

Regulation 22/2021 of the Academic Commission of the Doctoral Program in Biomedicine

Regulation 22/2021 issued by the Governing Council in ordinary session on May 24, 2021, to regulate the Organization and Internal Operations of the Academic Commission of the Doctorate Program in Biomedicine at the University of Córdoba.

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Royal Decree 99/2011, dated January 28, which regulates the official academic syllabus of the doctorate, established the academic syllabus of the doctorate and the criteria for the verification and evaluation of new doctoral programs, in addition to creating Doctoral Schools, academic commissions for the doctorate programs, and the role of the coordinator. Academic commissions are an essential element in the organization and operation of doctoral programs, and specific competencies are assigned to these programs by R.D. 99/2011.

Regulation 57/2020, concerning doctoral studies at the University of Córdoba, was approved by the Governing Council in an ordinary session on November 27, 2020, to regulate basic aspects that affect the organization of the doctorate, which include the definition of doctoral programs and the appointment of academic committees. It also establishes that they must have Regulations for Organization and Internal Operations which must be approved by the Governing Council of the University of Córdoba, after a favourable report from the Master's Degrees and Doctorates Commission. For this reason, the following Regulations are hereby presented, which regulate the composition, structure, functions and administration of the sessions and publication of agreements.

Article 1. Purpose.

These regulations regulate the structure, organization and operation of the Academic Commission of the Doctoral Program in Biomedicine in accordance with the provisions of Regulation 57/2020 for doctoral studies at the University of Córdoba, issued at an ordinary session on November 27, 2020.

Article 2. Role.

The Academic Commission for the Doctoral Program (ACDP) is responsible for the organization, definition, design, updating, quality control and coordination of the Doctoral Program, supervision of the progress of research and training, as well as giving authorization for the presentation of the thesis of each doctoral student on the Program.

Article 3. Composition and appointments.

1. The members of the ACDP will be proposed by each Doctoral Program among those people who meet the requirements to be line managers (Art. 16.4 of Regulation 57/2020 of the UCO doctoral studies) and will be approved by the Masters and Doctorate Commission. In the case of Interuniversity Programs, an Academic Subcommittee will be created based at the University of Córdoba, which must meet the same requirements as the ACDP of the said University.
2. Regarding the representation of the University of Córdoba in the Academic Commission of the Interuniversity Program, the stipulations in the corresponding signed collaboration agreement and in the verification document will be followed.
3. The composition of the ACDP will include the person who coordinates the program, plus individuals from any of the lines of research attached to it; researchers and doctorate researchers both national and international organizations that have established specific agreements for doctoral studies with the University of Córdoba may also be admitted.
4. The composition of the Academic Committees for Interuniversity Programs or for programs in which organizations, entities, centres or institutions involved in R+D+i participate will be regulated in the corresponding agreement.
5. Members of the ACDP will be appointed for a period of 3 years, and may be reappointed for a single period of equal duration, except in exceptional cases, which must be approved by the Commission for Masters and Doctorates. Once the mandate expires, they will continue exercising their functions until the appointment of new members.
6. Members of the Academic Commission may be relieved of their position for any of the following reasons:
 - a) by legal termination of the mandate,
 - b) by express resignation, in writing, to the coordinator
 - c) due to loss of or changes in the academic and/or administrative status by which they were appointed,
 - d) for any other cause included in the regulations.

Article 4. Functions of the ACDP.

The functions of the ACDP are as follows:

- a) To design, organize, coordinate and update the Doctoral Program, as well as the training and research activities, in order to guarantee their academic excellence.
- b) To propose changes in the verification report, follow-up and accreditation, proactively encouraging improvements to be made.
- c) To propose a candidate to coordinate the Doctoral Program, and to assist them in their work.
- d) To propose the lines of investigation, members and people in charge, the maximum number of eligible students and the selection criteria.
- e) To report annually on the compliance with the requirements of the lines of research included in the program.
- f) To propose to the Master's Degree and Doctorate Commission the inclusion in the lines of

