



Freie Universität Bozen
Libera Università di Bolzano
Università Lìedia de Bulsan

REGULATIONS ON Ph.D DEGREE PROGRAMMES

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ITEM I GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Art. 1 Scope

The present regulations, issued to implement art. 4 of Law No. 210 dated 3 July 1998, as amended by art. 19 of Law No. 240 dated 30 Dec 2010, govern the implementation and operation of Italian and international doctoral courses by the Free University of Bolzano in conformity with the general criteria and parameters determined by Ministerial Decree No. 45 dated 8 Feb 2013.

For the purposes of the present document:

- "University" is defined as the Free University of Bolzano
- "Course" is defined as a course with a duration of at least 3 years on one or more subjects pertaining to broad, organised and clearly defined disciplinary fields.

Art. 2 Training and research institutions

Pursuant to art. 2 of Ministerial Decree No. 45/2013, the University may require accreditation of doctoral courses even through agreements with or in consortium with public or private universities and research agencies, both foreign and Italian, that have met high cultural and scientific standards and have suitable personnel, organisation and equipment. Such agreements or consortiums may include the possibility of issuing double, multiple or joint degrees.

Also, according to the provisions of art. 4, par. 4, of Law No. 210 dated 3 July 1998, and for the purposes described in the preceding paragraph, the University may stipulate agreements with businesses, even in different countries; however, in such cases, the University will be the administrative home of the doctorate and will issue the academic degree.

Art. 3 Course goals

Doctoral research courses are an integral part of the 3rd level teaching programme offered by the University. They consist of study programmes the purpose of which is to deliver the skills required for performing highly qualified research at public or private entities and for becoming qualified to practice free-lance professions and thereby contribute to the development of The European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area. An additional purpose in this regard is to enhance the employment of qualified young people. The titles and possible curricula of doctoral courses are proposed by the entities requesting accreditation and are evaluated by the ANVUR (Italian Agency for University and Research Evaluation) during the course accreditation process.

ITEM II COURSE IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

Art. 4 Implementation

Doctoral courses are implemented after accreditation by the Ministry, upon receipt of a matching opinion from the ANVUR and in accordance with general European guidelines, by entities that engage in specific, broad, original, qualified, and ongoing teaching and research activities that are internationally recognised in the sectors pertaining to the doctorate. At least once a year, the University Council determines the financing for the implementation of doctoral courses.

The Faculty Councils of the individual faculties, even by mutual agreement, provide the bodies specified in art. 6 with proposals for implementing and renewing doctoral courses for which the University is the administrative home.

The items indicated in the proposal include:

- a) the area of research, the macro-sectors and the relative scientific-disciplinary sectors dealt with in the

- b) the subjects of research treated in the upcoming course cycle
- c) the aims and methods of the course, including possible internships at public or private entities, and periods of study abroad
- d) the minimum duration of the course
- e) the number of graduates the course can accommodate based on the scientific-teaching facilities and the staff involved in running the course
- f) the candidate selection methods and the test evaluation criteria
- g) the universities and public and private entities participating in the doctoral programme, and the relative financial commitments
- h) the names of the professors and researchers who are interested in sitting on the Teaching Committee
- i) the Admission Board that decides upon admission to the doctoral course
- j) the possible sources of external funding

Art. 5
Evaluation of course proposals

Proposals for implementing new doctoral courses are examined by the Studies Committee and the Academic Senate so that they can express their opinion on the importance from the scientific and cultural standpoints.

Art. 6
Implementation of doctoral courses

Acting upon proposal of the Faculty Councils of the individual faculties in the University, and after obtaining the opinions of the Studies Committee and the Academic Senate, the University Council considers the doctoral course proposals submitted and approves or rejects their implementation based on the information at its disposal.

Every year, the Rector orders the implementation of doctoral courses and issues the call concerning the entrance tests.

Doctoral courses begin at the start of the academic year.

Art. 7
Evaluation of suitability requirements

Every year, the Internal Evaluation Committee draws up a report, based on specific findings, regarding efficiency and correct operation of the implemented courses, presence of the suitability requirements and conformance with the educational goals. The report also considers the evaluations submitted by doctoral candidates.

