

REGULATION OF PHD COURSES

TITLE I GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Art. 1

Scope

1. This document regulates the establishment and functioning of the PhD Programmes (hereinafter 'PhD Courses' or simply 'Courses') of the Gran Sasso Science Institute (hereinafter 'GSSI'), in compliance with the Italian regulations in force.
2. PhD Courses achieve full integration between research and teaching and follow standards recognised by the international scientific community, particularly with regard to incoming selection and dissertation evaluation. GSSI encourages and pursues the internationalisation of PhD Programmes, with a special reference on the European context.
3. PhD Programmes are established in the framework of Scientific Areas (hereinafter 'Areas'). PhD Courses carried out in collaboration between distinct Areas may also be established.
4. English is the official language of the GSSI PhD Courses.
5. Each PhD Course follows its own Regulations, established by the Academic Board on the basis of these Regulations.

Art. 2

Coordinator and the Academic Board

1. Each PhD Course has its own PhD Coordinator and Academic Board as Governing Bodies.
2. The Coordinator of each PhD Course is responsible for the management, the organisation, and the coordination of the Course's teaching and research activities. In particular, it is the responsibility of the Coordinator:
 - a. convene and preside over the Academic Board and set its agenda;
 - b. to propose to the Board the Academic Program offered and the corresponding teaching coverage, in agreement with the Director of the Scientific Area;
 - c. co-ordinate the scientific and training activities of the course;
 - d. provide the Director of the Scientific Area with the authorisation for the approval of missions and off-site stays of students, after consulting their Advisor and, in case of missions lasting more than three months, the Academic Board;
 - e. where necessary, after having consulted the Director of the Scientific Area and the Academic Board, propose to the GSSI Rector the suspension of the student's

scholarship in the case of repeated and unjustified absences and behaviour that is detrimental to the prestige of the GSSI and to the dignity of the individuals;

- f. adopt the urgent measures within the competence of the Academic Board, submitting them for ratification at the immediately following meeting of the Board.
3. The PhD Coordinators are selected among the GSSI full professors or, in their absence, among associate professors in possession of a high scientific qualification, attested on the basis of the requirements established by current regulations for access to the functions of full professor. Appointment and revocation of the Coordinators is the responsibility of the Board of Directors, based on a motivated proposal by the Rector and following the opinion of the Director of the Scientific Area and the Academic Senate, pursuant to Article 9, paragraph 1, letter f of the GSSI Statute.
 4. The Coordinator remains in office for a three-year, renewable term.
 5. The Coordinator may designate, from among the full or associate professors of the PhD Course Academic Board, a Deputy Coordinator who replaces him/her in all functions in the event of absence or impediment.
 6. The Academic Board has the responsibility for programming the teaching activities of the PhD courses and the introduction to research activities. More specifically, the Academic Board is responsible for:
 - a. preparing the course offer, based on the proposal of the Coordinator, and identifying the coverage of the courses;
 - b. appointing one or more Advisors for each student;
 - c. deciding on the admission of students to the following year's course, in accordance with the provisions of the subsequent Article 16, or on any extension for the completion of the research project, according to the provisions of Article 13;
 - d. providing opinions and proposals concerning the students;
 - e. expressing its opinion, after having consulted the Advisor, on study periods abroad longer than three months for the students;
 - f. approving the guidelines regarding the PhD Academic Programmes.
 7. The Academic Boards shall be composed of at least half of the members by full or associate professors, and for the remaining part by researchers of Universities or public research institutions. In the case of PhD Programmes in associated form with public research institutions, the Board may also include researchers belonging to the ranks of research managers, researchers or first researchers of the Institutions themselves, without prejudice to the minimum quota of professors, as well as, to the maximum extent of one third of the total composition, by experts with proven qualifications in research areas consistent with the training objectives of the doctoral course who are external to GSSI, although not belonging to other universities or public research Institutions, Italian or foreign, in accordance with the current regulations.

