
Centre monitoring report

Doctoral School

Academic year 2022/2023

19 January 2024

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1. Basic identification details

Director of the Doctoral School (centre)	<i>David Masip Rodó dmasipr@uoc.edu</i>
Report authors	<i>David Masip Rodó dmasipr@uoc.edu Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol mfernandezar@uoc.edu Marga Casamitjana Franco mfrancoca@uoc.edu Ferran Adelantado Freixer ferranadelantado@uoc.edu Lluís Garay Tamajón lgaray@uoc.edu Iolanda Garcia González igarciago@uoc.edu David Martínez Zorrilla dmartinez@uoc.edu Antoni Meseguer Artola ameseguer@uoc.edu Ferran Prados Carrasco fpradosc@uoc.edu Joan Pujolar Cos jpujolar@uoc.edu</i>
Body and date of approval	<i>Doctoral School Management Committee, 19 January 2024</i>

Programme name	RUCT code	Year implemented	Validation	Modification	Accreditation
Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture	5601453	2021/2022	11 March 2021	-	-

2. Preparation of the report

The Doctoral School's centre monitoring report has been drawn up by the director of the Doctoral School, Dr David Masip Rodó, with the assistance of those involved in the programme's management, namely:

- Dr Mireia Fernández-Ardèvol (director of the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture);
- Marga Casamitjana Franco (director of the Research Centre and Doctoral Management Office); and
- Members of the Doctoral School Management Committee.

This report is based on the doctoral programme monitoring report for the Society, Technology and Culture programme, which was prepared by the programme's academic committee applying the following procedure:

- The relevant data were analysed.
- A first draft of the report was prepared by the programme director, taking into account the information provided by each member of the teaching staff.

- This draft report was submitted to the competent member of the Planning and Quality department.
- The members of the academic committee met to discuss the draft report.
- The report was reviewed in the light of feedback from the academic committee and signed off.
- The report was resubmitted to the Planning and Quality department.

Once the doctoral programme monitoring report was completed, the following steps were taken:

- The report was reviewed by the director of the Doctoral School and a first draft of the centre monitoring report was written.
- This draft report was submitted to the competent member of the Planning and Quality department.
- The director of the Doctoral School made the necessary changes to the report based on feedback from the Planning and Quality department.
- Once completed, the report was reviewed and presented at the Management Committee meeting (see Section 1, "Basic identification details") and validated and approved on 19 January 2024.

3. Follow-up on requirements and recommendations from external assessment procedures

Code	Level (centre/ programme)	Description in original final external assessment report	Response	Current status
PM-AC-2019_03	Centre	5. <i>In order to foster communication between candidates, potential candidates or the wider scientific community and the doctoral programme, as stated in the three self-assessment reports, we recommend that all past and present students on any doctoral programme at the UOC should have access to their peers' research profile and be able to see the work they have published as part of the doctoral programme and the courses, activities, research stays and other endeavours they have undertaken.</i>	Doctoral students are able to meet students from other disciplines and cohorts in the tutoring classroom. There they can communicate and view each other's profiles. The UOC is also improving the exchange of information between students at different stages of research with its Folio tool, which we will be able to roll out next semester. Folio is an innovative and highly visual tool for sharing research progress with teaching staff, thesis supervisors and, with the author's permission, all students or the entire scientific community.	In progress
		9. <i>The websites of the three programmes do not provide information on the main career opportunities for doctoral students.</i>	This information will be published soon.	In progress
PM-VE-2021_01	Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture	1. <i>The link that should lead to the continuous enrolment regulations for the doctoral programme still does not work.</i>	The link was checked and found to work.	Resolved
		2. <i>Information is provided on the percentage of students who have received postdoctoral grants or contracts during the last five years: 10 postdoctoral contracts with grants funded by the UOC, 2 international postdoctoral contracts (UK and Japan) and 1 Juan de la Cierva</i>	This information will be added to the next Modifica report.	In progress

Code	Level (centre/ programme)	Description in original final external assessment report	Response	Current status
		<i>contract. This information, which is provided in the appeals document, must be included in the programme validation report.</i>		

4. Assessment of compliance with the monitoring standards

4.1 Standard 1: Quality of the training programme

The study programme design (research lines, skills profile and training activities) is current according to the requirements of the educational field and it meets the required level of study according to the MECES.

