

Regulations of the SISSA Philosophiae Doctor courses¹ (Director's Decree n. 504 dated 19 June 2026)

Art. 1 (Purpose)

1. "Philosophiae Doctor" courses (hereinafter referred to "Ph.D. Courses" or simply "Courses") provide the skills and competencies necessary to carry out highly qualified research activities at universities, public institutions and private organizations. They contribute to the development of the European Higher Education Space and the European Research Space, also for the purposes of access to careers in public administrations and the integration of highly innovative professional pathways.

Art. 2 (Field of application)

1. These Regulations govern the establishment and the functioning of the SISSA Ph.D. Courses.
2. Courses are activated within the framework of a SISSA Scientific Area (hereinafter referred to "Area"), with the potential collaboration of other Areas. Several Courses can be established within an Area.
3. Courses may be activated, including in associated form, through agreements or the constitution of consortia with public or private subjects, including Italian or foreign universities, research institutions as well as companies, including foreign companies, engaged in qualified research, development, and innovation activities.
4. Each Course is disciplined by its own Regulations, in compliance with these Regulations.

Art. 3 (Course Bodies and relevant tasks)

1. The Teaching Board and the Coordinator are the Governing Bodies of each Course.

¹ The use of the masculine gender, both singular and plural, throughout this document is to be understood in a strictly linguistic sense as referring to the person irrespective of gender, in line with the inclusion and gender equality policy pursued by SISSA.

2. The Teaching Board shall consist of professors and researchers involved in didactic activities within the Ph.D. Course. At least half of the members of the Teaching Board must be tenured University Professors both full and associate (prima e seconda fascia). The remaining members may include tenured researchers from universities or public research institutions or, up to the maximum of one third of the Board's total membership, experts who do not belong to universities or public research institutions but possess proven and outstanding scientific or professional qualifications in research fields consistent with the Course's educational objectives.

3. The composition of the Teaching Board shall be proposed by the Board of the Area hosting the course and approved by the Academic Senate.

4. The minimum number of members of a Teaching Board shall be six, with more than 50% belonging to SISSA academic staff. Each SISSA professor or researcher may belong to a maximum of two Teaching Boards of Programmes organized by the School.

5. In addition to the regular members identified in the preceding paragraphs, other professors and researchers involved in teaching activities within the Programme may be invited to participate in Teaching Board meetings as additional members. Additional members shall be proposed by the relevant Area Board and approved by the Academic Senate.

6. For the purpose of accreditation, researchers belonging to the Teaching Board must possess the scientific qualification for access to the functions of associate professors (seconda fascia), and the professors must possess scientific qualification provided for access to the functions of the position they belong to. Members affiliated with foreign universities or research institutions must possess at least the minimum qualifications required by current regulations for access to the functions of associate professors (seconda fascia).

7. The Teaching Board is responsible for the design and implementation of the PhD Programme. The Teaching Board shall:

- a) define the training goals and topics of the Ph.D. Course;
- b) annually, draft the Course didactic activities, divided into lecture cycles; to be approved by the Area Board and the Academic Senate for its publication on the School website by the month preceding the beginning of the Course itself. For each lecture cycle, divided into mandatory and optional lectures, the name, the Professor in charge, attendance period and expected duration shall be specified, in compliance with the Regulations on the

SISSA Professors' and Researchers' academic duties. The cycles of frontal teaching lessons are divided into:

- institutional courses aimed at providing a spectrum of specialized knowledge common to the interdisciplinary research activities carried out within the course, held mainly during the first year;
 - monographic courses intended as a specialized in-depth training activity, aimed at a small group of students enrolled mainly in years following the first and functional to specific research projects undertaken and therefore carried out in parallel with them and lasting no more than 60 hours;
- c) approve students' study plans, which may even include lecture cycles of other Courses;
- d) assign a supervisor on the basis of students' preferences and the available research lines, and one or more co-supervisors pursuant to art. 9 paragraph 4 and 5.
- e) decide on students' admission to the subsequent year;
- f) collect students' opinions on institutional teaching.

