence to do so, the committee shall draw up a proposal for a resolution to the Standing Committee of the Council of Universities. In this case, the duration of the review procedure may not exceed one month from the lodging of the complaint. The committee may, if it deems it necessary, refer the dossier to the quality agency that issued the report for review in the light of the aspects detected that merit a new assessment.

If a complaint is received, DEVA will act in accordance with the provisions of the document:

<http://deva.aac.es/include/files/deva/normativa/protocolos/ProcedimientoRecursosUniversidades.pdf>

Once the quality agency's report has been received, the commission will draw up a resolution proposal that will be sent to the Standing Committee of the Council of Universities for its final decision. In this case, the duration of the entire review procedure may not exceed three months from the Presidency of the Council of Universities' receipt of the university's complaint. The corresponding decision will put an end to administrative proceedings in accordance with the provisions of article 114.1b) of Law 39/2015, of 1 October. If the time limits foreseen have elapsed without the corresponding decision on the appeal having been issued, the appeal may be understood to have been rejected. The Council of Universities shall notify the applicant university of the final decision, and shall also notify the Autonomous Community and the quality agency involved, and the Ministry of Universities.

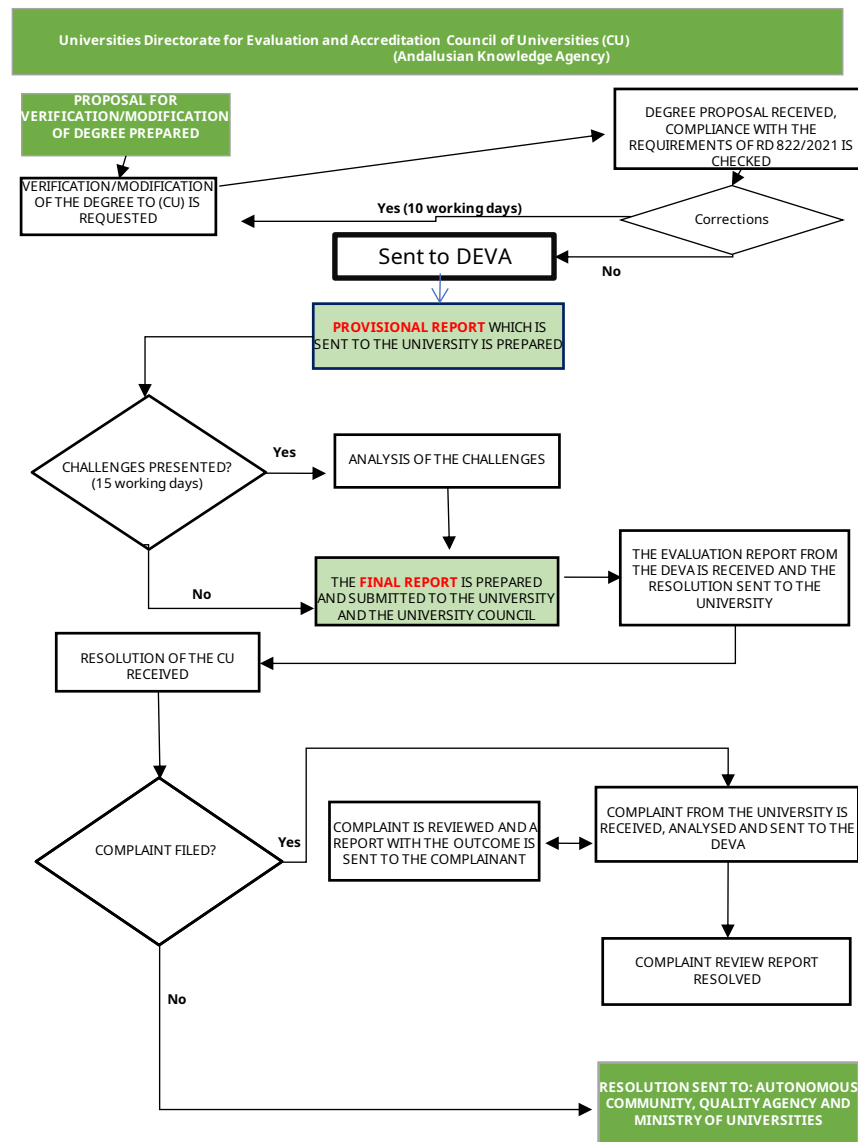


Figure 1. Procedure for the evaluation of official university degrees

### 3. Assessment dimensions, criteria and guidelines for doctoral programmes.

The guide is structured into eight criteria to be assessed, each criterion includes:

- the guidelines laid out in Annexes I and II of RD 99/2011
- outline the necessary information for each relevant section in the proposal's preparation, as well as the criteria to be assessed by the committees. These items may serve as a reference for those responsible for preparing proposals for doctoral programmes regarding the information content of the report. In the same way, the evaluation committee will take as a reference the information proposed to the universities for the elaboration of the proposals, so that they can justify their evaluations.





## Criterion I. Description of the doctoral programme [ESG 1.2]

[1] Doctoral programmes must include key details such as the name, participating institutions (with at least one coordinating university), collaborating institutions, and whether the programme is part of a doctoral school. The presence of international networks or agreements should also be noted.

Things to make sure of:

- The name of the doctoral programme must align with the proposed research directions.
- The involvement of further institutions in the programme.
- The incorporation of the programme into the university's R&D&I strategy or, when applicable, that of other institutions. This will be evident in their enrolment in a doctoral programme, whether it is offered by the university, an inter-university programme, or one in collaboration with external organisations and institutions.
- The presence of global networks or agreements.

The official name of the doctoral programme must align with its content, discipline, proposed research lines, and relevant names in national and international contexts. It should also avoid creating errors related to its academic level. The rationale behind the suggested doctoral programme and its contextual backgrounds (social, scientific, etc.) should be outlined.

The presented programme must encompass a detailed overview of the regulated or agreement-based collaborations established with other universities, national, and international organisations and institutions.

These references will be taken into consideration during the evaluation of the various sections of the doctoral programme proposal.

### 1.1. Basic data

#### Title of the doctoral programme

The title of the doctoral programme should align with the research areas proposed in the programme<sup>4</sup> and should not cause misunderstandings regarding its academic level.

The name of the programme shall be: **Doctoral Programme in T offered by University U**, where T refers to the concise programme name for the relevant field and subject, and U denotes the name of the responsible university.

The titling of doctoral degrees, as outlined in RD 99/2011, shall conform to the specifications set forth by Royal Decree 1002/2010, of 5 August, regarding the conferment of recognised university degrees<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> The research topics will feature in section 6. Human Resources.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2010-12621>



The title "International Doctor" may be used before the title of Doctor if the regulatory regulations are met for this purpose.

The doctorate programme's name must be in Spanish. If the course is taught in another language, a Spanish translation will also be provided.

ISCED1 and ISCED2 Codes must be identified: These codes identify the knowledge areas for grouping a given title. Information on these codes can be found at: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Pages/default.aspx>.

### **Joint Degrees:**

If multiple universities collaborate to create and develop a doctoral programme, they must jointly submit a single application for verification. The application must include the proposal and the corresponding agreement, which should be in force and signed by all participating universities.

