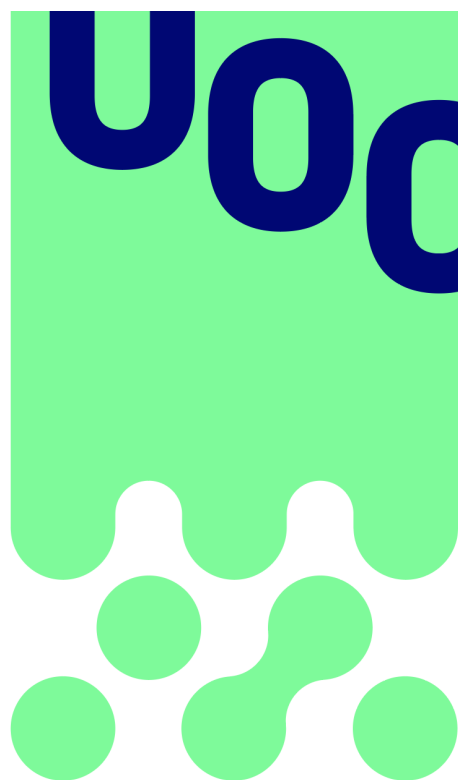


# Doctoral Programme Guide

Society, Technology and Culture



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## Introduction

The doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture is an inherently multidisciplinary programme. It will be provided by the UOC's Doctoral School and is cross-cutting in nature at university level. The programme encompasses the research work in social sciences and humanities carried out at the Internet Interdisciplinary Institute (IN3), the UOC's main research centre, and is further bolstered by select, related research carried out by UOC teaching staff who are members of a faculty dealing in the fields of social sciences and humanities. The aim is to take advantage of the research staff's training potential and the dynamics of the existing research groups in relation to the topics covered by the doctoral programme.

The programme provides tools to analyse the complex relationships between technology and society, and to understand and help overcome the key challenges defining today's societies. It is a multidisciplinary doctoral programme with elements from both the social sciences and humanities. Its subjects of study include growing inequalities, the various forms of discrimination, sustainability, social and economic innovation, citizen mobilization and centre-periphery conflict in increasingly digitized cultural contexts. It views technology as a mediator of social and cultural processes with a dominant role in the (re)distribution of power.

Although its main focus is on digital infrastructure and technology, it also takes into account the non-digital technologies underpinning the key infrastructures of today's societies. In relation to this, the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture meets the need for academic development carried over from the soon-to-be-discontinued doctoral programme in the Information and Knowledge Society, as technology (both digital and non-digital) is constantly changing and we must continue to study its effects on society and culture in greater depth.

The analysis of social, political, economic and cultural systems through a technological lens transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. As a result, the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture has been designed to include a combination of various theoretical, epistemological and methodological approaches for the creation of relevant knowledge.

Students can write doctoral theses falling under any of the following five areas: (1) social, political and economic changes; (2) gender, communication and inequality studies; (3) sustainability, urbanization and (socio-)technology policies; (4) biopolitics, technoscience and society; and (5) culture, digital humanities and society.

The lines of research included in the doctoral programme are linked to research interests and projects being carried out both at the IN3 and in several of the UOC's faculties (Arts and Humanities, Health Sciences, Information and Communication Sciences, Law and Political Science, Economics and Business, and Psychology and Education Sciences). A number of

thesis proposals are offered for each of the research lines, and these are updated every year. You can find them on the Doctoral School's website.

## Admission profile

This doctoral programme is for those individuals looking to focus their career on research and who are creative, original and wish to advance in solving significant problems in their field of study.

The doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture is aimed at students with an **academic background in subjects falling under the social sciences or humanities in the broadest possible sense** who wish to gain overall knowledge of one of their fields of knowledge and make new and relevant academic contributions. Due to the multidisciplinary approach of the doctoral programme and its associated research groups, there is no specific list of previous qualifications.

In addition to the general eligibility requirements for doctoral programmes, candidates must provide proof of at least level B2 in English according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL).

## Admission criteria

Once the candidate's fulfilment of the eligibility requirements and admission criteria has been confirmed, the selection process will begin.

The programme's Academic Committee makes a decision regarding the selection and admission of candidates to its programme. Candidates are selected based on scientific and academic criteria. In addition to the eligibility and admission requirements that must be met by candidates, the following criteria are taken into account:

- Candidates' academic excellence (based on their academic records from their bachelor's and master's degrees).
- Suitability of their academic background, experience and research interests in relation to current research projects and the fields of knowledge or topics studied by the research groups associated with the doctoral programme.
- Furthermore, candidates' previous scientific output and dedication to research are also positively valued. In any event, the selection process also promotes access to each doctoral programme by candidates who have just completed a university master's degree and a research pathway, a type of candidate that does not usually have significant previous scientific output.