Art. 8
Accreditation with the Ministry

The accreditation system consists initially of the authorisation to implement the doctoral courses, and then of regular verification that the accreditation requirements are still being met, as per the procedures outlined in art. 3 of Ministerial Decree No. 45/2013. Course accreditation may be granted or denied with a decree issued by the Ministry upon receipt of a matching opinion from the ANVUR, and is valid for five years, on condition that the courses pass the annual verification of the accreditation requirements. This verification is performed by the ANVUR and also takes into account the results of checks performed by the Internal Evaluation Committee.

ITEM III DOCTORATE GOVERNING BODIES

Art. 9 The Teaching Committee

The governing bodies of the research doctorate courses are the Teaching Committee and the Coordinator. The purpose of the Teaching Committee is to design and realise the doctoral courses. It oversees all of the educational activities involved in the doctorate, and it both directs and guides doctoral candidates as they carry out their scientific research.

The Teaching Committee for each doctoral course consists of at least 16 instructors. No more than one-fourth of these instructors may be researchers, and at least 12 must be full or associate professors belonging to macro-sectors consistent with the educational goals of the course. With regard to the composition of the Teaching Committee for the purpose of implementing doctoral courses through agreements or consortiums with other entities, reference is made to the provisions of Ministerial Decree No. 45/2013. For the purpose of calculating the required numbers of members of the Teaching Committee, each individual may be counted only once in Italy.

The members of the Teaching Committee must have achieved documented results in research at international level in the disciplines dealt with in the doctoral course. Particular emphasis will be given to results obtained over the 5 years preceding the date when the application for course accreditation was filed.

For professors and researchers from Italian universities, participation in a Teaching Committee at another university must be approved by the university to which the individual belongs.

The Faculty Councils name the members of the Teaching Committee by approving the evaluation questionnaire.

Degree candidates are duly represented on the Teaching Committee for discussing teaching and organisational issues. These representatives are elected according to the procedures contained in the regulations for election of the student representatives.

Art. 10 Coordinator

The Coordinator must be a full-time full professor, or in his absence a full-time associate professor, teaching at the Free University of Bolzano, and he may hold office even during multiple, simultaneous cycles of doctoral study. The Coordinator serves over the duration of the cycle.

The Coordinator convenes and presides over the Teaching Committee, and also supervises the activities involved in the course to insure that it runs in an orderly, regular manner. Election of the Coordinator is called by the oldest member of the Teaching Committee. All of the members of the Teaching Committee are entitled to vote for the election, and any full and associate professors sitting on the Teaching Committee can be elected. If the Coordinator resigns or is unable to serve, the Teaching Committee elects a replacement from among its members by absolute majority of those present, said election to take place within 30 days from the date of resignation or inability. In case of a tie vote, the member with greater tenure seniority is elected. If both candidates have equal tenure seniority, the candidate who is chronologically older is elected.

ITEM IV
ADMISSION TO DOCTORAL COURSES

Art. 11
Admission Requirements

Admission to the doctoral courses implemented by the Free University of Bolzano is open to anyone of any age or citizenship who has a specialist/master degree or other degree awarded according to the regulatory system in force prior to Ministerial Decree No. 509/99 and Ministerial Decree No. 270/2004, or a suitable equivalent degree awarded abroad. Admission is also open to anyone who will be awarded such a degree no later than October 31 of the year when application is submitted. If a candidate is selected but has not been awarded the required degree by the aforementioned deadline, admission will be denied. The suitability of foreign degrees is determined by the Doctoral Commission in accordance with regulations applicable in Italy and in the country where the degree was awarded, and with the applicable treaties or international agreements on the acknowledgement of educational qualifications to the purpose of furthering study.

Art. 12
Call for Applications

The call for application to doctoral courses is issued by the Rector. It specifies the number of grants and apprenticeship contracts to be awarded as per art. 5 of Legis. Decree No. 167 dated 14 September 2011, as well as other possible forms of financial aid from research funds or other University resources, including the research grants provided for in art. 22 of Law No. 240 dated 30 December 2010, which may be awarded to one or more candidates whose suitability is determined during selection. Furthermore, the call for application specifies the tuition and fees to be paid by doctoral candidates, also in light of the provisions of law on access to education.

