

# SISSA PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR DIDACTIC REGULATION

## ART. 1 – OBJECTIVES

“Philosophiae Doctor” Curricula (henceforth PhD Curricula or simply Curricula) provide expertise to pursue high-qualification research activities in Universities, Public Authorities and private subjects, contributing to the realization of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and of the European Research Area (ERA).

## ART. 2 – LIMIT OF VALIDITY

1. The current regulation governs the activity and the operation of SISSA PhD Curricula.
2. Curricula are established in the context of a Research Area (henceforth Area) of SISSA, possibly with the collaboration of other Areas. Several Curricula can be established in the context of an Area.
3. Curricula can be also established jointly with other Universities or on agreement with private or public subjects of higher cultural or scientific education having suitable organization and personnel.
4. Each Curriculum is governed by an internal regulation based on the present one.

## ART. 3 – AUTHORITIES OF THE CURRICULA

1. Each Curriculum has its own Board of Professors and its own Coordinator.
2. The Board of Professors consists of professors and researchers that carry out teaching activities. The Coordinator is a full professor or, failing that, a full-time associate professor that belongs to the Board of Professors; he/she is chosen based on his/her ability and experience.
3. The Board of Professors has to organize teaching activities and the activities concerning the introduction to research of the corresponding Curriculum. The Board of Professors has the duty:
  - A) To define educational goals and the themes of the Curriculum;
  - B) To establish courses of the Curriculum and their corresponding teachers and contents.  
Lectures are divided in:

- courses aimed at transferring knowledge, held during the first year, having a duration of 15 to 80 hours;
- monographic courses: more advanced and in-depth, addressed to second and third year students, having a duration of 20 to 60 hours.

- C) To establish yearly the schedule of the teaching activities of the Curriculum, consisting of courses. That schedule, after the approval by Area Council and the Academic Senate, has to be published on the website of the School within one month of the beginning of the lectures. The title, the lecturers, the period and the duration should be indicated for each course as well as the compulsoriness of its attendance, in accordance with the SISSA Regulation for Professors and Researchers, with particular regard to ART. 2 and 3.
- D) To approve the study plan of the students, which are also allowed to choose courses from other Curricula.
- E) To approve the students' choices of advisors and the respective research projects.
- F) To decide upon the admission of the students to the their following years.
- G) To express opinions and to make proposals regarding each student where required by the regulations.

4. The Coordinator is responsible for the management, the organization and the coordination of the teaching activities and of the introduction to research carried out by the Curriculum. The Coordinator has the duty:

- A) To summon and to preside over the Board of Professors, to establish its agenda.
- B) To coordinate the educational offer.
- C) To manage the funds assigned to the Curriculum, where present.
- D) To take emergency measures of competence of Board of Professors and to submit them for ratification in the session that immediately follows.

5. The composition of the Board of Professors is proposed by the Area Council to which the Curriculum belongs and approved by Academic Senate before the beginning of the academic year. Professors and researchers coming from Areas different from that one to which the Curriculum belongs can also be appointed to the Board of Professors. Also external high-profile experts belonging to other Universities or research institutions can be appointed to the Board of Professors, provided their number is no more then 40% of the number of SISSA members. The total number of the junior or senior researchers coming from national or foreign research institutions cannot however exceed one quarter of the total number of members of the Board of Professors.

6. Other external professors or researchers carrying out teaching activity for the Curriculum, characterized as in the preceding clause, can attend the meetings of the Board of Professors in addition to its appointed members, as adjunct members. Adjunct members of Board of Professors are proposed by the Area Council relative to the Curriculum, and have to be approved by the Academic Senate.

7. Students' representative of the Curriculum in the Area Council attends the meetings of the Board of Professors, in order to deal with didactic and organizational problems.

8. The Coordinator is appointed by Academic Senate, on a proposal from the Board of Professors; he/she is chosen among internal appointed components of the School. His/her mandate lasts two years and can be renewed just one time. Further mandates can be assigned only after an interruption of, at least, one mandate.

9. The Coordinator can appoint a Vice Coordinator to take his/her place in case of absence or indisposition.

#### ART. 4 – SUITABILITY CRITERIA AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CURRICULA

1. The Area Council can propose the establishment of a PhD Curriculum. The Evaluation Unit of the School gives an opinion on suitability criteria. Subsequently, the proposal is submitted for the approval to the Academic Senate and to the Board of Directors, which verify the coherence of the Curriculum with the educational offer, as well as the availability of human and financial resources.

