

Minutes of the Academic Board of the SAAF PhD n. 13 (cycles XXXVIII-XXXIX-XL)
Meeting of 18th December 2024

Composition of the Academic Board:

			P	JA	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-Ruíz	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		X	
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			
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	

The meeting is held in presence in the Francesco S. Nesci room of the Department of Agriculture. The meeting is chaired by the Coordinator, Prof. Leonardo Schena. Prof. Anna Irene De Luca acts as secretary for the minutes. The special channel "PhD SAAF (Cycles XXXVIII/IX/XL) - MEETINGS" created by the Coordinator in the Microsoft Teams platform is activated to allow the participation of the members of the College residing

abroad (Dr. Abdelfattah, Prof. García-Ruíz, Dr. Lucas-Borja, Valentina C. Tassone). Dr. Lucas-Borja is considered justified absentees having previously sent a request by e-mail to the Coordinator. Prof. García-Ruíz, Dr. Abdelfattah and Dr. Tassone are considered absent since they have not sent any request and do not connect to the meeting on the platform.

The Coordinator, having noted that the Board has been duly convened by invitation sent by e-mail on 12th December 2024 and that it is in a position to deliberate, declares the meeting open at 15:40 p.m. The agenda is as follows:

1. Communications;
2. Approval of minutes no. 12 of 22.10.2024;
3. Planning of the PhD Training Plan (XL cycle);
4. Criteria for awarding credits for teaching and research activities (XL cycle);
5. Survey of doctoral students' opinions;
6. Proposal for co-tutorship;
7. Appointment of tutors;
8. Appointment of Co-tutors;
9. Authorization of the foreign period.

1. Communications

As part of the auditions provided for by the "AVA3" system, on Friday 6 December 2024, the Quality Assurance (QA) Group of the SAAF PhD was received by the NdV and the University PQA. The meeting was attended by Prof. Leonardo Schena (Coordinator of the PhD), Prof. Agostino Sorgonà (Member of the Academic Board), Dr. Edda Francomanno (Student Representative) and Dr. Simone Santacaterina (Technical and Administrative Staff). Prof. Anna Irene De Luca (Deputy of the Coordinator and member of the QA group) was not present due to other engagements in institutional activities off-site. During the hearing, appreciation and satisfaction emerged from NdV and the PQA for the progress of the SAF Doctorate and for the activities put in place. The Coordinator reiterated the main critical issues already highlighted in the past, namely:

- the lack of funds available to the PhD Course, which limits the implementation of many planned activities due to lack of economic availability.
- the small endowment of technical, administrative and library staff, insufficient to carry out institutional activities.

Among the recommendations received are:

- The replacement of the current student representative, Dr. Edda Francomano, in the QA group in consideration of her concomitant role in the Joint Teachers-Students Committee.
- The appointment of a final Committee that involves representatives of institutions and bodies on the basis of the cultural and professional profiles of outgoing PhD students.

The Coordinator reports that the elections of the representative of the doctoral students within the Department Council will be organized shortly. Similarly, to what happens in other Mediterranean PhD Courses, the elected doctoral student will be invited to join the QA group of the doctorate in place of Dr. Francomano. Regarding the appointment of a Final Committee, the Coordinator reports that during the hearing with the NdV and PQA on 6 December, the Coordinator of the PQA, Prof. Giovanni Leonardi, undertook to send specific guidelines. Following the definition of these guidelines, the appointment of the Final Committee will be discussed by the Academic Board for subsequent approval. The Board takes note of this.

2. Approval of minutes no. 12 of 22.10.2024

The Coordinator reminds those present that the draft of the minutes of meeting no. 12 of 22.10.2024 drawn up in Italian and English was sent on 12th December 2024 to all members of the Board, together with the convocation of this Board. The minutes, in both versions (Italian and English) are approved unanimously.

3. Planning of the PhD Training Plan (XL cycle)

The Coordinator points out that according to the provisions of the University Regulations on the subject of the PhD Programme, the Academic Board prepares a training plan of the activities on the basis of which the PhD student must acquire 180 credits during the three-year period and recalls that 4 hours of lectures on the PhD are equivalent to 1 CFU, as per the resolution of the Council of the Doctoral School of 28.11.2022. He reports that, subsequently, within the Doctoral School, the Authorizing Officers of the individual Doctorates agreed not to apply this equivalence for the "Language Specialization" course, proposing that 8 hours of lessons for the English course correspond to 1 CFU, similarly to what happens for many first and second level courses. He also recalls that in the PhD project that led to the accreditation of the XL cycle of the SAAF doctorate, the "*Planned/planned teaching activity*" includes the following courses:

- Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics for the validation of experimental data in the agro-forestry field.
- Safety in research facilities.
- Evaluation of the sustainability of experiments and innovations for the validation of research paths.
- Use of the main databases and statistical sources in the agri-food and forestry sectors.
- Bibliographic research in the field of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences.
- Presentation of experimental data and writing of scientific articles.

