

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

DOCTORAL STUDIES

> What are doctoral studies?

Doctoral studies, regulated by Royal Decree 99/2011, constitute the third cycle of official university education and aim to develop competencies related to high-quality scientific research. They culminate in the completion of a doctoral thesis.

>What does writing a doctoral thesis involve?

The doctoral programme combines a research phase with a training phase. The research component focuses on producing the doctoral thesis – an original piece of research carried out by the doctoral candidate within one of the established lines of research. Each thesis must have a supervisor, although it may be co-supervised by two supervisors.

In addition, the programme includes specific training for doctoral candidates. Training activities are recorded in the Doctoral Student Activity Report (DAD), a personalised record that lists the various activities undertaken, such as conferences, publications and training linked to the programme. This document is periodically monitored by the tutor and thesis supervisor and assessed by the Doctoral Academic Committee.

> How long does a doctorate take?

The maximum duration from admission to the defence of the doctoral thesis is:

- **Full-time:** 4 years, with the possibility of one additional year.
- **Part-time:** 7 years, with the possibility of one additional year.

The minimum period before the thesis can be submitted is two enrolments in the doctoral programme.

Justified absences (due to illness, pregnancy, etc.) are excluded from the calculation, and it is possible to request a temporary suspension of up to one year, with the possibility of a further year.

> **Can I do my doctorate at UIC Barcelona if I do not speak Spanish?**

Yes. It may be undertaken in the languages commonly used for scientific communication in your field of knowledge, subject to prior approval by the Academic Committee of the programme.

> **Can the doctorate be done online? Do I need to live in Barcelona?**

Yes, it is possible to complete the doctorate remotely, except for the defence and presentation of the thesis, which must take place in person. The Doctoral School also offers online training activities via the Moodle platform.

Meetings with thesis supervisors can be held virtually and the annual progress review may also be conducted online, provided the requirements established by the Doctoral School are met.

> **What is the international recognition?**

The International Recognition is an acknowledgement that may appear on the doctoral degree certificate if the following requirements are met:

- **Research stays:** Undertake one or more research stays at universities or research centres outside Spain, with a total duration of at least three months. If there are several stays, one must last at least one month. These must be approved by your supervisor and the Academic Committee and recorded in the activity document.
- **Thesis in a foreign language:** At least the abstract and conclusions of the thesis must be written and defended in a scientific language other than Spain's official languages.
- **External reviewers:** The thesis must receive at least two favourable reports from doctoral-level experts at foreign institutions who did not participate in your research stay.

- **Examination panel members:** The panel must include at least one foreign expert holding a doctoral degree, who is not the tutor of the research stay.

>What is an industrial doctorate?

The industrial recognition forms part of the doctoral degree and certifies that the thesis has been carried out within the framework of an agreement between the University and a company or a public body other than the University. In addition, the student must be employed by the company for at least one year. For further information, please consult the section on the industrial distinction.

The Government of Catalonia also offers a specific funding programme for industrial doctorates, aimed at the doctoral student, the research group and the participating company. If interested, we recommend visiting the Government of Catalonia's website dedicated to [industrial doctorates](#).

>What is joint supervision?

The joint supervision modality involves doing the doctorate jointly between two universities in different countries. This entails having one thesis supervisor at each university and formalising an agreement between the two institutions. The agreement must specify the university in which the thesis will be defended, the period during which the doctoral studies will be completed and the enrolment conditions.

The thesis defence takes place at one of the participating universities and, once approved, the doctoral degree is awarded by both institutions.

ADMISSION

>What qualifications do I need to pursue a doctorate?

To access a doctoral programme at UIC, you must hold an **official bachelor's degree, or equivalent, and an official university master's degree**. This means having completed a minimum of 300 ECTS credits across the bachelor's and master's studies (in the case of 120-credit master's degrees, completing 60 credits is sufficient).

> I did not do a master's degree, but my university degree is worth 300 credits.

Can I still apply?

Yes. Regulations allow access to doctoral studies if you hold a 300-credit university qualification and it is classified at MECES level 3. You can consult the level of your bachelor's or licentiate degree in the [RUCT](#).

> If I already hold a doctorate in another field, may I apply?

Yes. In this case, you may apply directly with your existing doctoral degree. If you began your doctoral studies under earlier university regulations, you may access the doctorate upon admission by the Doctoral School.

> I already have a consolidated research career and have now decided to begin the doctorate. Which route is most suitable?

In this case, you may access the programme through research proficiency (RD 185/1985). In the field of Health Sciences, you may also be admitted with the official Specialist title.

> I completed part of my studies outside Spain. Can I apply for a doctorate at UIC Barcelona?

To access a doctoral programme in Spain, you must demonstrate that you hold a qualification corresponding to level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework. If part of your studies was completed outside the European Higher Education Area, an equivalence assessment will be carried out, and you must provide a letter from your home university certifying that the qualification grants access to doctoral studies in the issuing country.