It must clearly state:

- The university or universities responsible for storing the doctoral student's records, issuing the degree, and detailing the registration process.
- the procedure for modification or termination of the doctoral programme must be outlined,
- and the duties of each of the involved universities within the consortium.

A description of the agreement's objectives and the mechanisms for facilitating coordination, as well as mobility (if applicable), should be included, along with details of the quality assurance system adopted for the doctoral programme. This system might be that of one of the participating universities, or it may be designed specifically, etc.

In the case of agreements with foreign universities<sup>6</sup>, a certificate issued by the competent authority or accrediting body must accompany the agreement to verify the official or accredited status of the foreign university or universities in question. In all circumstances, the Spanish university will hold the records of the degrees it awards.

In the event of establishing a joint doctoral programme with a foreign university, it is recommended to adhere to the guidelines provided by the European University Association (<http://www.eua.be/>) and the European Consortium for Accreditation (<http://www.eacaconsortium.net>) regarding the organisation of joint doctoral programmes (Joint Programmes).

In the case of joint doctorate programmes, it is important to note that the university initiating the programme is responsible for requesting any necessary modifications resulting from its implementation and for preparing and submitting information for the monitoring and renewal of the accreditation.

---

<sup>6</sup>If the foreign university is not listed in the application, an incident must be submitted to the RUCT section "Related to the data included in the RUCT application" asking for the university to be included by the Ministry of Education.



## 1.2. Applicant university, responsible centre, and departments/institutes in charge of the courses.

### New places offered

Once the applicant university has been identified, the centre(s) for teaching the doctoral programme should be chosen. Where appropriate, each of the centres indicated must be completed:

- An estimate of the maximum **number of new positions** to be offered during the initial two years of the programme's implementation.

If there are any **part-time or full-time student positions** on offer, the overall cost of these must be specified. Indicating the breakdown of places in the section "context" or "circumstances surrounding the doctoral programme", based on dedication.

The institutions permitted to offer authorised doctoral programmes are referred to as doctoral schools, as governed by Article 9 of the Royal Decree 99/2011. These centres, along with the others, must be registered with the RUCT. Doctoral schools can be established by a sole university or in collaboration with other universities, organisations, centres, institutions, or entities conducting R&D&I activities, irrespective of being public or private, national or international.

The availability of places will be considered when evaluating the adequacy and appropriateness of the human and material resources at hand for the doctoral programme, particularly for newly established programmes.

### Justification

The justification for the doctoral programme proposal must align with the context, tradition, and global degree offerings while considering the potential of the proposing university or universities.

Evidence of the degree's academic, scientific, or professional significance and relevance should be outlined. For example:

- **The university has prior experience in providing degrees with comparable features**, regardless of whether the proposition arises from transforming a doctorate with a Quality Mention [Mención de Calidad] or possesses a Mention of Excellence [Mención de Excelencia].
- **Forecasting the demand for the doctorate degree** by referring to data and studies regarding its potential interest to society.
- **Relation of the proposal to the R&D&I situation of the scientific-professional sector:** research groups, projects, and more.
- **Brief reference to the correspondence of the proposed Doctorate with external** national and international **references** that support the proposal. The institution should compare its doctoral programmes with similar national and foreign programmes, which can act as a guarantee. Consultations with external researchers and professors, or reference documents from other institutions, can be cited for additional insight., etc...
- **Integration or not of the doctoral programme within a network or Doctoral School.** Where appropriate, the report should contain a section referring to:
  - Its R&D&I strategy, linked to the university or institutions involved.



- Field of study and degrees available.
- Academic and research resources should facilitate the evaluation of leadership and an adequate critical mass within the scholars' field of expertise.
- Human resources for administration and services equipped with proficient programme management skills.

A link must be provided to a web address where it can be evaluated:

- The Management Committee oversees the organisation and management of the School, including its composition. This committee includes the director of the School, coordinators of doctoral programmes, and representatives from collaborating entities.
- The forthcoming regulations shall define the rights and obligations of doctoral students, their supervisors, and thesis directors, as well as the structure and responsibilities of the academic committees overseeing their programmes. The regulations align with the guidelines set forth in the Statute of the University Student<sup>7</sup>, approved by Royal Decree 1791/2010, of 30 December.
- The code of good practice adopted by the School, to which all members must subscribe.

The information given in this section will be considered when evaluating the "Collaborations" section.

**Part-time and full-time doctoral students:** as previously stated, it is vital to detail the overall number of new doctoral positions available, as well as those specifically allocated for part-time doctoral students. Its relevance to the acquisition of the competences outlined in the doctoral programme needs to be justified.

## Collaborations

The doctoral programme must specify its collaborations with other national and international universities, organisations, or institutions. Both collaborations governed by a collaboration agreement, which must be included in the application in PDF format, as well as any other collaborations undertaken by the doctoral programme, will be outlined.

Those doctoral collaborations that are unregulated must maintain a direct relationship with the doctoral programme. These must be specified and completed in the "Other collaborations" section:

- The purpose of the partnership.
- The intensity of it.
- The universities or entities involved and their nature.
- Other data of interest for the assessment of the same.

If the doctoral programme collaborates with other universities, organisations, or national and international institutions, its viability will be evaluated:

- These partnerships are deemed necessary, fitting, and satisfactory for the advancement of the programme.
- Whether the integration of the doctoral programme into a network or international agreements is adequately justified.

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.boe.es/buscar/pdf/2010/BOE-A-2010-20147-consolidado.pdf>



- The doctoral programme demonstrates suitable internationalisation levels with respect to its subject matter and context.
- Whether the integration of the doctoral programme into a doctoral school is sufficiently justified.
- The doctoral programme is integrated into the R&D&I strategy of the university or other organisations and institutions.

If the doctoral programme does not collaborate with other national and international universities, organisations or institutions, we will assess whether this lack of collaboration is justified in relation to the programme's development.

## Criterion II. Competences(see Annex I. Competences)[ESG 1.2]

[2] Competences. Description of the competences to be acquired by the students at the end of the doctoral programme.

Things to make sure of:

- Whether the competencies that the doctoral student is expected to acquire are assessable and ensure at least the basic competencies, or are consistent with those required at the doctoral level.

It will be assessed whether the competences to be acquired by the doctoral candidates correspond to those required for the award of the doctoral degree and to the qualifications established in the European Higher Education Area (level 4 of the MECES)<sup>8</sup>. This should include a description of the competencies that doctoral students are expected to acquire during their studies and that are required for the award of the doctoral degree. These competences must be clearly and precisely formulated so that they are assessable, consistent with the level of the doctoral programme, and so that there is a guarantee that all doctoral students will have these competences.

Competence is defined as: "*the set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are acquired or developed through coordinated training experiences with the aim of achieving functional knowledge that provides an efficient response to a task or problem in daily and professional life that requires a teaching and learning process*".

On the basis of a flexible and dynamic organisational scheme, in accordance with the characteristics that define current doctoral programmes, all the actions planned throughout the research training programme<sup>9</sup> must be aimed at enabling doctoral students to acquire the different competences proposed in the verification report, specifying how these competences are to be acquired and assessed.