2. Curricula are established with a Director's decree, upon approval of the Ministry of Education, University and Research (henceforth MIUR).

3. The Board of Directors can approve the closure of a Curriculum, upon proposal of the Director or of the Area Council after consulting the Academic Senate. The closure is actualized with a Director's decree.

4. The Evaluation Unit verifies yearly the permanence of the criteria for each established Curriculum. In case of negative evaluation of a Curriculum, it immediately communicates the result to the Director.

5. After the publication of the report of the Evaluation Unit, the Director summons the Coordinator of the Curricula to inspect the aforesaid report and to find a strategy to improve the quality of the Curricula.

6. Possible recommendation of external committee are forwarded to the Evaluation Unit that take them into account, during its activity.

7. The suitability criteria are the following:

- A) The presence in the Board of Professors of at least three appointed members or two appointed and two adjunct members. They must be professors or researcher of the School investigating on subjects on which the Curriculum is focused.
- B) The achievement, from the members of the Board of Professors, of documented world-class results in their research concerning the subject area of the Curriculum.
- C) The availability of enough resources for at least three PhD scholarships per doctoral cycle, in order to create an appropriate learning context, as well as of a number of scholarships related to the educational capability of the Curriculum.
- D) The availability of adequate and stable funding for the Curriculum, in particular for the scholarships and for the research activities.

- E) The availability of operational and scientific structure for the educational and research activities of the students, including scientific laboratories, an appropriate library, databases, and computational units, depending on the Curriculum.
- F) The preparation, also jointly with other Curriculum, of educational, disciplinary and interdisciplinary activities, activities concerning linguistic and IT improvement, as well as in the field of research management, of the knowledge of European and international research institutions and of the development of research and intellectual property.

#### ART. 5 – EVALUATION OF CURRICULA

1. Curricula are evaluated yearly by Evaluation Unit, which analyze also the opinions that students express during and at the conclusion of the PhD. The International Scientific Committee, which usually convene every third year, advices and steers Curricula.
2. The Didactic and Student Secretariat informs yearly the School for each Curriculum about:
  - A) As far the admission exams of the last three years are concerned: number of registered candidates, number of participating candidates, number of admitted students, number of waivers of the admitted students.
  - B) Average number of month between the admission and the achievement of the PhD of the students that received their title in the last three years.

#### ART. 6 – ADMISSION CRITERIA

Every person who received a “Laurea Magistrale” or “Laurea Specialistica” or “Laurea” (in accordance with D.M. 03/11/1999, n. 509) from an Italian University, or other foreign academic degree which is recognized as valid from the Admission Committee and from the Academic Senate, can be admitted to the Curricula, upon success in the admission exam, without neither age nor nationality limitation.

#### ART. 7 – COMPETITION NOTICE

The competition notice is issued with a decree of the Director. It is published in the “Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana” and on the European website Euraxess and on the “Borsa Nazionale del Lavoro”. It is presently sent to the Ministry to be publicized electronically both in Italy and abroad. The notice is written both in Italian and in English.

## ART. 8 – ADMISSION PROCEDURES

### A. Ordinary Admission

1. The admission to Curricula occurs by means of a public selection that has to conclude within the deadline in accordance with the Law.

2. The admission exam is aimed at verifying the aptitude of the candidate for research and his/her knowledge of English. It consist in title evaluation, a written and an oral test.

The Committee has 100 points at disposal: 10 for the titles, 40 for the written test and 50 for the oral test. A candidate must have passed the written test at least with 28 points to be admitted to the oral test. Candidates residing outside the country can have an online oral test, where provided for by the notice. Eligibility is achieved with a total score no less than 70 points. After the evaluation of each test, the Committee publishes the results by the end of the day. Upon reasoned request by the Board of Professors of a Curriculum, the Academic Senate can authorize different admission procedures.

The report of the competition are sent to the Didactic and Student Secretariat and from here to the Academic Senate for the approval of the eligible candidates.

In case of eligible candidates with the same score, the order of preference is decreed by D.P.R. n. 487/94 as subsequently amended and supplemented\*. In case of further parity younger candidates prevail in accordance with ART. 2, clause 9 of the Law 16/06/1998 n. 91 amending ART. 3, clause 7 of the Law 15/05/1997 n. 127. The official documents of the competition are public and publicly accessible in accordance with the Law.

3. The Committees for the admission exam to the Curricula are appointed by the Boards of Professors of the corresponding Curricula. They consist of at least three professors, of which, at least one external to the School.