1.1. The programme has mechanisms in place to ensure that the admission profile of PhD students is suitable and that the number of students is consistent with the characteristics and distribution of the programme's research lines and the number of places available.

1.2. The programme has suitable mechanisms in place for supervision of PhD students and, where applicable, of training activities.

Programme	Progressing towards excellence	Compliant	Compliant with conditions	Non-compliant
Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture	X			
Overall assessment		X		

Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture

Analysis and assessment

The Doctoral School uses inclusive language in its communications and adheres to the institution's equality plan.

Below are the key indicators for the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture:

- Seventeen students were admitted for the 2021/2022 academic year, of whom 7 (41.2%) were women, and 12 students were admitted for the 2022/2023 academic year, of whom 6 (50%) were women.
- International students accounted for 24% of the total in 2021/2022 and 83% of the total in 2022/2023, coming from a wide range of countries: Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Austria, Costa Rica, the United States, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey.

- Of the students admitted for the 2021/2022 academic year, 41% entered the programme on a full-time predoctoral contract and 65% dedicated themselves to the programme on a part-time basis. Of the students admitted for the 2022/2023 academic year, 42% entered the programme on a full-time predoctoral contract and 83% dedicated themselves to the programme on a part-time basis. Some students with a grant work part-time on their doctoral thesis.

For comparison, the same indicators are shown below for the Doctoral School's 9 programmes:

- A total of 122 students were admitted for the 2021/2022 academic year, of whom 58 (47.5%) were women, and 106 students were admitted for the 2022/2023 academic year, of whom 57 (53.77%) were women.
- International students accounted for 37.28% of the total. This represents 85 students from a wide range of countries other than Spain, including Argentina, Ecuador, the United States, France, Italy, Colombia, Bolivia, Serbia, Mexico, Iran, Brazil, Turkey, Thailand, Cuba, Romania, Macedonia, Greece, Russia, China, Hungary, Portugal, El Salvador, Cameroon, Nepal, Austria, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Nigeria, Ukraine and Uruguay. The percentage of international doctoral students contracted with UOC grants is even higher, at 58.4%.
- In the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic years, 29.1% of students entered the programme on a full-time predoctoral contract (49 grants) and the remaining 70.9% entered as part-time students.
- In the 2022/2023 academic year, 12 predoctoral contracts were awarded through the UOC's grant programme. There was also 1 FPU grant, 1 FPI grant, 2 FI grants and various contracts funded through competitive projects (H2020 or equivalent).

On the initiative of a large group of doctoral students, many of them from the Society, Technology and Culture programme, the first LGBTQIA+ Conference was held during the 2022/2023 academic year. The event was coordinated by the doctoral students themselves, with support from the programme director, who focused her efforts on equipping them with the necessary skills for event organization. The conference took place on 16 June, with various presentations accepted following an abstract submission process. It was a success in terms of participation and is expected to be repeated in the coming years. The Doctoral School also offered seminars during the academic year on topics of cross-disciplinary interest: gender and research, postdoctoral careers and data management.

The mechanisms for coordination between the teaching staff and the faculties and research centres affiliated to the programme and the Doctoral School are considered positive.

The welcome sessions for students on all programmes, as well as the specific and complementary welcome sessions for students on predoctoral contracts, are very well received. Individual welcomes are also organized for researchers on predoctoral contracts as they arrive. Lastly, the director of the Doctoral School holds a quarterly meeting for contracted doctoral students.

The Academic Regulations for Doctoral Programmes were revised during the 2022/2023 academic year, with changes to the following articles as described below:

- The possibility of transferring to another doctoral programme within the UOC was added to Article 7, which also states that students may not defend their thesis during the first two semesters following the transfer.

