

Minutes of the Board of Professors of the SAAF Ph.D. n. 10 (cycles XXXVIII-XXXIX)

Meeting of 29 May 2024

Composition of the Academic Board:

			P	AG	A
1.	Abdelfattah	Ahmed			X
2.	Abenavoli	Maria Rosa	X		
3.	Agosteo	Giovanni	X		
4.	Barreca	Francesco	X		
5.	Bernardi	Bruno	X		
6.	Bombino	Giuseppe	X		
7.	Campolo	Orlando	X		
8.	De Luca	Anna Irene	X		
9.	Di Fazio	Salvatore		X	
10.	García-Ruiz	Roberto		X	
11.	Giuffrè	Angelo Maria	X		
12.	Gulisano	Giovanni	X		
13.	Li Destri	Giulia	X		
14.	Lombardi	Fabio	X		
15.	Lucas-Borja	Manuel Esteban	X		
16.	Lupini	Antonio	X		
17.	Marcianò	Claudio		X	
18.	Marziliano	Pasquale		X	
19.	Modica	Giuseppe			X
20.	Monti	Michele	X		
21.	Muscolo	Adele Maria			
22.	Nicolosi	Agata	X		
23.	Palmeri	Vincenzo	X		
24.	Piscopo	Amalia Rosa Maria	X		
25.	Poiana	Marco	X		
26.	Porto	Paolo			X
27.	Proto	Andrea Rosario	X		
28.	Schena	Leonardo	X		
29.	Sicari	Vincenzo	X		
30.	Sorgonà	Agostino		X	
36.	Spampinato	Giovanni		X	
31.	Strano	Alfio	X		
32.	Sunseri	Francesco		X	
33.	Tassone	Valentina C.		X	
34.	Zema	Demetrio Antonio	X		

35.	Zimbalatti	Giuseppe		X	
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The meeting will be held in person in the Francesco S. Nesci Hall of the Department of Agriculture. The Coordinator Prof. Leonardo Schena will chair the meeting. Prof. Anna Irene De Luca acts as secretary. The special channel "PhD SAAF (Cycles XXXVIII/IX)" was created by the coordinator in the Microsoft Teams platform to allow the participation of the members of the College residing abroad (Dr. Abdelfattah, Prof. García-Ruíz, Dr. Lucas-Borja) is activated. Dr. Lucas-Borja is present, having connected to the specially arranged telematic meeting, as well as Prof. Maria Rosa Abenavoli who has requested to be able to connect remotely for ascertained health reasons; Prof. García-Ruíz and Dr. Tassone are considered excused absences having previously sent a request by e-mail to the Coordinator, while Dr. Abdelfattah is considered absent because does not appear to be connected to the meeting on the platform.

The Coordinator, noting that the Board has been duly convened by invitation sent by e-mail on 24 May 2024 and that it is in a position to deliberate, declares the meeting open at 11:10 a.m. The agenda is as follows:

1. Communications;
2. Approval of minutes no. 9 of 31.01.2024;
3. Criteria and timing for the evaluation of the first year of activity;
4. Appointment of co-tutors;
5. Authorization for the period abroad;
6. Proposal for the renewal of the PhD (XL cycle).

1. Communications

- The Coordinator reports that Dr. Angelo Giuffrè requested by a specific e-mail sent on May 27, 2024, to be authorized at the use of the mailing list of doctoral students to anonymously administer a questionnaire for scientific research purposes, and the Coordinator;
- The Coordinator reports on the beginning of the activities of the QA (Quality Assurance) Group of the SAAF Doctorate, appointed and approved following the Academic Board of 21 November 2023 (minutes no. 8). The Coordinator recalls that the QA group is made up of the following members: Prof. Leonardo Schena (Coordinator of the PhD), Prof. Anna Irene De Luca (Vice Coordinator of the PhD), Prof. Agostino Sorgonà (Member of the Teaching Board), Dr. Edda Francomanno (Student Representative) and Dr. Simone Santacaterina (Technical and Administrative Staff). The Coordinator reports that in the first meeting held on 09 February 2024, the role and tasks that the QA Group of the PhD is required to perform were examined and it was agreed on which activities to start on the following main topics: identification of points of attention of AVA 3 System on PhD activities; evaluation of the PhD training plan; definition of guidelines for writing the thesis, with particular attention to copyright, plagiarism and self-plagiarism issues. In the second meeting held on 21 May 2024, the members reported on the progress of the planned actions and the "Renewal of the XL Cycle of the SAAF Doctorate" was addressed as a further element of analysis. In addition, during the meeting, the coordinator reported on a note received recently by the coordinator of the PQA, Prof. Vincenzo Palmeri, with which, given the CEV visit scheduled by ANVUR in the first semester of 2026, PhDs are required to fill in the Evaluation Forms as prepared by ANVUR and approved by Resolution of the Board of Directors no. 221 of 2 November 2022 (not Prot. No. 0013802 of 21.05.2024). Professors De Luca and Sorgonà have taken on the task of proceeding with the drafting of the evaluation report that the coordinator will send to the PQA by the deadline of 15 June 2024, as requested by Prof. Palmeri. The Coordinator reports that due to the tight deadlines, this document will be sent to the PQA in a non-final form, and then it will be analyzed and definitively approved by the Board in a second phase.
- The Coordinator informs that following the provisions of the University Regulations on the subject of PhDs (Art. 6, paragraph 2, letter c / Art. 5, paragraph 4, letter i) it has authorized the following PhD students to carry out the foreign period, lasting no more than 6 months:

