



**UNIVERSITÀ
DI PARMA**

DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE
DEGLI ALIMENTI E DEL FARMACO

Ph.D. FOOD SCIENCES

mail: foodsciencePh.D.@unipr.it

Ph.D. Course in Food Science

Corso di Dottorato di Ricerca in Scienze degli Alimenti

XL Cycle (Nov 1st, 2024 - Oct 31st, 2027)

Statement of the Rights and Responsibilities of the Ph.D. students

Carta del Dottorato



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1. Course description

The Doctoral (Ph.D.) Course in Food Science (Corso di Dottorato di Ricerca in Scienze degli Alimenti)" is offered by the Department of Food and Drug, University of Parma. The focus of the programme is the 3-years Ph.D. research project (setting up, planning and performing research, then writing it up and presenting it), which leads to a thesis and associated publications. The research is done under the supervision of a Supervisor and potential co-Tutors.

The Ph.D. Course in Food Science aims at organising the training of Ph.D. candidates to become self-reliant, societal skilled researchers in the field of fundamental and applied research on food science. The Ph.D. Course in Food Science is designed to cover all the step along the food supply chain, "from the farm to the fork", to address cutting-edge topics (i.e. local food systems, circular bioeconomy, human microbiome, and dietary patterns), and to provide the candidates with the knowledge required to tackle the next-to-come challenges in food quality and safety.

The research portfolio, based on a strong interdisciplinary environment, is mainly composed of the work done within the Department of Food and Drug in the following areas: i) Food microbiology; ii) Food technology and processing; iii) Human nutrition; iv) Plant production; v) Animal science; vi) Food chemistry and circular bioeconomy; vii) Agro-economy, consumer's science, and food systems; viii) Food biochemistry.

The Doctoral Board provides a Supervisor and offers lecturing and training in all the core disciplinary areas of the course plus a range of interdisciplinary activities, shaping a highly transdisciplinary course.

Ph.D. work must be considered as exclusive full-time employment. [Art.12 c.1 DM 226/2021].

This document contains information about the organization of the Course and represents an agreement among the parts involved; it assumes that all the parts are aware of Italian laws and internal rules about the Dottorato di ricerca (*Regolamento dei corsi per il conseguimento dei dottorati di ricerca - www.unipr.it*).



2. Definitions, rights and responsibilities

2.1. *Ph.D. Student (Studentessa/Studente di dottorato, Dottoranda/Dottorando)*

- Ph.D. Students have access to education, supervision, and training. It includes access to the Supervisor's lab and research facilities at the Food and Drug Department or other Departments.
- Ph.D. Students have the right to receive a timely assessment of their progress and to be informed about the criteria upon which the assessment is based. Students should also be provided with opportunities to discuss their evaluation with their Supervisors. Reasonable warning should be provided in advance in case of potential dismissal based on failure in the academic progress.
- Ph.D. Students have the right to have acknowledged their contribution to research outcomes. The Ph.D. student, the Supervisor and other relevant parties involved in the research activity must discuss extensively regarding the student's expectations and the nature of the acknowledgement. Ph.D. students and their Supervisors must follow the guidelines of the University of Parma about good research practice (<https://www.unipr.it/node/21810>).
- Ph.D. Students of each Ph.D. course cycle must elect a representative who takes part to the meetings of the Doctoral Board and advises them about any organisational and didactical issue.
- Ph.D. Students must know and accept all the regulations of the University of Parma (<https://www.unipr.it/ateneo/albo-online/regolamenti>);
- Ph.D. Students have the responsibility to keep informed about the requirements of their program and to dedicate appropriate effort and time to meet these requirements; in particular, they have the responsibility to fulfil their commitments and duties regarding research and complementary activities.
- Ph.D. Students have the responsibility to understand and fulfil their role in developing and maintaining a professional relationship with their Supervisor. This includes the responsibility for communicating regularly with him/her, maintaining a mutually agreed schedule of meetings, and informing supervisor about: the status of their work; any expected deviations from the agreed program; any unanticipated absences.



- Ph.D. Students have the responsibility to acknowledge the contributions to their research outcome made by the supervisor and/or other colleagues. This includes maintaining confidentiality until results have been published. Any disclosure must be agreed with the Supervisor.
- Ph.D. students have the responsibility to collect documents attesting their participation to complementary activities, and to report these activities to the Supervisor and to the Doctoral Board.
- Ph.D. students must avoid plagiarism of any kind and abide by the principle of intellectual property and joint data ownership in the case of research carried out in collaboration with a supervisor(s) and/or other researchers. The need to validate new observations by showing that experiments are reproducible should not be interpreted as plagiarism, provided that the data to be confirmed are explicitly quoted.
- Ph.D. students should at all times adopt safe working practices, in line with Italian legislation, including taking the necessary precautions for health and safety and for recovery from information technology disasters, e.g. by preparing proper back-up strategies. They should also be familiar with the current national legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality protection requirements and undertake the necessary steps to fulfil them at all times.
- For five years after the end of the Course, the Dottore di Ricerca agrees to fill a questionnaire about his/her professional career.