4. Candidates which are directly admitted to the oral test and those whose written test is evaluable, can be given a fee for the travel, where provided for by the Competition Notice.

5. Exceptionally qualified candidates coming from outside the European Union can be admitted to the Curricula only by virtue of their titles. Different procedures for the admission can be provided for, case by case. Candidates which are admitted with procedures different of those established this clause, have to give a qualifying exam by the end of the first year before the Committee referred to in the 3rd clause.

6. The Academic Senate, on a proposal from the Board of Professors, can acknowledge the study and the research work conducted among other institutions of a candidate who has passed the admission exam, and admit him/her directly to the second year.

7. A quota of scholarships can be reserved for:

- students who get their degree abroad;
- scholarship holders from foreign countries;
- students involved in international mobility or research programs.

---

\*This decree concerns only people with Italian citizenship. The text of this decree can be read in the second ANNEX of the Italian version of the present document at: [www.sissa.it/tpp/phdsection/Regolamento\\_Didattico\\_Generale.pdf](http://www.sissa.it/tpp/phdsection/Regolamento_Didattico_Generale.pdf).

In these cases different admission procedures are allowed as well as a separate ranking.

### **B. Direct Admission**

It is possible to admit directly to the Curricula a certain number of subjects:

A) subjects selected by procedures established with some agreements or international research programs to which SISSA participates as a coordinator or as a partner, provided their duration is no less than that one established by Italian Law for PhD Curricula;

B) students enrolled as PhD students in foreign Universities or research institutions, that signed an agreement with SISSA for the issue of joint “co-tutorship” PhDs.

The maximum number of these subjects is established by the competent authorities. The enrollment of these subjects is upon approval of the Board of Professors of the Curriculum. The subject must anyway fulfill the requirements established in ART. 6.

### **C. Special Selections**

In case of PhD established or scholarship funded as a consequence of international cooperation agreement among Universities or industries, the Admission Committee, the admission procedures, the evaluation criteria, the duration, as well as organization, are defined as in the agreements. In case the agreements do not establish these issues, ordinary rules are effective.

## **ART. 9 – NUMBER AND AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIPS**

1. Every PhD student has a scholarship, internally or externally funded.
2. The number and the amount of scholarships, as well as their subdivision among Curricula are decided yearly by the Board of Directors upon approval of the Academic Senate.

## **ART. 10 – ENROLLMENT**

1. Students of the Curriculum are University students enrolled to a third-level education program. Their attendance at School is compulsory and they must pass all exams established by the regulation of their Curriculum. Every student can be enrolled to a single Curriculum, and after enrollment cannot be simultaneously enrolled to any other PhD or degree course in the country or abroad, with the exception of what provided for by the “co-tutorship” agreement for the achievement of a double PhD. His/her attendance to other master or graduate program is upon the authorization of the Board of Professors.
2. Students are associated to the Area that organizes the Curriculum.

## ART. 11 – DIDACTIC AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

1. Every Curriculum is structured in a period of compulsory educational activities, which cannot last less than six months, and in a second period devoted to research and specialized training activities. The activities take place in English. Seminars are organized throughout the duration of PhD, with periodic invitation of external speakers. A small number of students selected among national and foreign Universities can be allowed to attend certain courses of a Curriculum, upon approval of the Coordinator. The amount of that students must be such as not compromise the didactic activities and the functionality of the School. The access to didactic activities can be provided for by some agreement.
2. Compulsory and optional didactic activities are governed by internal regulation of the Curriculum, that establishes individual training for students. The first year is devoted to transfer of basic and advanced knowledge that is needed to the research activities.
3. Exams are scheduled at the end of courses and take place before a board composed of at least two members of which at least one belonging to the Board of Professors or, in any case, to the research staff of the School. The holder of the course is the president of the board. The results of the exam are recorded in a report which has to be signed by the candidate and by at least one member of the board. Different procedures for the exams can be approved by Academic Senate on proposal from the Board of Professors.
4. By the end of first year the students agree upon the line of research for their PhD thesis with one of the available supervisors. The supervisor can be complemented by a co-supervisor. The supervisor and the line of research must be approved by Board of Professors. The change of the supervisor is allowed upon reasoned request of the student and must be approved by the Board of Professors.
5. The supervisor must be a professor of the school or of another institution. In the latter case, if the supervisor is not a member of the Board of Professors, must be complemented by a co-supervisor (as guarantor) of the School and must be approved by the Board of Professors and by the “Giunta” to which the Curriculum belongs. In case the supervisor is temporarily absent (sabbatical year, illness, leave) for a long period or ceased to be a teaching member of the School, the Board of Professors guarantees the continuity of the student’s line of research.
6. The students can contact the Ombudsperson, in accordance with a specific regulation, to solve possible problems with his/her relationship with his/her supervisor.
7. PhD projects realized jointly with other Universities are allowed on a proposal from the Board of Professors, upon approval by Area Council or, where provided for, by “Giunta” to which the Curriculum belongs. They must be also approved by the Academic Senate and, as far as financial aspects are concerned, by the Board of Directors.
8. Students’ research activities are based on subjects pursued by the School. They are carried out under the guidance of the supervisor, using, where necessary, computing resources, the library and the laboratories provided by the School, and other means provided for by appropriate agreements.