- ✓ Maria Teresa RODINO' (XXXVIII cycle). Tutor: Prof. Michele Monti; Institution: *Institute of Molecular Biology, Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS)*", Slovakia; Period: 01/10/2023 - 20/12/2023;
- ✓ Maria Teresa RODINO' (XXXVIII cycle). Tutor: Prof. Michele Monti; Institution: *University of Castilla – La Mancha*", Spain; Period: 19/02/2024 to 19/04/2024;
- ✓ Francesco CANINO (XXXVIII cycle). Tutor: Prof. Adele Muscile; Institution: *"Faculty of Engineering Technology (Technologies campus Gent) – KU Leuven"* in Belgium; Period: 10/01/2024 - 10/07/2024;
- ✓ Lamia RAHALI (XXXVIII cycle). Tutor: Prof. Giuseppe Modica. Institution: *"Rothamsted Research (Harpenden, UK)"* in Cambridge, UK. Period: 01/09/2024 - 28/02/2025.

He also recalls that the Board, in meeting no. 6 of 13 September 2023, authorized the PhD student Ilaria Latella, (Tutor Dr Orlando Campolo), to travel to Germany at the *"Zoologische Staatssammlung München"* in Munich, for a total duration of 6 months and 13 days (02.10.2023 - 15.04.2024)

2. Approval of minutes no. 9 of 31.01.2024;

The Coordinator reminds those present that the draft of the minutes of meeting no. 9 of 31.01.2024 drawn up in Italian and English was sent on 23 May 2024 to all the members of the Board, together with the convocation of this Board. The minutes, in both versions (Italian and English), were approved unanimously.

3. Criteria and timing for the evaluation of the first year of activity;

In line with what has been decided in the previous PhD cycles, the Coordinator proposes that the evaluation of the first year of activity of the PhD students of the XXXIX cycle be made based on:

- A three-year research project in English;
- The annual report on the activities carried out in English;
- An individual training plan containing teaching and research activities with the respective credits acquired.

The Coordinator emphasizes that the annual report and the training plan are fundamental documents for the evaluation of doctoral students even in the second and third years of activity.

As far as the evaluation of the three-year research project is concerned, the evaluation by an internal/external commission composed of three members, at least 2 of whom are external to the Academic Board, and approved by the Academic Board, is proposed again. This commission will evaluate the project and presentation by the PhD students. The commission's evaluations, together with the annual report and the individual training plan, will be used by the Board to evaluate the doctoral students and, in the event of a positive evaluation, for admission to the second year.

About the timing for sending the required documentation to the Coordinator, the following is approved:

- Three-year research project in English: 30 June 2024;
- Annual report and individual training plan: 14 October 2024;

The Board mandates the Coordinator to inform the doctoral students about the timing and to send the necessary forms, which remain unchanged compared to the XXXVIII cycle.

4. Appointment of co-tutor

The Coordinator, as the tutor of the PhD student Procopio Giuseppina (XXXIX Cycle) proposes the assignment as co-tutor of Dr Santilli Elena, Researcher of CREA-OFA of Rende (CS). The Coordinator points out that Dr Procopio has a scholarship under Ministerial Decree 117/2023 co-financed 50% by CREA-OFA, drawing on the resources of the NOVIXGEN project (CUP C83C22001280006) of which Dr. Santilli is responsible. He also points out that Dr. Procopio's research project includes a mandatory period at CREA-OFA and that, in the specific agreement between the Mediterranean University and CREA-OFA, Dr Santilli has been indicated as a company tutor. The Board unanimously approves the appointment of Dr Santilli as co-tutor of the PhD student Procopio.

