

**Minutes of the Academic Board of the SAAF Doctoral Program No. 20 (Cycles XXXVIII-XXXIX-XL)**  
**Meeting of October 23, 2025**

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-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	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	

\*Leaves at 11:00 and returns at 13:00; \*\*leaves at 10:45; \*\*\*enters at 11:00; \*\*\*\*leaves at 13:00

The meeting is held in person in the Francesco S. Nesci lecture hall of the Department of Agriculture. The meeting is chaired by the Coordinator, Prof. Leonardo Schena. Prof. Orlando Campolo serves as recording secretary. The dedicated channel "PhD SAAF (Cycles XXXVIII/IX/XL) - MEETINGS" created by the Coordinator

on the Microsoft Teams platform is activated to allow the participation of Board members residing abroad (Dr. Abdelfattah, Prof. García-Ruíz, Dr. Lucas-Borja, Valentina C. Tassone) and to enable the presentation of annual reports by doctoral students currently conducting a research period abroad (Laura MISALE, Emanuele PORCU, Giuseppina PROCOPIO, and Giuseppina VIZZARI). Dr. Lucas-Borja and Dr. Ahmed Abdelfattah are considered justified absences having previously sent a request via e-mail to the Coordinator. Prof. García-Ruíz and Dr. Tassone are considered absent as they did not send any request and did not connect to the meeting on the platform.

The Coordinator, having noted that the Board was duly convened by invitation sent via e-mail on October 17, 2025 (note Prot. 0037969 of 17.10.2025) and that it is in a position to deliberate, declares the meeting open at 09:40. The agenda is as follows:

1. Presentation of the annual reports of the PhD students of the XXXIX cycle
2. Presentation of the annual reports of the PhD students of the XXXVIII cycle (starting activities in November 2022)
3. Communications
4. Approving minutes of meeting n. 19 (10.09.2025)
5. Evaluation of PhD students of the XL cycle for admission to the second year
6. Evaluation of PhD students of the XXXIX cycle for admission to the third year
7. Evaluation of PhD students of the XXXVIII cycle, (starting activities in November 2022), for approving the submission of the PhD thesis to external evaluators
8. Proposal to appoint external evaluators
9. Authorization of the foreign period
10. Appointment of co-tutors

### **1. Presentation of the annual reports of the PhD students of the XXXIX cycle;**

Prior to the start of the doctoral student presentations, at the invitation of the Coordinator, the order of presentations for the XXXIX cycle (item 1 on the agenda) and the XXXVIII cycle (item 2 on the agenda) is drawn by lot. The Coordinator notes that Dr. Giuseppina VIZZARI (XXXVIII cycle) and Dr. Giuseppina PROCOPIO are excluded from the draw as they are currently conducting research activities abroad in Australia and the United States, respectively, following authorization by the Academic Board at meetings no. 10 of 29.05.2024 (note prot. no. 0016469 of 17/06/2024) and no. 19 of 10.09.2025 (note Prot. 0030955 of 15.09.2025). At the request of the interested parties, taking into account the time zone difference to avoid presenting during the night, Dr. Vizzari was authorized to present her data at the beginning of the session, while Dr. Procopio will present last. The draw identifies Dr. Matteo SBAGLIA as the first presenter among the XXXIX cycle doctoral students and Dr. Francesco CANINO as the first presenter among the XXXVIII cycle doctoral students. Starting from those drawn, presentations will proceed in alphabetical order.

The Coordinator notes that the following doctoral students of the XXXIX cycle are called to present: Roberta CARIDI, Laura MISALE, Emanuele PORCU, Giuseppina PROCOPIO, Matteo SBAGLIA, and Antonio ZUMBO. Taking into account what was stated in the preamble regarding the needs of Dr. Vizzari and Dr. Procopio, the presentations of the XXXIX cycle doctoral students (Sbaglia, Zumbo, Caridi, Misale, and Porcu) are preceded by the presentation of Dr. Vizzari (XXXVIII cycle). Dr. Procopio (XXXIX cycle) will present last, after the XXXVIII cycle doctoral students. In addition to Dr. Vizzari and Dr. Procopio, doctoral students Misale and Porcu, being abroad following regular authorization from the Coordinator (note Prot. no. 0013454 of 02.05.2025) and the Academic Board (note Prot. 0030955 of 15.09.2025) respectively, will present remotely. The other doctoral students are present in the lecture hall and will therefore present in person.