In addition to the "*Planned/planned teaching activity*", the PhD project approved by ANVUR also includes "*Other teaching activities*" including:

- Language improvement
- Core principles of ethics, gender equality and integrity
- Exploitation and dissemination of results, intellectual property and open access to research data and products
- Research and knowledge management of European and international research systems.

During the presentation of the projects, it was decided that the "*other educational activities*" are common to all the doctoral courses of the Mediterranean and, as such, organized at the school level. All courses will be organized for the PhD students of the XL cycle, but also other PhD students of previous cycles who for various reasons have not had the opportunity to attend some courses in previous years will also be able to participate.

The Coordinator reminds the Board that on 02.12.2024 he sent to all the Teachers of the Department of Agriculture a communication with the subject "Declaration of interest in holding courses/seminars as part of the teaching activities of the PhD in Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences (XL cycle)" (Prot. no. 40044 of 02/12/2024) and informs those present that he has received a total of 8 proposals for contributions, also including proposals made by professors outside the Department. He points out that other courses/seminars not yet planned may be organized and made available to doctoral students both by the SAAF Doctorate and by the Doctoral School, also through the invitation of leading personalities in their fields of expertise at national and/or international level.

Considering the provisions of the University Regulations on Research Doctorates (Art. 5, paragraph 4, letter c) and, considering: a) The "*Planned/planned teaching activity*" and the "*Other teaching activities*" included in the PhD project of the XL cycle approved by ANVUR and b) The course proposals received in response to the communication of the Coordinator (Prot. no. 40044), were prepared and:

- 1) A table containing a proposal for the overall educational offer with the credits to be acquired with teaching/training activities and with research activities (Annex 1)

- 2) A table with the list of proposed courses divided into courses organized by the SAAF Doctorate and courses organized by the Doctoral School (Annex 2).

The Coordinator emphasizes that the courses provided for in the "*Programmatic/planned teaching activity*" of the doctoral project approved by ANVUR, are mandatory. All other courses are optional and can be freely chosen by SAAF doctoral students as well as by other Mediterranean doctoral students. He also points out that the achievement of the compulsory credits reported in Table 1 can be acquired with other activities freely chosen by the doctoral students, taking into account the criteria that are brought for approval in the following point 4 to the agenda.

This is followed by an in-depth and detailed discussion at the end of which the proposals summarized in **Annexes 1 and 2**, which become an integral part of these minutes, are approved unanimously.

This point is read and approved immediately.

4. Criteria for awarding credits for teaching and research activities (XL cycle)

The Coordinator projects a proposal for "Criteria for the attribution of CFU for teaching activities" highlighting that the same was discussed and approved by the QA group of the PhD in meeting no. 3 of 14.11.2024. He also points out that the proposal contains few changes that improve on the criteria approved for XXXIX, focusing on these changes. This is followed by an articulated discussion during which the Board agrees on the document presented which is unanimously approved and becomes an integral part of these minutes (**Annex 3**).

This point is read and approved immediately.

5. Survey of doctoral students' opinions

The Coordinator recalls that the "Questionnaire to monitor the level of satisfaction of PhD students" as well as the Report with the results of this monitoring, were sent to all members of the board by email on 17.12.2024. The members of the board present confirm that they have received the documents and have read them. He emphasizes that the questionnaire was developed and approved by the QA group and thanks in particular Prof. De Luca who prepared the questionnaire, as well as the administration of the same to the PhD students through the Google Forms application for the creation of online forms, as well as the collection and processing of the results. He also points out that the QA group decided to administer the questionnaire to all PhD students even before approval by the college with the aim of reaching today's meeting with the results of the survey and allowing a supported evaluation of the effectiveness of the questionnaire. The Coordinator, therefore, for the benefit of the professors of the Board and to facilitate the discussion, proceeds to the projection of the pdf file of the Report with the results of the survey, recalling that the questionnaire, as agreed in the QA group, is aimed at monitoring the level of satisfaction of doctoral students with respect to their advanced training path. The aim is to draw inspiration from the analysis of the evidence and critical issues found, as well as from any constructive suggestions, to help improve the quality of the PhD experience in the Department of AGRARIA.