In any case, the researchers belonging to the Doctoral Board must be in possession of a scientific qualification based on the requirements for accessing the role of associate professor as per current regulation, while the professors must be in possession of a scientific qualification required for their academic positions. Members of the Boards from foreign universities or research institutions must meet at least the minimum requirements for access to the position of associate professor.

8. The members of the Academic Board, for each cycle, are appointed by the Rector, upon the proposal of the Director of the Scientific Area where the PhD Course is established and subject to the favourable opinion of the Academic Senate, before the beginning of each academic year. No approval is required for the Academic Boards of the already accredited doctorates, which do not make any change in their composition.
9. The Academic Boards may also hold their meetings remotely, in accordance with the provisions of the GSSI's "Regulations for meetings of Collegial Bodies and selection procedures Committees in telematic mode".

Art. 3

Advisor e Co-advisor

1. The Academic Board appoints one or more Advisors or co-Advisors for each student, usually selected among GSSI professors and researchers or lecturers who have taught courses at GSSI. In the event of the appointment of a Supervisor who does not belong to the GSSI, the PhD Coordinator may appoint an internal GSSI tutor with the task of supporting and monitoring the student's progress in collaboration with the Advisor.
2. The Advisor is responsible for guiding the student through the PhD course and the development of the research project. Specifically, the Advisor:
 - guides the student in the writing of the thesis, assessing his/her work and ensuring the scientific relevance of the research topics;
 - guides the student in carrying out periods of study and research off-site;
 - prepares, if requested, a report on the student's activities, to be submitted to the Academic Board before the admission to the following year;
 - submits the PhD thesis to the judgement of two external Evaluators, agreed with the PhD Coordinator, selected among highly qualified international scientific experts, and obtains their opinions before the student is admitted to the thesis defence.
3. Changes of Advisors or co-Advisors is allowed upon proposal of the PhD Coordinator and must be authorised by the Academic Board at the first suitable meeting.

TITOLO II PHD Courses

Art. 4

Establishment of the courses

1. The establishment, modification or suppression of the PhD Courses is decided by the Board of Directors within the framework of the Three-Year Planning, after consulting the Director of the relevant Scientific Area, with the prior approval of the Academic Senate with a majority vote of 2/3 of the members of the Senate entitled to vote on the matter.
2. Courses are established by decree of the Rector, subject to accreditation by the Ministry of Universities and Research, (hereinafter 'MUR'), in accordance with Ministerial Decree no. 226/2021 and subsequent amendments and additions, in compliance with the national regulations required for their accreditation.
3. Modification and suppression of Courses are also ordered by decree of the Rector, upon proposal of the Scientific Directors of the relevant Areas.
4. On an annual basis, the Evaluation Committee verifies the permanence of the requirements for the accreditation of the PhD courses instituted, by preparing a report. The report is submitted to the Rector.

Art. 5

Call for Applications

1. The call for applications for admission to the PhD courses is issued by decree of the Rector, in accordance with the provisions of this regulation and current regulation on the matter
2. Normally, the call for applications is unified for all the Courses activated at the GSSI and must mention:
 - a. the number and amount of scholarships offered;
 - b. the contributions to be paid by the PhD candidates and the discipline of the exemptions, pursuant to Article 7 of Ministerial Decree no. 224 of 30 April 1999;
 - c. the procedures for admission to the Courses;
 - d. any reserved positions for graduated students from foreign universities or scholarship holders from foreign countries or from specific international mobility Programmes;
 - e. any places funded through external funds, highlighting any specific conditions.
3. If necessary, positions funded through specific European Union Programmes maybe the subject of separate calls for applications, according to the rules of the Programme in question. Selection procedures may be modified in accordance with the requirements of the relevant EU Programmes.

4. The call for applications will be published on the *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*, on the MUR portal, on the European Euraxess portal, on the GSSI institutional website and on various international websites, in order to ensure maximum dissemination.
5. The call for applications is written in Italian. An English language extract is also prepared for international publication.