> Do I need to submit official translations of my qualifications if they are not in Spanish?

All documents must be officially translated (if they are in a language other than Catalan, Spanish, or English) and legalised. However, official recognition (homologation) is not required in order to apply.

> **When should I submit my admission application?**

Online admission applications must be completed during the pre-enrolment period, which usually opens between June and September, through the NAOS Academic / Sigma platform. This can be accessed from the Doctoral School's [admission process](#) website, where exact dates are published.

The process consists of two stages: **administrative validation**, verifying that documentation is correct and meets the legal requirements for access to doctoral studies; and an **academic evaluation**, carried out by the Academic Committee of the programme, which may take between 25–35 working days after the pre-enrolment period closes. Decisions are communicated via email.

If admitted, the candidate must confirm their interest and complete enrolment.

> **What documentation do I need to submit?**

To apply for [admission to the doctorate](#), you must submit: (1) A copy of your DNI, NIF, NIE, or passport, (2) an up-to-date curriculum vitae, (3) academic documentation certifying your access route (degree certificate and academic transcript for bachelor's and master's degrees, including the average grade, or other documentation where applicable).

You must also provide (4) a research proposal, (5) a motivation letter and (6) a letter of support from your thesis supervisor. If the proposed supervisor is external to UIC Barcelona, you must also submit their curriculum vitae, demonstrating thesis supervision experience and recognised six-year research periods.

> **Do I need a thesis supervisor's support to complete the pre-enrolment?**

The admission application requires a letter of support from the thesis supervisor. This letter is a decisive academic endorsement for the Academic Committee's evaluation. Therefore, we recommend establishing this collaboration before beginning the admission process.

> **How do I complete the pre-enrolment for a doctorate at UIC Barcelona?**

Only applications submitted through the designated online platform are accepted. Step-by-step instructions are available here:

<https://www.uic.es/es/escuela-de-doctorado/proceso-de-admision>

> **I followed the instructions, but the platform is not working. What should I do?**

You may request support from the Doctoral School (edoc@uic.es). During non-working periods (August), the response time may be up to 10 days.

THESIS SUPERVISION

> **How can I find an appropriate thesis supervisor?**

The first step is to contact the reference person for the line of research that interests you. They can advise you on available topics and help you identify potential supervisors. You should then contact a lecturer whose research interests align with yours to ask about their availability to supervise your thesis.

You can consult lines of research for each programme at the following links:

Lines of research and team

- o [Doctorate in Health Sciences](#)
- o [Doctorate in Architecture](#)
- o [Doctorate in Economics and Law](#)
- o [Doctorate in Communication, Education and Humanities](#)

> **How many supervisors may I have?**

Each doctoral candidate must have one thesis supervisor, with the option of up to two co-supervisors. In exceptional and justified cases involving multidisciplinary research, a third supervisor may be added.

> What are the requirements to supervise a doctoral thesis?

To be a supervisor or co-supervisor at UIC Barcelona, the following requirements apply:

1. General requirements:

- Be affiliated with a university.
- Hold an active six-year research period or equivalent research activity.
- Exceptionally, the Academic Committee for Doctoral Studies (CAD) may appoint a professional without university affiliation who demonstrates equivalent research.
- Emeritus and honorary lecturers may also act as supervisors.

2. Co-supervision: At least one co-supervisor must hold an active six-year research period or equivalent.

> Can my supervisor be external to UIC Barcelona?

Yes, it is possible for your supervisor to not be affiliated with UIC Barcelona. However, if the supervisor is not part of the university, the Academic Committee for Doctoral Studies (CAD) will need to appoint a university tutor in the following cases:

1. **If there is only one external supervisor**, a tutor from UIC Barcelona will be assigned.
2. **If there are two external co-supervisors**, a tutor from UIC Barcelona will also be assigned.
3. **If the co-supervision includes a lecturer from UIC Barcelona**, it will not be necessary to assign an additional tutor.

> What is the difference between a tutor and a supervisor?

The distinction lies in their roles and responsibilities:

- **Supervisor:** The person responsible for the doctoral student's academic guidance. Their main role is to guide the research, define the thesis topic, oversee research progress and provide continuous feedback. If the supervisor does not belong to

UIC Barcelona, a tutor is assigned.

- **Tutor:** Their role is primarily administrative. The tutor acts as a link between the external supervisor and the university, ensuring that UIC Barcelona's procedures and requirements are followed.

ENROLMENT

> Can I enrol directly in a doctoral programme or do I have to be admitted first?

Anyone wishing to begin their studies must apply for admission to one of the doctoral programmes, as the number of places for new students is limited.

