

## Most important modifications in the REGULATIONS FOR MANAGING OFFICIAL DOCTORAL STUDIES AT THE UPV/EHU

This text has been drawn up by the Doctoral School (DOKe) and aims to make it easier to read the new REGULATIONS FOR MANAGING OFFICIAL DOCTORAL STUDIES AT THE UPV/EHU (hereinafter, the 2024 regulations, <https://www.euskadi.eus/web01-bopv/es/bopv2/datos/2024/06/2402766a.shtml>). Listed below are the most important aspects that have been added, deleted or modified, as regards the Implementing Rules for doctorate teaching, which was published on 5 March 2020 (hereinafter, the 2020 rules, (<https://www.euskadi.eus/web01-bopv/es/p43aBOPVWebWar/VerParalelo.do?cd2020001342>))

**The text given in this document has no legal or regulatory value. This text is intended as a guide and will be updated on a regular basis**

The parts that have been added, deleted or modified are shown below according to their chapter.

### Chapter I. General regulations

#### Article 2. Doctoral studies

In the 2024 regulations, the following is added:

- 2. 3. Doctoral studies are generally organised into face-to-face activities, in keeping with the verified report, and any activities that are carried out otherwise must be expressly included in the Research plan and personal training plan.

Comment from the DOKe: Some doctoral students who are preparing their theses remotely (without being physically present in the Basque Country) have endeavoured to access mobility grants from their places of residence or to receive online synchronous training following a schedule that is compatible with their places of residence. Point 2.3 specifically expresses that the doctorate is organised on a face-to-face basis, which sets the framework for the UPV/EHU's obligations as regards managing activities and economic aid, without curtailing any activities that may, indeed, be carried out without requiring the person to be physically in attendance.

### Chapter II. Access, admission and enrolment

#### Article 5. Requirements for accessing a Doctoral Programme

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to accessing a doctoral programme, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree. Among the most common situations are the following, providing access to a doctoral programme:

- Students with Spanish degree and master's degree qualifications, who have acquired 300 credits and who have proven MECES3 [Level 3 of the Spanish qualifications framework for higher education]
- Other Spanish qualifications at MECES3 level

- **Students from the EHEA who can prove they have reached MEC7 [Level 7 of the Spanish qualifications framework] (without a minimum number of credits)**
- **Students from outside of the EHEA who can prove they have access to doctoral studies (without a minimum number of credits)**

**Comment from the DOKE: In the RD99/2011 that was modified in 2023 (and, therefore, in the 2024 regulations), students are required to finish their master's degree even with 90 or 120 credits, because it is compulsory to be able to prove level MECES3. Under the 2020 rules, students could access with 300 credits (60 master's degree credits), without having completed their master's degree. For candidates with foreign qualifications, these are divided into students from the EHEA and the rest (this wasn't the case before). In these cases, there is no minimum number of credits. This may lead to clear comparative disadvantages. For example, with a foreign degree qualification of 180 credits and a Spanish master's degree of 90, both could access the doctoral programme. The academic commissions are reminded that they may regulate admission following their own criteria.**

#### **Article 6. Admission requirements and criteria**

**The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to admission on a doctoral programme, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree. So:**

- **Endorsement can be requested from a researcher on the doctoral programme as a possible supervisor of the doctoral thesis.**
- **Additional training must be carried out before the second year of the doctoral programme.**
- **5% of the places offered must be reserved for students who have a degree of disability of 33% or higher.**

