

# **Internal Regulations of the PhD Program in Biology**

## **PART I**

### **General provisions**

#### **Article 1 The PhD Program**

1. The PhD Program in Biology (hereinafter referred to as the "Program") aims to provide the skills necessary for conducting high-level research activities in both public and private sectors, as well as qualifying for independent professional practice, thereby contributing to the realization of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area.
2. The official language of the PhD Program is English. Seminars, courses, intermediate assessments, exams, and the dissertation defense are conducted in English. Some events may also take place in other languages; moreover, the doctoral thesis may be written in a language other than the official language of the program, subject to approval by the Board of Faculty.
3. The Department administratively hosting the Program is the Department of Biology.
4. The University of Pisa promotes equality and equal opportunities between men and women. Therefore, in this Regulation, the masculine gender is used, which should be understood as referring to both sexes, solely for the sake of simplicity and brevity.

#### **Article 2 Bodies of the PhD Program**

1. The bodies of the Program include the Coordinator and the Board of Faculty as defined in the University Regulations on PhD Programs (hereinafter referred to as the "University Regulations"), issued under D.R. No. 696/2017 and subsequent amendments and additions.
2. The Coordinator may appoint a Vice-Coordinator, with powers to act in place of the Coordinator in case of impediment or absence, and an Academic Committee, with powers to organize educational activities and monitor activities related to each doctoral candidate's annual progression.
3. The Board of Faculty is composed in accordance with gender balance, as stipulated by the University Regulations. Membership in the Board of Faculty is subject to approval by the Board itself, which assesses the applicant's qualifications in relation to the educational objectives of the Program. New requests for participation must be submitted to the Board of Faculty along with a letter of motivation and the applicant's curriculum vitae.
4. Additionally, the Board of Faculty includes, solely for the discussion of educational and organizational issues, two representatives elected from and by the enrolled students of the Program. Voting procedures are governed by the norms specified in the University's general regulations and the University Statute. These representatives do not participate in the discussion and decision-making concerning the annual evaluation of students and the organization of the final examination. Their term of office is two years.
5. The Academic Committee holds purely instructional functions in preparing documents related to teaching and verifying compliance by doctoral candidates, on which the Board itself subsequently deliberates. These include attendance at courses and seminars, submission of doctoral projects, annual reports, and admission to additional doctoral positions. The Academic Committee consists of between 5 and 10 members, including a President, chosen and appointed by the Coordinator from among the faculty members of the Board.

6. Meetings of the Board of Faculty are conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in the University Regulations on PhD Programs. They may involve the participation of some or all members via teleconference, simultaneous telephone conference, or other electronic means that allow simultaneous connection of participants, as provided for in the University Regulations for conducting collegial sessions remotely, under D.R. No. 1280/2022 dated July 21, 2022. In urgent cases, consultations for purely instructional purposes and subsequent decisions may also be conducted remotely or via email.

## **PART II**

### **Admission**

#### **Article 3**

##### **Admission**

1. According to the University Regulations, admission to the doctoral program is based on either a public selection process or through the procedure for additional admissions.

#### **Article 4**

##### **Admission Tests**

1. Admission to the PhD Program in Biology is achieved through the formation of a merit ranking (listing both winners and eligible candidates) for each of the research topics advertised. The competition involves evaluating the curriculum vitae and conducting an interview related to the research theme of the advertised project. Up to 40 points may be awarded for the curriculum vitae evaluation and up to 60 points for the interview. To pass the admission tests, each candidate must score at least 30 points for the curriculum vitae evaluation and 40 points for the interview. The interview can be conducted in Italian or English; if conducted in Italian, the candidate's knowledge of the English language will also be assessed. The same procedures apply for selection with reserved spots for graduates of foreign universities.

#### **Article 5**

##### **Examination Committee**

1. The examination committees for admission to the PhD research courses are appointed in accordance with the University Regulations.

## **PART III**

### **Attendance of PhD Courses**

#### **Article 6**

##### **Supervisors**

1. Within three months from the start of the PhD program, each first-year doctoral candidate enrolled in the PhD Program in Biology presents their research project through written and oral presentations in the presence of the Board of Faculty and all enrolled doctoral candidates in Biology. The Board of Faculty approves the research plan of each doctoral candidate and appoints a supervisor and co-supervisor, as stipulated by the University Regulations.

## **Article 7**

### **Compatible and Incompatible Activities**

1. Regarding the compatibility of work activities with doctoral studies, reference is made to the provisions of the University Regulations on doctoral research. Among the compatible activities, up to forty hours of supplementary and/or subsidiary teaching activities are allowed per academic year. Any other paid activity not directly related to the research activities stipulated for the doctoral candidate must be authorized by the Board.