- research of doctors from public research organizations and from the business world.
- g) To carry out the process of assessing the merits and student admissions to the Doctorate by applying the established selection criteria and procedures, which will be made public; also, to manage, where applicable, the waiting list for places after each admission period.
 - h) To establish the complements for methodological and scientific training of doctoral students when required.
 - i) To assign doctoral students a person belonging to the Doctoral Program as their tutor and/or director of their thesis.
 - j) To make any changes in the appointment of the tutor and/or director of the Doctoral Thesis, under the terms provided in these Regulations.
 - k) To plan, on an annual basis, the specific training activities of the Doctoral Program, and validate other external training activities that may be offered throughout the academic year, after approval by the Commission of Masters and Doctorates.
 - l) To evaluate, on an annual basis, the document containing the research plan and the activities of doctoral students, in accordance with the procedure and deadlines established in these Regulations.
 - m) To authorize, where appropriate, part-time doctoral studies, as well as extensions and temporary withdrawals from the program by students who formally request it with justification.
 - n) To authorize stays abroad, taking into account the guarantee presented by the director of the thesis.
 - o) To exercise the powers entrusted to them by these Regulations with regard to the preparation, presentation and defence of Doctoral Theses.
 - p) To guarantee the quality of the Doctoral Theses submitted for evaluation
 - q) To foster the international projection of the Program, promoting the mobility of both doctoral tutors and doctoral students, including the formalization of agreements with foreign institutions.
 - r) To promote the training of doctors in companies.
 - s) To issue reports concerning any processes carried out in the Program or those which are essential to the development of doctoral theses.
 - t) To ensure compliance with the regulations applicable to doctoral studies within the Doctoral Program.
 - u) To update the information regarding the Doctoral Program and ensure it is updated regularly and serves as the normal means of communication and dissemination.
 - v) To fulfil any other function assigned to them under the current provisions or entrusted to them by the governing body of the faculty.

Article 5. Coordination of the ACDP.

1. One person will be appointed to coordinate each Doctoral Program, proposed by the ACDP, who must then be approved by the Master's and Doctorate Commission and designated by the Rector.
2. The coordination of the Doctoral Program must be assigned to a suitable researcher and must be endorsed by compliance with the following requirements:
 - a) Having carried out at least two six-year periods of research activity, recognized according to the provisions of Royal Decree 1086/1989 on the remuneration of the university teaching staff, dated August 28, , whose evaluated period includes at least one of the last seven years or, in the case of teachers or researchers contracted from other organizations or institutions to which the above criterion does not apply, its equivalent, according to the CNEAI assessment parameters for granting six-year terms of research activity in the different fields.
 - b) Having directed two doctoral theses in the last five years that have obtained the maximum rating and have given rise to at least 2 publications in journals with an impact index, or 2 relevant contributions in their scientific field, according to the criteria of the National Commission for the Evaluation of Research Activities.

3. The person who coordinates the Program will be appointed for a period of 3 years, which may be renewed for only one period of equal duration, except in exceptional cases, which must be approved by the Commission of Master's Degrees and Doctorates. Once the mandate is over, they will continue in their role until a new coordinator is appointed.

4. In the case of Interuniversity Doctoral Programs, a coordinator will be assigned by the organisers in Córdoba, in accordance with the established procedure and requirements of the Doctoral Programs of the University of Córdoba.

5. The coordinator may propose the appointment of a secretary from among the members of the ACDP, who must be approved by the Commission, as a prior step to their presentation and approval by the Commission for Master's Degrees and Doctorates.

Article 6. Duties of the program coordinator.

The duties of the program coordinator are as follows:

- a) To represent the Doctoral Program.
- b) To oversee the execution of the agreements of the governing bodies of the Doctorate School and the ACDP.
- c) To promote all the procedures which are the responsibility of the Doctoral Program related to the admission of students and the development and presentation of Doctoral Theses.
- d) To ensure compliance with the Code of Good Practices in force at the Doctorate School.
- e) To give advice to enrolled doctoral students regarding issues related to the Doctoral Program.
- f) To ensure that the public information about the Doctoral Program available on the web is up to date.
- g) To fulfil any other function assigned to them in the current provisions or entrusted to them by the governing bodies of the Doctoral School.

Article 7. ACDP internal operation.

1. The ACDP will be constituted at its first meeting by signing an Act of Constitution of all the members, as expressly indicated by the Coordinator and Secretary, if applicable.

2. The ACDP will be convened at least once each semester, and may also be convened in extraordinary circumstances, on the initiative of the President or at the request of at least 20% of the members of the commission. All meetings in which an urgent issue must be addressed, and on which the session is mainly focused, will be considered extraordinary meetings.