- Article 16 on the allocation of places was amended to specify that candidates who pass the selection process but find themselves in a situation where there are no more places available on the programme will be placed on a waiting list in order of individual merit. An 8-day time frame was also added for submitting appeals against the allocation decision.
- Article 21 on full-time/part-time commitment to the doctoral programme was amended to clarify that the continuous enrolment period begins on the day the student first enrolls and ends on the day they deposit their thesis.
- Article 28 on theses presented as a collection of articles was amended to allow different assessment criteria depending on the doctoral programme. In this way, the criteria can be tailored to the field of knowledge, which is necessary given the wide variety of subject areas. A distinction was also made in the case of contributions to the collection of articles by doctoral students in a company (by agreement), waiving the need to indicate their affiliation to the UOC.
- Article 29 was added to regulate practice-based doctoral theses, a new format that goes beyond the traditional written dissertation. These theses involve the development of a strategy, process, creation and/or product (of a communicative, technological, artistic, design or other nature), usually intended to serve a social purpose or a wider audience beyond academia, and experimentation with materials, methods or other types of process.
- Article 30 was amended to allow up to 3 thesis co-supervisors in certain circumstances with academic committee approval.
- With regard to Article 40 on authorizing thesis oral examinations, the requirement for students to submit 4 printed and bound copies of their thesis was removed and a digital format will now be the standard.
- A procedure was put in place to meet the requirements of Article 71, on requests for recognition of equivalence levels.

The regulations were also updated to cover aspects relating to the online presentation and defence of doctoral theses. A plan will also be drawn up to process any changes to the doctoral programmes that may be required, according to the timetable proposed by AQU (Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency).

These changes will allow the Doctoral School to adapt its regulations to the needs of the new programmes, given their highly interdisciplinary nature. However, they are only a starting point, as the recent approval of the new Royal Decree of 27 July, which affects doctoral programmes, will require regulatory changes that will be described in the report for the next monitoring period.

Strengths

The doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture has formal and informal spaces for communication between the programme and teaching and research staff, and between the programme and students. The academic committee is heavily involved in reviewing and improving the programme's processes and sound working practices in terms of gender and diversity.

In the Doctoral School, there is good coordination between all the programmes and a good understanding between the programme directors, as evidenced by the discussions, rapid consensus and decision-making that take place in their meetings.

Areas for improvement

In 2024, a work plan will be drawn up to increase the number of UOC master's degree students who apply for admission to its doctoral programmes.

4.2 Standard 2: Relevance of public information

The institution appropriately informs all stakeholders of the PhD programme's characteristics and the management processes for quality assurance.

2.1. The HEI publishes truthful, complete, up-to-date and accessible information on the characteristics of the PhD programme, its operational delivery and the outcomes achieved.

2.2. The institution guarantees easy access to relevant information on the PhD programme for all stakeholders, which includes monitoring and, where applicable, accreditation outcomes.

2.3. The HEI publishes the IQAS which forms the framework of the PhD programme.

Programme	Progressing towards excellence	Compliant	Compliant with conditions	Non-compliant
Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture		X		
Overall assessment		X		

There have been no significant changes in relation to this standard since the last centre monitoring report. However, the way in which information is presented on the website for all the programmes offered by the UOC has undergone a formal and aesthetic redesign. This has resulted in various review processes to ensure the correct transfer of information.

As part of certain improvement actions (see PM-AC-2019_3), we have considered adding specific items to the doctoral programme website, in particular to enable mechanisms and provide information on the processes for depositing and defending theses, requesting international mentions, preparing and defending research plans, requesting temporary leave, and requesting and downloading certificates and qualifications. These actions have been resolved in the *Procedures* section of the Virtual Campus. Each of these processes has an associated procedure, with a section for submitting queries to the Help Service, a diagram outlining the steps to follow, and links to upload the necessary documents and download the results. The *Procedures* section can be accessed by students enrolled on any programme. As it is a service provided by the Academic Secretary's Office, it is not accessible via the public website.

Strengths

The UOC publishes clear and comprehensive information on its programmes in the *Quality* section of the website. The following changes were also made in the 2022/2023 academic year:

- Information on all doctoral programmes was moved to the new *Course offering* page of the website, which has the same layout as the pages for bachelor's and master's degrees (see <https://www.uoc.edu/en/studies/doctorates>).

- Regulations were published regarding the funding provided by the Doctoral School to cover or supplement the financial aid funds associated with all types of Doctoral School grants. These regulations cover the funding of mobility activities (depending on the funding body), research stays and training activities (enrolment fees).

Areas for improvement

We propose the following centre improvement actions:

- The Doctoral School website or the *Quality* page of the UOC website should publish information on the monitoring reports of doctoral programmes, with a breakdown of the academic and satisfaction results of each programme.
- The CVs of teaching staff involved in the programme's coordination and academic committee are available on the programme website. Although this site also contains a complete list of the programme's thesis supervisors, a link to their CVs must be added.