Therefore, at the beginning of each academic year, a pre-enrolment period is opened during which applicants must submit their admission application. This procedure is carried out exclusively through the [NAOS Academic](#) platform.

Once the pre-enrolment period has ended, the Academic Committee of the programme will evaluate the applications to determine admission.

> What is assessed for admission to the doctoral programme?

The Academic Committee evaluates the suitability of the applicant's qualifications and experience. If the number of applications exceeds the available places, a selection process is carried out based on the criteria set out in the "Admission process" section of each programme on the website.

> How does enrolment work?

Enrolment in the doctorate is annual and must be renewed at the beginning of each academic year. Payment must be made within the deadlines established by the Doctoral School.

There are two types of enrolment:

1. **Annual supervision enrolment:** Includes supervision of the doctoral thesis and access to training activities. The fee is set each academic year by the university and includes academic and administrative charges.

- 2. Deposit and defence fee:** This is added to the existing annual enrolment when the thesis deposit is approved. This is a one-time fee paid at the end of the doctoral process.

> **How much does the doctorate cost at UIC Barcelona? Can I pay in instalments?**

To consult the cost of the doctorate, you may access the following link: [Enrolment and financial information](#) and head to the financial information section.

The enrolment fee cannot be paid in instalments and must be paid in a single payment within the established deadlines.

GRANTS AND FINANCIAL AID

> **Are there predoctoral grants or contracts to complete the doctorate?**

Yes, the Vice-Rectorate for Research of UIC Barcelona offers predoctoral contracts to support doctoral studies. There are also various grants awarded by public and private institutions.

For more information, contact: vrecerca@uic.es.

TRAINING COURSES

> **Which doctoral courses are compulsory?**

Each doctoral programme establishes its compulsory courses to ensure the required competencies are achieved. Compulsory courses are always available through the Doctoral School.

The courses are short modules (2–10 hours), with materials and recordings accessible on Moodle throughout the academic year. The Academic Office monitors compliance with these requirements before the thesis deposit.

For more details on the specific courses of each programme, we recommend consulting the annual training plan.

>Are all training courses offered in English?

Not all of them. Compulsory training guarantees that at least one course per competency is offered online, in Spanish and in English. However, some optional activities may be delivered in only one language and a small number of in-person sessions do not have an English alternative.

DEPOSIT AND DEFENCE OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

>What is the pre-deposit of the doctoral thesis?

The pre-deposit is the first formal step before the official deposit. In this phase, the doctoral student submits:

- The complete thesis.
- The administrative documentation required by the Doctoral School (EDOC).
- The thesis supervisor's proposals for the examination panel and external reviewers.

The aim of the pre-deposit is for the Academic Committee for Doctoral Studies (CAD) to assess the validity of the proposed panel and reviewers and for the external reviewers to issue their reports on the thesis.

> What is the difference between the pre-deposit and the official deposit?

Pre-deposit: approval of the proposed examination panel and external reviewers by the CAD, review of the thesis by the external reviewers and completion of the necessary revisions by the doctoral student until the final thesis is ready.

Official deposit: submission of the final version of the doctoral thesis, payment of the deposit and defence fees, and formal registration with EDOC. During the deposit period, the thesis is publicly accessible for consultation by the academic community. Once this period ends, the thesis officially enters the defence phase until the date of the defence.

> What happens after submitting the thesis for pre-deposit?

1. The CAD reviews whether the proposed panel and reviewers are appropriate.
2. EDOC contacts the two external reviewers so they can evaluate the thesis.

3. According to the reviewers' reports:

- **Favourable reports:** the CAD approves the thesis for deposit and defence, and the doctoral student must submit the final version. The thesis enters the deposit phase.
- **Unfavourable reports:** the thesis must be revised and corrected by the doctoral student. The CAD will assess the changes and, if in doubt, may send it back to the reviewers. Until the CAD approves the thesis, it does not enter the official deposit.

>When do I have to register and pay the deposit and defence fees?