8. The Coordinator shall be a full-time full Professor (prima fascia) or, in case of justified unavailability, an associate full-time Professor (seconda fascia). He/She must be in possession of a high scientific qualification, based on the requirements provided for by current legislation for access to the functions of full Professor (prima fascia). The function of Coordinator may be exercised in only one Teaching Board.

9. The Coordinator is appointed by the Academic Senate, upon proposal by the Teaching Board, and is chosen among the full members of the School. The Coordinator's term in office lasts for two years, it can only be renewed for a second consecutive term. Additional terms are possible only after an interruption of at least one term.

10. The Coordinator may appoint a Deputy Coordinator who shall replace him/her in every function in case of absence or impossibility to act. The Deputy Coordinator is chosen among associate and full Professors (prima e seconda fascia) who are part of the Teaching Board.

11. The Coordinator is responsible for the management, organization and coordination of didactic activities and introduction to research carried out during the Course. The Coordinator shall:

- a) convene and chair the Teaching Board and draft its agenda;
- b) coordinate the Course training activities;
- c) manage the funds allocated to the Course if any;
- d) adopt urgent measures lying within the framework of the competence of the Teaching Board, submitting them for approval to the following Board meeting.

12. The students' representative of the Course in the Area Board takes part in the Teaching Board meetings to deal with didactic and organization issues.

Art. 4

(Course establishment, suitability requirements and assessment)

1. The Area Board may propose the establishment of a Ph.D. Course. The Evaluation Committee of the School, after consultation with the Student-Academic Personnel Joint Committee, expresses an opinion about the fulfilment of suitability requirements. Subsequently, the proposal is submitted for approval to the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors, which verify the consistency of the Course with the training planning, as well as the availability of human and financial resources needed to activate it.

2. Courses are established by a Director's Decree, following the accreditation of the Ministry of University and Research (hereinafter referred to as "MUR").

3. Upon proposal by the Director or the reference Area Board, the Board of Directors, following an opinion by the Academic Senate, can decide to close a Course. The closure is implemented by a Director's Decree.

4. Courses are evaluated every year by the Evaluation Committee, in agreement with the Joint Committee and the Quality Assurance Unit with the support of the Students' Secretariat, in the time and manner established by the School's regulations pertaining to quality assurance procedures. Judgments made by students in questionnaires administered to them also contribute to this evaluation. The School's International Scientific Committee also performs advisory and directing functions related to Ph.D. courses.

5. Accreditation requirements are as follows:

- a) Composition of the Teaching Board as established in art. 3 paragraphs 2, 3, 4 of these Regulations;

b) Availability of adequate and stable financial support to sustain the PhD Course, with specific reference to the availability of fellowships and support to Students' activities;

c) Availability of appropriate and qualified operating and scientific structures for students' study and research activities, adequate for the number of fellowships provided, including, depending on the type of Course, facilities of a caring nature, scientific laboratories, a suitable number of books, databases, and resources for electronic calculations;

d) Planning of activities, possibly in common among several doctorates, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary training, linguistic and IT improvement, as well as teaching activities, research management, knowledge of European and International research system, valorization and dissemination of research results, intellectual property and open access to research data and products, and the fundamental principles of ethics and integrity;

e) A system of quality assurance, project planning, and management of doctoral education that complies with the standards for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) according to ANVUR guidelines.

Art. 5

(Admission requirements)

1. The Courses can be accessed, having passed an entrance exam, by candidates of any age and citizenship with a "Laurea Specialistica/Magistrale" or an equivalent academic title obtained abroad, recognized suitable by the Admission Committee. The academic title must be held by the date of enrolment in the PhD course under penalty of forfeiture of admission to the course. However, enrolment must be completed by the end of the month of the beginning of the course.

Art. 6

(Call for applications)

1. The call for applications, in Italian and English language, is issued by a Director's Decree and advertised for at least thirty days on the School's website on the Euraxess website and on the MUR (Ministry of University and Research) website.