2.2. Supervisor (*Relatrice/Relatore di tesi*) and External Advisor (*Co-tutore*)

At the beginning of the Course, a Supervisor (*Relatrice/Relatore di tesi*) is assigned to each Ph.D. student by the Doctoral Board. If the Ph.D. Students will perform a relevant part of their research activity out of the Supervisor's lab, an External Advisor (*Co-tutore*) will be selected. It is made clear that the Ph.D. Students must in any case refer to the Supervisor for what concerns their activity.

- The Supervisor has the responsibility to agree with the Ph.D. student a research plan, to follow their progress and to agree with them the schedule of any complementary activities.
- The Supervisor must provide all the requirements needed to perform a regular research work. This includes access to equipment, facilities, consumables, and documentation. In addition, the Supervisor must provide the Ph.D. student with the opportunity to attend at



least one National Conference over the three years. This responsibility is shared with the External Advisor, in case of activities performed out of the Supervisor's Department.

- The Supervisor must encourage, and support student's international mobility stay and traineeship, for at least 3 months over the 3-years course. This includes providing contacts with experts located abroad, and schedule with them research activities relevant for the student's Ph.D. programme.
- The Supervisor reports to the Doctoral Board about the research progress and complementary activities carried out by the Ph.D. student, to admit them to the following year of the Course and to the final examination.
- Before the end of the course, the Supervisor proposes to the Doctoral Board two external reviewers for the Ph.D. thesis pre-examination assessment.

When the collaboration between Ph.D. students and their supervisor is compromised, each of them can ask for a re-assignment to the Coordinator, who tries to settle the dispute. If, for any reason, the collaboration cannot be restored, the Coordinator asks the Ph.D. student and the Supervisor to report their points of view in written documents and presents these reports to the Doctoral Board. The Board can re-assign the Ph.D. student to another Supervisor or take any different decision; the decision taken by the Doctoral Board is considered to be final.

2.3. Doctoral Board (Collegio dei Docenti)

The Doctoral Board takes care of:

- assigning a Supervisor to each Ph.D. student;
- stating the overall requirements of research work and complementary activity;
- approving, at the end of every academic year, the Ph.D. student's statement of research, admitting them to the next year in case of positive response;
- approving, at the end of the last academic year, the Ph.D. student's statement of research, admitting them to the final evaluation in case of positive response;
- assigning the pre-examination external reviewers as well as the additional reviewers in case of Doctor Europaeus title award;



- proposing the *Viva Voce* Committee members to the Rector of the University of Parma (Magnifico Rettore).

The members of Doctoral Board must participate to formative and complementary activities, teaching, courses and seminars. They must produce relevant research results in the scientific fields covered by the Ph.D. course, and fulfil any additional requirement set by the Italian Ministry of University and Research, as well as by the University of Parma.

The members of the Doctoral Board are renewed every year, and the list is published on the Course website.

2.4. Chair of the Doctoral Board (*Coordinatrice/Coordinatore del Dottorato di Ricerca*)

The Chair of the Course

- updates the composition of the Doctoral Board and summons its meetings;
- is responsible for the accreditation process of each Ph.D. cycle;
- is responsible for the setup and organisation of the annual application procedure;
- defines, manages, and supervises the capacity building activity program;
- authorizes secondments of Ph.D. students abroad up to 6 months. For longer mobility stays, the Doctoral Board's approval is required;
- authorizes any teaching task carried out by the Ph.D. students;
- authorizes Ph.D. candidates to officially submit their thesis;
- engages with industries and institutions in support of Ph.D. students' activities and post-doctoral placement.

For temporary vacation, this role may be assigned to a Vice-Chair, if any.



2.5. Head of the Department (*Direttrice/Direttore di Dipartimento*)

The Head of the Department guarantees that the conditions of learning, teaching and research are appropriate and reasonable for their discipline. This includes financial support for research work, participation in complementary activity and travelling, provided that the relative items of expenditure are funded.

3. Requirements of the Course

3.1 Course organization

The Course takes three years. It requires accomplishment of an original research work, as well as the fulfilment of a complementary capacity building program. Considering that in the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), 60 ECTS credits are the equivalent of a full year of study or work, Ph.D. students are required to obtain 180 ECTS.