4.3 Standard 3: Efficacy of the internal quality assurance system

The HEI has a functioning internal quality assurance system that has a formal status and assures the quality and continuous enhancement of the PhD programme in an efficient way.

3.1. The IQAS facilitates the processes for the design and approval of the PhD programme, its monitoring and its accreditation.

3.2. The IQAS ensures information and relevant outcomes are compiled for effective management of the PhD programmes.

3.3. The IQAS is reviewed periodically in order to analyse its suitability and, where applicable, an enhancement plan is put forward in order to optimize it.

Programme	Progressing towards excellence	Compliant	Compliant with conditions	Non-compliant
Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture		X		
Overall assessment		X		

Analysis and assessment

In the academic year prior to the period covered by this report, the tools for measuring satisfaction among doctoral students were updated in line with the needs of the Doctoral School, which were often different from those of the faculties (understood as centres that offer bachelor's and master's degrees). This new model (see Section 4.3 of the monitoring report for the 2021/2022 academic year) was maintained for the 2022/2023 academic year and was used to analyse satisfaction with the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture for this report.

Strengths

[No significant changes]

Areas for improvement

A satisfaction survey will be developed for doctoral programme graduates.

4.4 Standard 4: Suitability of teaching staff

Teaching staff are both sufficient and suitable in accordance with the characteristics of the PhD programme, the scientific field and the number of students.

4.1. Teaching staff have accredited research activity.

4.2. Teaching staff are sufficient in number and work a suitable number of hours in order to perform their functions.

4.3. The PhD programme has suitable actions in place in order to promote thesis supervision and student tutoring.

4.4. The level of involvement of foreign teaching staff and international doctors in monitoring committees and thesis assessment boards is suitable for the scientific field of the programme.

Programme	Progressing towards excellence	Compliant	Compliant with conditions	Non-compliant
Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture		X		
Overall assessment		X		

Analysis and assessment

In analysing this standard, the following observations were made with regard to the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture:

- The programme's teaching and research staff exceed the required excellence criteria (six-year periods, ongoing research projects, relevant contributions), as indicated in the validation report approved in 2021.
- In the two academic years covered by this report, there were minimal changes in the teaching and research staff compared to the validation report. They also maintained the same level of research activity and therefore continue to meet the criteria in terms of six-year periods, involvement in ongoing competitive research projects and scholarly contributions.
- The teaching and research staff are sufficient in number and structured properly to supervise doctoral theses and meet students' needs. They are distributed in research lines by specialization and, at the end of the 2022/2023 academic year, there was a ratio of 1.34 members per doctoral thesis in progress.

- In 46% of cases, at least one member of the doctoral thesis committee is from a foreign university. With 59% of thesis supervisors being women, there is a good gender balance.

The student satisfaction survey was redesigned and the new model was used for the first time in the 2022/2023 academic year. The survey was completed by 12.1% of students on this programme, all of whom gave a score of 100% for all indicators relating to their thesis supervisors.

The average satisfaction of thesis supervisors for all doctoral programmes increased compared to previous years, reaching 85.2% in the 2021/2022 academic year and 78.7% in the 2022/2023 academic year. The response rate was 11.5%.

Strengths

More than 75% of the teaching and research staff working on the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture have a six-year research period, almost half of the doctoral thesis committees have at least one member from a foreign university, and there is a ratio of 1.34 staff members per thesis in progress.

Doctoral students are highly satisfied with their thesis supervisors and the results have improved compared to previous years.

Areas for improvement

There is a need to increase the response rate to all surveys across all doctoral programmes.

4.5 Standard 5: Effectiveness of learning support systems

The physical resources and services needed to deliver the activities envisaged in the PhD programme and for the training of PhD students are sufficient and suitable in accordance with the number of PhD students and the characteristics of the programme.

5.1. The available physical resources are adequate for the number of PhD students and the characteristics of the PhD programme.

5.2. Services available to PhD students provide suitable support to the learning process and encourage access to the labour market.

Programme	Progressing towards excellence	Compliant	Compliant with conditions	Non-compliant
Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture		X		
Overall assessment		X		

Analysis and assessment

The 2022/2023 academic year saw the most significant change in the Virtual Campus since the start of the doctoral programmes. All UOC courses were migrated to a new environment, Canvas. This process was completed without incident.

