

*Please note that this is an English courtesy translation of the original documentation prepared in Italian language (i.e.: REGOLAMENTO DEL CORSO DI DOTTORATO IN MOLECULAR AND EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE) and that, consequently, only the Italian version of this document has legal value.*

# **REGULATION OF THE PhD PROGRAMME IN MOLECULAR AND EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE**

## **Art. 1 - Scope of the Regulation**

1. This Regulation disciplines the management and operation of the PhD Programme in Molecular and Experimental Medicine in accordance with current legislation.

## **Art. 2 - Establishment of the PhD Programme**

1. The Research Doctorate Programme in "Molecular and Experimental Medicine" (hereafter "MEM" or "PhD Programme" or "Programme") has been established as of the XXXI cycle. The request for accreditation has been submitted by the Department of Biomedical Sciences of Humanitas University in partnership with the Università degli Studi di Palermo and the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR).

## **Art. 3 – Objectives**

1. MEM aims to offer theoretical, methodological and experimental training to researchers and professionals in the complex and innovative fields of immunology, pathology, genetics, neuroscience and oncology. The Programme aims to strengthen the links and the interdependence between the experience derived from core pre-clinical disciplines and those resulting from the direct application of clinical technics.  
2. The specific objective of MEM is to provide students with a specific training in academic, clinical and industrial research so that they will be able to conduct high level translational research at universities as well as at public or private institutions.

## **Art. 4 – Disciplinary Areas**

1. The PhD Programme covers primarily the following areas:

- a) Area 05 - Biological Sciences;
- b) Area 06 - Medical Sciences.

## **Art. 5 - Main Features**

1. The legal duration of the PhD Programme is three years. The Programme can be articulated in different curricula according to the number and composition of the Academic Board.

2. English is the official language of the PhD Programme: all seminars, lectures, exams and the PhD thesis are in English, as are the notice for admission to the Programme and the website. Foreign students are nevertheless encouraged to learn Italian, at least at the elementary level, by the end of the second year.

3. MEM ensures the principle of non-discrimination, admitting to the Programme the most qualified students regardless of their nationality, gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, belief, disability, age or sexual orientation and promoting equal treatment.

## **Art. 6 - Bodies of the PhD Programme**

1. The Bodies of the PhD Programme are the following:

- a. Academic Board;
- b. Coordinator;

c. Executive Board.

#### **Art. 7 – Academic Board**

1. Composition of the Academic Board of the PhD Programme is determined in accordance with current legislation. More specifically, the Academic Board can include:

- a. Full and Associate Professors, including fixed term Full Professors (i.e., “Professori Straordinari”);
- b. University Researchers;
- c. Directors of Research, Senior Researchers and Researchers of Research Centres;
- d. Experts with qualified research experience who work for public or private entities.

2. The Coordinator may invite to attend Academic Board meetings persons who are not members of the Board but whose contribution is considered relevant to the definition of scientific, educational, technical and/or financial matters related to the PhD Programme. These persons, who do not have voting rights, may include student representatives enrolled in MEM or those tutors who are not already on the Academic Board.

3. Membership on the Academic Board is on a volunteer basis; those interested must inform the Coordinator and must send their Curriculum Vitae and a declaration of that they are not on the Academic Board of any other Italian PhD Programmes. For professors and researchers of other Italian universities, the authorization of their department or university is also required.

4. Meetings of the Academic Board are convened either by the Coordinator or at the request of at least 1/5 of its members with voting rights. The notice is sent at least five days before the meeting is scheduled to be held by the most suitable method that will ensure its receipt. In urgent cases, meetings may be convened with a minimum notice of 24 hours. The meeting agenda is normally sent together with the notice. For the meeting session to be valid, the presence of the absolute majority of the members with voting rights is required. The Coordinator may convene meetings that allow one or more members to join the meeting by means of audio or video conference, ensuring that each member has the opportunity to participate and express his/her opinion and to vote.

5. The Academic Board may resolve to delegate the Executive Committee to perform all or some of these functions.

6. The Academic Board will meet at least once a year to deliberate on issues relating to the functioning of the PhD Programme and to carry out functions not delegated to the Executive Committee. Resolutions are adopted with the majority of votes of those present. In the event of a tie the Coordinator’s vote will prevail.

