



ESCUELA INTERNACIONAL DE DOCTORADO UNIVERSIDAD FRANCISCO DE VITORIA

REGULATION of the DOCTORATE in BIOTECHNOLOGY, MEDICINE and BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

The regulation for Doctorate in Biotechnology, Medicine and Biomedical Sciences provides the regulatory framework for the organisation of official university study programs for obtaining Doctoral Degrees from the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, in accordance with state and autonomous community legislation in this area:

- Order ECI/2514/2007, of August 13, on the issuance of official Master's and Doctoral degrees.
- Royal Decree 99/2011, of January 28, regulating Official Doctoral Studies.
- Royal Decree 534/2013, of July 12, modifying RD 1393/2007 and RD 99/2011.
- Royal Decree 43/2015, of February 2, modifying RD 1393/2007, of October 29, establishing the regulatory framework for official university studies and Royal Decree 99/2011, of January 28, regulating official doctoral studies.
- Royal Decree 195/2016, of May 13, establishing the prerequisites for the issuance of a European Diploma Supplement.

The most important aspects of this regulation are:

1. A **Doctorate** refers to the third cycle of official university studies, oriented towards the acquisition of competences and skills related to quality scientific research.
2. The **Doctorate Program** is a set of activities oriented towards the acquisition of competences and skills necessary to obtain a doctoral degree. The aim of the program is to provide specific training to the doctoral student and establish procedures and lines of research to develop a doctoral thesis.
2. A **doctoral student** is a student admitted to a Doctorate Program and matriculated in the same.
3. The **Thesis Director** is responsible for guiding the student through the activities and research tasks of the program.
4. The **Tutor** is responsible for ensuring the training and research activities of the student adhere to the principles of the doctorate program and the Doctoral School.
5. The **Academic Commission** is responsible for the definition, updating, quality and coordination of the Doctorate Program as well as supervising the progress



of research and training of doctoral students and the authorisation of the presentation of a thesis.

6. The **Activities Register of doctoral students** is the personal log of the activities of the student within the program. The thesis director will review this document and the Academic Commission will evaluate it annually.
7. The **Research Plan** is the document produced by the doctoral student before completing the first year of the program and will include the advances made from the start of the program in terms of the methodology used, the planned objectives and the means and plan to achieve them. This plan will be submitted annually with the advances and improvements and must be approved by the Director and the tutor.
8. The **UFV International Doctoral School** is the institution of the University responsible for overseeing the coherence of the doctorate programs, ensure convergence with establish norms and regulations, approve proposals from the Academic Commissions, to direct and be the final reference for the doctorate programs of the UFV.

A. Requirements for the degree.

The requirements for a Doctorate or PhD from the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria are:

1. To meet the necessary entry requirements for the Doctorate Program of the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria.
2. To successfully complete the courses, seminars and tutored research projects of the corresponding Doctorate Program.
3. Present and defend before a Tribunal designated for evaluation, a Doctoral Thesis consisting in original and unpublished research project. Where approved by Doctorate Commission, a thesis may be presented as a compendium of publications but must strictly adhere to the conditions established for these cases (see Section I. Doctoral Thesis, point 3, of this Regulation).

B. Access to the Doctorate Program.

1. In general terms, access to the official Doctorate Program will require an officially recognised Spanish Bachelor's Degree and University Master's Degree or the equivalent, providing this total at least 300 ECTS for both degrees.
2. Additionally, those in any of the following situations may access the Doctoral Program:
 - a) To have an officially recognised Spanish degree or from other member state of the EHEA, allowing access to a Masters' degree program pursuant to Art 16 of the RD 1393/2007. October 29, and have achieved a minimum total of 300 ECTS in all official university studies, of which at least 60 must be at the Master's degree level.
 - b) To have an officially recognised Spanish Graduate degree, consisting in adherence to EU regulations of at least 300 ECTS. In this case, with the

exception of degree study plans which include credits for research training, students must take a training course with the equivalent credits to research credits in a Master's degree studies.