**Comment from the DOKE: In order to be able to use the endorsement of a possible supervisor of the doctoral thesis as an element of evaluation for admission, the doctoral programmes must process it as a non-substantial modification through the UNIKUDE programme and notify the Doctoral School accordingly. With regard to additional training, it is important to bear in mind that completion of said training within the established time period is a necessary condition to be able to submit a doctoral thesis. For this reason, the academic commissions are requested to pay particular attention to the application of this requirement, as the aim for administrative purposes is to study master's degree subjects at the UPV/EHU with their corresponding enrolment and evaluation. In this regard, at their session on 1 July 2024, the Permanent Council of the Doctoral School agreed that "it is the responsibility of the Doctoral Programme's Academic Commission to first contact the Academic Commission of the Master's Degree in question to verify the requirements that the students must meet, to be able to study those master's degree subjects that they wish to take as additional training, as well as to get approval to register the doctoral student". Regarding the places reserved for people with a recognised disability, if said places are not taken, they will be opened up to the general quota.**

#### **Article 7. Admission procedure**

The 2024 regulations modify the admission procedure deadlines, which are now as shown in the following table (also for the 2020 rules).

UPV/EHU Regulation	Allegation by the candidate to the AC	Answer from the AC	Appeal to the DOKe	Answer from the DOKe	Appeal before the Vice-chancellor
2020	10 days	15 days	15 days	indefinite	1 month
2024	3 days	10 days	3 days	10 days	1 month

The 2024 regulations include an exceptional admission procedure outside the established deadline, which requires authorisation from the Doctoral School.

Comment from the DOKe: The admission procedure considerably shortens its deadlines compared with the 2020 rules. The exceptional admission procedure aims to cover situations such as pre-doctoral contracts, joint supervision arrangements or similar circumstances (not PIC [hired research staff] contracts). In order to use this exceptional procedure, candidates must expressly request it.

### Chapter III. Monitoring of doctoral studies

#### Article 9. Supervision and monitoring of doctoral studies

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the supervision and monitoring of doctoral studies, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree. The most important modifications are as follows:

- The **“Research Plan”** in the 2020 rules becomes the **“Research plan and personal training plan”**.
- On admission to the doctoral programme, the doctoral student must immediately not only be assigned a tutor but also a supervisor.

Comment from the DOKe: By introducing the personal training plan, more importance is placed on the training aspect of the doctoral period (not just the research side). To prepare this text, there will be a model available on the UPV/EHU website. As regards assigning a supervisor on admission (in the 2024 rules there would be a period of 3 months for this), it is understood that the chance to request endorsement for the candidate must be guaranteed. The personal training plan must be in line with the personal skills, abilities and competences that the doctoral students must acquire during their doctoral training, and which are listed in the RD99/2011 royal decree (article 5).

#### Article 10. Thesis supervision

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to thesis supervision, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree. The most important modifications are as follows:

- The concept of **“accredited research experience”** is defined, which is a requirement to be able to supervise a doctoral thesis. So, it mentions that

having "accredited research experience" entails having at least a six-year research period recognised by the National Assessment Committee for Research Activities (CNEAI) or, in the case of people who are not able to provide a six-year research period, having equivalent research merits.

- Although ideally any potential co-supervisors should accredit their research experience in the same manner as the thesis supervisor, the academic commissions may, as an exception, assign co-supervisors who do not meet this requirement.
- The maximum number of thesis directors or supervisors is three.
- Retired, emeritus and honorary collaborating lecturers are considered to be the primary supervisor while the thesis is submitted within the six months following their retirement or corresponding appointment.
- The teaching staff on the doctoral programme must be reviewed and updated every year, at least one month before pre-registration.

Comment from the DOKe: People who cannot provide a six-year research period are those who fall into one of the following circumstances: (a) their academic or professional position does not allow them to request six-year research periods; (b) their academic or professional position does allow them to request six-year research periods but they are waiting for the decision regarding their request for a six-year research period to be granted; or (c) their academic or professional position does allow them to request six-year research periods but there has not been any open call to request six-year research periods since they took the academic job.

## Chapter IV. Doctoral studies

### Article 13. Duration of doctoral training

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the duration of doctoral training, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree.