## **Article 8**

### **Educational Activities and Assessment**

1. At the conclusion of each academic year and following receipt of the reasoned opinion of the supervisor, the Board of Faculty assesses the completion of the educational and research activities required for each doctoral candidate, according to the following differentiated procedures for students in different years:
  - a. First-year doctoral candidates: each candidate presents the progress of their research in written form to the two supervisors and orally to the Board of Faculty by the end of the first year.
  - b. Second-year doctoral candidates: each candidate presents the progress of their research by preparing a written report and discussing it in the presence of the two supervisors. Additionally, independent of the academic year transition timings, a day will be scheduled for discussion and interaction between doctoral candidates and faculty, during which second-year doctoral candidates will present a poster on their research activities. This day, involving all doctoral candidates in the Biology PhD program, will be open to all department faculty members.
  - c. Third-year doctoral candidates: each candidate presents the progress of their research in written form to the two supervisors and orally to the Board of Faculty by the end of the third year.

In cases where it is impossible to present the research in person, the doctoral candidate may submit a reasoned request to the Chair of the Doctoral Education Committee in Biology to present their work via teleconference (conference call).
  - d. All documents, reports from students and evaluators, must be provided in English.
2. At the end of the evaluation process, an evaluation form is prepared with a judgment based on which the Doctoral Faculty Board approves or denies advancement to the next year for doctoral candidates in the first and second years of the program, and assesses suitability for thesis submission to evaluators for third-year doctoral candidates.
3. Regarding educational activities, each doctoral candidate is required to follow a mandatory educational plan (hereinafter "exclusive educational offerings"). This constitutes one of the necessary requirements for admission to the public defense. Throughout the doctoral program, candidates must attend one or more courses, totaling at least 60 hours, offered by the Biology PhD program. Each course within the exclusive educational offerings may conclude, at the discretion of the instructor, with a positive assessment or a certificate of attendance from the instructor; alternatively, the candidate may self-certify attendance. Doctoral candidates from all years of the program may also attend activities as described in Article 4, paragraph 2, letter f) of Ministerial Decree no. 226/2021, organized by the University, the mandatory nature of which is determined annually by the University.
4. Attendance at educational activities is mandatory for at least 70% of the hours of each course within the exclusive educational offerings. At the end of each year, the doctoral candidate is required to submit documentation of completed educational activities to the Doctoral Faculty Board.

5. During the doctoral program, candidates have the option to attend educational activities offered within Master's degree programs at the University of Pisa, provided they align with the doctoral project. Candidates may participate in these activities without needing authorization from the Doctoral Faculty Board, following discussion with their supervisor(s).
6. All documentation related to the educational activities of third-year doctoral candidates must be submitted by the deadline for assessing the eligibility of the thesis for submission to evaluators.

## **PART IV**

### **Degree Award**

#### **Article 9 Final Examination**

1. Procedures for awarding the Doctor of Philosophy degree are established by current regulations.
2. The final examination consists of defending the research thesis, which must contain original contributions and results. The thesis presents and discusses the results of the doctoral candidate's research plan, must be written in English, and must include both an Italian and an English summary. Additionally, the candidate must attach a report on the activities carried out during the doctoral program and any publications.
3. The Board, after obtaining opinions from the supervisor and co-supervisors, based on the evaluation by the Educational Committee and the final activity report, decides within twenty days from the submission of the thesis by the doctoral candidate, on admission of the thesis for external evaluation or on a possible deferral period according to current regulations, for a maximum of two months. By that date, the candidate must be listed as (co-)author of at least one paper submitted for publication in an indexed international scientific journal relevant to the research topic.
4. As per current regulations, until the thesis defense, the doctoral candidate is authorized to use the University facilities to complete all activities related to the thesis.
5. Upon completion of the degree, the Doctor of Philosophy receives, in addition to the diploma, a document signed by the course coordinator, certifying the activities carried out during the doctoral program.

#### **Article 10 Examining Committee**

1. The committee is composed according to the University Regulations on doctoral research.

## **PART V**

### **Agreements and Internationalization**

#### **Article 11 Agreements and Consortia**

1. In order to effectively coordinate high-level national and international research activities, the University of Pisa may enter into agreements and establish consortia, aimed at issuing joint or dual degrees, in accordance with current regulations.

2. These agreements and consortia, respecting the principle of reciprocity, must include effective sharing of educational and research activities, distribution of responsibilities, methods for regulating financial support, exchange and mobility of faculty and doctoral candidates, and the potential issuance of joint or dual degrees.
3. For doctoral programs administratively based in Italy, involving universities and highly qualified public or private research institutions, current regulations apply, including regarding the composition of the Board.

## **Article 12**

### **Joint Doctorate**

1. Doctoral candidates from the University of Pisa and foreign universities may participate in a joint doctoral program for the completion of their thesis, according to current regulations and conditions agreed upon in the agreement.

## **Article 13**

### **Doctor Europaeus**

1. Upon request of the doctoral candidate, the University may issue the Doctor Europaeus certification if the conditions specified by current regulations are met.

## **PART VI Application**

## **Article 14**

### **Final Provisions**

1. Pursuant to the University Regulations on doctoral research, this Regulation and any subsequent amendments are proposed by the Faculty Board, approved by the Department Council of Biology, and forwarded to the central administration for further approval by the Academic Senate, following the opinion of the Board of Directors.
2. Matters not covered by this Regulation shall refer to the University regulations and current applicable legislation.
3. This Regulation shall enter into force the day following its publication on the University website in the Official Information Board and applies to students enrolled in the Biology PhD program starting from the XXXIX cycle.