This item shall be read out and approved on the spot.

5. Authorization for the foreign period

The Coordinator brings to the attention of the Board the request of Dr Giuseppina Vizzari, PhD student of the XXXVIII Cycle, countersigned by the tutor, Dr Ahmed Abdelfattah and the co-tutor, Dr Antonino Malacrinò, to be authorized to carry out the foreign period in Adelaide in Australia at the "*Flinders University*" for a total duration of 12 months (01.10.2024 - 01.10.2025). The Coordinator also informs the Board that a specific letter of availability produced by the Host Institution is attached to the request. The Board unanimously approves the request of the PhD student Giuseppina Vizzari to travel to **Australia from 01.10.2024 to 01.10.2025**.

This item is read and approved immediately.

6. Proposal for the renewal of the PhD programme (XL cycle)

The Coordinator points out that by e-mail dated 28 May 2024, he sent to all the members of the Board, the draft proposal for the renewal of the Doctoral Course in Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences (XL Cycle), in order to incorporate any proposals for modification and/or integration. He points out that in the proposal sent, the composition of the Board remains unchanged concerning the two previous doctoral cycles, the end of completing a three-year doctoral period (Cycles XXXVIII, XXXIX and XL) and avoiding, in line with the provisions of art. 12 of the University Regulations on the subject of PhDs, a new accreditation process for the XL cycle. He points out that the current composition has been accredited in the XXXVIII cycle and that the accreditation of the courses has a duration of five years, except in cases of change of the name, or of the composition of the Teaching Board, to an extent greater than twenty-five per cent of the initial one of the reference cycle, or in cases of change of the course's coordinator.

The Coordinator reports that following discussions with the Doctoral School, the XL cycle accreditation proposal provides for 4 scholarships, 3 of which are under Ministerial Decree 360/2024 and one from University funds. In addition, there is a place without a scholarship. He points out that the co-financing under Ministerial Decree 360/2024 is equal to € 60,000.00 (sixty thousand/00) to which is added the co-financing by companies for an amount of € 15,000.00 (fifteen thousand/00) in order to reach the total cost of a scholarship which is approximately € 75,000.00 (seventy-five thousand/00). In this regard, he recalls that on 14 May 2024, he sent to all the members of the Board a joint note from the Coordinator of the Doctoral School, Prof. Paolo Fuschi and the Deputy Rector for Research, Prof. Massimo Lauria, requesting to instruct as quickly as possible interlocutions with any partners (companies) interested in co-financing scholarships with an amount of € 15,000.00 (fifteen thousand/00). The note clarified that this interest had to be formally expressed through the sending by May 27 of a specific letter of intent drawn up using the attached forms to be sent via certified email to the Rector and for information, to the Coordinator of the Doctorate. Finally, the note pointed out that, if the number of proposals exceeded the availability, the requests would be satisfied according to the chronological order of the proposals received.

The Coordinator reports that expressions of interest have been received, in chronological order, from the following companies:

- Italian Association for Organic Agriculture (AIAB APS) - Internal contact person for the PhD: Prof. Claudio Marcianò;
- Council for Research in Agriculture and Analysis of Agricultural Economics (CREA) – Internal contact person for the PhD: Dr. Orlando Campolo;
- Experimental Station for the Industries of Essences and Citrus Derivatives - Special Agency - Chamber of Commerce - Internal contact person for the PhD: Prof. Marco Poiana;
- Azienda Caterisana - Internal contact person for the PhD: Prof. Giovanni Spampinato;
- EnBioTech - Internal contact person of the PhD: Prof. Leonardo Schena.

The Coordinator, in accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned joint note from the Coordinator of the Doctoral School and the Deputy Rector for Research, receives a mandate from the Board to send a draft agreement produced by the competent offices, to the internal representatives of the Doctorate of the companies that chronologically transmitted the first three expressions of intent (AIAB, CREA and Experimental

Station for the Industries of essences and derivatives from citrus fruits). The Coordinator points out that the agreement must be produced and transmitted by 03 June 2024 and proposes that, otherwise, we will proceed with the other companies, always following the chronological order.

This is followed by an in-depth discussion with some requests for clarification during which there is broad agreement on the proposed PhD project. The Board unanimously approves the renewal proposal and mandates the Coordinator to conclude the online procedure to reaccredit the course.

As there were no other items for discussion and all the items on the agenda had been dealt with, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00.

The Coordinator
Prof. Leonardo SCHENA

The Secretary
Prof. Anna Irene DE LUCA