

STUDENT FAQs

[1. What is the Doctoral Student's Training Activities Document?](#)

It is an individual electronic document used to keep a record of the doctoral student's training activities. To complete it, the student must have active enrolment in a doctoral programme during the corresponding academic year. It can be accessed through an online application called RAPI2, following this path: <http://www.ucm.es/> > UCM ONLINE > GEA-UCMnet > RAPI2 (see the appendix containing [frequently asked questions about RAPI2](#)). The student must record the activities carried out during the doctoral studies. This document will be regularly reviewed by the supervisor and thesis director and assessed by the Academic Committee responsible for the doctoral programme.

[2. Can I undertake training activities outside the UCM?](#)

The Academic Committee may authorise (or recommend) doctoral students to undertake activities offered by other academic institutions, which may then be included in the training activities document.

[3. What is the Research Plan?](#)

It is the doctoral student's roadmap and must include, at a minimum, the following:

- The methodology providing the framework for the research.
- The objectives to be pursued.
- The resources to be used.
- The timetable for achieving the objectives.

Each year (in June), the Academic Committee of the programme will assess the Research Plan together with the reports to be issued by the supervisor and thesis director. A positive assessment is an essential requirement for continuing in the programme. In the event of a negative assessment, which must be duly justified, the doctoral student must undergo a new assessment within six months (in January of the following academic year), for which they must prepare a new Research Plan. If the new assessment is also negative, the doctoral student will be permanently withdrawn from the programme.

The Research Plan must be generated annually by the student in order to update it, where appropriate. As with the Training Activities Document, it must be endorsed by the supervisor and thesis director.

4. When do I have to register my thesis project?

Within a maximum period of three months from the date on which enrolment was formalised, and always before January 31 of the first academic year in the programme.

5. How do I complete the Training Activities Document and the Research Plan?

Online, through the RAPI2 web application, following this path: <http://www.ucm.es/> > UCM ONLINE > GEA-UCMnet > RAPI2.

6. How do I access RAPI2?

To access the application, you must log in using your active UCM email account and password, following this path: <http://www.ucm.es> > UCM ONLINE (at the bottom of the screen) > GEA-UCMnet > RAPI2.

7. Can I have more than one thesis director?

1. Yes. You may have up to a maximum of three, provided that this is authorised by the Academic Committee of the programme.
2. The Academic Committee must assign the thesis director(s) within a maximum period of three months from the date of first enrolment in the programme and, in any case, before January 31. At that point, you must register the thesis project and sign the "Documentary Commitment."

8. What is the "Documentary Commitment"?

It is a [document](#) establishing the supervisory responsibilities for the doctoral student, as well as matters relating to intellectual or industrial property rights and a procedure for resolving conflicts. When the thesis project is submitted, it must be signed by the doctoral student, supervisor, thesis director(s), and the representative of the Programme's Academic Committee.

9. Can the supervisor or thesis director be changed at any time?

Yes. The Academic Committee of the programme may authorise a change in the appointment of the supervisor or thesis director, either at the request of the doctoral student or at the request of the supervisor and/or thesis director.

10. What is the maximum period of study in the programme before the thesis is submitted?

If the doctoral student is enrolled on a full-time basis, four years, counted from October 15 of the academic year in which they were admitted and enrolled, until the [deposit of the thesis](#) with the Academic Committee of the Programme; in the case of part-time enrolment, seven years, calculated in the same manner.

[11. When and how can I request a change in study mode \(full-time/part-time\)?](#)

A change from one study mode to the other may only be made once per academic year and must always be requested before the renewal of academic supervision for the corresponding academic year, by submitting a general application addressed to the Academic Committee. A change from full-time to part-time study must be approved by the Academic Committee of the programme, following justification by the doctoral student of the reasons for the request. The Academic Committee may, where appropriate, request a favourable report from the thesis director and supervisor. A change in study mode may not be requested once the academic supervision renewal period (enrolment period) for the third year of full-time study or the fifth year of part-time study has elapsed.

[12. When can I request an extension?](#)

If the doctoral student anticipates that they will be unable to submit their thesis before the end of the maximum period applicable to their study mode (four or seven years), they may request an extension during the four months preceding the expiry of the maximum period of study under their corresponding study mode (the deadline is October 15, unless the doctoral student has taken temporary leave due to illness, maternity, paternity, etc.). The extension request must be approved by the Academic Committee on the basis of the supporting documentation submitted by the doctoral student.

[13. When can I begin the procedures for submitting my thesis for defense?](#)

1. Not before completing the first academic year following admission.
2. The joint assessment for the academic year preceding the year in which the thesis is deposited must be positive.

[14. What documentation must I submit for my thesis to be admitted for processing?](#)

1. Once the thesis has been completed, with the approval of the thesis director(s) and supervisor, you must submit an electronic copy to the Academic Committee and follow the [instructions](#) for the electronic deposit of the thesis.
2. Within a maximum period of one month, the Academic Committee must obtain the relevant reports.
3. Once the relevant reports have been received, the Academic Committee will request the final version of the thesis from the doctoral student and, within a maximum period of fifteen working days, will decide whether to authorise or refuse its admission for processing.

15. Can I submit and defend my thesis in a language other than Spanish?

Yes. The thesis may be written and defended in the languages commonly used for scientific communication in the relevant field, subject to approval by the Academic Committee of the programme.

16. Can theses be submitted in “publication format”?

1. Yes, provided that the doctoral student has participated as a principal author in the publications comprising the thesis and that these publications have appeared in specialist journals included in recognised quality indexes or, in the case of books, are of a similar scientific level.
2. The Academic Committee of the programme is responsible for assessing whether the requirements have been met.

17. Are there specific thesis presentation requirements?

1. The thesis must include a 500- to 1,000-word summary of the research objectives, methodology, results, and conclusions, in Spanish and English, plus a third version in the language in which the thesis is written if this is different from the two languages mentioned above. The summary must be included in the table of contents of the thesis.
2. The thesis copy must be bound and properly identified.

18. What is the “International Doctorate” distinction and how can I obtain it?

It is an honorary distinction that may be included on the front of the Doctoral Degree Certificate if the following requirements are met:

1. Completion of a minimum three-month research stay outside Spain at a prestigious higher education institution or research centre. This stay may be divided into a maximum of two periods, neither of which may be shorter than two weeks.
2. Part of the thesis, at least the summary and conclusions, must have been written and presented in one of the languages commonly used for scientific communication in the relevant field, other than any of Spain's official languages.
3. The thesis must have been reviewed by at least two doctoral experts from a non-Spanish institution.
4. At least one expert from a non-Spanish institution, other than the person responsible for the research stay, must serve on the thesis examination board.

[19. What is the “International Joint Supervision” annotation and how can I obtain it?](#)

It is an annotation that will be included on the front of the Doctoral Degree Certificate when the doctoral thesis is jointly supervised or co-supervised by up to two PhD holders from a Spanish university and a foreign university, in accordance with Article 15.2 of Royal Decree 99/2011 of January 28, and provided that the thesis is not part of a joint doctoral programme.

[Procedures for obtaining it](#)