If the call for application indicates a number of places set aside for students with foreign degrees, for winners of grants from foreign countries or for participants in specific international mobility programmes, the University may establish differentiated admission procedures and, in such case, will draw up a separate ranking of candidates.

The call for application is issued in Italian, German and English, and is publicised in compliance with art. 8, par. 2 of Ministerial Decree No. 45/2013. It must specify the criteria for admission and for the evaluation of qualifications, as well as any written tests (including those that are recognised internationally) or oral tests required.

Art. 13
Admission Board for admission to the doctoral courses

This Board is indicated in the course implementation proposal for each doctorate cycle. Each Board consists of three members chosen from tenured university professors and researchers in the scientific disciplinary sectors to which the course refers. The Commission may be supplemented with no more than two experts (who may be foreigners) chosen from among public and private research agencies and organisations. Substitute members are also named.

The Presidency of the Board is assumed by the full professor with the longest seniority; if two such professors have equal seniority, the Presidency is assumed by the older professor.

If no full professors are sitting on the Commission, the Presidency is assumed by the associate professor with the longest seniority; if two such professors have equal seniority, the Presidency is assumed by the older professor.

Art. 14 Admission procedure

Admission to doctoral courses is based on a public selection the purpose of which is to determine and evaluate the preparation of the candidates and their attitude toward research. Said selection must be completed no later than September 30 of each year.

Admission to doctoral courses is granted according to a general ranking based on merit, which is drawn up by the Admission Board in charge. Said ranking extends until all the places specified in the call for application have been filled. The ranking is approved with a decree issued by the Rector and is published on the University's website.

If an admitted candidate vacates his or her place before the start of the course, another candidate is assigned to the vacated place in accordance with the ranking.

If an admitted candidate vacates his or her place or is expelled during the first term of the course, the Teaching Committee considers filling the vacant place with another candidate, in accordance with the ranking.

In the case of joint projects with institutions within or outside the EU, specific admission procedures and organisational approaches may be adopted which take into account the characteristics of the individual projects, as long as they have been implemented within the purview of accredited doctoral courses.

Art. 15 Fees and grants

After consulting with the Academic Senate, the University Council establishes the admission and tuition fees required for attending doctoral courses at the Free University of Bolzano, and also decides on the monetary values of grants and the conditions under which they are awarded.

Grants are awarded after a comparative evaluation of the candidates' merit and in accordance with their position on the relative rankings. If two candidates have equal merit, an evaluation of their financial situations will determine who will receive the grant, as per Italian Prime Minister's Decrees dated 30 April 1997 and 9 April 2001.

Grants have a duration of one year and are renewed on condition that the doctoral candidate has completed the programme of required activities specified for the preceding year, as verified according to the procedures established in the proposal for course implementation. If the verification is positive, renewal is obligatory.

The monetary amount of the Grant, which is paid in deferred monthly instalments, is initially determined to be no less than the amount specified in the Ministerial Decree dated 18 June 2008 and published in No. 241 of the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic on 14 October 2008. If the doctoral candidate is authorised by the Teaching Committee to engage in research work abroad, said amount shall be increased by a maximum of 50 per cent over a period not exceeding 18 months.

For each doctorate cycle to be implemented, an average of at least six grants must be available per course, and no fewer than four grants must be available in each individual doctoral cycle. To meet said requirement, other forms of financing set aside for grants, with at least an equivalent monetary amount, may be included.

Starting in the second year, each doctoral candidate shall be granted a budget for research activities in Italy and abroad, which shall be of adequate size for the type of course and in any case shall amount to no less than 10% of his or her study grant. The relative funds shall be set aside from the financial resources listed on the balance sheet of entities accredited according to applicable law. If the doctoral candidate is found to be undeserving of the grant upon evaluation for its renewal, or if he or she forgoes the grant, the unused portion shall remain available to the University for the same purpose.

The principles outlined in this article shall not apply to students receiving grants from foreign countries or to beneficiaries of financial support provided in special mobility programs governed by specific regulations.