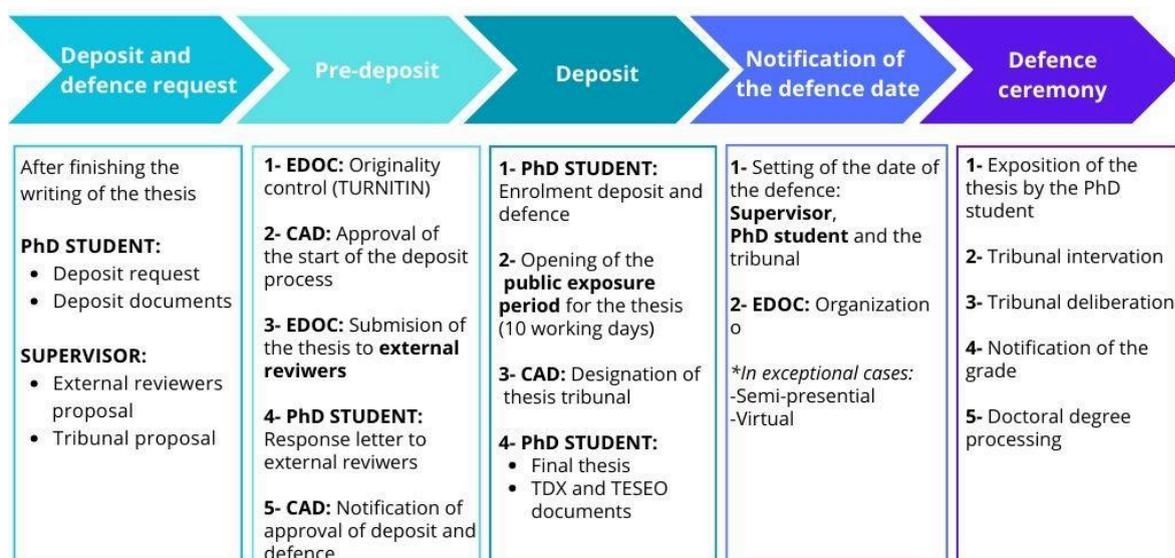
Registration for the deposit and defence fees takes place only when the Academic Committee for Doctoral Studies (CAD) has approved the pre-deposit. This means that the reviewers have issued favourable reports and that the CAD has validated both the thesis and the examination panel.

Although the doctoral student has submitted the thesis and documentation during the pre-deposit phase, this is not an official step and does not initiate the deposit period. The deposit becomes official only when the final version of the thesis is submitted, enrolment is completed and the deposit and defence fees are paid.

Until then, the thesis remains in the review phase and is not considered officially deposited.

> How long does the entire process take until the defence?

Depending on administrative timings, it usually lasts several months:



It is advisable to consult the **exact deadlines** with the Doctoral School Office.

> When can I schedule the defence date?

Once the Academic Committee has approved the panel and the public consultation period has ended, the thesis supervisor, in agreement with the panel and the doctoral student, proposes the defence date. This date must be communicated to the EDOC Office sufficiently in advance, as a space must be reserved (auditorium or room) for the defence ceremony.

> Where is the thesis defence held?

At UIC Barcelona, the doctoral thesis defence is held on the Barcelona campus or the Sant Cugat campus, depending on the doctoral programme and the panel's availability. In some exceptional cases, it may be defended at institutions UIC Barcelona has agreements with. In joint supervision cases, the arrangements set out in the agreement between the participating universities apply.

> **What happens after the defence?**

If the thesis is approved by the panel, the Doctoral School Office processes the issuance of the doctoral degree, together with the UIC Barcelona Department of Academic Management. The defence record is officially registered and, where applicable, the corresponding distinction is added (industrial, international, etc.).

> **If I want the international recognition, does any part of the doctorate have to be completed in English?**

If you wish to obtain the **international recognition** at the defence, part of the process will be conducted in English. The Doctoral School will advise you on how you can meet these requirements in the best possible way.

FACILITIES

> **What facilities and resources does UIC Barcelona offer doctoral students?**

- Access to specialised libraries and scientific databases.
- Laboratories and research spaces depending on the field of study.
- Individual and group study rooms.
- Common areas and meeting rooms.

> **Do doctoral students have reserved spaces to work on their thesis?**

Yes. In the Terré Building on the Barcelona campus, there is a specific room for doctoral students. Each doctoral student may be assigned a desk (by prior request to the EDOC Office), with a computer and a drawer unit for use during the development of the thesis.

INTERNATIONAL DOCTORAL STUDENTS

> **Does doing a doctorate entitle me to a student visa in Spain?**

Yes, international students may apply for a student visa to reside in Spain during their doctorate. UIC Barcelona does not handle this procedure, so it is recommended that you consult the current regulations at the relevant embassy or consulate.

>Can it be done online? What attendance is required? Do I need to live in Barcelona?

The only moment when physical presence is required is at the defence of the doctoral thesis. Only in exceptional, duly justified cases will the option of an online defence be permitted.

Regarding training, most activities, and at least one option for each compulsory course, are offered online to ensure access for all doctoral students. However, **UIC Barcelona is not a distance-learning university**, which means that some services may be limited for students who are not on campus.

In addition, the Doctoral School organises in-person activities to foster interaction among doctoral students and researchers and to build an academic community. These sessions do not always have an online alternative, so while it is not mandatory to live in Barcelona, it is advisable to have availability to attend certain on-site events.

> Are there tours or information sessions for prospective students?

No specific tours are organised for doctoral programmes. However, if you are interested, you may contact the Doctoral School Academic Office to resolve any queries. If necessary, we can schedule an information session, either online or in person, to provide all the details you may need about the programme.