3. The sessions will be convened by email from the President or another delegated person. The call will state the date, time and place of the meeting (or will provide a link if the meeting is online), as well as providing the Meeting Agenda, including all the documentation needed to prepare the session or the place or link where it can be found. For ordinary meetings, attendees must be notified at least 48 hours in advance. For extraordinary meetings, the minimum notice will be 24 hours.

4. To constitute a valid meeting, in the first call, the attendance of the President and that of at least half plus one of the members of the ACDP are required. In the second call, the President and at least one third of the members of the ACDP must attend. If, due to *force majeure*, the President is unable to attend the meeting, the Presidency will be undertaken by the person with the highest category and seniority at the University of Córdoba.

5. Matters which do not appear in the Meeting Agenda may not be debated or agreed on, unless the total ACDP membership is present and the matter to be treated is declared urgent by a favourable majority vote.

6. The agreements will be adopted by a simple majority vote among the attendees. In case of a tie, the Presidency will have the casting vote. Secret ballot may only be used in any of the following cases: i) to elect or appoint a person to a position; ii) when an agreement is adopted that directly affects the personal or professional sphere of the interested parties. The secret ballot will be carried out by means of the attendees, after proving their identity, handing in voting slips to the person who occupies the Secretary of the Council.

7. Whoever acts as Secretary of the Council will draw up the minutes of the sessions, which will contain a concise list of the matters discussed, persons involved, incidents produced and agreements adopted.

8. The minutes will be kept by the Doctoral School. All interested parties will be informed about the agreements adopted via the usual channels of communication.

9. In the cases where the topic to be dealt with requires it, and to ensure the smooth running of affairs, the ACDP may request the advice and support of the staff of the Doctorate School or any other university services. These external personnel will be obliged to maintain confidentiality in the exercise of their functions, as established by the current legislation.

10. The ACDP may appoint subcommittees to help them perform their relevant functions. All agreements to create the subcommittees will be communicated to the Master's Degree and Doctorate Commission. In all cases, any proposals presented by the subcommittees must be subsequently approved by the ACDP.

Article 8. Quality criteria of the Doctoral Program.

1. Doctoral students

a. Criteria for admission to the Doctoral Program

In general, access to an official doctoral program is regulated by RD 99/2011, dated January 28. Article 33 of Regulation 57/2020 concerning doctoral studies at Córdoba University establishes that the University, through the corresponding ACDP, may establish additional requirements and criteria for the selection and admission of students to a specific Doctorate Program, which may include the requirement for supplementary training in research, equivalent in educational value to research credits from studies leading to a Master's Degree (30-32 ECTS).

*Admission requirements and criteria must be approved by the Master's Degree and Doctorate Commission and will be included in the corresponding degree verification report (Art. 33.3, Regulation 57/20).

b. Quality control of the doctoral thesis (normal thesis and thesis by compendium)

The Doctoral Thesis will consist of an original research work performed by the doctoral student in any field of knowledge. The quality criteria, modalities, presentation, exhibition, defence and tribunal are regulated in Regulation 57/2020 of the University of Córdoba doctoral studies. The ACDP is responsible for guaranteeing the quality of theses submitted for evaluation by Doctorate students, and may propose special, separate evaluations, apart from publications in branches of knowledge recognised by the ANECA and CNEAI, as well as additional criteria in a doctoral program, which must be approved by the Masters' Degree and Doctorate Commission and must be made available to the public.

The ACDP proposes, where appropriate, the following additional criteria:

1. In general, within the framework of the ORPHEUS recommendations, it is considered that a Doctoral Thesis in Biomedicine must be equivalent in length to at least 3 complete, full-length scientific articles of the type which are usually published in indexed magazines with area censurs. The ACDP will assess the quality of the doctoral thesis according to the quality criteria established by the Institute of Postgraduate Studies of the University of Córdoba (Reg. 57/20). The signs of quality will consist of advanced results being reported in publications accepted by journals of international dissemination included in the Journal Citation Reports. These signs of quality will be understood as sufficient indications that any of the following conditions are met:
 - a. Having an original article published in a journal whose impact index is included in the 1st quartile of the corresponding area of the Journal Citation Reports.
 - b. Have two original publications from the 2nd or 3rd quartile of the Journal Citation Reports, of which at least one is in journals in the 2nd quartile of the corresponding area.
 - c. Have an original article published in the 2nd quartile of the Journal Citation Reports and a bibliographic review in, at least, the 2nd quartile of the Journal Citation Reports.