The use of a grant for pursuing a doctoral course is incompatible with other sources of personal income earned from employment either as an employee or a freelancer, nor is it compatible with a seniority pension, except for the 40 hours of teaching assistance provided for by Ministerial Decree 45/2013. Furthermore, the grant cannot be combined with other study grants, but may be combined with grants intended for supplementing the educational and research activity through stays in foreign countries.

Art. 16

Transfer from other Universities

PhD students who have already attended a doctoral course at another university, Italian or foreign, for at least one year can request in advance the authorization to enrol to 2nd year of the PhD course at the Free University of Bolzano under the following conditions:

- a) there must be a PhD degree program equivalent to the previous one attended by the applicant PhD student. Said doctoral course should have comparable goals in research and education.
- b) the PhD student must certify the exams sat at his/her home university so that they can be regularly recognized by the PhD Committee in charge.
- c) the PhD student must obtain a positive evaluation of the interview taken with the PhD Committee (Teaching Committee)
- d) the candidate PhD student must have been already admitted to 2nd year of the program of his/her home university. The PhD Committee is in charge of this decision.

In case of transfer from a foreign university, the PhD Committee should evaluate with regards to contents, if the PhD study career corresponds to the conditions above mentioned.

Once the applicant PhD student obtains the authorization in advance mentioned above, the transfer should be entered in the prescription portal. This can be done only if the student left the home university being already enrolled in 2nd year. The PhD committee, together with the service in charge will consider the possibility of giving a grant. The study place should be available among the ones already planned within the receiving doctoral courses.

The PhD Committee in charge states a number of credits that can be recognized (credits achieved during the study at the home university) and name a tutor.

If a PhD student of the University wants to move to another university, she/he needs to apply for a transfer within the deadline set for the enrolment to the second year.

ITEM V COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Art. 17 Duration

The duration of doctoral courses may not be less than three academic years.

Art. 18 Leave of absence, interruption and withdrawal

Attendance at course activities is mandatory, as specified in article 19.

Absences exceeding thirty days will result in suspension of the grant. The Coordinator is responsible for notifying the competent administrative offices regarding the failure by any course enrolees to meet the attendance requirements.

A leave of absence from attending course activities may be granted upon request by the doctoral candidate, and with subsequent approval by the Teaching Committee, in the following cases:

- a) parental leave

- b) serious, documented illness
- c) special family situations
- d) enrolment in TFA (active apprenticeship) courses

A leave of absence may not exceed one calendar year.

The provisions for the defence of maternity contained in the decree issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security on 12 July 2007, as published in No. 247 of the Official Gazette of the Italian Republic on 23 October 2007, apply to female doctoral candidates. Absences due to causes other than those listed in the first paragraph must be expressly authorised by the Teaching Committee.

After the cause of a leave of absence has ended, the Teaching Committee shall decide upon the methods for recuperating the missed educational activities; however, the duration of the course may not be shortened for any reason. The amount of the grant received by a doctoral candidate who is readmitted during the year will be reduced by the amount already paid in the year when the absence occurred.

Art. 19 Expulsion

Upon justified decision of the Teaching Committee, a doctoral candidate may be expelled from a doctoral course, with resulting loss of the grant, in the following cases:

- a) negative evaluation by the Teaching Committee during the annual verification of the candidate's activities
- b) permanent employment, or acceptance of temporary employment for performing work or services, without authorisation by the Teaching Committee
- c) prolonged, unjustified absences
- d) failure to fulfil the obligations specified in art. 19 herein
- e) serious reasons that have come to the attention of the Teaching Committee

Art. 20 Rights and obligations of the doctoral candidate

Enrolees in doctoral courses must attend course activities, perform study and research at the facilities made available for such activities and, at the end of each year of the course, provide the Teaching Committee with a report on the research carried out. Admission to a doctoral course results in an exclusive, full-time commitment. As an integral part of their educational plan, and upon approval by the Teaching Committee, but with no increase in the study grant, doctoral candidates may tutor students in bachelor and master courses, and engage in supplementary teaching activities; however, the latter may not exceed forty hours per academic year. After the third year of the doctoral course, the latter limit shall no longer apply. Doctoral candidates who do not receive a grant from the University may do remunerative work upon approval by the Teaching Committee.