Weighting table: candidate selection criteria

Criterion	Variables	Weighting
Academic excellence	$\frac{2}{3}$ bachelor's degree academic record average + $\frac{1}{3}$ master's degree academic record average	30%
Research experience	Conferences, publications, grants and participation in projects related to the subject of the thesis	10%
Presentation/Motivation letter	Dedication to research, and research maturity level (based on experience). Evidence of concrete research interests and of theoretical and methodological knowledge of the field	30%
Commitment and reliability	Proof of vocational commitment and seriousness in submitting the application and documents.	10%
Suitability for the doctoral programme	Goodness-of-fit with the priorities of the candidates' potential thesis supervisors and research groups	20%
TOTAL		100%

Further information on the documents to be submitted and the deadlines for doing so can be found on the website.

## Academic Committee

The Academic Committee is made up of professors and/or researchers, who are supported by a programme management assistant and the Doctoral School. It is responsible for determining the programme's study plan and making relevant academic decisions.

### Academic Committee members

- Natàlia Cantó Milà, Ph.D.
- Anna Clua Infante Ph.D.
- Ana I. Jiménez Zarco, Ph.D.
- Daniel López Gómez, Ph.D.
- David Martínez Zorrilla, Ph.D.



- Ma. Elena Rodríguez González, Ph.D.
- Ivan Serrano Balaguer, Ph.D.

## Programme coordinator

Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol, PhD

## Assistant to the programme manager

Agnès Requena Bou / Daniela Estefania Gil Gamboa

# Competencies

## Basic competencies

- Systematic understanding of a field of study and mastery of the research skills and methods related to this field.
- Ability to conceive, design or create, put into practice and adopt a substantial research or creation process.
- Ability to contribute to expanding the frontiers of knowledge through original research.
- Ability to carry out a critical analysis and assessment and synthesize new and complex ideas.
- Ability to communicate with the academic and scientific community and with society in general regarding the student's areas of knowledge, in the styles and languages commonly used by the international scientific community.
- Ability to foster, in academic and professional settings, scientific, technological, social, artistic or cultural progress in a knowledge-based society.

## Personal abilities and skills

- Ability to come to conclusions by analogy in contexts where there is little specific information.
- Ability to find the key questions that must be answered to solve a complex problem.
- Ability to design and develop innovative projects.
- Ability to work both as part of a team and independently in international or multidisciplinary settings.
- Ability to integrate knowledge, tackle complexity and formulate judgments with limited information.
- Ability to criticize and defend solutions from an intellectual viewpoint.

- Ability to set specific goals and, on the basis of these goals, organize and plan the tasks that must be performed to achieve them in a specified time.
- Ability to engage with other projects that are not specifically related to the subject of the thesis, but may provide significant learning or contribute value for the student.
- Ability to prepare and engage with teaching tasks that may contribute to the student's academic training.

## Programme of study

Training activities are established in the **Personalized Training Plan**. This sets out each student's schedule in accordance with the courses available each semester.

Although the vast majority of courses available are optional, students must complete all the educational activities specified in their personalized training plan.

The list of courses is split into four categories:

- *Bridging courses*. These will be courses from UOC university master's degrees.  
Timing: during the first and second semesters of the doctoral programme.
- *Methodology courses*. Doctoral candidates who have not previously completed these must take and successfully complete the courses in advanced research methodologies applicable to their research pathway within the programme.  
The Academic Committee for the Doctoral Programme will assign the course on "Research Design in the Social Sciences" to all training plans by default, as the course supports the design of the thesis plan.  
Timing: during the first academic year (preferably the first semester)
- *Thematic seminars on research*. These will consist of courses relating to interdisciplinary subjects aimed at ensuring that candidates master the state of the art in key humanities and social science topics.  
Timing: throughout the doctoral programme.
- *Additional research-oriented training activities*. Based on the doctoral candidate's previous studies, their research interests and the format of their doctoral studies (full-time or part-time), participation in short-term training activities to support their research may be arranged. These may be on-site, and can cover a broad range of topics (such as workshops on how to write articles, academic writing in English, academic presentations in English, and so on).

Details of these activities will not be included in the Training Plan. They will be carried out at each student's initiative and discretion or as instructed by the thesis supervisor based on whether they consider it necessary and appropriate at any time during the programme.

Timing: throughout the doctoral programme.

- *Seminar on Doctoral Research.* In the specific case of full-time students, the Academic Committee for the Doctoral Programme may stipulate an obligation to attend specific interdisciplinary seminars to facilitate their learning and promote a sense of community among the different cohorts of doctoral candidates.

Timing: during the first academic year

Bridging courses may not account for more than 12 ECTS and must be taken as a matter of priority.

Regular participation in the respective research group seminars, as well as the presentation of results (participation in at least one conference) and publication of results in formal academic settings (publication of at least one working paper), are key to the process of acquiring the competencies covered by this programme.

Finally, the Training Plan may also include mobility activities (stays in other universities or research centres). These are highly recommended but not compulsory.

In summary, the training activities to be completed are:

- **Full-time students:** all bridging courses, methodology courses and seminars must be completed within the **first four semesters** of the programme. The presentation of papers at conferences, publication of articles or working papers, and all mobility activities, must be completed before submitting the thesis.
- **Part-time students:** all bridging courses, methodology courses and seminars must be completed within the **first six semesters** of the programme. The presentation of papers at conferences, publication of articles or working papers, and all mobility activities, must be completed before submitting the thesis.