The aim of the degree must therefore be to enable doctoral students to acquire the attitudes, skills and knowledge associated with high-quality scientific research.

The competences can be classified according to the classification used in Art. 5. of RD99/2011, differentiated according to their orientation into:

---

<sup>8</sup> Royal Decree 1027/2011 of 15 July 2011 on the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES)

<sup>9</sup> If there are training activities, they will be detailed in Section 4: Training Activities



**Basic or general competences** are common to all doctoral programmes. They are essential and must be acquired by all doctoral students.

**Personal skills and abilities** are relevant to a variety of professional training areas, particularly those with a demand for creativity and innovation. They are common to all doctoral degrees. They must be achieved by all doctoral students.

If additional competences are to be included, there is a section entitled "**Other competences**". Here, for example, other competences specific to a field and aimed at achieving a specific graduate profile can be included. These competences must be limited to aspects of the training and to areas of knowledge that are very close to the degree.

**When defining new competences in addition to the above**, it is important to remember that the list of competences to be achieved (competence profile) must be formulated according to the following guidelines:

- It should contain an active verb. It should identify an action that produces a result that can be visualised and evaluated. Therefore, when defining competences, it is advisable to avoid using verbs such as know and understand and to use others such as describe, identify, recognise, classify, compare, evaluate or assess, formulate, argue, calculate, plan, etc.
- It should include a description of the purpose of the action and the context in which it will be carried out. The competence must be related to the field of the discipline in which its acquisition is of fundamental importance.

A long list of competences should be avoided, but rather a structured proposal of competences should be made, with the understanding that this list should serve as a guide to the competences that doctoral students should develop throughout their studies and that they should have achieved by the end of their studies.



## Criterion III. Access and admission of doctoral students and doctoral candidates

### [ESG 1.4]

[3] Access and admission of students.

- Pathways and requirements for student access and admission, and systems for making this information available to students prior to enrolment.
- Admission systems and procedures that are adapted to students with special educational needs as a result of a disability.
- Description of specific training complements, if any, adapted to the different entry profiles.
- If the doctoral programme is an outgrowth of an existing programme, the number of students admitted in the last 5 years, identifying those from other countries. Estimated enrolment and expected number of international students for new programmes.

Things to make sure of:

- Clarity and adequacy of procedures for admitting and selecting students.
- Adapt the specific training complements to the different entry profiles, where they exist.
- Number of students (national and foreign) enrolled in doctoral programmes in the last five years, or estimated number expected to enrol.

The doctoral programme must have an access and admissions system. This system must regulate and clearly inform students about the admission criteria. Where appropriate, the doctoral programme may have specific training complements that are in line with the entry profile and coherent with the scientific field of the proposed doctoral programme. All information concerning the doctoral programme must be made public, **accessible and available** to doctoral students prior to enrolling them.

### Preliminary Information Systems

The procedures for orientating and welcoming new doctoral students, which make it easier for them to integrate into the doctoral programme, should be indicated. Information on induction and orientation procedures should be explained so that the prospective student can plan their access to the programme and training, and at least these procedures should be specified:

- the dissemination channels that will be used to inform prospective doctoral candidates about the programme and the procedures for access to and admission to it,
- the actions to be taken and the bodies or units responsible for their implementation,
- the recommended profile of entry, which will be made available to the public before the start of the academic year. This recommended admission profile consists of a brief description of the skills, previous knowledge, types of qualifications, languages used in the training process and the level required in these languages, and so on, which would normally be regarded as appropriate for persons embarking on a doctorate.



## **Student access requirements and admission procedures**

The access conditions and admission criteria for doctoral students are set out in Articles 6 and 7 of Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January, which regulates official doctoral studies:

### **Requirements for access to the doctorate.**

In general, in order to be admitted to an official doctoral programme, it is necessary to hold an official Spanish Bachelor's degree or its equivalent and a Master's degree or its equivalent, provided that a minimum of 300 ECTS credits have been obtained in these two courses together. You can also apply if you are in any of the following circumstances:

- a) Hold an official university degree from Spain or from another country belonging to the European Higher Education Area that gives access to a Master's degree, in accordance with the provisions of art. 20 of Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, and have obtained a minimum of 300 ECTS credits in official university studies, of which at least 60 must be at Master's level.
- b) Hold an official Spanish degree of at least 300 ECTS credits, in accordance with Community legislation. Such graduates shall be required to complete the training complements referred to in Article 7.2 of this Regulation, unless the curriculum of the corresponding bachelor's degree includes research training credits equivalent in training value to the research credits of the master's degree.
- c) University graduates who, after having obtained a place in the relevant entrance examination for specialised training in health sciences, have successfully completed at least two years of training in a programme leading to the award of an official qualification in one of the specialisations in health sciences.
- d) Hold a degree obtained in accordance with foreign education systems, without the need for official statement of comparability, once the University has verified that it recognises a level of training equivalent to that of the official Spanish Master's degree and that it entitles the holder to access doctoral studies in the country in which it was obtained. This admission does not in any way imply the statement of comparability of the candidate's previous qualifications or their recognition for purposes other than access to doctoral studies.
- e) Hold another Spanish Doctorate obtained in accordance with the previous university regulations.
- f) Possess an official university degree that corresponds to level 3 of the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES), in accordance with the procedure established in Royal Decree 967/2014, of 21 November, which establishes the requirements and procedure for the official statement of comparability and declaration of equivalence of official university degrees and academic levels and for the validation of foreign higher education studies, as well as the procedure for establishing the correspondence of the official degrees of Architect, Engineer, Graduate, Technical Architect, Technical Engineer and Graduate with the levels of the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES).





Universities, through the Academic Committees, may establish additional requirements and criteria for the selection and admission of doctoral candidates to a particular doctoral programme. These requirements and criteria must be public, clear, in accordance with the regulations and sufficient to ensure that the training profile is achieved. Where appropriate, there shall be an indication of the body which will be in charge of the approval process and its composition. The criteria for assessing merit and the specific admission tests used in the selection system established in the doctoral programme must also be provided.

Admissions systems and procedures established by higher education institutions must include, for doctoral candidates with special educational needs arising from a disability, appropriate support and guidance services to assess the need for possible curricular adjustments, itineraries or alternative studies.

### **Part-time doctoral students**

If the programme provides for part-time doctoral studies, the admission criteria and procedures shall be indicated, as well as the conditions under which doctoral students may change to a part-time mode, if applicable.

Special provisions for part-time doctoral students should be reflected in the university's academic regulations (enrolment, assessment, etc.).

- **Rules of permanence:** Each university will provide a link to the terms and conditions that apply to doctoral programmes, including at least the definition of full-time and part-time doctoral students. These rules must be in force. They must be adapted to the applicable regulations.
- **Language(s) used throughout the training process:** The language(s) used throughout the training process shall be indicated. The level of proficiency required shall be specified in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

### **Doctoral students enrolled in doctoral programmes**

In order to ensure the continuity of the doctoral programme and the satisfactory use of available resources, the doctoral programme must have a **critical mass of doctoral students**.