- c) University graduate who have successfully completed at least two years of training in a program to obtain an official degree in any speciality within the Health Sciences.
- d) To have a degree from a foreign university, without need for homologation, providing the educational level can be certified as comparable to an official Spanish Master's degree and which permits in the issuing country the student to access a doctorate program. This admission does not imply official recognition of the previous degree of the student nor the recognition to any other effect than access to the Doctorate Program.
- e) To have another Spanish PhD degree obtained in conformity with previous university requirements.
- f) To have an official university degree corresponding to Level 3 of the Spanish Framework for Higher Education (*Marco Español de Cualificaciones para la Educación Superior*), pursuant to RD 967/2014, of November 21.

C. Admission to the Doctorate Program.

1. Admission of candidates to the Doctorate Program will be decided by the Academic Commission of the Doctorate Program, which sets the requirements and criteria in evaluating the merits for the evaluation and admission of candidates.
2. The applicant, providing they meet the access requirements, must apply for admission by presenting the normal application form and the documentation required therein.
3. The admissions calendar is fixed annually.
4. The Doctorate Program should be scientifically related to the university curriculum of the candidate. In any case, the Academic Commission will decide on these issues.
5. Admission to the Doctorate Program may require complementary research training in the case of official Spanish Graduate degrees with at least 300 ECTS in branches of Sciences and Health Sciences (e.g. Pharmacy, Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, etc) should these Degree study plans not include content/competences for research methodology. These complementary courses must be taken during the first year of the Doctorate. These are:
 - Research Methodology in Biomedical Sciences (6 ECTS)
 - Basic Research Techniques in Biomedical Sciences (3 ECTS)
6. Admission will be valid only for the academic year applied for and will take effect with formal matriculation in the academic program.

D. Matriculation in the Doctorate Program.





1. Once admitted to the Doctorate Program, students will formalise their matriculation as a Doctoral student. Matriculation in the program will give the student the right to academic tutoring.
2. Students must renew their matriculation annually to maintain their right to academic tutoring and to defend their thesis.
3. Matriculation in each academic year will take place according to the annual calendar posted on the Portal Universitario of the University.

E. Duration of doctoral studies.

1. Doctoral studies will conclude with the submission and defence of a doctoral thesis incorporating original research results.
2. The doctorate will have a maximum duration of three years, full time, from the data of admission in the Doctorate Program until the presentation of the thesis. Nevertheless, the doctoral student may pursue their doctorate on a part time basis with the prior authorisation of the Academic Commission and this will have a maximum duration of five years from admission in the Program until the presentation of the thesis.
3. If at the end of this three year period the student has not applied to file their thesis the Academic Commission of the Doctorate Program may authorise, upon the request of the student and with the approval of the thesis director, the extension of this period for one year and, under exceptional circumstances may be extended for a further year.
4. The calculation of this period will not include time off for medical leave, maternity/paternity leave or any other cause established in the regulations or approved by the Academic Commission.
5. The doctoral student may request temporary leave for a period of one year, which may be extended for a further year. The request for leave must be duly justified and presented to the Academic Commission of the program which will decide on its approval.

DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTORATE PROGRAMS

F. Organisation of the doctoral program.

1. An essential activity of the doctoral student will be research.
2. Notwithstanding the above, the Doctorate Program includes training activities in research the doctoral student must complete.
3. All activities of the doctoral student will be recorded in an Activities Register to be reviewed periodically by the tutor and thesis director and evaluated annually by the Academic Commission.
4. A commitment statement signed by the student, the director, co-director and tutor will be included in the student record. This commitment includes a dispute resolution mechanism established by the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria and

aspects related to intellectual and industrial property rights within the scope of the Doctorate Program.

G. Thesis Director.

1. Upon admission into the Doctorate Program, each student will be assigned a Thesis Director by the Academic Commission. The role may be assigned to any Spanish or foreign Doctor with certified research experience, regardless of university or institution. The student will also be assigned a tutor, associated with the Entity or School conducting the program and who will oversee the interaction of the doctoral student with the Academic Commission. The tutor may or may not be the Thesis Director.
2. In the case a Thesis Director is not assigned at the moment of admission, the Academic Commission will designate a director will be assigned within a maximum period of three months from matriculation in the program.
3. The role of a co-director will require the prior authorisation of the Academic Commission. This authorisation may be revoked if it is the judgement of the Academic Commission that this does not benefit the development of the thesis. To further the experience of researchers, in certain cases, with the approval of the Academic Commission, a second co-director may be a teacher in the process of consolidating their research career, providing the first co-director, es established by law, is a doctor with a publicly recognised research career. The Academic Commission, in liaison with the doctoral student, may change the designated tutor and/or thesis director at any time during the course of the program, for duly justified reasons.