The UOC's new research building, known as the Interdisciplinary R&I Hub, became fully operational. During the 2022/2023 academic year, the acquisition of equipment was completed and the facilities were officially inaugurated (https://www.uoc.edu/portal/en/agenda/2022/agenda_687.html). Two people were recruited to promote the Hub, which hosts research seminars for the various faculty groups, the research centres (IN3 and eHealth Center) and the doctoral programmes.

The 12.1% of students on the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture who responded to the student satisfaction survey for the 2022/2023 academic year rated the support they received in using the Virtual Campus and methodology at 71.4%. Their satisfaction with the applicability of the programme to the labour market was 85.7% and their overall satisfaction with the programme was 100%.

Strengths

The new Interdisciplinary R&I Hub greatly facilitates research at the UOC, in particular thanks to the dedicated laboratories available to doctoral students and the facilities for organizing events, seminars and informal meetings for the exchange of ideas and interdisciplinary collaboration.

The Canvas environment has proven to be much more stable and easier to standardize than the previous campus. Plus, the classrooms now offer a new catalogue of student monitoring tools.

Areas for improvement

[No significant changes]

4.6 Standard 6: Quality of (learning) outcomes

The learning outcomes achieved, supported by the doctoral theses and the scientific results derived from them, are consistent with the intended training profile. The quantitative results of the indicators in terms of academic performance, satisfaction and access to the labour market are adequate.

6.1. The learning outcomes achieved correspond to the training objectives set and to the level established in the Catalan Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (MCQ) for PhD programmes.

6.2. The number of PhD theses defended, their duration and the scientific results derived from them are adequate and consistent with the intended training profile.

6.4. The values for the graduate labour market indicators are adequate for the characteristics of the PhD programme.

Programme	Progressing towards excellence	Compliant	Compliant with conditions	Non-compliant

Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture		X		
Overall assessment		X		

Analysis and assessment

Students on the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture received appropriate training by successfully participating in the seminars, courses and activities set out in their individual training plans. All new students submitted their thesis plan by the first-year deadline, received positive assessments and were allowed to continue with their doctoral research.

During the period covered by this report, one full-time thesis was defended by a student on this programme who had transferred from the doctoral programme in the Information and Knowledge Society. No part-time theses were defended. These figures are within the normal range given the programme's short lifespan. The only defended thesis received both cum laude and international mentions. It is a collection of articles that were published in international Q1 and Q2 journals prior to the defence.

6% of students on the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture have completed a research stay, which is an encouraging figure considering that they are in their first and second years. There were no drop-outs during the period analysed.

The Doctoral School is currently reviewing the satisfaction survey for doctoral graduates. The student satisfaction survey was also reviewed and the new version was used for the first time in the 2022/2023 academic year. The survey had a student response rate of 19.7%. The students who completed the survey were 100% satisfied with the programme overall. Efforts will also be made to increase the rate of response to all surveys.

It is important to note that the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture started only two years ago. For this reason, its results in terms of scientific output, the number of defended theses or mentions (cum laude, international or industrial), and student drop-out and enrolment rates are still very tentative. No conclusions can be drawn until these indicators can be properly assessed. This will be updated in future monitoring reports.

The table below shows a number of quantitative indicators for the Doctoral School as a whole for the 2022/2023 academic year. Values from previous years are also provided for comparison.

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Number of full-time theses defended	6	6	2	6	2
Number of part-time theses defended	5	13	16	24	29
Average completion time for full-time students (in years)	4.06	3.52	3.57	3.37	4.48
Average completion time for part-time students (in years)	3.32	4.27	4.99	5.87	6.12

Percentage of theses awarded cum laude	4	4	1	4	1
Percentage of graduates with an international mention	2	3	0	1	1

Table 4.6.1. Indicators for theses defended in the last 5 academic years

Post-COVID-19 outcomes and assessment

Following on from previous reports, this section aims to provide a more definitive analysis of the last few years. Because the grant extensions ended in the 2022/2023 academic year, we are now able to assess the impact of COVID-19 over the entire period concerned, as compared to the years before the pandemic (in relation to the Doctoral School as a whole, as the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture is new).

The most recent centre monitoring reports were characterized by (unavoidable) changes in our academic activities due to the exceptional situation caused by the pandemic. The last four monitoring reports provide details of the actions carried out, which included extending predoctoral contracts, making changes to the online/hybrid thesis assessment model, and undertaking specific actions to monitor and improve doctoral student welfare.