A forecast of the total number of doctoral students to be enrolled in the first year and a forecast of the total number of doctoral students from other countries must be provided if the doctoral programme is completely new and does not result from the conversion or merging of other doctoral programmes.

If the doctorate is a transfer from a pre-existing doctorate, the applicant should select the pre-existing doctorate when applying, or if the doctorate is a multi-university doctorate, the applicant should select the doctorate at each of the participating universities. For each of the last 5 years, the total number of doctoral students admitted and the total number of doctoral students from other countries must also be provided.



## Training complements

The training complements must be appropriate, adapted to the entry profile of the doctoral students and coherent with the scientific field and objectives of the doctoral programme and the admission criteria.

Doctoral programmes may include specific training complements. These may be included in the doctoral programme or may be organised outside the programme. In the "Previous information system" section of the report, the profile(s) of students who will have to take these complementary courses must be described, as well as those who will have to take them and those who will be exempt from taking them, depending on their previous training.

If the doctoral programme includes in its requirements and access criteria the completion of complementary training, the institution must specify its design and characteristics (doctoral students to whom it is addressed, credits or equivalence in working hours, training activities, operational planning, supervision, etc.). Details of content, learning outcomes, learning activities, assessment arrangements and so on are provided.

Complementary training must be linked to research credits. They are compulsory for doctoral students entering the programme with only a 300 ECTS or higher degree that does not include research credits in its curriculum. Doctoral programmes should avoid including additional training for other doctoral students, as the corresponding activities would fall within the other training activities of the programme.

## Criterion IV. Training activities[ESG 1.3]

### [4] Training Activities

- Information on horizontal and specific training activities in the field covered by the programme.
- Teaching Planning.
- Control procedures.
- Mobility actions and criteria.

Things to make sure of:

- Organising and planning doctoral training, in particular disciplinary and methodological training (seminars, courses, workshops, etc.), cross-sector skills, training experiences (doctoral conferences, national or international congresses, etc.) throughout the programme.

The training activities included in a doctoral programme (seminars, courses, workshops, doctoral conferences, national and international congresses, etc.), while maintaining the necessary flexibility and dynamism in their organisation, must constitute a coherent training proposal that complements the preparation of the doctoral thesis. This proposal should take into account the commitment of doctoral students over a given period of time and address the needs of different training and access profiles in a coordinated manner.

All training activities included in the doctoral programme must be described by the university.



It should also include information on the mode of delivery and the duration of the activity in hours. An estimate in hours is required for the computer application for verification purposes. Taking into account the sequence foreseen in the development of the doctoral programme, the training activities must be ordered.

The training activities must demonstrate that the disciplinary aspects of training and competence development are appropriate. In other words, the design of these activities, together with the doctoral student's own research activities, must enable the doctoral student to acquire the competences described in the training profile. Furthermore, all activities must be up-to-date and in line with international standards.

Doctorates will include organisational aspects of research training which do not need to be structured in ECTS credits and will include both generic and specific training in the field of each doctorate. Basic information such as the following should be provided for each of the proposed doctoral training activities:

**Title of the training activity.** The name of the training activity shall be associated with an ordinal number that allows it to be identified.

**Duration.** The number of hours devoted to the training activity, including student participation, should be indicated.

**Detail and planning of the training activity.** Explain how the various transversal and specific training activities within the framework of the doctorate constitute a coherent and viable proposition (with regard to the commitment of the doctorate students) in order to guarantee the acquisition of the competences of the doctorate.

Briefly describe the **typology** and updated **content** of the proposed training activities:

- theoretical and scientific training,
- methodological training (scientific method, experimental, statistical, qualitative analysis, etc.), and
- applied, practical, technological and procedural training.

Its **scheduling** throughout the doctoral student's research training. The doctoral student must be able to achieve the training objectives through the scheduling and sequence of training activities. This planning should include both full-time and part-time students. This will ensure that the expected competences are acquired.

The learning outcomes that the doctoral student will achieve upon completion of the above training activities.

Language(s) in which they will be taught, indicating the level of proficiency required as documented in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Other clarifications as deemed appropriate.

**Control procedures.** Detailed procedures for monitoring the proposed training activities.



Royal Decree 99/2011 establishes that all training activities must be recorded in the doctoral student's activity document, which is the individualised record of the control of these activities. This document will be materialised in the appropriate support and will be regularly reviewed by the tutor and the supervisor of the thesis and evaluated by the academic committee responsible for the doctoral programme. The evaluation will be carried out on an annual basis.

**Mobility actions.** Mobility initiatives require suitable measures for planning, monitoring and evaluating, ensuring consistency with the programme objectives and planning.

The doctoral programme should outline the mobility actions and criteria that will be carried out, along with the programme's organisation to ensure doctoral students can acquire the necessary competencies. Consideration should be given, where applicable, to the part-time commitment of the doctorate student.

The IT application requires that mobility actions be specified for each training activity. However, it may be advisable to plan these mobility initiatives at the programme level instead of on an individual activity basis within the programme. For this reason, it is advised to register a training programme called "Mobility" and describe the relevant **actions, criteria and procedures** in detail, where applicable. This will ensure that the doctoral students achieve the required competencies. If this option is selected, the Mobility text box associated with each training activity in the software application will remain empty.



## Criterion V. Programme organisation[ESG 1.3]

[5] Organisation of the programme.

5.1 Thesis supervision.

- Description of the process for defining and evaluating actions to encourage multiple supervisions of doctoral theses.
  - List of planned activities to promote the supervision of doctoral theses and the availability of a best practices guide for their supervision.
  - List of planned activities to encourage multiple supervision in academically justified cases, such as co-directing theses with both experienced and new supervisors, co-supervising interdisciplinary and collaborative theses on an international level, and ensuring the involvement of international experts in monitoring committees, preliminary 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 tutor and supervisor of the doctoral thesis.
- Description of procedures for monitoring the activities of each doctoral student and verifying their data.
- Description of the procedure for the annual assessment of the research plan and the activity document of each doctoral student.
- Regulations governing the presentation and reading of doctoral theses.
- Forecast of doctoral students' visits to other national and international training centres, joint supervision, and European acknowledgements.

Things to make sure of:

- The suitability of the process for defining and evaluating the measures to promote supervisory pluralism and supervise doctoral theses and planned activities.
- The suitability of the outlined procedures in alignment with the programme's objectives.
- The presence of international experts in the monitoring commissions, preliminary reports and thesis tribunals.
- In the reaccreditation phase, we will review the estimates presented in this criterion and consider the justifications provided as well as the actions resulting from their monitoring.

RD 99/2011 outlines this section as "Programme Organisation"; however, the necessary data for this criterion pertains to supervising and monitoring doctoral students, rather than organising the programme's academic planning and training activities, which was covered in the previous section.

This section evaluates whether the protocols for overseeing the doctoral student and overseeing the doctoral dissertation are sufficient to guarantee that the doctoral student attains the competencies outlined in the programme.