Prof. De Luca also recalls that the questionnaire was developed starting from the models proposed by the National Agency for the Evaluation of the University and Research System (ANVUR), simplified, integrated, and "personalized" on the experience of the PhD in the Department of AGRARIA. The administration took place by sending an e-mail to the institutional addresses of the PhD students enrolled in the PhD in Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences of the XXXVII/XXXVIII/XXXIX cycles, containing the link to the Google Forms form, which can be filled out strictly anonymously. All students currently enrolled in the cycles already mentioned (30 doctoral students, of which: 11 of the XXXVII cycle; 13 of the XXXVIII cycle and no. 6 of the XXXIX cycle) completed the questionnaire.

The Coordinator proceeds to the projection of the document showing the main sections of the questionnaire relating to the following questions: 1) "Effectiveness of supervision and tutoring"; 2) "Training course"; 3) "Research Activities"; 4) "Experience in other national research institutions, companies or public administrations"; 5) "Collaborations and Third Mission"; 6) "International Experiences"; 7) "Teaching activity". The most significant aspects and results regarding the responses of the PhD students are illustrated, on each of which there is a wide and in-depth discussion by the members of the Doctoral Teaching Board, who are pleased to note the decidedly high level of general satisfaction declared by 83.3% of doctoral students, as well as the appreciation of the supervision and tutoring activities carried out by professors (90% of doctoral students).

Some critical issues emerge in relation to the training course and the courses provided in compulsory and optional mode, with respect to which 33.3% of doctoral students declare that the contents do not cover their training needs, while 23.4% declare that the training activities do not appear useful and consistent with the disciplinary path of their doctorate. In this sense, the members of the teaching board, present at the meeting, agree on the need to carry out a more articulated reasoning that will have to follow in the Board of Teachers as well as in the AQ Group. The discussion ends with the confirmation by the Academic Board of the usefulness and effectiveness of the evaluation tool used on an experimental basis and with the recommendation to use it also for subsequent cycles. To this end, the "Questionnaire to monitor the level of satisfaction of PhD students" prepared by the QA group is unanimously approved.

6. Proposal for a doctorate in co-tutorship

The Coordinator reports that he has not had the opportunity to acquire all the necessary documentation and proposes to postpone the discussion. The Board approves.

7. Appointment of tutor

The Coordinator highlights the need to appoint the Tutors of PhD students of the XL cycle, recalling that according to the *provisions of the University Regulations on the subject of Research Doctorates (Art. 5, paragraph 4, letter e) the Academic Board "assigns to each PhD student, within the first year of enrolment, a tutor chosen from among the members of the Board, with the function of supervisor and supervisor, who follows him in his training and research activities, and annually evaluates his activity with appropriate forms of monitoring and verifies his attendance of the Course"*. After an articulated discussion, in consideration of the projects presented for the purpose of selection by the candidates admitted attending the doctorate and the availability that emerged, the Board assigns the following tutors:

- PhD student Zucco Giada holder of a scholarship funded by DM 630 of 24.04.24: tutor Prof. Marco Poiana, Full Professor, SSD AGRI-07/A Food Science and Technology;
- PhD student Ritorto Davide, holder of a scholarship funded by DM 630 of 24.04.24: tutor Dott. Orlando Campolo, Researcher SSD AGRI-05/A General and Applied Entomology;
- PhD student Scarpino Giulio holder of a scholarship financed with University funds: tutor Prof. Agostino Sorgonà, Associate Professor, SSD AGRI-06/B Agricultural Chemistry.

The Board approves unanimously.

8. Appointment of co-tutor

No requests were received.

9. Authorization of the foreign period

No requests were received.

Since there are no other topics for discussion and having dealt with all the items on the agenda, the meeting is closed at 5:30 p.m.