Art. 6

Admission requirements

1. Applications for positions with a scholarship may be submitted, without any citizenship restrictions, by those who, by the deadline of the call for applications, are in possession of a Master's degree or a suitable foreign qualification, or by those who obtain the qualification required for admission, under penalty of forfeiture of admission in the event of a positive outcome of the selection process, by the start date of the PhD Course. The eligibility of the foreign degree is ascertained by the Selection Committee in compliance with the relevant legislation in force in Italy and in the Country where the qualification was awarded and with international treaties or agreements on the recognition of qualifications for the pursuit of studies. The foreign degree must in any case document attendance of at least four years of university studies.
2. Scholarships are assigned in order of ranking.
3. Scholarship places may be increased as a result of funding provided by public or private entities, which may become available even after the publication of the call for applications. Notice of such an eventuality shall in any case be given by means of publication on the GSSI website.

Art. 7

Admission procedure for students

1. Admission to the PhD Course is based on a public selection procedure, which must be completed no later than 30 September of each year, with the exception of cases PhD Courses activated in collaboration with companies, industrial PhD Programmes and higher education apprenticeships.
2. The admission procedure is aimed at ascertaining the candidate's level of preparation and aptitude for scientific research, as well as knowledge of English language. The selection procedure may be conducted entirely in remote form. The details of the procedure are set out in the call for applications. The Selection Committee may first carry out a shortlist of the candidates admitted to the interview, on the basis of their CVs, letters of introduction and transcripts of previous academic career.
3. The Selection committees for the admission of students to the PhD Courses are appointed by Decree of the Rector, upon proposal of the PhD Coordinator. These committees are appointed in accordance with the law and may make use of telematic tools for their activities.

Art. 8

PhD Scholarship

1. All students enrolled in PhD Programmes benefit from a scholarship.
2. The amount of the scholarship is defined in the call for applications and may not be less than that determined pursuant to Article 1, paragraph 1, letteraa of Law 315 of 3 August 1998, as amended and supplemented. Such amount is increased by a maximum of 50%, for a total period not exceeding 18 months, for the performance of research activities abroad, authorised by the PhD Coordinator.
3. Scholarships are granted on an annual basis and are subject to annual confirmation up to a maximum of three or four years depending on the legal duration of the Course, provided that the PhD student has completed the programme of activities planned for the previous year. The annual extension is granted through a progression examination, normally in the month of September preceding the annual deadline. A student who fails to pass this examination forfeits the scholarship and is excluded from the PhD Course and from any affiliation with GSSI. GSSI will not provide any recognition of uncompleted study courses.
4. Scholarship instalments are paid on a monthly basis, except for the first two instalments which are paid in one instalment 45 days after the start of the Programme.
5. Scholarship holders who withdraw or are excluded from the Programme within the first 45 days of the start of the Programme or enrolment are not entitled to the scholarship.
6. Scholarship holders are exempt from paying fees to access and attend the Programme.
7. The PhD scholarship is subject to the payment of INPS (National Institute for Social Security) social security contributions under separate national insurance and pension scheme, pursuant to Article 2, paragraph 26 of Law no. 335 of 8 August 1995, and subsequent amendments and additions, in the amount of two-thirds payable by the Administration and one-third payable by the scholarship holder.
8. Starting from the second year each PhD. student is granted, in addition to the scholarship and within the existing financial resources of the budget, a budget for research activities in Italy and abroad appropriate to the type of course and in any case not less than 10% of the amount of the same scholarship. If the PhD student is not positively evaluated for the renewal of the grant, or if he/she renounces it, the unused amount shall remain at the disposal of GSSI for the same purposes.
9. A student holding a scholarship may renounce it at any moment, without being excluded from the Programme. Such renouncement does not entail any change in the student's obligations under these regulations and the GSSI regulations. The renouncement of the scholarship before the end of the academic year does not entail the repayment of the amounts received, on the condition that the Academic Board certifies the regular and profitable performance of the study and research activities up to the moment of renouncement.