2. All Ph.D. students receive a fellowship.

3. The number, the total amount of scholarships and their allocation to individual courses are decided annually by the Board of Directors upon the approval of the

Academic Senate.

Art. 7 **(Admission procedures)**

1. Admission to the Courses takes place through a public selection, held at least once a year.

2. The entrance exam, that can be provided in-person or online, aims to ascertain a student's suitability for scientific research, as well as knowledge of the English language, and consists in the evaluation of his/her titles, and a written and/or oral test as indicated in the call for application.

3. For evaluation purposes, the Admission Committee shall normally have a total of 100 points available, allocated as follows: 10 points for qualifications, 40 points for the written examination, and 50 points for the oral examination; alternatively, 30 points for qualifications and 70 points for a single written or oral examination. Upon proposal of the Teaching Board, the call for applications may provide for a different distribution of points. Each stage of the procedure is understood to have been passed with a minimum score of 7/10 of the score given to that test. Eligibility is achieved by passing all the tests. Upon completion of the evaluation of each test, the committee shall make the results public.

The minutes of the competition are forwarded to the Students' Secretariat, which will forward them to the respective Teaching Boards and from these to the Academic Senate for the approval of the rankings of eligible candidates.

In case of eligible candidates with the same score, the priority titles to be admitted to the courses are those envisaged by President Decree No. 487/94 and amendments thereto. In case of equal qualifications, according to art. 2, paragraph 9 of Law No. 191 dated 16.06.1998, modified by art. 3, paragraph 7 of Law No. 127 dated 15.05.1997, the younger candidate will be preferred.

The selection procedure records are public and may be accessed in accordance with applicable legislation.

4. The selecting Committees for students' admission to the PhD Courses are appointed by the Teaching Boards which manage the Courses and are made up of at least of three professors/researchers, at least one of whom is external to the School and to the Teaching Board.

5. Candidates directly admitted to the oral test and those which handed in an assessable written test may be granted a travel expense reimbursement, determined by the call for application.

6. Candidates with exceptional qualifications coming from countries not belonging to the European Union may be admitted to the Ph.D. Courses by academic records

only through specific call for application. Students admitted based on the procedures envisaged by this paragraph must in any case take a qualification examination at the end of the first year, according to the rules of the Teaching Board.

7. Within the framework of agreements as well as national and international collaboration projects, specific admission procedures and organizational arrangements appropriately agreed upon between the participating institutions may also be provided.

8. Upon proposal by the Teaching Board, the Academic Senate may acknowledge the studies and research carried out at other Institutions by candidates who have passed their admission examinations, admitting them to the second year of the Ph.D. directly.

9. A quota of positions may be reserved for:

- graduates in foreign Universities;
- students receiving fellowships from foreign governments;
- students from specific mobility or international research programs.

In such cases, different admission methods and times and a separate ranking can be envisaged.

Art. 8 **(Enrollment)**

1. Students of the Courses are university students enrolled in a post-graduate third level training course. Attendance is mandatory as envisaged by the doctoral program, subject to the provisions of Article 15. Each student can be enrolled in a single Course, after enrolment, he/she cannot be enrolled in another doctorate in Italy or abroad, except if this is envisaged by specific agreements for joint doctorate or for achieving a double doctorate title.

Attendance of Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, First-Level Master's, or Second-Level Master's programmes that do not require compulsory attendance, as well as specialization or advanced training courses offered either by SISSA or by other Italian or foreign institutions, shall be subject to authorization by the Teaching Board.