#### **Art. 8 - Coordinator**

1. The Coordinator is responsible for the PhD programme, directs its activities and represents its interests in relations with the University and with external organizations.

2. The Coordinator is elected by the Academic Board from among the full-time Full Professors or, in case of unavailability, from among full-time Associate Professors who are members of the Academic Board and who serve at the University that acts as administrative headquarter of PhD Programme.

3. The election of the Coordinator is convened by the Dean of the Faculty, a member of the Board and who serves at the University that acts as administrative headquarter of the PhD Programme. In the first ballot, election is determined by the absolute majority of those entitled to vote; in the second ballot, with the absolute majority of all those present. The vote is personal; voting by proxy is not allowed. A report of the election shall be drawn up.

4. The Coordinator’s mandate is three years and can be renewed just once.

5. The Coordinator shall perform the following tasks:

- a) coordinate and organize the training and administrative activities of the PhD Programme;
- b) convene and chair the Academic Board and ensure the implementation of the relevant resolutions;
- c) authorize the students, including by delegating the designated professors or the tutor, to carry out research/ internship/ traineeship at the partner universities or at other institutions or research centres;
- d) report to the relevant administrative offices the unjustified absences of any student for the purpose of suspension of the scholarship payment and expulsion from the PhD programme;
- e) draw up a detailed report of the Programme to submit to the Evaluation Team of the University and to ANVUR at the end of each academic year;
- f) appoint a Deputy Coordinator from among the members of Executive Board who can cover for the Coordinator in the event of impediment or illness.

#### **Art. 9 - Executive Committee**

1. The Executive Committee is composed of a maximum of 8 members including the Coordinator, who chairs it and who, in the event of a tie in the deliberations, has double vote.
2. The members of the Executive Committee are elected by and from among the members of the Academic Board with right to vote by a simple majority with single preference.
3. The same provisions described for the operations of the Board of Professor are adopted for the operations of the Executive Committee as well.
4. The Executive Committee assists the Coordinator in the fulfilment of his/her duties.
5. The Coordinator may assign to individual members of the Executive Committee specific functions considered necessary to the management and organization of the PhD Programme.
6. The Executive Committee remains in office for the duration of the term of the Coordinator.
7. In the event of resignation, termination or impediment of a member of the Executive Committee for a period exceeding three months, the Academic Board may replace him/her with the first from among the non-elected members. In the event of lack of a substitute, the Academic Board may call new elections for the appointment of a substitute. The mandate of the new member expires with the mandate of the Executive Committee.

#### **Art. 10 - Supervisor**

1. A professor (i.e., Supervisor) is assigned to each student by the Academic Board in relation to the research project that that student will develop during the PhD.
2. The Supervisor is responsible for the following functions:
  - a) monitoring and promoting the integration of the student in the PhD Programme;
  - b) supporting the student in defining the research topics to develop during the PhD Programme supporting him/her during the drafting of the proposal and the planning of the individual study plan, as well as in preparing the interim evaluations and that of the doctoral thesis;
  - c) providing the student with the resources and research materials necessary to carry out his/her research project and advising on the student's request to use resources allocated to activities consistent with the individual study plan of the student;
  - d) promptly reporting to the Academic Board any difficulty, including those of an ethical or behavioural nature, which may emerge during the course of the PhD Programme;

e) any other function the Academic Board deems useful to facilitating the student' successful completion of the PhD Programme.

### **Art. 11 - Requirements and procedures for admission**

1. The requirements for admission to MEM are approved annually by the Academic Board on a proposal from the Executive Committee and expressly listed in the notice for admission.

2. The notice for admission to the PhD programme is issued by decree of the Rector and posted on the websites of partner universities and organizations, on the Euraxess website and on that of the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. The notice is widely disseminated among the relevant scientific communities through all the suitable means indicated by the Academic.