## Milestones

The doctoral program can be completed either in a full-time and a part-time mode. The **full-time mode** must be completed in **three years** and is the path for granted students. The **part-time mode** must be completed in **five years** and applies to the rest of the students. If after the given

period the application for submission of the thesis has not been made, the Academic Committee may authorize an extension of one year, and exceptionally of a further year.

Key milestones are:

- Training plan: set up when the 1st semester begins
- Courses: 1st academic year preferably
- Supervisory committee: 1st semester
- Research plan: prepared during the 1st & 2nd semester. Must be approved at the end of the 1st academic year
- Activity report: annual (years 2, 3, ...)

See the infographic [The path to your PhD](#) for an overview. The programme's academic calendar is published at the beginning of scholar year and shared with the students.

## Thesis supervisory committee

Appointed by the programme's Academic Committee, its members are the thesis supervisor – who is also the Committee's president – and another two faculty members or researchers, both holders of doctoral degrees and with proven research experience. The supervisory committee must be set up during the **first semester**. Annually, the three members of the committee will issue progress reports on the student's doctoral research for the programme's Academic Committee, so that it may better monitor and assess the activity carried out by each doctoral student. In its reports to the Academic Committee, the thesis supervisory committee will also assess the research plan prepared by the doctoral student and will propose its approval or not, giving the reasons in either case. However, the decision on this and other assessments corresponds solely to the programme's Academic Committee.

## Tutor

This is the person who welcomes the doctoral student (after their admission to the programme), proposes a personalized study and research plan (based on the student's prior experience and training) and helps the student find a thesis supervisor during the first few weeks after starting the programme. The tutor must be a doctoral degree holder and member of the UOC's staff and must have been approved by the programme's Academic Committee. The tutor will identify the professor or researcher who may perform the functions of the thesis supervisor for the doctoral student. In most cases, the tutor will actually take the functions of the thesis supervisor, when the thesis' subject and the student's interests are so required.

## Thesis supervisor



The thesis supervisor works with the doctoral student, first of all, to present and obtain approval of the research plan and, subsequently, to write and defend the doctoral thesis. The thesis supervisor monitors the doctoral student's research plan at regular intervals, guiding the student in its development. As the student progresses in the development of the plan, the thesis supervisor encourages the student to take the initiative and work more independently. The thesis supervisor ensures that the plan is original, formative and innovative, and can be completed within the time proposed, and also that it is consistent with the research line it is affiliated with. In short, the thesis supervisor is the student's main point of academic reference at the University, once the student has completed the activities that may have been included in the personalized study plan during the doctoral programme's first year.

In the case of full-time doctoral students who earned a UOC grant for conducting their doctoral theses or other competitive predoctoral grants, the thesis supervisor is also responsible for the activity performed by the grant holder within the institution.

## Research plan

Supervised and guided by the tutor and the thesis supervisor, each student must **develop the research plan during the first semester**, which will be **assessed during the first academic year**. The document must contain a first outline of the student's study subject, how it will be approached and the expected results. It should also include a timeline of the activities to achieve the proposed objectives. Obviously, this document may undergo changes as the activities related to the thesis are completed. However, the goal is to provide the student, the thesis supervisor and the supervisory committee with a map that will guide them through the process.

As part of the development of the research plan, the student will be required to review the relevant literature and follow the thesis supervisor's instructions.

The research plan will be assessed by the thesis supervisory committee and two independent assessors. The process ends with the approval of the research plan by the Academic Committee. The approval of the research plan is required for continuing the doctoral studies.

## Activity report

Having completed the research plan, the next step will be to submit the activity report for the annual monitoring assessment.

The activity report is an instrument that includes all the activities performed by the student. In this document, the student must provide detailed information about the specific research



training received: cross-disciplinary training; research plan; changes in thesis supervisor; justified pauses in the activity (temporary absences approved by the Academic Committee); agreements; research stays; grants and financial support; participation in conferences, workshops or seminars; publications, etc.

The training and research activity carried out by the doctoral student during each academic year will undergo an annual monitoring assessment performed by the thesis supervisory committee (and must be approved by the Academic Committee). Obtaining a favourable result in this assessment is required for continuing the doctoral studies.

## Assessment

Each year, the programme's Academic Committee supervises students' progress on the basis of the research plan, the reports issued by the thesis supervisory committee and the students' activity report. The Committee will perform an individualized assessment of students' progress, taking into account their specific goals and giving priority to the scientific quality of their work and their training as future researchers.

At the time of submitting the thesis and based on the reports issued by external experts, the Academic Committee will state whether students have met all the requirements specified in the study plan and the research plan. If they have, students will be authorized to defend their thesis.

The doctoral thesis can be presented either as a monograph or as a compendium of scientific publications. You will find the rules applicable to this and the rules concerning thesis submission on the Doctoral School's website and on the [Academic Regulations for the UOC doctoral studies](#).