2. Students belong to the Area responsible for organizing the course.

Art. 9

(Didactic and research activities)

1. Courses include a first mandatory training activity period, lasting at least six months, and a second period dedicated to research and specialized training activities. Activities are carried out in English. Teaching activities are disciplined by internal regulations of each Course, in accordance with the terms of Article 3 Paragraph 7.
2. Access to individual didactic courses may be allowed to a selected and limited number of students from Italian and foreign universities, such as not to prejudice the functionality of the teaching activities and facilities of the School, upon the proposal of the Course Holder subject to the approval of the Ph.D. course Coordinator. Access to teaching activities may also be provided under specific agreements.
3. The results of profit tests at the end of individual institutional teaching courses, or the certification of attendance of the courses are registered in the appropriate telematic platform. Profit tests are evaluated by a committee of at least two members, including the Course Holder who acts as chairperson, the result will be communicated to the student.
4. By the end of the first year, each student is assigned a supervisor and one or more co-supervisors. It is possible to change supervisor by submitting a motivated request, and if approved by the Teaching Board.
5. At least one among the supervisor and co-supervisors must be members of the Teaching Board employed by the School. The Teaching Board shall identify appropriate ways to ensure the continuity of the research project for the student, even in the case of temporary unavailability of the supervisor or other critical issues that have occurred.
6. In order to solve any problems in the relation between student and supervisor, a student can refer to the Ombudsperson in the ways defined in a specific regulation.
7. The research activity of the students is carried out under the direction of the supervisor, by using the School's facilities, infrastructural and financial resources and other resources made available by appropriate agreements.
8. Each doctoral student is normally expected to carry out research and training activities, in line with the doctoral project, at highly qualified institutions in Italy and abroad and to participate in national and international conferences.

9. For carrying out the research activity in Italy and abroad and everything related to it, a budget of at least 10% of the amount of the Ph.D. fellowship is guaranteed to each student.

Art. 10

(Admission to subsequent years beyond the first)

1. Each Course establishes, through its own regulations, the procedures for admitting students to years following the first. The completion of the “PhD Student Opinion Survey Questionnaire” is, however, a necessary condition for the renewal of enrolment in years subsequent to the first.

2. At the end of the first year, the evaluation takes into consideration both the results of the exams at the end of the Courses or attendance of Courses and the assessment of research activities, if any. Admission to the following years is mostly based on the assessment of research activities.

3. Research results are presented and discussed before a Committee composed of at least three members of the Teaching Board. The date of the discussion is set and communicated to the student in advance. The Committee forwards the results of the assessment of research activity to the Students’ Secretariat, which will transmit them to the individual students.

The evaluation carried out at the end of the penultimate year of the course must necessarily include specific indications in cases of serious difficulties for the student in defending the thesis within the final year of the course. Any critical issues are communicated to the student, whose progress will be assessed at the end of the first and second quarter of the final year of the course. All documents relating to the above evaluations must be promptly submitted to the Students’ Secretariat, which will forward them to the competent governing bodies.

4. The Teaching Boards decide on the admission of students to the subsequent academic year at the first available meeting after the acquisition of the assessment elements and, in any case, in time for the subsequent resolutions of the Academic Senate and the Board of Directors.

Art. 11

(Change of Ph.D. Course)

The passage of a student from one Ph.D. Course to another is allowed after the favorable opinion of the Teaching Board of the receiving Course, which establishes case-by-case teaching and research obligations of the student in the new Ph.D. Course and notify them to him/her in advance.

Art. 12 ***(Mobility)***

1. Ph.D. Course students may spend study and research periods at universities, research institutes or enterprises, in Italy and abroad, with the approval of their supervisor and Course Coordinator, for a total amount of time not exceeding 12 months. Specific agreements regulate the co-tutoring thesis procedures, which may envisage activities in other locations for period up to 24 months.

2. In the case of study and research periods abroad, subject to the prior authorization of the course Coordinator, the Council (or, in its absence) the Board of the Area to which the student belongs may decide to increase the amount of the fellowship by 50% for periods of continuous stay abroad of no less than 14 days and no more than 12 months in total. This period may be extended to a maximum total of 24 months for doctorates in co-partnership with foreign institutions.

3. Student missions, even if they do not imply an expense for the School, must be authorized in advance by the Course Coordinator in accordance with the SISSA "Mission regulations".

Art. 13 ***(Additional teaching activities and other external activities)***

1. Ph.D. Course students may carry out additional teaching activities and coaching for Bachelor and Master's degree students in other Italian Universities, provided that this engagement is not in conflict with their research activities. This activity is subject to the prior authorization of the Teaching Board, based on compatibility with ordinary research activities, and must in any case be within the limit of 40 hours per academic year.