The most recent predoctoral contract extensions ended in the 2022/2023 academic year, and we now have sufficient hindsight to analyse the outcomes of these cohorts and the impact of the pandemic on them. The variable analysed in this report is the average time taken by students to complete their theses, distinguishing between full-time and part-time theses, whose estimated completion times vary considerably according to Royal Decree 99/2011.

Table 4.6.1 shows the graduation results of the UOC's contracted predoctoral researchers in the 2018/2019 to 2022/2023 cohorts. From our one-to-one interviews with part-time students, we realized that it was necessary to include them in the study as they were also very much affected by COVID-19. Many doctoral students in the social sciences carry out active data collections, focus groups and interviews, which were not possible during a significant portion of the time they had to complete their theses. Therefore, part-time doctoral students are also included in the data.

The table should be read as follows: For each column, we look at all the theses defended in that academic year, calculating the average time to completion and the absolute number of defences. Taking into account the duration of the pandemic, students who started their doctoral thesis in the 2019/2020 academic year were the last to be affected and entered their third year in 2022/2023. Students who started in 2018/2019 were the hardest hit, as they were in their second and third years during the pandemic. The impact is as expected: there was a notable increase in the number of theses defended in the 2022/2023 and 2021/2022 academic years, reflecting the delay caused by the pandemic (and the resulting backlog of students from two cohorts, i.e. those starting in 2018/2019 and 2019/2020). The interesting point to examine over the next two years is the extent to which students in these cohorts will be able to complete their theses on time, or whether they will be delayed by the time lost during the pandemic. The other indicator that sheds light on this point is the average completion time. In the specific case of part-time theses, which provide more statistically significant data due to the large number of part-time students at the Doctoral School (around 80% of the total), the time taken to complete theses has increased year on year, reaching over 6 years in 2022/2023. This peak is

expected to continue into the following academic year and gradually decline as the cohorts affected by the pandemic graduate.

The same trend was observed for the theses of full-time doctoral students on predoctoral contracts. The time taken to complete these theses increased in recent academic years, owing in part to the two grant extensions offered to these cohorts (see the monitoring report for the 2021/2022 academic year). There is only one outlier (the 2021/2022 academic year), when the average completion time for full-time theses was 3.37 years. This figure was skewed by one particular thesis which was completed after only one year by a transfer student who had worked on it for several years under the same thesis supervisor. If this outlier is removed, the average time taken to complete a full-time thesis was almost 4 years, confirming the gradual increase caused by the pandemic, which will level out in the coming years.

Strengths

Although the programme has only been running for a short time, the first defended thesis was of high quality. According to the new survey, doctoral students are very satisfied.

Areas for improvement

The UOC is working on an institutional data governance project that will make it possible to break down all indicators by gender, including the most individualized academic results. We expect to be able to analyse data based on gender parameters from the 2025/2026 academic year.

The director of the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture will hold individual follow-up meetings with all students to find out what their particular needs are and how well the programme is meeting their expectations. Measures will also be taken to increase survey response rates.

5. Assessment of the programmes

5.1. Doctoral programme in the Information and Knowledge Society

The programme began to be phased out in the 2021/2022 academic year and replaced by the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture. Since its creation, a total of 53 students have transferred to other UOC programmes that better meet their needs. The doctoral programme in the Information and Knowledge Society still has 44 active students.

5.2 Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture

Although the programme has only been running for a short time, the available indicators suggest that it is performing very well overall. In other words, it is being carried out adequately. There is proven interest in the programme, particularly among international students. The number of places available is

commensurate with the demand for access and allows for the admission of students from a variety of disciplines within the broad field of social sciences and humanities.

The programme's teaching and research staff have strong research experience and the programme is able to attract new staff with equally strong CVs. This structure is conducive to staff co-supervising theses, giving the most junior members the opportunity to develop and grow academically.

Indicators on the quality of outcomes are positive, although a more detailed analysis would be premature in this early monitoring report.

6. Improvement actions

See the document [PO07 Accions millora seguiment ED](#)

The 2022/2023 academic year saw the most significant change in the Virtual Campus since the start of the doctoral programmes, which was a pending improvement action. All UOC courses were migrated to a new environment, Canvas. This environment opens up new possibilities and significantly improves campus stability and scalability.