Following the Doctoral Board's resolution, it has been established that 1 ECTS credit (briefly, ECTS) can be achieved attending 6 hours lecture or 1-day National/International Schools/Workshops. For research activity, one ECTS corresponds to 25 hours work (approximately 6 ECTS per month of full-time work). For seminars one ECTS corresponds to at least 5 seminars of 2 hours.

Ph.D. students are asked to undertake an original research project, promoted by their Supervisor, and attested by publication on peer-reviewed scientific journals. In addition, they are asked to attend academic activities for a total of 24 ECTS in three years. Courses are taught in English, and tailored for increasing the disciplinary knowledge and interdisciplinary skills at post-graduate and young professional level. In addition, conferences, workshops, and Ph.D. Schools attendance is strongly promoted. The educational activity must be planned by each candidate with her/his supervisor, and approved by the Doctoral Board before the annual evaluation, and the admission to the next year of the Programme or to the final exam. Under specific agreements between University of Parma and a partner University, it is possible to follow a joint Ph.D. Program.

At the end of each academic year, the Ph.D. student must submit a report of the research and academic activities to the Chair of the Doctoral Board, following the format provided by the university office. The report must be duly signed by the supervisor. The Chair will present the report to the Doctoral Board for approval and admission of the candidate to the next year or to the final examination.



3.2. Research work, secondment and tutoring activity

Upon enrolment and following the format provided by the Board, each Ph.D. student submits to the Chair a research plan, duly signed by their Supervisor. The research plan will include:

- a title;
- a brief description of the state of the art;
- the specific objectives and methodologies of the project;
- expected results, phases and milestones.

At the end of each year, Ph.D. students must prepare and send a report on their research activities as well as educational and training activities. Moreover, during the annual Ph.D. Day (approx. scheduled in November/December each year), the Ph.D. students will deliver a talk on their work and on their most important results. The Ph.D. Day must be attended by all the Ph.D. students as well as by the Doctoral Board members. Detailed instruction and agenda will be provided by the Chair each year in due advance.

The Ph.D. student must interact with his/her supervisor to assess research progress, analysis weakness and pitfalls, and define a possible contingency plan. At the end of each academic year, the Ph.D. student submit a statement of research, briefly describing the progress and the achievements. The Doctoral Board will evaluate the report for admittance at the next year or at the final exam. At least a draft for a publication or patent application is expected to be presented to the Supervisor within the end of the second year.

An international secondment in a distinguished external institution, for at least 3 months and up to 18 months, is strongly encouraged. Ph.D. student's mobility can be supported by the Overworld mobility program, Erasmus program or other programs organized by the University. International secondments must be approved by the Chair or, for periods longer than 6 months, by the Doctoral Board, and countersigned by the Head of the Department.

According to the University of Parma regulatory framework, Ph.D. students must ask the Chair for formal authorization to perform complementary teaching in institutional courses, up to 40 hours per year. Ph.D. Students could be appointed as "Cultore della Materia" with reference to the University regulation (<https://gspi.unipr.it/node/3994>) and up to maximum 2 course units in three years. As stated by the University Regulation, tutoring activities obtained by means of official calls and contracts must be authorized by the Doctoral Board up to maximum 1 tutoring assignment



per year. Finally, any other working activity under legal subject different from University of Parma with a remuneration must be justified and Ph.D. students must ask the Doctoral Board for formal authorization. Anyway, all these activities do not imply any obligation for the University.

3.3. Educational and training activities

Educational and training activities attended by Ph.D. students during the three years of the Programme can be classified into disciplinary, interdisciplinary and research-related activities.

The candidates must collect a total of 24 ECTS in three years, according to the following scheme:

ACTIVITIES	ECTS in 3 years	DESCRIPTION
Institutional activities	≥ 6	Courses and seminars specifically activated for the Ph.D. course, attended by the candidate during the current year
Interdisciplinary activities	≥ 4	Soft skills, (i.e. public speaking, intellectual properties, ethics in science)
Research-related activities	≤ 10	Workshop, summer or winter schools, Ph.D. schools, study abroad period, etc... attended by the candidate during the current year
Other activities	≤ 2	Complementary didactic activities carried out by the candidate within courses of the University of Parma (teaching hours: max 40), i.e. class exercises, laboratories assistance, other...

Significant deviations from this plan, agreed in advance by the Ph.D. student and her/his Supervisor, have to be approved by the Doctoral Board.