- The duration of the full-time thesis in the 2024 regulations follows a 4+1 system; i.e.: 4 years plus a possible extension of 1 year. Part-time would be 7+1. In both cases, temporary leave may be requested of up to 2 years, either in one block or in accumulated time. For people with a recognised disability of 33% or higher, the full-time system is 6+1 and the part-time system is 9+1.

Comment from the DOKe: The duration of the doctorate remains the same as the 2020 rules, as the full-time system followed here was 3+1+1; i.e.: 3 years plus two possible extensions of 1 year each. The part-time system would be 5+1+1. With this change, the first extension procedure, which was a very generalised request, is removed. It is also worth pointing out that, for the first time, a different time frame has been set for people with a disability. Furthermore, the concept of temporary leave does not include temporary incapacity, birth, adoption, custody for the purposes of adoption, fostering, risk during pregnancy, risk during breastfeeding, and gender violence, or any other situation envisaged in existing regulations. These situations are covered in higher-level regulations and interrupt the doctorate, and do

not count in its duration, although the Doctoral School must be notified of said situations.

### **Article 15. Research plan and personal training plan**

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the research plan and personal training plan, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree.

- The “*Research Plan*” in the 2020 rules becomes the “*Research plan and personal training plan*”.

Comment from the DOKe: See comment on article 9.

### **Article 16. Commitment document**

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the Commitment document.

- It must be submitted within a maximum of 1 month from the date of enrolment.
- The commitment document must explicitly state the obligation of the doctoral candidate and any supervisors belonging to the UPV/EHU to indicate their status as such in all publications and results deriving from the doctoral thesis.

Comment from the DOKe: The deadline for uploading the commitment document to GAUR was 3 months in the 2020 rules, because this was the time frame set for assigning supervisors. With the new 2024 regulations (article 9), the supervisor must be assigned within a maximum of 1 month, and this is the same deadline set for preparing the commitment document.

Furthermore, by introducing the obligation of the doctoral candidate and the supervisors to indicate their affiliation to the UPV/EHU in all publications and results deriving from the doctoral thesis, the purpose is to ensure their traceability and adjudication to the UPV/EHU, as it is often the case (particularly in students who carry out their activity outside of the UPV/EHU) that said affiliation is not reflected.

### **Article 17. Assessment of progress**

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the assessment of progress.

- The assessment carried out by the AC may include recommendations for improvement, even if the assessment is positive.
- The request for a review of the provisional assessment at the academic commission of the doctoral programme is added to the procedure.
- The student must also be given a hearing before the second consecutive negative assessment.

Comment from the DOKe: Although the assessment is positive, it is recommended that observations be made in the report in those cases in which the student's

performance is questionable, as this would support a subsequent negative assessment. The possibility of requesting a review of the provisional assessment at the academic commission of the doctoral programme was included as a result of an agreement by the Doctoral School's Permanent Council, and hence it is also added to the 2024 regulations. Furthermore, given that the result of a second consecutive negative assessment is the expulsion of the doctoral student from the doctoral programme, said student must be given a prior hearing, for the purposes of doing everything possible to avoid expulsion.

## Chapter V. Mobility among doctoral candidates

### Article 19. Outgoing mobility

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to outgoing mobility.

- Sojourns, or stays, shall be registered by the Doctoral School in the application set up for this purpose.

Comment from the DOKe: Previously, outgoing mobilities could be processed through the DOKe, but it was not compulsory. For now, there is no application set up for this purpose and stays are registered manually at the DOKe.

### Article 20. Incoming mobility

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to incoming mobility.

- Incoming stays at the UPV/EHU may last for a total maximum of nine months, per student and doctoral thesis.

Comment from the DOKe: By limiting the length of the stay, the aim is to avoid situations in which students enrolled at other universities use the UPV/EHU's resources for a longer period of time than that in which a stay could lead to a co-supervision agreement.

## Chapter VI. Doctoral theses: characteristics, deposition and defence

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the doctoral thesis, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree.