## ART. 12 – ADMISSION TO THE YEARS FOLLOWING THE FIRST

1. Every Curriculum establishes, by means of its regulation, the criteria for the admission of the student to the years following the first.

2. At the end of first year the evaluation is based on the exam reports and on the possible research activity. For the year following the first, the eligibility is mainly based on the evaluation of the research activities.

3. The results of the research are described and discussed before a committee composed of at least three members of the Board of Professors. The day of the discussion has to be scheduled and communicated to the student far enough in advance.

The evaluation at the end of the third year must include precise information if the student has severe difficulties to defend his PhD thesis within the fourth year. The criticalities are to be notified to the student and his/her progress is to be verified at the end of the first and the second period of the fourth year.

A possible request to defer for more than one month the PhD defense should be presented by the student to the Board of Professors normally by the end of the second period of the fourth year.

All the documents referred to into the aforesaid evaluations have to be sent promptly to the Student and Didactic Secretariat, which has to send them to the competent authorities.

4. The Boards of Professors decide on the admission to the students to following Academic year the first time they convene after the acquisition of the evaluations, in due time to let the Academic Senate and the Board of Director approve their decisions.

## ART. 13 – CHANGE OF CURRICULUM

A student is allowed to change Curriculum upon the approval of the Board of Professors of the receiving Curriculum. The latter establishes, case by case, his/her new educational and research duties and communicates them in advance to the student.

## ART. 14 – MISSIONS

Students' missions, even where not entailing any expenses for the School, have to be approved in advance by the Coordinator in accordance with SISSA "Mission and Refund Regulation"

## ART. 15 – EXTERNAL INTERNSHIP

On the base of specific agreements with enterprises, approved by Academic Senate and by the Board of Directors, students can have internships in enterprises upon the approval of the

Coordinator of the Curriculum.

#### ART. 16 – MOBILITY

1. Students of PhD Curriculum are allowed to study and research at Universities, research institution or enterprises in the country or abroad for no more than 18 months upon approval of their supervisor and of the Coordinator.
2. Specific agreements regulate the procedures to write co-tutored theses at other premises, for a period that can exceed 18 months.

#### ART. 17 – SUPPLEMENTARY DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES AND OTHER EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES

1. From second year on PhD students can carry out supplementary didactic and tutorship activities for bachelor and master students in other Italian Universities, as part of their education, upon approval of the Board of Professors, provided these teaching activities are not conflicting with their research. The limit of the supplementary teaching activities is 40 hours for the second and third years.
2. Other possible activities have to be authorized in advance by the Board of Professors, in accordance with the Law. In case of non-fulfillment, the Director can suspend or revoke the scholarship.

#### ART. 18 – DURATION

The duration of each Curriculum is normally four year.

Where scientific maturity and research results allow, a student can defend his/her thesis before the end of the fourth year.

However the PhD is not issued until minimum period for its fulfillment, in accordance with the Law.

#### ART. 19 – FINAL EXAM AND ACHIEVEMENT OF PHD

1. The PhD is issued upon a positive evaluation of a research thesis contributing to the development of the studied subject. Its originality has to be such that the results which contains are suitable to be published in one or more scientific papers on highly-qualified journals.
2. The PhD thesis is written in English. The final version of the thesis together with a

summary has to be delivered to the Student and Didactic Secretariat at least one month before the date of defense so that it can be sent to the members of the committee.

3. The thesis together with an attached report written by the student about the activities carried out and the papers published during the PhD, is evaluated by at least two highly qualified professors external to the School and to those institutions which collaborated at the possible co-tutorship. These Professors, which can also come from foreign institutions, are henceforth called Evaluators. The choice of the Evaluators is made by the Board of Professors. The evaluators appraise analytically the thesis and decide if it can be defended publically or if it has to be amended and supplemented deferring the discussion for a maximum of six months. After that period the thesis is admitted in any case to the public defense with a new report written by the Evaluators in the view of the possible above corrections.