The same authorization will be necessary for working activities if dealing with other institutions, which are operating within the same topical area of the PhD program.

Public employees admitted to doctoral courses are entitled to a leave of absence for the normal duration of the course, as provided for in their collective labour contract. When compatible with administrative needs, employees of public companies obtain special study leave with or without monetary compensation, pursuant to Law No. 476 dated 13 August 1984 as amended, unless such leave is explicitly waived. The leave is granted only when such employees enrol in a doctoral course for the first time, regardless of the academic subject involved.

ITEM VI CONFERRAL OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE

Art. 21 Evaluation of the research thesis

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy, which is abbreviated in Italian with "Dott.Ric." and in English with "Ph.D." is awarded upon positive evaluation of a research thesis that contributes to advancing knowledge or methodologies in the chosen field of investigation. The doctoral thesis, accompanied by a synopsis in Italian or English, must be written in Italian, German or English, but may be written in another language upon authorisation by the Teaching Committee. The thesis, complete with a report by the candidate on the activities carried out during the doctoral course and on any publications issued, is evaluated by at least two highly qualified professors (who may belong to foreign institutions) that have taken no part in awarding the candidate's doctor of philosophy degree. Said professors, who will hereafter be called "evaluators", are named during the final academic year of the doctoral course by the Teaching Committee, upon recommendation of the supervisor of each candidate. The evaluators write a critical opinion of the thesis and either recommend its admission to public discussion or postpone such admission for a period not exceeding six months, if they consider that important additions or corrections are needed. After said period has passed, the thesis is in any case admitted to public discussion, accompanied by a new opinion written by the same evaluators that includes their view of the corrections or additions which may have been made. The public discussion takes place before an Examination Board composed as described in Art. 21 below. At the end of the discussion, the thesis is either approved or rejected, and the relative reasons are expressed collectively in writing. The Examination Board may confer the doctoral degree *cum laude* by unanimous vote when the results of the thesis are of special scientific import.

Art. 22 Examination Board

The Examination board is named by decree of the Rector after consulting with the Teaching Committee for the doctoral course in which the doctoral candidate is enrolled.

The Commission consists of three members chosen from university professors and researchers in the scientific disciplinary sectors to which the course refers. Substitute members are also named at the same time. At least two members must belong to Italian or foreign universities that are not involved in the degree course and may not be members of the Teaching Committee.

The Commission may be supplemented with no more than two experts (who may be foreigners) chosen from public and private research institutions.

The President of the Commission is named according to the criteria outlined in article 13 above.

The Examination board must complete their work not later than 90 days after their nomination.

Art. 23 Admission to the final examination

Doctoral candidates enrolled in the final year of their course must submit to the Teaching Committee an application for admission to the final examination. To obtain postponement, the candidate must submit to the Teaching Committee, within 45 days from the end of the course, a special request outlining the reason for such postponement. The Committee will then grant or reject the request.

The competent office will provide candidates with the names of the Examination board members and also inform them of the date and time of the final examination. This notification will be made by registered mail with return receipt and will be sent at least 30 days before the examination date.

The candidates must provide each member of the Examination Board with a copy of the thesis accompanied by the evaluators' initial critical opinion, along with the evaluators' subsequent written opinion if the thesis was postponed to make corrections or additions.

The examination before the Examination board consists of a public discussion of the final thesis. The Commission writes a report on the examination and, for each candidate admitted to the final examination, also writes a report on the accomplishments on the basis of which the decision to award the degree was taken.

Art. 24

Conferment of the Doctor of Philosophy degree

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy is awarded when the final examination is passed.

The degree is issued by the Rector of the Free University of Bolzano, who will provide the relevant certification upon the candidate's request.

After the degree is awarded, a digital copy of the thesis is sent by the Free University of Bolzano to the national libraries in Rome and Florence.

Art. 25 Visiting Phd Students

Phd students of other Universities, Italian or foreign, who are on research stay at Free University of Bolzano will be managed by means of a specific software and can access the buildings, the Library, the scientific network and the canteen. No fees are required.

Art. 26 Temporary provisions

These regulations are issued without prejudice to the application of previous doctoral course regulations on courses implemented before the regulations herein took effect.