The new learning environment should allow us to get the most out of student monitoring. In this respect, we believe that implementing this environment in the tutoring classrooms will be a new step forward in the processes involved in the doctoral programmes. We are considering inviting the programme directors into the tutoring classrooms to work with the cohort tutors to improve the use of these classrooms and to collaborate on the milestones involved in each programme (research plan, assessment and annual monitoring of students' activity reports).

The migration process was challenging for all doctoral programmes, which had to transfer all their content to the new platform and adapt their course design to a learning challenge approach. In terms of communication, this also involved a great deal of effort to train teachers, collaborators and students in the use of the new platform.

The Doctoral School is putting the finishing touches to a new survey model for doctoral programme graduates, as set out in the improvement actions. The survey will be sent out annually from July this year. A focus group with thesis supervisors from all programmes will also be held in the coming academic years to gather their input.

As a further improvement action, the UOC is working on an institutional data governance project that will allow even the most individualized academic results to be broken down by gender from the 2025/2026 academic year.

The last point we would like to share is that students' ability to defend their theses remotely was established during the state of emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The UOC put in place all the necessary mechanisms to ensure and guarantee that thesis defences could be held in this way. In view of the positive experience in this regard, the university will continue to allow remote or hybrid thesis defences. The Academic Regulations for Doctoral Programmes are therefore being revised accordingly.

7. Annexes

Improvement actions taken by the Doctoral School, 2022/2023 (*PO07 Accions millora seguiment_ED*) – [link](#)

Programme monitoring report for the doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture for the 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic years – [link](#)

Requirements and recommendations from external assessment procedures – [link](#)

Annex 1. Centre improvement plan. Monitoring of the 2022/2023 academic year

Annex 1. Centre improvement plan. Monitoring of the 2022/2023 academic year

Monitoring of the improvement plan for the 2021/2022 academic year

Programme	Standard	Weakness identified	Description of the cause	Proposed action	Status	Observations
Centre	S2	Include an option on the website for students, thesis supervisors and members of thesis assessment boards to download the documents they need, so that these documents are accessible to everyone.	Since these documents are not available on any public web page, users without a Virtual Campus account are unable to access them. External researchers cannot log on to the Virtual Campus, so they cannot access important information they need as ad hoc collaborators.	Create a specific institutional blog or website for non-UOC researchers.	Analysis ongoing	As of the 2024/2025 academic year, a new page will be available on the Doctoral School website for external researchers who occasionally collaborate with the UOC.
Centre	S2	There should be more data on the quality of outcomes on the website's <i>Data</i> page.	Some doctoral data have not been published.	Publish all doctoral data on the UOC website's <i>Data</i> page.	In progress	All satisfaction assessment tools are being redesigned. When these begin to yield significant data, they will be published. This information is centrally organized in the <i>Quality</i> section of the UOC website, together with satisfaction data for the other official programmes. Due to an IT issue, not all results can be viewed at the moment, but this is a temporary problem.
Centre	S3	Both student surveys about the courses and programme and satisfaction surveys for thesis supervisors need to improve.	It is necessary to create a satisfaction assessment system tailored to the indicators used for doctoral	Create a satisfaction assessment system tailored to the key doctoral programme indicators. We	In progress	A newly formed working group is reviewing all satisfaction assessment tools and will present its findings shortly. From the

			programmes and the people involved in them. The surveys sent out so far have failed to gather adequate information because they were simply adaptations of those used for other official programmes.	will continue without an assessment system for academic results.		2022/2023 academic year, four new satisfaction assessment tools will be used: (1) semester course surveys; (2) semester research course surveys; (3) annual doctoral programme surveys; and (4) a focus group to gauge the satisfaction of thesis supervisors. Surveys have not been eliminated, but have been updated to reflect the desired indicators for doctoral programmes. Feedback results of the 2023 annual review (04/05/2023): Review of the doctoral programme assessment system for the 2022/2023 academic year.
Centre	S4	Although teaching staff spend an adequate amount of time on research, measures need to be taken to increase this.	The amount of time that teaching staff devote to research is a key factor in the quality of research and the doctoral programme itself.	Encourage the joint supervision of doctoral theses.	Resolved	Seven out of ten theses currently in progress are jointly supervised. Although this figure has gone up, we will continue to encourage joint supervision in order to increase it further.
Centre	S6	The monitoring of competency acquisition has yet to be implemented.	This activity still follows the traditional assessment guidelines.	Adjust the assessment guidelines.	Pending	
Centre	S5	There is a need for campus technological support on what should be a doctoral classroom, with its time targets and specific assessment and monitoring needs.	The current Virtual Campus classrooms do not meet the needs of either doctoral students or thesis supervisors.	Create classrooms tailored to the needs of doctoral programmes.	Resolved	The UOC is rolling out Canvas classrooms for all degrees and will study how to adapt them for doctoral programmes.
Centre	S1	Increase international student enrolment.	It would be beneficial to increase international dissemination and establish agreements to attract	From the 2023/2024 academic year, a series of actions will be designed to raise the international profile	Pending	Although the UOC is already engaged in many international dissemination activities and agreements, these should be