The Coordinator
Prof. Leonardo SCHENA

The Secretary
Prof. Anna Irene DE LUCA

ANNEX 1

EDUCATIONAL PLAN: Educational/Teaching Activities and Research Activities (SAAF Doctorate - XL Cycle)

Training/teaching activities (CFU)

	Planned/planned teaching activity*	Other educational activities**	TOT
Year I	15	20	35
Year II		5	5
Year III		5	5
TOT	15	30	45

* Planned/planned teaching activity present in the accreditation proposal evaluated by ANVUR, organized by the SAAF doctorate (Compulsory)

** Other teaching activities envisaged in the accreditation proposal evaluated by ANVUR, organized by the Doctoral School

** Other courses and/or seminars organized by the SAAF Doctorate and/or the Doctoral School

** Seminars/Workshops/Conferences related to the topics of the SAAF Doctorate, organized by recognized universities or research institutions

Research activities (CFU)

Year I	23
Year II	56
Year III	56
TOT	135

Educational/teaching activities + Research activities = 180 credits

ANNEX 2

COURSES organized by the SAAF Doctorate/Doctoral School (SAAF Doctorate - XL Cycle)

Planned/planned teaching activity (Mandatory)

Course	Hours	ECTS	Organization	Teacher
Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics for the validation of experimental data in the agro-forestry field	20	5	SAAF PhD	Pasquale Marziliano Orlando Campolo
Safety in research infrastructure	10	2,5	SAAF PhD	Simone Santacaterina
Evaluation of the sustainability of experiments and innovations for the validation of research paths	10	2,5	SAAF PhD	Giacomo Falcone
Use of the main databases and statistical sources in the agri-food and forestry sector	10	2,5	SAAF PhD	Nathalie Iofrida
Bibliographic research in the field of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences	5	1,25	SAAF PhD	Angelo Giuffrè
Presentation of experimental data and writing of scientific articles	5	1,25	SAAF PhD	Meriem Miyassa Acl
Total	60	15		

Other teaching activities (chosen by the PhD student)

Course	Hours	ECTS	Organization	Teacher
Language improvement	40	5	Doctoral School	ihBRITISH SCHOOL of Reggio Calabria
Core Principles of Ethics, Gender Equality, and Integrity	4	1	Doctoral School	TBD
Exploitation and dissemination of results, intellectual property and open access to research data and products	4	1	Doctoral School	TBD
Research and knowledge management of European and international research systems	4	1	Doctoral School	TBD
Ethnobotany: plants useful to man	20	5	SAAF PhD	Carmelo Maria Musarella
Innovative agronomic strategies to mitigate the negative effects of climate change on fruit crop cultivation	8	2	SAAF PhD	Rocco Mafrica
Computational molecular genomics in agroforestry and environmental	10	2,5	SAAF PhD	Antonio Mauceri
Introduction to Statistical Analysis with R	16	4	SAAF PhD	Annamaria Ienco
Monitoring and protection of animal species in Mediterranean environments	8	2	SAAF PhD	Francesca Laudani

Profiles of environmental administrative law	12	3	SAAF PhD	Giuseppina Lofaro
Hydrological analysis tools and intervention techniques for the protection of river basins in semi-arid environments	24	6	SAAF PhD	Pietro Denisi Misagh Parhizkarkhadiv Giandomenico Foti
The microbiome and sustainable crop protection in a "One Health" approach	16	4	SAAF PhD	Meriem Miyassa Aci
Total	166	3 6.5		

ANNEX 3

Criteria for the attribution of credits (Doctorate SAAF XL Cycle)

1. Educational activities	ECTS
CdL and CdLM courses	As per the CdS
Courses organized by the SAAF Doctorate	1 CFU/4 hours
Courses organized by the SAAF Doctoral Sole	1 CFU/4 hours
Seminars/workshops	0,5 CFU
Participation in international conferences	1 CFU/day of conference (max 2 CFU)
Participation in national conferences	0.5 CFU/day of conference (max 2 CFU)

2. Research activities	ECTS
PhD thesis	20
Scopus or ISI indexed article (first name and/or corresponding author)	25
Scopus or ISI indexed article (intermediate positions)	15
Scientific article no Scopus or ISI (first name or corresponding author)	3
Scientific article no Scopus or ISI (intermediate positions)	1
Paper accepted and presented at international conference	10
Paper accepted and presented at national conference	5
Poster (or ppt) international conference	4
Poster (or ppt) national conference	2
International volume chapter (first name or corresponding author)	5
International volume chapter (intermediate positions)	3
National volume chapter (first name or corresponding author)	3
National volume chapter (intermediate positions)	1
Research activities in foreign institutions (CFU/week)	2,5
Research activity at UNIRC laboratories (CFU/week)	0,75
Research activity in companies (CFU/week)	0,75