H. Research Plan and Activities Register

1. The doctoral student must present a Research Plan annually. The student must also present their personal Activities Register.
2. To this effect, the doctoral student will submit at the end of the April a paper and digital copy of their Research Plan with the approval of their tutor/director for presentation to the Academic Commission.
 - a) The Research Plan presented in the first year will describe the subject of the thesis to be pursued, propose a methodology to be followed, the sources to be consulted, the objectives, means and a timeline to achieve these. The plan will adhere to the format established in the program. In subsequent years the plan will include a synthesis of the advances made in the research.
 - b) The research plan must be approved by the tutor and the thesis director (where these are different) and may be improved or further developed during the course of doctoral studies.
 - c) The research plan must be approved by the Academic Commission, which will particularly value the research capabilities of the student according to the work presented. The Academic Commission will issue an evaluation report indicating the strengths and weakness of the proposed thesis and suggest





- actions to be taken which the student and the director/tutor will take into consideration for the following evaluation.
- d) A positive evaluation of the research plan from the Academic Commission is essential for the student to continue in the Doctorate Program and permit matriculation the following year.
 - e) In the case the student has not presented their research plan by April (first convocation) or received the same negative evaluation, duly justified, the student will be evaluated again in the second convocation (September), when they will present a new research plan.
 - f) With a second negative evaluation the doctoral student will leave the program.
 - g) Once the Academic Commission of the Doctorate Program has approved the research plan, the doctoral student may register the title of their thesis, presenting the Academic Commission the corresponding document signed by their thesis director.
3. The doctoral student must present in September their personal Activities Register with the approval of their tutor/director for presentation and evaluation by the Academic Commission.
- a) The Activities Register will log all activities of interest for the doctoral student, such as:
 - Seminars, courses and workshops (50 hours). At least 10 hours per year during the first two years of the Doctorate Program.
 - Congresses (45 hours). Attendance to national and international congresses related to the theme of the research related to the Doctoral Thesis.
 - Mobility (20 hours). Attendance to seminars, workshops and specialisation courses imparted at institutions other than the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria.
 - Teaching collaboration (80 hours). Doctoral students may participate in teaching of Degree programs imparted by the UFV Faculty of Biomedical Sciences. This teaching collaboration may not exceed 60 hours annually.

DOCTORAL THESIS

I. Doctoral Thesis.

1. The doctoral thesis will consist of an original research project on a subject related to the scientific or technical field of the Doctorate Program.
2. Doctoral theses are written and defended in Spanish, or another language used internationally for the dissemination of scientific research if so approved by the Academic Commission of the Doctorate Program.
3. A thesis consisting of a compendium of published work may be presented by those with a minimum of three published articles prior to the defence of the thesis, of which at least two must have been published after the date of initial matriculation in the program and the other published within three years of initial matriculation. These works must have been published in relevant scientific

journals related to the field of knowledge and duly indexed (JCR, SJR) or in books of demonstrable value in which the doctoral student appears in at least two as the leading or primary author. The supervision and acceptance of these works will always be subject to the approval of the Academic Commission of the UFV.

J. Request to present the Thesis.

1. The doctoral student wishing to present their thesis for reading and defence will submit a request to the Academic Commission, presenting 3 copies of the draft version of the thesis.
2. The request must be accompanied by a favourable report from the thesis director to be submitted with the copies of the thesis.
3. Prior to requesting the filing of the thesis, the Academic Commission will value that the student documents the dissemination of part of their research through publication or acceptance for publication an original article in important scientific journals (JCR, SJR) or the filing of a patent after the initial matriculation in the Doctorate Program. In these publications the student must appear as the lead or primary author.

K. Authorisation for filing the Doctoral Thesis.

1. The Academic Commission will designate an internal evaluator as well as an external evaluator, who will have one month to review the presented draft thesis and issue a report to the Academic Commission.
2. The Academic Commission will decide, upon consideration of these evaluations, to proceed with the filing of the Thesis and suggest modifications where considered necessary.
3. In the event the Academic Commission refuses to file the thesis, the student has a period of one month to appeal this decision in writing before UFV Doctorate Commission. The written appeal justifying the motives for appeal should be addressed to the President of the Commission.