Disciplinary and interdisciplinary courses

Every academic year, short courses on disciplinary or interdisciplinary topics, specifically designed for the Ph.D. students in Food Science, are offered by the Doctoral Board members as well as by external experts. The courses are approved by the Doctoral Board and published on the website. In addition, the Ph.D. School in Food and Technology and other Institutions at the University of



Parma may offer other courses, including interdisciplinary ones, that can be included in the student's program as well.

Ph.D. students are also encouraged to attend other courses that can improve their scientific and technical growth. Courses from post-graduate curricula, and in some cases also from undergraduate ones, can concur to ECTS accumulation for educational activities. On a case-by-case basis, the suitable number of ECTS will be assigned by the Doctoral Board based on supervisor's suggestion and considering the duration of the course, its level and the congruity with the Ph.D. programme in Food Science.

3.4 Final commitment

At the end of the third year, the Ph.D. candidates submit to their Supervisor and to the Doctoral Board a statement of research describing:

- the research work performed and the main results achieved;
- the complementary activities performed and attended;
- a list of publications, congress reports and acknowledgments.

The Ph.D. candidates prepare an original thesis based on the results of their research work. The thesis must be written in English. The Ph.D. candidates submitting the thesis must report any use of AI tools, including those used in the collection and analysis of data or in the creation of text, images, figures, or graphs, but not including spelling, grammar and referencing tools used in word-processing software. Within the thesis, any contribution provided by the supervisor as well as by other colleagues must be properly acknowledged. Any kind of plagiarism must be avoided. While avoiding copyright infringements in reproducing published work, the Ph.D. candidate can include work and results that has been previously published, provided that she/he appears as a co-author and that the publication is properly referenced.

3.5 Course evaluation

In compliance with the ANVUR Guidelines for the self-assessment, evaluation and accreditation of universities and study courses - AVA 3 – the PhD students at the end of the first and second year of the course must fill out an anonymous questionnaire reporting their opinions on the course.

At the end of the third year of the course, PhD students are required to complete the AlmaLaurea Questionnaire to evaluate their study course.



3.6 Title award

On the basis of the statement of research submitted by the Ph.D. candidate, and following the Supervisor's advise, the Doctoral Board admits the Ph.D. candidate to the final exam. The thesis must undergo a pre-examination assessment by two external reviewers. Upon written evaluation, the reviewers may admit the candidate to the Viva Voce exam, with no or minor amendment of the thesis, or may suggest major revision allowing a postponement up to 6 months for integrations or amendments. In the last case, the thesis must be reassessed by the reviewers before the final exam. A public Viva Voce exam is performed in front of a Committee appointed following University rules. The Viva Voce exam is intended in English. At the end of the Viva voce exam, the candidate can be approved or rejected (Art. 8 DM 226/2021).

Under application by the Ph.D. candidate and favourable opinion by the Doctoral Board, the University of Parma can award an additional Certification of "Doctor Europaeus", as defined by the European University Association, when (<https://www.unipr.it/node/21035>): 1) the Ph.D. thesis work includes a secondment of at least 3 months in an EU Country; 2) the Ph.D. student presents two positive evaluations by academics from two EU Countries; 3) the Commission for the final evaluation includes at least one member from an EU Country.

4. Code of ethics

All Ph.D. students comply to Code of Ethics of University of Parma released by Rector's Decree n. 236 of 06 February 2017 and published on the university website (<https://www.unipr.it/en/ateneo/albo-online/codice-etico>). The Code aims to ensure that the conduct of staff and students complies with the principles governing the University activities and is not conditioned by interests other than institutional ones.

5. Good practice in research

In order to promote constant application of good scientific practices, the University of Parma published "Good Practice in Research and Publication and Dissemination of Results" Guidelines (<https://www.unipr.it/en/research/research-ateneo/good-practice-in-research>) with the aim of ensuring that university staff and researchers adhere to sound ethical principles in design, development and exploitation of research. The Guidelines are applicable to all research fields and have the purpose of ensuring that all University staff, students as well as Ph.D. students, and researchers belonging to other institutions collaborating with the University of Parma, follow robust ethical principles when planning and developing research, whether conducted individually or as a collaborative effort, and when disseminating research results.



6. General regulation

The Parties refer, for all matters not expressly provided for in this text, to the regulations released by University of Parma and/or by Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research.

7. Agreement

We, the undersigned, hereby declare to accept what stated in the document "Statement of the Rights and Responsibilities of Ph.D. Students" for the Ph.D. Course in Food Science - XL cycle.

The Ph.D. Student,

Email

Date:

Signature

The Supervisor,

Date:

Signature

The Chair,

Date:

Signature

The Head of the Department of Food and Drug

Date:

Signature