10. If a student is enrolled under reserve for proven reasons related to the timing of the issue of the Certificate of Equivalence of Qualification (Dichiarazione di Valore) by the diplomatic or consular representations, the disbursement of the scholarship may, after having consulted the PhD Coordinator, be suspended as a precautionary measure. At the time the reserve is lifted, all the instalments due shall be paid to the student .
11. In the event of a student renouncing the scholarship within the first 45 days from the start of the Programme, the scholarship shall be reassigned to the first eligible student according to the relative ranking, subject to the express provisions of agreements with public or private bodies that finance scholarships tied to the possession of certain requirements or aimed at specific research topics. If only the scholarship is renounced, the Academic Board may resolve to assign the scholarship to the first of the students admitted without a scholarship, if available.
12. For any periods spent off-site for research and training activities at Universities or Research Centres abroad, the amount of the grant is increased by 50% for a maximum period of 18 months.
13. Any further contributions for off-site stays at Italian Universities and Research Centres may be granted subject to authorisation by the Director of the Scientific Area on the Coordinator's proposal.

Art. 9

Benefits

1. PhD students are guaranteed accommodation or a financial contribution in lieu of accommodation and are paid meal vouchers for their meal expenses, in accordance with the terms set out in the call for applications.
2. The use of residential services and other benefits granted by GSSI is governed by specific regulations.

Art. 10

Enrolment

1. Candidates who, on the basis of the final ranking list, are admitted to the PhD Programme must submit an enrolment application within 30 days of the notification of the selection results. Enrolment will normally take place on the day of the start of the Programme, except in special cases managed by the GSSI Administration. In the event of failure to enrol by the deadline for reasons attributable to the candidate, the latter shall forfeit the right to admission and the ranking list shall be automatically scrolled.
2. The Rector may authorise the postponement of enrolment, in individual cases, due to force majeure or serious personal reasons duly documented, up to a maximum of 60 days from the

start of the Programme. In this case, the Course Coordinator shall indicate the procedures for making up participation in lectures and examinations.

3. In the event of the withdrawal or exclusion of a duly enrolled student within the first 60 days of the start date of the Programme, another eligible candidate takes over in the order of the final ranking list.
4. In case the enrolment application does not include the Certificate of Equivalence of Qualification (Dichiarazione di Valore) for qualifications obtained abroad, conditional enrollment may be accepted if the candidate proves that he/she has applied for a Certificate of Equivalence of Qualification (Dichiarazione di Valore) at the competent diplomatic authorities. After the condition has been positively resolved, the date of enrolment with reservation is deemed to be the effective enrolment date. Conditional enrollment must be resolved no later than 60 days from the date of the enrolment application, under penalty of nullity of the registration itself, except in cases where the delay is in no way attributable to the candidate's negligence.

Art. 11

Registration

1. GSSI PhD students are university students enrolled in a PhD Programme. They must attend lectures, pass all the examinations envisaged for the Course in which they are enrolled and are subject to the GSSI Internal Regulations.
2. Each student may be enrolled in only one PhD Course, except as provided for in specific agreements for Joint or Double PhD Programmes.
3. The start of the PhD Courses coincides with the start of the academic year, except for PhD Courses in collaboration with companies, industrial PhD Programmes and advanced training apprenticeships, for which different timetables and different organisational arrangements for teaching activities may be established.

Art. 12

Teaching and research activities

1. The courses are structured in a first period of compulsory teaching, consisting of at least 150 total hours of training activities provided by GSSI, and a second period devoted to research. Teaching activities, both optional and compulsory, are defined by the Coordinator and the Academic Board of the PhD Course and are aimed, during the first academic year, at imparting basic and specialised knowledge needed to carry out research activities. All teaching activities are held in English.
2. Compulsory training activities must normally be carried out during the first year of the Programme. Within the same period, the relevant examinations and/or tests must be taken, in accordance with the regulations of the individual PhD courses.