2. The Teaching Board may authorize the doctoral student to carry out paid activities that allow him/her to acquire skills concerning the educational field of the doctorate after assessing the compatibility of the same activities with the profitable performance of the training, teaching and research activities of the Ph.D. course. The maximum limit of the additional salary may not, however, exceed the amount of the fellowship itself.

3. Based on specific agreements with Companies, approved by the competent Bodies, students of a Ph.D. course can also carry out Company internships, subject to the authorization of the Supervisor and the Course Coordinator.

4. Any other external activities, such as teaching in the secondary and high school must be authorized in advance by the Teaching Board. In case of breach, the Director may suspend or revoke the fellowship.

Art. 14 ***(Course duration)***

Each Course normally lasts for a total of four academic years. If a student's scientific maturity and the results achieved make it possible, a thesis can be discussed before the end of the fourth year. In any case, the title will not be issued before the minimum term envisaged by the Italian law on the duration of doctorate courses.

Art. 15 ***(Absences and suspension of the scholarship)***

1. Absences exceeding 15 days must be previously authorised by the thesis supervisor and the Course Coordinator and communicated to the Students' Secretariat.

2. Absences exceeding one month must be previously authorised by the Board (or, in its absence, by the Council) of the Area to which the student belongs, which decides on any suspension of the scholarship.

3. PhD students may request, for duly substantiated reasons provided for by law or by these regulations, suspension of the course for a maximum duration of six (6) months per event, for the following reasons:

- a) compulsory civil or military service;
- b) mandatory maternity, paternity, adoption and foster care leave, in accordance with applicable legislation and the periods provided by INPS or other competent body;
- c) parental leave, in accordance with applicable legislation and the periods provided by INPS or other competent body;
- d) illness and hospitalization, for a minimum period of 15 days;
- e) serious personal reasons;
- f) special cases whose exceptional nature must be assessed by the supervisor and the Teaching Board and approved by the Academic Senate.

Without prejudice to the application of rules protecting parenthood, PhD students on leave or suspension retain the right to the scholarship. At the end of the suspension period, the scholarship is resumed upon return to programme

attendance and is paid up to the total duration of the scholarship itself. Except in specific cases approved by the Teaching Board, the student shall resume their studies in the original admission cohort.

4. In case of mandatory maternity/paternity leave, serious illness or hospitalisation exceeding 15 days, students entitled to receive the INPS allowance may request a supplementary contribution up to the full value of the PhD scholarship — and in any case not exceeding 70% of the scholarship — for all months covered by the allowance.

In the same circumstances, where INPS coverage is not provided, students may request a contribution equal to 70% of the scholarship. This limit is extended to 12 months in cases of compulsory removal from study and research activities. The maximum total period of maternity and paternity leave and SISSA parental leave follows the rules in force for workers registered with the INPS Gestione Separata or other similar institution, as defined by law for PhD students.

5. In case of late notification of pregnancy with respect to the start of mandatory leave, the student shall be placed on mandatory leave with immediate effect. The relevant SISSA contribution shall be adjusted according to the actual leave period, in accordance with applicable regulations.

6. The renunciation of the scholarship by a student before the end of the academic year does not entail repayment of the amounts received, provided that the Teaching Board certifies the regular and productive performance of study and research activities up to the time of renunciation. Where such certification covers a period shorter than that accrued at the date of renunciation, reimbursement of the amounts received for the uncovered period shall be required.

Art. 16

(Final examination and awarding of the degree)

1. The title of Philosophiae Doctor is awarded following a positive evaluation of a research thesis that contributes to the advancement of knowledge or methodologies in the chosen field of study and whose original nature is such as to give rise to one or more articles suitable for publication in highly qualified journals.

2. The PhD thesis is written in English. The student or their supervisor submits the thesis, accompanied by an abstract also in English, to the Students' Secretariat and, at the same time, to the external evaluators referred to in the following paragraph, at least one month before the date of the defence.