In all publications, the first author must be the Doctorate student (an author recognized in the publication as "equal contributor" will also be considered as the first author). In all cases, the publication must have resulted directly from the writing of the Thesis.

As a general rule, letters to the editor, editorials, conference proceedings or brief articles of less than 3 pages will not be considered as articles which may be submitted for evaluation, apart from exceptional cases where the manuscript is of outstanding quality and has been published in journals such as Nature, Science, etc.

2. If the Doctorate student is not the first author, being among the first three authors of a published article in the 1st decile of the Journal Citation Reports will count as sufficient evidence for consideration.

3. If the Thesis opts for the International Mention, it will be sufficient if, in addition to meeting the requirements established in the University of Córdoba regulations, a preview of the results the Thesis has been published in a JCR, in which the Doctorate student is the first author.

4. The Thesis may also be presented as a compendium of publications. In this case, the doctoral thesis may be composed of a set of works published by the doctoral student and derived from the approved research plan. The set of works must be made up of a minimum of 3 articles published or accepted in journals included in the first three quartiles of the list of journals in that specialist field and referenced in the latest list published by Journal Citation Reports (SCI and/or SSCI).

5. In addition, the Academic Doctorate Commission will take into account whether the obligatory and optional training objectives included in the Training Plan have been satisfactorily met, as established for the Doctorate student.

* The approved additional criteria must be included in the corresponding title verification report, will be valid for at least two academic years, and cannot be applied to students who are enrolled in the Doctoral Program at the time of its approval until two academic years have passed (Art. 51.7, Reg. 57/20).

2. Requirements for Tutors and Directors of Doctoral Theses

a. Maximum number of theses which can be supervised simultaneously in the Program

The ACDP is responsible for regulating the maximum number of doctoral theses that can be supervised simultaneously within each Doctoral Program, by considering the number of theses read rather than those directed in the last 7 years (Art. 50.3, Reg. 57/20). The current regulations propose authorizing a maximum of 10 simultaneously directed Doctoral Theses for the same teacher on the Program. However, considering the number of theses read rather than those directed in the last 7 years and the quality indices of these Theses, the ACDP may authorize the direction of a greater number of Doctoral Theses.

b. Additional criteria for directing doctoral theses

The person assigned by the ACDP to direct each doctoral student must have accredited research experience (Art. 15.6, Reg. 57/20), and the ACDP may establish additional criteria, based on an analysis of the situation and assessment of the results of previously supervised theses carried out in the Doctoral Programs.

Without prejudice to the contents of the Regulations for Doctoral Studies of the University of Córdoba, the Academic Commission of the Doctoral Program in Biomedicine will apply the following criteria:

1. Having completed, at least, a six-year term of work in the last 6 years, or having published publications equivalent to those required to obtain such a six-year term. This requirement may be replaced by being the Principal Investigator of a research project obtained in competitive calls or having directed, in the last five years, a Doctoral Thesis which has obtained the maximum rating and has given rise to at least 2 publications in journals with an impact index or the same number of relevant contributions in their scientific field, according to the criteria of the National Commission for the Evaluation of Research Activity.

2. The application for Academic Tutelage, in which the director or directors will be appointed, must in all cases, be authorized by the person leading the Research Team, as a guarantee of the availability of the economic and material resources needed to complete the Doctoral Thesis.

*Any additional requirements approved will be valid for at least two academic courses, and cannot be applied to students enrolled in the Doctorate Program at the time of its approval until two academic years have passed (Art. 50.9, Regulation 57/20).

First additional provision.

In matters not provided for in these Regulations, the operation of the Academic Committee will be governed by the Regulations for the operation of the Governing Council of the University of Córdoba and its Commissions, by the Statutes of the University of Córdoba, and by the currently applicable general legislation.

Second additional provision.

All references contained in these Regulations naming bodies, positions and members of the university community, as well as any references made to the masculine or feminine gender, shall be understood as applying equally to men and women, regardless of the gender of those who perform them.

Single final provision. Publication and commencement.

These Regulations will be published in the "Official Bulletin of the University of Córdoba", and will enter into force the day following their publication.