3. A student's absence from a test or examination may only be authorised for serious, personal or health related proven reasons by the teacher of the training activity. The student is required to give immediate written notice to the Coordinator.
4. Each student agrees on a research project line for the thesis with his/her Advisor, possibly assisted by the Co-advisor, in accordance with Article 3 of these Regulations and the Regulations of the individual PhD Courses.

Art. 13

Course Duration

1. The duration of the PhD Programmes is specified in the PhD call for applications. Courses may not have a duration of less than three academic years.

Art. 14

Suspension of the PhD

1. There is the possibility to interrupt course attendance and the disbursement of related funds for a maximum of 6 months for the following reasons:
 - a) compulsory civil/military service, limited to EU citizens;
 - b) maternity or paternity leave;
 - c) illness;
 - d) serious personal reasons.
2. The deadline for defense of the thesis may be postponed for a maximum of 12 months, at the student's request, but in no case may this postponement, added to any extension, exceed 18 months after the expiry of the scholarship.
3. The interruption request, duly documented, must be submitted to the Academic Board, which decides on the matter.

Art. 15

Missions and Offsite Activities

1. The GSSI Missions Regulation governs student missions.
2. Offsite activities of students, which are different from missions, even if they do not entail expenses for the GSSI, must be authorised in advance by the PhD Course Coordinator. For periods longer than three months, the Coordinator may grant authorisation after receiving a favourable opinion from the Academic Board.

Art. 16

Admission of students to subsequent years

1. Each Academic Board, after appropriate assessment, authorises the admission of students to the years following the first.
2. At the end of the first year, the assessment takes into account both the results of any examinations taken and any research activity, as established by the Regulations of each PhD Course. For admission to the years following the first, the assessment of eligibility is mainly based on research activity.
3. In the event of a negative outcome, the Academic Board decides not to admit the student to the following year. The resolution of the Academic Board is forwarded to the Rector, who issues a decree for the expulsion of the student.

Art. 17

Thesis defense and graduation

1. The PhD degree is awarded following the successful evaluation of a research thesis that contributes to the advancement of knowledge or methodologies in the chosen field of investigation.
2. The PhD thesis, accompanied by an abstract, is written in English. In addition, it must be accompanied by a report by the PhD student detailing the activities carried out during the PhD Programme and any publications.
3. The thesis, accompanied by the report, must be assessed by at least two "Evaluators". Evaluators may belong to foreign institutions, are external to Institution(s) awarding the PhD Degree and possess highly qualified experience. At least one of them must be a university Professor. The Examiners express a written analytical judgement on the thesis and propose its admission for public defense or its postponement for a period not exceeding six months if they deem significant additions or corrections to be necessary. After this period, the thesis shall in any case be admitted for public defense, accompanied by a new written opinion from the same Examiners, rendered in the light of any corrections or additions made.
4. The defense shall take place before a committee, appointed by Rector's decree, composed as follows in respect, where possible, of gender balance: five members of which at least three do not belong to the administrative headquarters of the PhD Programme and no more than two are internal to GSSI or belong to PhD participants if in associated form. At least three of the members of the Committee shall be chosen from among university Professors and Researchers in Italy or abroad, belonging to scientific disciplinary sectors relevant to the PhD Programme, no more than two may be highly qualified external experts.

5. At the end of the defense, the thesis is approved or rejected by a reasoned collective written opinion. The Committee, by unanimous vote, may award the PhD title *cum laude* in the event of particularly outstanding scientific results.

Art. 18

Rights and duties of PhD students

1. Admission to the PhD courses requires an exclusive, full-time commitment, with exceptions provided for in the current regulations for public employees and PhDs in collaboration with companies, industrial PhDs and advanced training apprenticeships.
2. As the GSSI is a campus-based school, students are required to be permanently present on the premises, unless on approved mission for scientific reasons. With the exception of periods when GSSI activities are interrupted on holiday days or during holiday periods, short absences for personal reasons, not exceeding a total of 20 days per year, must be authorised by the PhD Coordinator.