### Article 22. Doctoral theses

### Article 23. Initiating the thesis deposition procedure

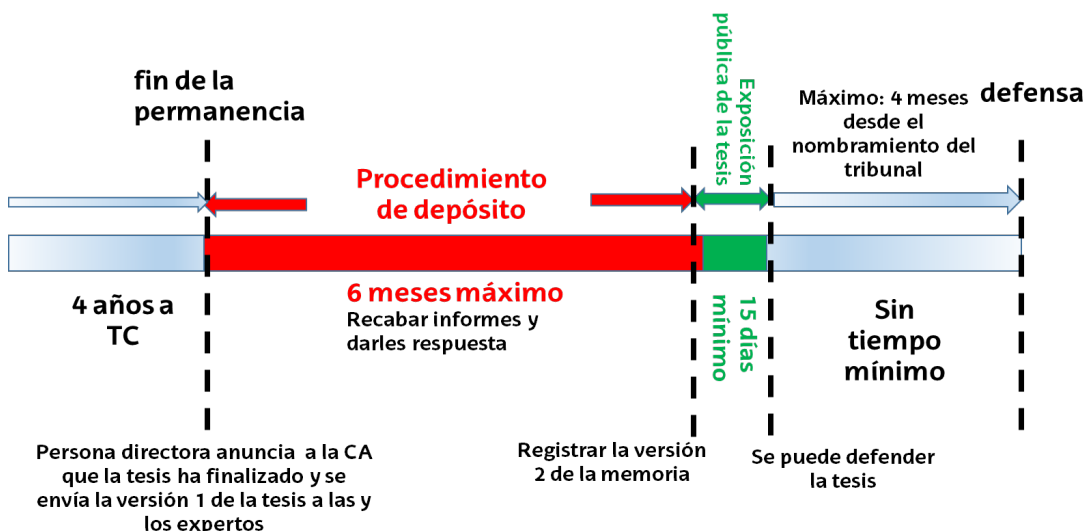
### Article 24. End of the deposition procedure: thesis registration

### Article 29. Publishing the date of the viva

- Two reports from external experts must be provided when submitting the thesis, and these may include objections and suggestions for improvement.
- The objections and suggestions for improvement must be answered.
- The external experts may form part of the thesis panel.

- The deposition procedure may not last longer than 6 months.
- The thesis may be defended immediately after the public examination period (which lasts 15 days) and no later than 4 months after the panel has been appointed.

Comment from the DOKe: The comment refers to articles 22, 23, 24 and 29. The compulsory nature of providing two reports by external experts requires a deposition procedure to be defined. The due time has been defined outside of the established term so as not to be detrimental to the doctoral students.



ES	EN
fin de la permanencia	end of the established term
Procedimiento de depósito	Deposition procedure
Exposición pública de la tesis	Public examination of the thesis
Máximo: 4 meses desde el nombramiento del tribunal	Maximum: 4 months as from the moment the panel is appointed
Defensa	defence
4 años a TC	4 years full-time
6 meses máximo Recabar informes y darles respuesta	Maximum 6 months Gather reports and answer them
15 días mínimo	Minimum 15 days
Sin tiempo mínimo	No minimum time period
Persona directora anuncia a la CA que la tesis ha finalizado y se envía la versión 1 de la tesis a las y los expertos	The supervisor informs the AC that the thesis has been completed, and the first version of said thesis is sent to the experts
Registrar la versión 2 de la memoria	Register version 2 of the report
Se puede defender la tesis	The thesis can be defended

### Article 33. Sending the pertinent documents to the office of the competent Vice-Chancellor

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to sending the documents for submitting a doctoral thesis to the competent vice-chancellor, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree.

- The thesis only has to be submitted in digital format

Comment from the DOKe: It is no longer a compulsory requirement to submit the report on paper.

## Chapter VII. Doctoral thesis examination panels

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to doctoral thesis examination panels.