4. The public defense of the thesis is carried out before a committee composed of at least five members of which at least two permanent or non-permanent professors of the School and two external to the school, appointed by the Board of Professors. At the end of the defense the thesis is either approved or rejected with a collectively written, reasoned evaluation. The committee issues the PhD with *laude*, acting unanimously, in the presence of high-quality scientific results.

In the case of failure, the final exam cannot be repeated.

5. As far as the submission, archiving and public consultation of the thesis, reference is made to ANNEX A.

6. The final exam is normally taken by the end of the fourth year or during the following month.

This deadline can be deferred for at most two months, on a proposal from the Board of Professors, approved by Area Council or “Giunta”.

For exceptional, properly documented reasons, the aforesaid deadline can be deferred for at most six months upon approval of the Academic Senate on a proposal by Area Council or “Giunta”. In case of a deferral of more than a month the supervisor has to provide a scholarship on external funds to the student, for the period from the end of the fourth year to the defense of the thesis. If the supervisor is not able to guarantee that financial provision, the Board of Professors has to locate the funds among those one available to the said Board.

## ART. 20 – OTHER CERTIFICATES

1. The School can issue the certificate of “Magister Philosophiae” or other certificates at the end of, at least, one year of course.

2. The School can issue the mention of “Doctor Europaeus” upon approval by the Board of Professors, in accordance with the European University Association.

3. The issue of certificates is governed by the Regulations of the Curricula.

## ART. 21 – ABSENCE

1. Absence periods of more than 15 days have to be authorized by the supervisor or by the Coordinator. They must be communicated to the Area Secretariat.
2. Absence periods of more than a month have to be authorized by the Area “Giunta” (or, where absent, by the Area Council), which decide for a possible suspension of the scholarship.

## ART. 22 – VARIATION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP

1. The “Giunta” (or in its absence the Council) of the Area to which the student belongs, can decide to increase by 50% the amount of the scholarship for a period of one to 18 months during which the student continuously resides abroad.
2. It is possible to suspend the attendance of the Curriculum and the scholarship for at most 12 months in case of:
  - A) compulsory civil or military service;
  - B) maternity or paternity;
  - C) illness;
  - D) severe personal reasons.
3. The defense of the thesis can be postponed, at the request of the student, of a period equal to that of suspension.
4. The properly motivated request of suspension and of the deferral of the defense has to be submitted to the Board of Professors. In case of maternity, paternity or serious illness, students can ask for a contribution of the 70% of the scholarship, for a maximum of 5 months for each event. In case of maternity leave this period can be prolonged up to 12 months if, for security reasons, the student cannot participate in the PhD activities (including writing thesis).
5. In case of discontinuance of the PhD before the end of the academic year, the student does not have to return the any amount of money, provided the Board of Professors certifies that he/she carried out productive research activities until the request of discontinuance. If the certification concerns a period shorter than that elapsed since the request of discontinuance the student have to return the amount of scholarship regarding the uncovered period.

## ART. 23 – TRANSPARENCY

The Board of Professors of each Curriculum publishes and update the following information on the School website:

- A) Didactic Regulation of the Curriculum;

- B) procedures for the admission to the PhD Curriculum;
- C) mandatory didactic activities, year by year: number of courses and their contents, lecture hours, laboratory hours, reports, admission procedures for the years following the first;
- D) available lines of research and thesis;
- E) formal and informal procedures for the choice of the supervisor and of the thesis;
- F) journal articles resulting from the PhD theses, at least of the last three years;
- G) current position of the alumni, if known.

ANNEX A  
SUBMISSION, ARCHIVING AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION  
OF THE THESIS

Sissa Digital Library (SDL) is the unique and official archive of the SISSA PhD theses. The final version of the thesis, in PDF format, has to be uploaded to SDL at least two days before the date of the discussion.

The copy on the digital archive is the considered to be the final official version and is placed on the record, it is uneditable and is made accessible in accordance with the Law on legal deposit.

The author can postpone up to three years the permit of access to the full text of the thesis. At any time after the defense, the author can add to SDL a revised edition of his/her thesis which has to be clearly marked as such. To update procedure occurs throughout the dispatch by email to the library ([library@sissa.it](mailto:library@sissa.it)) which will upload the document.