Failure to comply with the residency requirements shall result in the reduction of the scholarship by an amount equal to the fraction of the scholarship corresponding to the days of absence, increased by 20%. In the event of repeated absence, the student may be expelled, by resolution of the Rector on the proposal of the Course Coordinator, after consulting the Director of the Scientific Area.

3. GSSI PhD students may, after approval by the Academic Board and as an integral part of the training project, carry out seminar and tutoring activities for students on degree courses, who participate in activities resolved by GSSI. Their commitment may not exceed 30 hours per year.
4. Any other external activities, which allow the acquisition of skills relating to the training area of the PhD Programme, where compatible with the current regulations, must be authorised in advance by the Academic Board, after assessing the compatibility of such activities with the profitable performance of the training, teaching and research activities of the PhD Course. In any case, the maximum cumulative amount received for external activities may not exceed €5,000.00 per year.
5. Students may have their attendance of the Programme and the scholarship suspended for maternity or paternity, for serious and documented illness or for other serious and documented personal reasons, in accordance with the procedures set out in Article 14.
6. PhD students must comply with the provisions of the GSSI Statutes and internal regulations.
7. In the event of foreign students that do not possess basic language skills, students are also required to attend Italian language and culture courses offered by GSSI.

Art. 19

Penalties

1. The Rector, through a decree, may impose the sanctions referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article in cases where the Student:
 - a. violates the provisions set out in these Regulations and in the GSSI internal regulations;

- b. engages in conduct that constitutes a criminal offence or constitutes a breach of mandatory legal provisions;
 - c. engages in conduct that causes damage to movable or immovable property owned by or in use by GSSI, committed with wilful misconduct or gross negligence;
 - d. commits serious behavioural misconduct or breaches the obligation to maintain an appropriate conduct;
 - e. causes damage, including reputational or moral damage to GSSI.
2. In the cases referred to in the preceding paragraph, the following sanctions may be imposed:
 - a. verbal warning;
 - b. written warning;
 - c. suspension of authorisation to carry out off-site activities;
 - d. suspension of the scholarship and of the benefits connected to the status of student for a period of 1 to 12 months;
 - e. request for exclusion from the PhD Programme.
 3. Sanctions may be proposed by the Rector, by the Academic Board, by the Scientific Area Directors and by the PhD Coordinators.
 8. Sanctions must be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the infringement and must take into account the conduct of the student and the presence of any mitigating and/or aggravating circumstances. The person concerned is notified of the initiation of proceedings and the sanction is imposed only after a hearing, where possible.
 9. The GSSI shall prosecute, in accordance with the law and in the appropriate fora, any student's behaviour that constitutes a breach of the law and/or causes damage to movable and immovable property owned by or at the disposal of GSSI, or damages the image and/or scientific reputation of the School.
 10. For all matters not governed by these Regulations, reference is made to the GSSI Code of Conduct.

Art. 20

Students' representatives

1. The students of the PhD courses shall elect two representatives to the Academic Senate, with a two-year term of office, who may be elected from among the students enrolled in PhD Programmes with at least one year of ordinary duration of the Course at the date of the elections.
2. The students of the PhD Courses elect one representative to the Board of Directors, with a two year term of office, who may be elected from among the students enrolled in PhD Programmes with at least one year of ordinary duration of the Course at the date of the elections.

3. The students who have been elected represent all the students in their relations with the Institute Bodies and Administration, in accordance with the provisions of the GSSI Statute, and they collect and forward to the Coordinators any observations and suggestions made by the students.
4. Elections are conducted pursuant to the procedures set out in the GSSI Regulations and using the forms provided by the Administration.

TITLE III
FINAL
PROVISIONS

Art. 21

Referral clause

1. For matters not expressly provided for in these Regulations, the relevant laws, statutes and regulations in force shall apply.

Art. 22

Effective date

1. These Regulation is issued by Decree of the Rector of GSSI and shall enter into force on the day following their publication on the GSSI Official Register.