### Article 36. Composition of the viva panel

- All members of the viva panel must hold a PhD and have accredited research experience.
- Professionals from outside the university or clinical professionals who fail to comply with the requirement for research experience may be assessed on the basis of their curriculum vitae, and must have at least 6 years professional experience in a field related to the topic of the thesis.
- At least one of the panel members examining the defence of the thesis must be from the UPV/EHU.
- The person chairing the panel must have 2 or more recognised 6-year research periods (or equivalent merits).

Comment from the DOKe: In the 2020 rules, the accredited research experience for the members of the panel referred to the last 10 years: this reference has now been deleted. The requirements are simplified regarding participation in the panels for professionals from outside the university and clinical professionals. There is a guaranteed place on the panels for someone from the UPV/EHU, which ensures control over the documents. It is only an essential requirement for the chairperson of the panel to have two six-year research periods or equivalent.

## Chapter VIII. PhD qualifications

No significant changes

## Chapter IX International doctorate

### Article 39. Requirements for the 'International Doctorate' distinction

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the requirements for the 'International Doctorate' distinction, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree.

- A stay, or sojourn, abroad lasting three months may be the sum of several stays.
- In the event that the student carries out several stays, at least one of them must have a minimum duration of one month.

Comment from the DOKe: At the UPV/EHU, the 3-month stay requirement is already being applied in this way.



## Chapter X. Co-supervised theses

### Article 41. Co-supervised theses

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to co-supervised theses, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree.

- The possibility of a thesis being co-supervised between 3 universities (just one Spanish university) is included.
- The co-supervision stay does not count for an international distinction.

Comment from the DOKe: In the 2020 rules, co-supervision agreements were only envisaged between two universities. With the new 2024 regulations, an additional stay is required, apart from the co-supervision stay, in order to qualify for an international distinction.

### Article 44. Authorisation of co-supervised theses

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the authorisation of co-supervised theses.

- When the foreign university establishes a training period prior to the start of the research work itself, the deadline for signing the co-supervision agreement will be calculated from the end of said period.

Comment from the DOKe: The 2020 rules required the co-supervision to be established in the first year of enrolment at both universities, with the option to do so in the second year in exceptional cases. In the 2024 regulations, the possibility is opened up to request co-supervision outside of these early years, if the foreign university has a training period prior to the start of the research work itself.

## Chapter XI. Industrial doctorate

### Article 51. The 'Industrial Doctorate' distinction

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the 'Industrial doctorate' distinction, as a result of the 2023 modifications to the RD99/2011 royal decree.

- A new definition of the industrial doctorate has been made: "Industrial doctorates are those carried out in conjunction with social and economic stakeholders with the aim of fostering collaboration and the transfer and exchange of knowledge between the academic world and the social and economic environment, in either the public or the private sphere."
- Establishing an agreement is a compulsory requirement.

Comment from the DOKe: This new definition aims to boost the industrial doctorate in every area of knowledge. Before the 2023 modification to the RD99/2011, it was not necessary to establish an agreement with the industrial sector (external entity).

## Article 52. Requirements of the research project

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the requirements of the research project to achieve the 'Industrial Doctorate' distinction.

- The scientific-technical report that backs the industrial nature of the doctoral thesis is submitted in the deposition.
- The scientific-technical report must be validated by the supervisor and person responsible in the collaborating industry.

Comment from the DOKe: The compulsory requirement in the 2020 rules to submit the scientific-technical report one year in advance has been deleted. To this effect, it is important to read the second additional provision in the 2024 regulations.

## Article 53. Development of industrial theses

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the development of industrial theses.

- The person responsible for the stay in the industrial environment cannot be a member of the thesis panel.

Comment from the DOKe: With the 2020 rules, the person responsible for the stay in industry could form part of the thesis panel if they were not a co-supervisor. This is no longer possible under the 2024 regulations.