### Thesis Supervision

The doctoral programme/university should define the activities aimed at promoting doctoral thesis supervision. The doctoral programme should possess an effective supervision and monitoring **manual** for training activities of doctoral students and their theses. The manual should be readily available to the public on the degree's website.



In cases where it is academically justified, it is important to provide details of the planned actions to encourage multiple supervision of doctoral theses. This may apply to theses with interdisciplinary themes or as part of programmes developed in collaboration with other national and foreign institutions. Additionally, co-direction of theses by a seasoned supervisor and a novice can also prove beneficial.

In addition to the current role of the doctoral thesis supervisor, Royal Decree 99/2011 mandates the appointment of a separate individual to supervise the doctoral student. As stated in the "Salzburg Principles," effective supervision of doctoral students is of utmost importance. Effective supervision requires collaborative efforts, not only from the primary supervisor but also involving the thesis supervisor, the academic committee, the doctoral student, the research group and the institution (doctoral school, centre, university, etc.). The **responsibilities** of these bodies should be written down and clearly detailed.

Developing the professional skills of their mentees is an institutional duty that can be fulfilled by offering relevant training or facilitating the sharing of experiences with others. The establishment of a supervision culture, shared among supervisors, thesis supervisors, and doctoral students, ought to be a primary focus of institutions in charge of doctoral programmes.

At the time of admission to the doctoral programme, the corresponding academic committee will assign a supervisor to each doctoral student to oversee their thesis. This opportunity is open to accredited researchers, whether Spanish or foreign, and regardless of the institution, centre or university at which they are based. A tutor with accredited research experience will be allocated to the doctoral student. The tutor will hold a Doctorate and will be affiliated with either the Entity or School responsible for coordinating the programme. The tutor will guarantee effective communication between the doctoral student and the Academic Committee. The person responsible for guardianship may or may not align with the individual overseeing the doctoral thesis.

If a thesis supervisor is not allocated at the time of admission, the Academic Committee is obligated to assign one within a maximum of three months following enrolment.

The presence of actions aimed at promoting thesis supervision should be assessed in the doctoral programme, along with the involvement of international experts in the monitoring commissions, previous report preparation, and doctoral thesis tribunals.

In the case of doctoral programmes that are a continuation of others implemented under the previous academic system, the institution should present proof of the attendance of international experts on the thesis tribunals, who have released reports before the thesis presentations or have participated in doctoral committees. For new programmes, the institution must specify how it intends to involve these specialists in the aforementioned activities.

### **Follow-up of the Doctoral Student**

The procedures for monitoring doctoral students during their training must align with the programme's objectives, adhere to current legislation, and enable students to develop the competencies outlined in the programme. These procedures should be clearly described by the doctoral programme.



The doctoral programme should have endorsed, revised, and disseminated all protocols with regards to the monitoring of the doctoral candidate's work.

As a minimum, the following procedures must be approved:

- The one used by the corresponding Academic Committee accountable for the doctoral programme to allocate the individual who will oversee and guide the doctoral student's dissertation, in addition to the procedure established by the aforementioned Committee for modifying this assignment, subsequent to hearing the doctoral student. The deadlines for allocating them must also be specified.
- The overall administrative process involves several key aspects, such as the activity document for the doctoral student, creation and delivery of the research plan, adherence to supervision requirements, addressing conflicts, and considerations surrounding intellectual and industrial property.
- The process used to oversee the activity record of every doctoral student and verify the accuracy of their data.
- The process for the yearly evaluation of the Research Plan and the recording of the activities of the doctoral student.
- The provision for doctoral students remains available at other national and international training centres, through co-tutelage arrangements, and European mentions.

The procedures outlined above should be followed in accordance with Article 11. In accordance with Royal Decree 99/2011 of 28 January, *supervision and monitoring of doctoral students*.

The university shall, as a minimum, provide the link to the website on which these procedures have been made public.

Universities must establish the supervision of doctoral students by means of a written commitment signed by the university, the doctoral student, the supervisor and the mentee in a specified manner. This commitment should be initialled as soon as possible after admission and, in addition to the reference to the above procedures, should include a procedure for the resolution of disputes, as well as aspects relating to intellectual or industrial property rights that may arise in the context of the doctoral programme. The institution shall provide the web link where the model commitment is published.

### **Rules for presenting and reading theses**

The regulations for the presentation and reading of doctoral theses, which must be public, up-to-date and in accordance with current legislation, must be provided by the institution responsible for the doctoral programme.



## Criterion VI. Human Resources[ESG 1.5]

[6] Human resources.

- Description of the research teams and teaching staff, including details of the internationalisation of the programme.
- Description of the mechanisms in place for external collaborations.
- The programme's research lines and the research teams involved.
- Scientific production of researchers in the last 5 years and joint contributions with foreign researchers.
- Doctoral supervision experience of research staff.
- Mechanisms for calculating the work of tutoring and thesis supervision as part of the teaching and research dedication of teaching staff.

Things to make sure of:

- A minimum percentage of 60% of the doctoral researchers participating in the programme must have accredited experience (excluding visiting and short-term visiting professors).
- The number of foreign teaching staff who participate in the programme.
- The research groups included in the doctoral programme have at least one competitive project on the programme's research topics.
- The quality of the scientific contributions of the research staff participating in the programme in the last 5 years/having a research tranche alive/having reached the maximum number of tranches possible.
- Joint contributions with foreign research staff.
- The research staff participating in the programme must have a proven track record in the supervision of doctoral theses in the last five years.
- The existence of clear mechanisms within the university for the recognition of tutoring and thesis supervision.

To ensure a priori the viability of the programme in terms of training doctors, the doctoral programme must be endorsed by the research staff. An assessment is made as to whether the research staff associated with the doctoral programme is considered adequate to ensure the acquisition of the competencies foreseen in the doctoral programme itself, and therefore sufficient and appropriately qualified and experienced to conduct the doctoral programme.

### Research Areas and Teams

The doctoral programme must be supported by a group of research staff who ensure a priori the viability of the programme in terms of training new doctoral candidates.

The adequacy of the human resources available to achieve the objectives must be justified by the institution responsible for the doctoral programme. In principle, the research activities of the different research teams and individuals involved in the programme should be described. In the case of new doctoral programmes that do not originate from an existing programme, the information is that of the research teams and individuals who will be part of them.

To complete this section, the information must be entered directly in the text field of the online application or attached as a PDF to the document containing the detailed description of the research lines and teams involved in the doctoral programme, according to the table in Annex II.

Information required and provided in the report is as follows:





#### FOR THE ENTIRE PROGRAMME:

- a) Full list of teaching staff. Unique<sup>10</sup> identifier of the lecturer linked to a line of research and project of the line and their participation in the programme (PI, researcher, collaborator, guest). The name of the programme and the university must be given if one of the professors is involved in another doctoral programme. The name of the university must be given if teachers from another Spanish university are participating in the programme.
- b) The year in which the last six-year period of research activity was granted (in accordance with the provisions of Royal Decree 1325/2002, of 13 December, amending and supplementing Royal Decree 1086/1989, of 28 August, on the remuneration of university teaching staff).
- c) Number of dissertations defended or progressed in the last five years.
- d) Year of last supervised thesis.
- e) Information on the 10 doctoral theses defended within the programme over the last five years and supervised by the teaching staff referred to in point (a) (total for all teaching staff and referenced researchers in the different research teams). For each of the 10 theses, the following information should be provided: title of the thesis, field of research, identification of the person who supervised the thesis, date of defence, qualification, university where it was read and the most significant scientific contribution (publications in journals, books or book chapters, patents and artistic works), as well as data on the objective impact of the contributions.