L. Filing and Admission of the Thesis.

1. With the authorisation of the Academic Commission, the doctoral student will present the Register with eight paper copies, duly bound and ordered (this number includes one copy for the Thesis Director), as well as two devices with digital copies of the thesis, and will request authorisation from the Academic Commission to defend the thesis.
2. The favourable report from the thesis director, and co-directors as the case may be, will be included in the first page of each copy of the thesis.
3. The doctoral thesis will have the following format:
 - a) The binding will be such to avoid any manipulation and must reflect the same information on the cover and spine (title, author, year).





- b) The cover should also bear the name and logo of the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, the name of the Faculty and the name of the thesis director or co-directors.
- c) The writing, layout and bibliography must adhere to the format established by the Doctorate Program.
4. The Academic Commission will submit a copy to the Secretariate which will verify that the student's academic records meet the requirements to present the thesis and will file the thesis. With this, the Academic Commission will notify the appropriate departments of the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria that the thesis has been filed.
5. The copies will be filed for a period of one month at UFV.
6. During this period, any Doctor may access the copy of the thesis and formulate in writing the considerations they consider appropriate for the Academic Commission.
7. For the purposes of this regulation, the non-academic period includes the months of July and August, Saturdays or Christmas or Easter holidays.

M. Matriculation for the defence of the Doctoral Thesis.

After the time on file, referred to above and with the authorisation of the defence of the thesis, the doctoral student will matriculate in the Secretariate to defend their thesis and make the appropriate payments for the corresponding examination.

TRIBUNAL OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

N. Designation of the Thesis Tribunal.

The UFV Doctorate Commission, in accordance with the proposal of the Academic Commission, will designate a tribunal according to the terms established applicable legislation. The Academic Commission will consult with the Coordinator of the Doctorate Program, and the Thesis Director and assessors the Commission considers appropriate.

O. Composition of the Tribunal.

1. The Tribunal will consist of five titular members and two supplements, all Doctors with certified research experience, either Spanish or foreign, associated with Universities or Institutions of Higher Learning or Research.
2. The tribunal will not have more than two members from the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria.
3. The thesis director and tutor will not form part of the tribunal. However, in the case the doctoral thesis presented through bilateral agreements of co-tutorship with other Universities where applicable the thesis director may form part of the tribunal.
4. Professors forming part of university faculties, and in possession of a doctorate degree, may form part of the tribunal including when on leave or retired.

5. The Academic Commission of the Doctorate Program will propose a tribunal to the UFV Doctorate Commission, including a President and Secretary.
6. In the case of a justified renunciation by any titular member of the tribunal the President may substitute them with the corresponding supplement.

P. Issue of copies to members of the Tribunal.

1. With notification of the designation of the tribunal, the Secretary of the Academic Commission will provide a copy of the thesis to each titular member of the tribunal. In any case, members of the tribunal should have a copy of the thesis with sufficient time prior to the scheduled date of the defence.
2. The tribunal will be provided with the register of the activities of the student, which will constitute a qualitative instrument to complement their evaluation. This document will not contribute to a quantitative score but will serve for the qualitative evaluation of the thesis doctoral.

DEFENCE OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

Q. Reading period.

1. The defence of the thesis will be convoked by the President and communicated by the Secretary of the tribunal of the Academic Commission of the Doctorate Program with, at least, twenty days prior notice, and will take place in a public session during the academic year.
2. The Academic Commission will notify the thesis director, co-director where applicable, and the student of the convocation who will confirm the choice of protocol: solemn or abbreviated. The defence of the thesis will be made public through the appropriate means.
3. For the purposes of this regulation, the non-academic period includes the months of July and August, Saturdays or Christmas or Easter holidays.

R. Defence of the Thesis.

1. The defence of the thesis will take place at the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria. In the case of inter-university programs or agreements for co-tutorship, the thesis may be defended in any of the participating universities according to the terms of the agreement.
2. The defence of the thesis will consist in the exposition and defence by the doctoral student of the research work as well as the content and conclusions of the thesis, with special emphasis on its original contributions.
3. The members of the tribunal, when so indicated by the President of the tribunal, should offer their opinion of the presented thesis and pose as many questions as considered appropriate and which the doctoral student must answer.