## Chapter XII. Theses in collaboration with external entities

No significant changes

## Chapter XIII. Thesis by published papers

### Article 56. Requirements

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the requirements corresponding to the submission of a thesis by published papers.

- One of these contributions may be an original paper on the status of the area under research, which complies with the conditions established by the CNEAI in the corresponding scientific field.
- The Academic Commission of the doctoral programme may accept an artistic creation/project as a contribution, if it complies with the conditions established by the CNEAI in the corresponding scientific field.
- In any case, only one of the three contributions can be of an artistic creation/project nature.

Comment from the DOKe: The changes aim to promote this way to submit a thesis in all fields of knowledge.

## **Article 57. Structure of the thesis by published papers**

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the structure of the thesis by published papers.

- The postgraduate commission authorises the structure of the thesis by published papers in each branch of knowledge.

Comment from the DOKE: The entire definition of the structure of the thesis by published papers has been deleted from the 2020 rules, to ensure greater flexibility with regard to the different branches of knowledge.

## **Chapter XIV. Collaboration agreements with external entities**

### **Article 60. Report justifying the agreements**

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to the collaboration agreements with external entities.

- All the agreements require a report.
- Within the framework of a specific student's doctoral training, it is the supervisors' job to draw up the relevant report.
- In general, the report justifying the agreement shall be signed by the coordinator of the doctoral programme, and it must be approved by the Doctoral School.
- When the agreement is promoted by the Doctoral School, the person responsible at the Doctoral School shall sign the report.
- When the agreement is promoted by a vice-chancellor, the report shall be signed by the relevant person from their office.
- The report justifying a mobility agreement must be signed by the coordinator of the doctoral programme. When the case in question is an outgoing stay, the report must be drawn up by the thesis supervisor, and when it is a question of an incoming stay, it shall be drawn up by the person from the UPV/EHU who is responsible for the stay at the university.

Comment from the DOKE: The changes made aim to improve the management of agreements.

## **Chapter XV. Extraordinary doctoral awards**

### **Article 64. Extraordinary doctoral awards**

The 2024 regulations are modified in several aspects related to extraordinary doctoral awards.

- The management of extraordinary awards is passed on to the Doctoral School.
- Not all extraordinary awards have to be given.

Comment from the DOKe: On this point, the UPV/EHU has adapted to meet the usual practice in all other universities in Spain, in which the doctoral schools are responsible for managing the extraordinary awards.

## FINAL PROVISIONS

### **Additional provision one. Authority to interpret these regulations.**

Authority in the matter of any interpretation or resolution issues that may arise during the application of these regulations is delegated to the Vice-Chancellor responsible for doctoral studies.

### **Additional provision two. Re-issuing of a doctorate with an 'Industrial Doctorate' distinction.**

Within the space of one year from the entry into force of these regulations, anyone who earned a doctorate from the UPV/EHU in accordance with the Implementing Rules for doctorate teaching approved by agreement of the UPV/EHU Governing Council on 12 December 2019 and who complies with the requirements for obtaining an industrial distinction established in the present regulations, may request that a new degree certificate be issued that includes said distinction. Issuing fees apply.

### **Transitional provision one. Doctoral candidates who are engaged in doctoral studies on the date on which these regulations enter into force.**

Doctoral candidates who, on the date on which these regulations enter into force, have already initiated their doctoral studies in accordance with previous regulations, will be subject to those regulations in everything related to their studies and the issuing of their degree. Notwithstanding, all provisions relating to viva panels, vivas and the assessment of doctoral theses, including extraordinary doctoral awards, as outlined in these regulations, will be applied to said doctoral candidates from the 2024-2025 academic year onwards.

### **Transitional provision two. Doctoral candidates who initiated their studies during the 2023-2024 academic year.**

Doctoral candidates who initiated their studies during the 2023-2024 academic year may request a third supervisor, who will start to fulfil that role during the 2024-2025 academic year.

The Postgraduate Service has created a [FAQs](#) text.