In the case of new doctoral programmes, these **10 theses** will correspond to the theses supervised by the staff involved in the programme at the time of its implementation.

- f) Full references of a total of **25 most relevant scientific contributions** over the last 5 years (publications in scientific journals, books or book chapters, patents, artistic works, contributions to conferences, etc.) of the research staff who will be participating in the doctoral programme at the time of the application for verification. These scientific contributions must be homogeneously distributed among the different lines of research and among the research staff of the different research teams that form part of the doctoral programme. In addition, the following information on the objective impact of the submission of scientific contributions should be provided:

#### **Publications in journals:**

In indexed journals with a relative quality index. Title of the publication, name of the journal, ISSN, year, impact index of the journal, number of journals in the field, relative position of the journal, etc.

In non-indexed journals or journals without a relative quality index. Title of the publication, name of the journal, ISSN, year and indication of quality (who should comment on whether the journal meets the following requirements):

- Submitted articles are externally peer-reviewed.
- International scientific committee.

---

<sup>10</sup> The first and last name(s) of the lecturer is not requested, but a code generated by the university is provided if it is useful for the evaluation of the information.



- Percentage of articles by authors not affiliated to the publishing institution.
- Research articles are exclusive content.
- Appearance in repertories and bibliographical bulletins more closely related to their speciality.
- Publish articles in more than one language.

Comments should be provided in the case of Sociology, Law and the Arts according to the following:

- Information quality: Identification of editorial and scientific committees, instructions to authors, information on the manuscript evaluation and selection process, translation of abstracts, article titles, keywords and abstracts into English and publication of data on the editorial process.
- Quality of the editorial process: periodicity, regularity, scientific arbitration, reviewers, anonymity of reviewers, review instructions, reasoned communication of decisions, editorial and advisory boards.
- Scientific quality: percentage and acceptance rate of research articles.
- Quality of dissemination and visibility: inclusion in bibliographic databases.

Books, chapters of books in print or electronic format. Title of book and/or book chapter, ISBN, publisher, editors, collection in which the work is published, reviews in scholarly journals, length, translations into other languages, year of publication, other indications of quality.

In the case of works of artistic creativity. Prizes and awards received for having influenced national and international critics or for having been exhibited and catalogued. Participation as curator of exhibitions, etc.

- g) Specify whether the participation of international experts in the doctoral programme is foreseen.

In this section it will be assessed that:

- **Accredited experience (six years of active research)** is required for at least **60% of the doctoral researchers** participating in the programme. Visiting and visiting faculty are exempt from this category.
- The programme is **supported by the extensive track record of its research team in overseeing theses** (at least **10 theses in the past five years**). Average number of doctoral theses supervised by the referenced academics during the previous five years.
- Scientific contributions derived from the 10 theses.
- Each research line has a **competitive research project** relevant to the field of the doctoral programme, with a PI who is a member of the same programme.
- The programme has received support from at least **25 relevant scientific contributions** in the past five years.



- There is a **balance among the various research teams and researchers** concerning scientific contributions, competitive research projects, and doctoral theses.
- **Foreign teaching staff** are participating in the programme.

**FOR EACH OF THE LINES OF RESEARCH:**

a) Full reference to an active, competitive research project. The doctoral programme requires that the project aligns with its scope and includes the project name, reference, funding source, granted amount, duration (start and end date), PI identifier, and the number of researchers involved (refer to Annex II).

**Mechanisms for determining the level of guidance and supervision required for doctoral theses.**

The programme's responsible institution should possess clear and approved mechanisms for recognising both tutoring and supervision of theses.

It is necessary to include an explanation of the university's procedures to quantify the tutoring and supervision of doctoral theses as a constituent of the teaching and research efforts of the faculty connected to the doctoral programme.

**Criterion VII. Material and support resources available to doctoral students[ESG 1.6]**

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

- Description of available resources and facilities on offer: access to laboratories and workshops, use of the library, connectivity, and accessibility to numerous databases, etc.
- Provision for acquiring external resources to assist doctoral students in their education.
- The programme should provide vocational guidance services that facilitate the proper insertion of its graduates in the labour market.

Things to make sure of:

- If the available material resources and other means are sufficient to ensure the conducted research can be adequately developed by the students.
- External resources and travel grants are available to support attendance at conferences and stays abroad.
- Funding for seminars, conferences, and other national and international training events.
- The percentage of doctoral students who obtain grants or post-doctoral contracts.

The objective is to evaluate whether the material resources and services essential for the implementation of the training activities outlined in the doctoral programme and for the instruction of doctoral students during the programme are sufficient to guarantee the attainment of the envisaged competencies.

Special emphasis will be given to cases where the doctoral programme necessitates high-end, costly services, equipment, and infrastructure.

The material resources and other available means must be sufficient to ensure the successful execution of the doctoral research within the programme. In particular, it is essential to ensure adequate funding for doctoral students to attend conferences, spend time overseas, and finance



seminars, congresses, and other training programmes. In numerous instances, these resources may be subject to conditions imposed by other institutions, such as mobility grants, travel grants, and others. However, the responsible institution for the programme should clarify how these resources are anticipated to be acquired.

The doctoral programme should ensure adequate provision of equipment and infrastructure at participating universities and collaborating institutions, with a clear justification of their appropriateness to facilitate the research of the doctoral student. The proposed doctoral programme must identify and describe the material resources and support available, which include laboratories, classrooms, special equipment and specific libraries. Additionally, the mechanisms for the maintenance, revision and updating of the resources must be indicated.

In all circumstances, compliance with Law 6/2022 of 31 March, which amends the Consolidated Text of the General Law on the rights of persons with disabilities and their social inclusion, as approved by Royal Legislative Decree 1/2013 of 29 November, is necessary to establish and govern cognitive accessibility and its requirements and application.

**The responsible institution must provide the following information in this section:**

- The material resources available. “Material resources” refer to the infrastructure, equipment, and aids that are fundamental to the development of the doctoral programme. This includes laboratories, group work classrooms, libraries (including virtual libraries), special equipment, telecommunication networks, and more. Depending on the type, these material resources can vary greatly. Basically, the institution must provide information on:
  - spaces for the placement and work of doctoral students;
  - laboratories, specific equipment and large scientific and technical facilities;
  - infrastructure relating to documentation and access to information (library, databases, etc.), and
  - network connectivity infrastructure.
- Providing travel grants and external resources to assist doctoral students in their training by attending conferences and staying abroad.
- The projected funding for seminars, conferences, and other training activities.
- The prediction of the proportion of doctoral students who would receive the aforementioned grants out of the total.
- The percentage of doctoral students who have obtained postdoctoral grants or contracts in the last five years.
- If relevant, details or a web link to agreements regulating the involvement of other organisations in the research project must be provided. In all cases, it is necessary to demonstrate that the resources and services provided by the collaborating entities are sufficient to ensure the successful delivery of the intended research training activities. In the case of a recently developed doctoral programme without any corresponding agreements being established yet, the details of the agreements that will be signed, including the name of the institution or body and the type of activity, must be included.
- Information on the provision of vocational guidance services that support effective job placement of programme graduates within the labour market.