			international talent to the various programmes at the Doctoral School.	of the Doctoral School's programmes.		increased. We propose drawing up a work plan to systematize relations with international institutions to secure grants and aid to provide external funding for students on the programme. We also want to develop a plan to raise our international profile.
Centre	S6	Programme data broken down by gender are not currently collected or analysed.	The fact that this information is missing was identified while preparing the monitoring report.	The UOC's data governance project will allow even the most individualized academic results to be broken down by gender, but this is not yet possible. We do not expect this to be ready before the 2025/2026 academic year.	Pending	A gender section has been added to the Doctoral School's current database.
Centre	S1	The ability for students to defend their theses remotely was introduced during the state of emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The UOC put in place all the necessary mechanisms to ensure and guarantee that thesis defences could be held in this way. In view of the positive experience in this regard, the university wishes to continue allowing remote or hybrid thesis defences. The Academic Regulations for Doctoral Programmes are therefore being revised accordingly.	Online and hybrid doctoral defences need to be regulated.	We will take the following steps to regularize online assessments: 1. Centre monitoring report: A note will be added stating that the UOC has the necessary mechanisms to ensure online thesis defences according to an online methodology. 2. Academic Regulations for Doctoral Programmes: The text under review has been proposed (link). 3. Methodological framework for the assessment of doctoral programmes: Definitions of face-to-face, online and hybrid will be	Resolved	Given the positive experience with online thesis defences, we would like to continue in this direction, while also allowing for hybrid and face-to-face defences.

Doctoral programme in the Information & Knowledge Society	S4	Student satisfaction with thesis supervision is 73% on average. Of the seven indicators measured, students are least satisfied with the involvement of thesis supervisors in the development of cross-disciplinary competencies (57% satisfaction).	Mismatch between student expectations and the actions of teaching and research staff.	included. There is a need to improve student satisfaction with the involvement of thesis supervisors in the development of cross-disciplinary competencies.	Resolved	
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Improvement plan. Monitoring of the 2022/2023 academic year

Programme	Standard	Weakness identified	Description of the cause	Proposed action
Centre	S6	The doctoral graduate satisfaction survey needs to be better adapted to the characteristics of doctoral programmes.	We need to know what doctoral graduates think, and for this to be meaningful, the survey needs to be changed.	Prepare a new satisfaction survey for UOC doctoral graduates and send it out every year in July.
Centre	E2	Some programmes do not have the CVs of their teaching and research staff published yet	Information needed by present and future students.	The Doctoral School will work with the corresponding units at the institution to improve this part of the website.
Centre	E1	Specific actions are deemed necessary to provide information about doctoral studies to students on UOC master's degree programmes.	It is deemed necessary to increase the numbers of UOC master's degree students who go on to study doctoral programmes, improving the connections between teaching and research staff's agendas.	The Doctoral School will propose explicit coordination with the faculties' associate deans to foster participation in both the doctoral programmes linked to each faculty and the multidisciplinary programmes.
Doctoral programme in Society, Technology and Culture	S6	The adapted student satisfaction survey for doctoral programmes does not provide qualitative insights.	Although the new student satisfaction survey has produced significant results, there is qualitative information that cannot be captured in a survey.	The director of the doctoral programme will meet individually with the students on the programme and use this qualitative approach to find out how well different aspects of the programme meet their needs and expectations.

Standard: (S1) Quality of the training programme; (S2) Relevance of public information; (S3) Efficacy of the internal quality assurance system; (S4) Suitability of teaching staff; (S5) Effectiveness of learning support systems; (S6) Quality of (learning) outcomes.