3. The thesis, together with a report on the activities carried out during the PhD course and any publications, is examined by at least two evaluators, who are not members of the School's staff and have highly qualified expertise, at least one of

whom must be a university professor. The evaluators, appointed by the Teaching Board, may belong to foreign or international institutions. Within thirty days of receiving the thesis, and in any case within seven days prior to the scheduled date of the defence, the evaluators issue a written analytical report, proposing either admission to the public defence or deferral of the defence for a period not exceeding six months. After such period, the thesis, accompanied by a new written opinion issued by the evaluators, is in any case admitted to the defence.

4. The defence takes place publicly before a committee appointed by the Teaching Board, ensuring, where possible, gender balance. The committee is composed of at least two-thirds members not belonging to the School's staff, at least two-thirds members not involved in supervising the thesis, and no more than one-third members belonging to the institutions participating in the PhD Course pursuant to Article 3, paragraph 2. In any case, at least two-thirds of the committee must be of academic origin. At the end of the defence, the committee issues a written and reasoned assessment of the thesis and, when it unanimously recognizes its particular scientific relevance, may award distinction (*cum laude*). In the event of a negative outcome, the final examination may not be repeated.

5. For the procedures concerning submission, archiving and public access to the thesis, reference is made to Annex 1 of these Regulations.

6. Without prejudice to Article 15 of these Regulations, the final defence is normally held by the end of the last year of the course or within the following month. For duly substantiated reasons that prevent the submission of the PhD thesis within the expected course duration, the Teaching Board may grant, upon request of the PhD student, an extension of up to six months, without additional financial burden on the School. An extension of the PhD course of up to six months may also be decided by the Teaching Board for justified scientific reasons, in which case the corresponding extension of the scholarship duration shall be ensured, funded by the student's supervisor or, in their absence, by the budget of the relevant Research Group.

7. The total periods of extension and suspension referred to in the previous paragraph and in Article 15, paragraphs 2 and 3, may not exceed eighteen (18) months in total, except in specific cases provided for by law.

Art. 17 **(Other certificates)**

1. The School can award "Magister Philosophiae" diplomas and other diplomas or certificates at the end of at least one year of course upon submission of a written assignment (*Master Thesis*) approved by the Teaching Board.

2. Upon student's request, following a favorable opinion by the Teaching Board, the School can issue the title of *Doctor Europaeus*, under the terms and conditions envisaged by the European University Association.

Art. 18 **(Transparency)**

1. The Teaching Board of each Course makes the following information available on the School web pages and keeps it updated:

- a) Course didactic rules;
- b) Ph.D. admission test methods;
- c) envisaged didactic obligations, divided by year: number of courses, titles and programs, hours of class lectures, hours of course in laboratories, essays, access test to years following the first one;
- d) structuring the research lines available for doctorate thesis;
- e) procedure of choice of the supervisor and, if envisaged, to choose the thesis topic, even if not codified, at least as envisaged by practice;
- f) publications from Ph.D. thesis, at least during the past three years
- g) alumni's current positions, if known.

Art. 19 **(Applicable law)**

For matters not expressly mentioned in these regulations, please refer to the D.M. n.226 14/12/2021.

Annex 1

Method of submission, storage, and public consultation of the thesis referred to in Article 16 paragraph 5.

SISSA Digital Library (SDL) is the unique and official archive of SISSA doctoral thesis.

The final version of the thesis in pdf format must be uploaded to SDL at least two days before the scheduled date of defense.

The copy inserted in the digital archive will constitute the official version that remains on file, is not editable and will be made accessible according to the rules of legal deposit.

Subject to the authorization of the Teaching Board, parts of the thesis may be made unavailable in relation to the use of data protected under current legislation. At any time after the thesis discussion, the Ph.D. may add a revised edition of the thesis to the SDL and clearly marked as such. The insertion procedure takes place by sending by e-mail to the library (library@sisssa.it) which will proceed *ex officio* to the upload for the subsequent deposit of the thesis at the National central libraries of Rome and Florence.