## Criterion VIII. Review, improvement and results of the doctoral programme[ESG 1.1/1.7/1.8/1.9/1.10]

[8] Programme review, improvement and results.

- Body, unit or person responsible for the quality assurance system.
- Description of the procedures and monitoring mechanisms to analyse the development and outcomes of the doctoral programme for the purpose of enhancing it.
- Description of the procedures that are in place to ensure the smooth running of mobility programmes and to publish information on the programme, its development and results.
- In the case of programmes involving more than one university, mechanisms and procedures to ensure coordination between the participating universities must be described.
- Description of the procedure for following up with doctoral graduates.
- Data relating to the production of theses, completion rate of doctoral theses, quality of the theses, and resulting contributions should be provided for the past 5 years or estimated for the next 6 years (in the case of newly established programmes). Justification of the data provided.

Things to make sure:

- That the doctoral programme has a responsible body and clearly defines processes and mechanisms to oversee its progress, scrutinise the outcomes and identify the necessary steps for enhancement. The views of students and individuals who hold a doctorate will be particularly important in defining and executing improvement actions.
- The presence of a system to scrutinise the findings of the mobility scheme, means to publicise details about the programme's progression and results will be evaluated.
- For programmes that involve multiple universities, we will assess the presence of mechanisms and procedures that ensure coordination between the participating institutions.
- Data for the previous five years or the estimated forecast, depending on their justification and context. During the reaccreditation phase, we will review these estimations with consideration to the justifications provided and the actions resulting from their monitoring.
- The employability of doctoral students within three years of their thesis defense, or the expected employability in the case of new programmes.

The institutions proposing the degree ought to set targets regarding the efficiency of developing the training programme and implementing procedures to guarantee the academic standard of the outcomes.

The institution requires an internal quality assurance system (IQAS) that encompasses doctoral programmes to ensure quality assurance internally. Ideally, the processes pertaining to these studies should be integrated into an IQAS that has been established at the centre or university for undergraduate and postgraduate degree studies. However, doctoral programmes have not yet been integrated into the IQAS. This is why the institutions accountable for the doctoral programme must possess an IQAS that involves, at a minimum, the procedures mandated by the prevailing legal regulations governing doctoral programmes.

It is imperative that institutions establish procedures to verify and demonstrate the development of competencies outlined in the learning profile throughout the programme, and their achievement at the point of graduation.

Efficiency targets must be specified at a minimum through the following metrics:

- success rate,
- number of theses produced,



- number of relevant scientific contributions and
- number of theses qualifying with *cum laude*.

The efficiency indicators aim to establish a benchmark from which to assess the outcomes achieved after the implementation of the doctoral programme. Furthermore, it is crucial that the programme's monitoring considers the development of these indicators and their proximity to the anticipated figures.

### Quality Guarantee System

The doctoral programme should implement mechanisms to evaluate its progress and outcomes, guaranteeing consistent review and enhancement.

This section may pertain to either a doctoral programme-specific Quality Assurance System or a general teaching system implemented by the university or responsible centre.

In the case of an application involving more than one university, a quality assurance system, which may be specifically designed for the doctoral programme or adopted by one of the participating universities, must be provided. However, in no case will more than one Quality Assurance System be accepted for the same programme.

The Quality Assurance System must contain information on the following aspects and in the following order, as set out in point 8 of Schedule I to Royal Decree 99/2011:

- The **body, unit or person(s) (Academic Committee) responsible** for the organisation, management, coordination and supervision of the new doctoral programme must be identified. Their structure and composition, and their regulations or operating rules and all other matters specified in Law 39/2015, of 1 October, on common management procedures in public administrations concerning collegial bodies, should be specified. If the responsibility for the quality system is divided among more than one body or unit, the responsibilities of each of these bodies or units shall be specified.
- It is recommended that the process of articulating the participation of the stakeholders involved in the doctoral programme in this body be detailed: tutors, thesis supervisors, doctoral students, academic and research managers, support staff and other external agents.
- **A procedure for monitoring, evaluation and quality improvement shall be established to monitor the development of the programme, analyse the results and, if necessary, identify actions for improvement.** It is recommended that this procedure should be in line with the quality objectives that have previously been established.
- A description should be given of the **procedure for the analysis of the satisfaction of the different groups involved in the programme** (doctorate students, postgraduate students, academic and administrative staff, employers, etc.).The intended method of collection, frequency of collection and other relevant technical aspects are recommended.
- The procedures for **assessing progress and analysing the learning outcomes** achieved and for **determining appropriate actions to improve** the doctoral programme should be described.



- **The system for collecting, processing and analysing suggestions and complaints must be established.**
- A description must be given of **the procedure to be followed to ensure the proper development of the mobility scheme** (relations to companies and institutions, establishment of agreements, selection and monitoring of doctorates, evaluation, etc.) and **its outcomes**, including the procedures to be followed to evaluate, monitor and improve the scheme, the persons responsible and the timetable for these procedures (who, how, when).
- **The procedure by which the institution will publish regularly updated, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, on doctoral programmes should be described.** For example: entry profile, results obtained, satisfaction of the groups, etc.
- **In the case of doctoral programmes involving more than one university/institution, the mechanism and procedure for ensuring adequate coordination between the different universities/institutions involved should be described.**

It is necessary to detail the mechanisms established to guarantee the quality of the processes and to specify how the information obtained is used to review and improve the development of the doctorate.

The various mechanisms for monitoring and supervising the doctoral student must be coordinated with the above procedures.

### **Procedure for the follow-up of doctoral graduates**

The **procedure for measuring and analysing the employability of future doctoral students** should be detailed. It is recommended to define the method of information collection envisaged, the frequency with which it will be carried out and other technical aspects considered relevant.

This procedure should be part of the institution's IQAS. However, it is presented in a separate section because it is specifically mentioned in Royal Decree 99/2011 and because it is included in the computer application for the submission of doctoral programme proposals in a specific section separate from the previous one.

It should also include a forecast of the percentage of doctoral students who will be awarded postdoctoral fellowships and data on their employability in the three years following the thesis defense, in the case of existing programmes, or data on the forecast of the above-mentioned employability, in the case of new programmes.

The results of the procedures put in place to measure graduate employability and graduate satisfaction with the training received should be used to review and improve the doctoral programme.

### **Results and forecast**



For each indicator, there must be an estimate of the value of the indicator and a justification for the estimated value. The adequacy of the justification will be assessed.