4. At the moment and manner indicated by the President, observations on the thesis may also be presented by the Doctors present during the public defence ceremony to which the student must also respond.

S. Evaluation of the Thesis.

1. Upon the conclusion of the public defence of the thesis, the tribunal will deliberate in a closed session regarding the qualification the consider the thesis deserves.
2. The tribunal will issue a report and global qualification of the thesis using the following scale: Not apt, approved, notable and outstanding.
3. The tribunal may grant a *cum laude* if the global qualification is outstanding. This classification is awarded through a secret vote and unanimously. The University will establish mechanisms for the granting of this designation, ensuing the counting of votes is performed elsewhere than where the defence of the doctoral thesis takes place.
4. Upon conclusion of the deliberation and the issuing of the global report, the Secretary will record the qualification of the present thesis and, in public, the President will communicate the qualification awarded to the doctoral student.
5. The Secretary of the tribunal will immediately submit the certification of the defended thesis to the Academic Commission as well as a copy of the thesis signed by the President along with all documentation necessary for the defence ceremony.
6. The Academic Commission will remit all documentation to the Secretariate for custody and filing.

T. Honourable Mentions of the best Doctoral Thesis.

The University may give an annual award for the best Doctoral Thesis defended during the previous academic year from among those receiving the highest qualification.

FILING OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS AND ISSUING OF THE TITLE OF DOCTOR

U. Filing and deposit of the Doctoral Thesis.

1. The documentation generated by the entire process of the authorisation and defence of the Doctoral Thesis will form part of the thesis reading file of the student and will be in the custody of the Secretariate.
2. Once the Thesis has been approved, the Academic Commission will send a copy of the thesis and a CD-ROM to the University Library for future consultation.
3. Another copy of the Thesis will be filed in the Secretariate along with the records of the doctoral student.
4. The University Secretariate will provide a digital copy of the thesis to the Ministry of Education, via the Doctoral Thesis Database (TESEO) a copy of the thesis and all other complementary information necessary for registration.
5. The University, via the Archive Service, will create an open digital file of the thesis in an institutional archive.

6. Under exceptional circumstances, decided by the Academic Commission, such as for example the participation of companies in the program or Doctoral School, the existence of confidentiality agreements with companies or the possible generation of patents drawn from the contents of the thesis, the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria will establish a procedure to ensure the confidential nature of these aspects.

V. Title of Doctor.

1. The successful completion of the studies set forth in these regulations will lead to the obtaining of the title of Doctor bestowed by Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, in accordance with regulations on the issuing of degrees.
2. The successful completion of Doctoral studies and the approval of the thesis, the student may request from the UFV Secretariate the issuing of the diploma of Doctor, as follows:
 - a) Instance of the applicant requesting the degree according to the model established by the Secretariate.
 - b) Certification of the identity of the applicant.
- c) Certification that the applicant meets the necessary criteria for the issuance of a diploma.
3. The Doctoral diploma may include on the reverse the mention "International Doctorate" providing the following conditions are met:
 - a) That during their studies to obtain the doctorate the student had a stay of at least three months outside of Spain at a higher learning institution or prestigious research centre for study or for research. The stay and the activities carried out must be certified by the Director and authorised by the Academic Commission and incorporated into the Activities Register of the student.
 - b) That part of the doctoral thesis, at least in the abstract and conclusions, is written and presented in one of the habitual languages for scientific dissemination in their field of knowledge other than any of the official or co-official languages of Spain. This norm is not applicable when the stays, reports and experts originate from a Spanish speaking country.
 - c) That the thesis was informed by at least two expert Doctors from a non-Spanish institution of higher learning or research institute.
 - d) That at least one expert Doctor from a non-Spanish institution of higher learning or research institute, other than the coordinator/director of the stay mentioned above in paragraph a), was part of the tribunal evaluating the thesis.
4. Upon the finalisation of the filing of a doctoral thesis, requests cannot be made to the Ministry of Education for the issuance of Doctoral Diplomas corresponding to the doctoral thesis defended at the Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, unless the data has been previously registered and updated in the TESEO database.