3. The notice is in English and indicates:

a. the legal duration and the educational objectives of the PhD Programme;

b. the terms and procedures for application;

c. the requirements for admission to the PhD programme and the criteria for assessing applications;

d. the selection process, specifying that the entire process will be carried out in English;

e. the number of positions available;

f. the number of positions reserved for applicants with scholarships funded by other countries or institutions or for employees of industrial partners that support the PhD Programme;

g. the maximum number of candidates that can be admitted as supernumerary;

h. the number of scholarships available and their amount;

i. the number of apprenticeships and / or any other form of financial support, including research fellowships ex Art. 22 of Law n. 240 of 30 December 2010, the amount of which must be at least equivalent to the amount of a scholarship;

j. the research subject of topic-related scholarships;

k. the amount of the scholarship increase for periods spent abroad;

l. the evaluation criteria for admission to the subsequent years;

m. the conditions for payment of the scholarship;

n. reasons for suspension and forfeiture of the scholarship.

4. Access to the PhD Programme is based on a competitive process of evaluation of applicants' qualifications stemming from academic and professional experiences and on an interview. The selection process is described in the notice. Interviews are public and can be carried out remotely. In all cases the equal treatment of all applicants during the interviews must be guaranteed

5. The Selection Committee for admission to the PhD Programme is appointed by the Rector of the University that acts as administrative headquarters of the Programme, on the recommendation of the Academic Board, and consists of one representative from each of the universities and affiliated organizations as well as at least one external component, Italian or foreign, with expertise in the disciplines covered by the Programme.

6. Admission to MEM takes place on the basis of ranking drawn up by the Selection Committee up to the number of positions available.

#### **Art. 12 – Educational and Training activities**

1. As part of the PhD programme a series of educational activities are organised yearly and presented at the beginning of each academic year together with a description of how and where they will take place. In the definition and organization of these activities, the alternation of premises and venues as well the mobility of students and professors will be guaranteed.
2. The partner universities and organizations provide information about and facilitate the participation of the students in seminars, meetings and other training events organized at the premises.
3. The programme of the activities and the calendar of the events related to the PhD programme are posted on the MEM website.
4. Each student must present a proposal for an individual research project by the end of the first year,. The project must be approved by the designated supervisor and presented to the Executive Committee.
5. Any activity that awards additional university credits is subject to the prior approval of the designated supervisor and communicated to the Executive Committee and to the competent administrative office.

#### **Art. 13 – Leaves of absence**

1. Leaves of absence may be granted by the Academic Board for justified personal reasons presented by the student.
2. Any leave or intermission whose duration exceeds two months in total will result in the deferral of the final exam. Suspension of the attendance for more than thirty days results the subsequent suspension of the scholarship.
3. Absences not previously communicated to or authorized by the designated supervisor or the Coordinator may be grounds for expulsion from the PhD Programme.
4. In case of pregnancy, the student is required to immediately report her status to the designated supervisor or to the Coordinator so that all the necessary safety and protection measures can be taken to protect the health of the future child. Any leave of absence or intermission lasting less than two months in total due to pregnancy which may occur in the first seven months of pregnancy does not imply a suspension of the training. The student is required to suspend the training for five months from the beginning of the eighth month of pregnancy, except as provided by the rules on radiation protection and other specific rules. The request for leave of absence must be submitted to the Coordinator and to the administrative office of the University at least fifteen days before the start date of the leave together with a gynaecologist's certificate attesting the state of pregnancy and the expected date of delivery. The student has the right to continue training throughout the eighth month of pregnancy by submitting a request to the Coordinator of the College and to the competent Office of the University. The application must be accompanied by the certificates required by law in which it is certified that this option does not harm the health of pregnant woman and the future child. In this case leave will begin one month prior to the expected date of delivery and will last at least five months.
- 5 The student-parent has the right to request a leave of absence due to serious and documented illness of the new-born.
6. At the end of the period of leave or intermission the student will resume the training programme and will send a statement attesting her/his return signed by the Coordinator to the relevant offices of. The administrative deadlines and the payment of the scholarship, if granted, will be deferred for a period equal to

the duration of the leave. The Academic Board will decide on the terms for making up for the lost training provided that in no case shall the ordinary duration of the course be shortened.