Estimates should be based on historical data for programmes derived from **previously implemented doctoral programmes**. In particular, the doctoral programme must provide at least the following data for the **last five years**:

- **Success rate after three years<sup>11</sup>**: the percentage of doctoral candidates out of the total number of doctoral candidates who complete the programme (defend and pass the doctoral thesis) within three years.
- **Four-year success rate\***: percentage of doctoral students out of the total who graduate from the programme (defend and pass the doctoral thesis) in four years.
- **Theses produced**: number of theses defended and approved.
- **Cum laude theses**: number of theses qualifying *cum laude*.
- **Relevant scientific contributions**: the number of relevant scientific contributions that can be directly derived from the defended theses.

In the case of **newly established doctoral programmes**, the university/institution must provide an estimate of the above indicators for the **five years following** the implementation of the programme. In this case, values from similar doctoral programmes at the same or other institutions may be used. These values will be adjusted according to the characteristics and research activities of the individuals and research teams that will make up the programme.

Other indicators that allow adequate monitoring of the programme and provide evidence of its quality may also be considered appropriate by the institution. As no benchmark has been set, these projections will be evaluated during the re-accreditation phase, considering the explanations furnished by the university/institution along with the measures stemming from their supervision. It is crucial that, as part of the doctoral programme review and enhancement process, the university/institution uses these metrics to assess its suitability and, if required, implement the appropriate improvement measures.

#### **4. Evaluation Committees: Composition and Functions.**

To conduct the assessment procedure for verifying Andalusian doctoral degrees, DEVA collaborates with evaluators from different profiles who form the evaluation committees. The Guide for the Verification of Official Undergraduate and Postgraduate (Master's) Degrees outlines the composition, selection, appointment, and functions of the committee.

---

<sup>11</sup> Where appropriate, the Success Rate may be estimated differently for full-time and part-time students.





## 5. Regulations

- Royal Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, which establishes the organisation of university education and the procedure for quality assurance Royal Decree 1027/2011 of 15 July 2011 on the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES)
- Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January 2011, regulating official doctoral studies.
- European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.
- Evaluation protocol for the verification and modification of official doctoral programmes (REACU, 03/02/2022).

## 6. Changes made in this latest version

Modified version	Section	Description of change in version V04
V03. 22/06/2017	All sections	Adaptation of the Guide to Royal Decree 822/2021, of 28 September, which establishes the organisation of university education and the procedure for quality assurance  Inclusion ANNEX II. Table Human Resources of the programme  Revision of inclusive language texts and adaptation of new structure.
V03. 22/06/2017	All sections	Adaptation of the Guide to current regulations (RD 99/2011).
V02. 09/11/2012		A chart detailing the process for verifying doctoral programmes is included.  The phrasing relating to the details that the university is required to furnish in the report on each research line has been amended.  The language pertaining to the Quality Assurance System has been amended.  The information regarding the "Results and forecast" criterion has been revised.
V01. 27/03/2012		Initial version

## Annex I. Competences to be acquired by doctoral students in accordance with Royal Decree 99/2011, of 28 January 2011, regulating official doctoral studies.

1. Doctoral studies ensure that doctoral students acquire, at a minimum, the fundamental skills listed below, as well as any additional competencies specified in the Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MECES):

- a) Systematic comprehension of a particular field of study and proficiency in conducting research methods associated with that field.
- b) Ability to devise, design, implement and embrace a comprehensive research or creative procedure.
- c) Ability to make significant contributions to the expansion of knowledge by conducting original research.
- d) Ability to analyse, evaluate, and synthesise complex ideas critically.
- e) Ability to effectively communicate with the academic and scientific community, as well as society in general, regarding their specific fields of expertise. This includes using the commonly used modes and languages within the international scientific community.



- f) Ability to foster scientific, technological, social, artistic, and cultural advancement in academic and professional environments within a knowledge-based society.

2. The doctoral degree should also provide a high level of professional qualification in a variety of fields, especially those requiring creativity and innovation. Doctors will have acquired at least the following personal skills and abilities:

- a) Dealing with contexts in which there is little specific information.
- b) Find the key questions that need 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 judgements with limited information.
- f) Intellectual critique and defence of solutions.



## Annex 2. Human resources of the doctoral programme under evaluation

<b>Name of the doctoral programme</b>	(Indicate here)
<b>University/universities</b>	(indicate here the university/universities in case of a joint programme)

(In a line adjustment amendment request, update, if applicable, existing information that corresponds to the current proposal submitted.)

### **1.- COMPLETE LIST OF ALL THE TEACHING STAFF OF THE PROGRAMME**

<b>Identifier of the doctoral programme's teaching staff*</b>	<b>University/Institution/Company</b>	<b>Year of granting the last six year research period</b>	<b>Number of theses defended in the last 5 years</b>	<b>Year of last thesis supervised</b>	<b>Knowledge area</b>	<b>Research project of the line</b>	<b>Participation (PI, researcher, collaborator, guest)**</b>

\* If a lecturer is participating in another doctoral programme, they should specify and notify the university and programme name in a subsequent list.

\*\* The details of the teaching staff identified as PI should correspond with those given in the table that supplies information on Research Projects in the knowledge area.

### **2.- SELECTION OF 10 THESES SUPERVISED BY THE PROGRAMME TEACHING STAFF IN THE LAST 5 YEARS AND DIRECTED BY THE PROGRAMME'S RESEARCH AREA TEACHING STAFF.**

<b>Title of thesis</b>	
<b>Research area</b>	
<b>Identifier of the lecturers supervising the thesis</b>	
<b>Date of your defence</b>	
<b>Qualification</b>	
<b>University where it was read</b>	
<b>Most relevant scientific contribution</b>	

(Copy the above table for each of the 10 theses)

### **3.- SCIENTIFIC OUTPUT OF RESEARCH STAFF IN THE LAST 5 YEARS AND JOINT CONTRIBUTIONS WITH FOREIGN RESEARCHERS.**



Incorporate details of 25 of the most relevant scientific discoveries, evenly distributed across the distinct research areas that comprise the doctoral programme. The details regarding these contributions will encompass the provisions outlined in this doctoral guide.

**RESEARCH AREA X**

<b>Name of the line</b>	<i>Indicate here the name of the line of research</i>
<b>Number of professors not specialised in the research area.</b>	<i>Please indicate the number of faculty members involved in each doctoral programme area. Each faculty member should only be involved in one research area.</i>

<b>Number of foreign visiting and collaborating lecturers.</b>	<i>Indicate the number of visiting and collaborating professors involved in the Doctoral Programme for this research area.</i>
--	--

**LIST OF RESEARCH PROJECTS IN X**

<b>Title of the research project</b>	<b>Reference</b>	<b>Funding Entity</b>	<b>Amount granted</b>	<b>Start date-End date of the project<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>Identifier of the teaching staff participating as PI of the Project</b> <small>Note: only if you are a faculty member of the doctoral programme (not a guest or collaborator).</small>	<b>No. of researchers involved in the programme</b>
Project 1						
Project 2						
.....						

(Insert as many rows as there are research projects associated with the research area)

**IMPORTANT:** COPY AND PASTE THE ABOVE TABLE AS MANY TIMES AS THERE ARE LINES OF RESEARCH IN THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

---

<sup>12</sup> Mandatory to identify active projects