#### **Art. 14 - Admission to the subsequent years and final exam**

1. At the end of the first year, students will present their research project to an Evaluation Committee appointed for this purpose by the Academic Board. In the event that a research project is not approved, that student will not be admitted to the second year, with the consequent loss of the benefits linked to the status of PhD student.
2. Students can be provisionally admitted to the second year (“ammissione con riserva”) when the Committee’s evaluation is only partially positive and highlights critical issues and possible amendments to the individual research project to be implemented by the end of second year.
3. Admission to the third year is contingent upon the positive evaluation of the achievements of the first two years of the training that each student presents and discusses in the presence of an external opponent identified by the Academic Board.
4. To be admitted to the final examination, students present the preliminary version of their doctoral thesis according to the instructions provided by the Academic Board, which will express an analytical judgment on the work of each student and will decide on the admission to the final examination.

#### **Art. 15 - Rights and Duties of PhD students**

1. Admission to the PhD programme involves a full-time and exclusive commitment.
2. By entering the PhD program MEM each student commit him/herself to:
  - a. respecting the Ethic Code of the University that acts as MEM’s administrative office as well as that of the partner institution where most of the student’s doctoral activities will be carried out . Any deficiency or discrepancy with regard to the above-mentioned regulations must be immediately reported to the Supervisor and to the Coordinator, who will refer it the Academic Board;
  - b. adopting a behaviour that respects the general principles of scientific integrity by conducting his/her own studies and research according to the criteria of honesty, accuracy, efficiency and objectivity;
  - c. avoiding any form of plagiarism and misconduct;
  - d. attending courses, seminars, tutorials and teaching modules in the PhD programme, and to carrying out study and research in a continuous manner in the premises designated for this purpose by the partner institutions.
3. As part of the programme, the Academic Board may authorize an overall period of 18 months (not necessarily consecutive) of training or research abroad. In correspondence with stays abroad lasting 30 consecutive days or more, the monthly instalment of the scholarship may be increased up to 50 percent, pro-rata, in relation to the destination.
4. Students may advance to the Coordinator a justified request to amend their individual research project; the Coordinator will bring the request to the attention of the Executive Board and to the Academic Board.
5. As part of the career development of MEM students, the Academic Board may authorize, students to undertake teaching and tutoring in the undergraduate and Master's degree programmes of partner universities for a maximum of forty hours per academic year.
6. The Academic Board may authorize students of clinical disciplines to provide clinical care within specific limits.

7. Students enrolled in the PhD programme shall elect a representative on the Academic Board for the discussion of educational and organizational matters. The representative remains in office for two years and may be re-elected for a second term. The representative may be removed by means of a vote of no confidence by the absolute majority of the MEM students as presented to the Coordinator.

#### **Art. 16 – Causes of expulsion**

1. The Academic Board, on the recommendation of the Supervisor and with a justified decision taken by the majority of those with voting right, may expel a student from the PhD Programme, with the consequent loss of the right to avail him/herself of the scholarship, in the following cases:

- a) insufficient achievement in mid-term evaluations of the preceding articles;
- b) violation of the duties of the previous article;
- c) carrying out of not previously disclosed and / or authorized activities;
- d) unjustified and prolonged absences or prolonged unavailability.

2. Expulsion is also foreseen in the case of failure to pass the final exam.

3. In the case of expulsion the scholarship will no longer be paid.

#### **Art. 17 - Intellectual property and patent rights**

1. The right to apply for patents and copyright and, generally speaking, to receive recognition for the intellectual property of inventions resulting from the scientific research conducted as an MEM student, without prejudice to the moral rights guaranteed by law, is governed by the rules and regulations adopted by the institutions where the student in question carries out his/her research activity.

#### **Art. 18 - Transitory and final provisions**

1. In the activation phase of the PhD Programme, pending the election of the governing bodies and in order to ensure the timely and orderly start of the Programme, the Council of the Department of the University that acts as MEM administrative office will appoint a Steering Committee composed of a maximum of eight members selected from among the full professors and Director of Research who compose the Academic Board, to which are delegated the functions that under this Regulation are assigned to the Coordinator or the Executive Committee.

2. Any matter not explicitly mentioned in these Regulations must refer to the current legislation and to the regulations of the University that acts as MEM administrative office or to that partner institution where the student is carrying out his/her research activities.