Taking into account the above, after the initial presentation by Dr. Vizzari (XXXVIII Cycle), which will be reported under item 2 of the agenda, the Doctoral Students of the XXXIX cycle are invited to present in the following order:

- a. Matteo SBAGLIA. Thesis title *“Advanced Vibration Management in Agricultural Machinery: From Tree Shaker Control to Soil-Friendly Mobility Solution”*. Supervisor: Prof. Bruno Bernardi; Co-supervisor: Giuseppe Papuzzo
- b. Antonio ZUMBO. Thesis title *“Forest Operations and Wood Quality in Calabrian Forest Region”*. Supervisor: Prof. Andrea R. Proto
- c. Roberta CARIDI. Thesis title *“NANOpriming as BIO-TECHnology for the agriculture: green synthesized nanoparticles by agri-food wastes and their role for the mitigation of abiotic stress in plants. (NANO BIO-TECH)”*. Supervisor: Prof. Agostino Sorgonà; Co-supervisor: Maria Rosa Abenavoli
- d. Laura MISALE. Thesis title *“CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing of N-metabolism related genes for improving Nitrogen Use Efficiency (NUE) in the Solanaceae”*. Supervisor: Prof. Francesco Sunseri
- e. Emanuele PORCU. Thesis title *“Untangling food webs in Mediterranean agro-ecosystems”*. Supervisor: Prof. Orlando Campolo; Co-supervisor: Dr. Michele Ricupero.

The presentation of Dr. Procopio is postponed to the end of the presentations of the XXXVIII cycle doctoral students (see item 2 of the agenda)

- f. Giuseppina Procopio. Thesis title *“Exploiting the olive pathobiome to counteract Xylella fastidiosa subsp. pauca”*. Supervisor: Prof. Leonardo Schena; Co-supervisor: Dr. Elena Santilli.

The presentation of each XXXIX cycle doctoral student lasts approximately 15 minutes and is followed by a brief discussion in which the candidates answer questions from the Board members.

## **2. Presentation of the annual reports of the PhD students of the XXXVIII cycle (starting activities in November 2022);**

The Coordinator notes that the following doctoral students of the XXXVIII cycle who started activities in November 2022 are called to present: Francesco CANINO, Iolanda CILEA, Ilaria LATELLA, Giuseppina VIZZARI, and Maria Teresa RODINO'. He notes that doctoral student Giuseppina VIZZARI has already presented at the beginning of the XXXIX cycle doctoral students session due to time zone requirements (see item 1 of the agenda).

- a. Giuseppina VIZZARI. Thesis title *“The response of the soil microbiome to wildfires and the consequences for plant health”*. Supervisor: Dr. Ahmed Abdelfattah; Co-supervisor: Dr. Antonino Malacrino

The other XXXVIII cycle doctoral students called to present today are present in the lecture hall and, following a draw, are invited to present their work in the following order:

- b. Francesco CANINO. Thesis title *“Formulation of sustainable gluten-free beer from rice malt and potato processing waste with a view to a circular economy”*. Supervisor: Prof. Adele Muscolo
- c. Iolanda CILEA. Thesis title *“Technological treatments to obtain high-quality food production”*. Supervisor: Prof. Marco Poiana; Co-supervisor: Prof. Alessandra De Bruno.
- d. Ilaria LATELLA. Thesis title *“Diversity and community composition of Lepidoptera in relation to different human pressures in southern Italy”*. Supervisor: Prof. Orlando Campolo; Co-supervisor: Dr. Stefano Scalercio.
- e. Maria Teresa RODINO'. Thesis title *“Assessment of the effects of two bio-based vs conventional mulching films on soil variables and plant responses in enclosed model system”*. Supervisor: Prof. Michele Monti; Co-supervisor: Prof. Antonio Gelsomino

This is followed by the presentation of Dr. Procopio of the XXXIX cycle (see item 1 of the agenda)

The presentation of each XXXVIII cycle doctoral student lasts approximately 20 minutes and is followed by a brief discussion in which the candidates answer questions from the Board members.

## **3. Communications**

The Coordinator informs the Board that by Rector's Decree no. 381/2025, the competition documents for admission to the three-year Doctoral Program in "Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences" (XL cycle) have been approved for 5 positions, of which 4 with scholarship, of which 1 reserved primarily for foreign candidates.

The Board takes note.

#### **4. Approving minutes of meeting n. 19 (10.09.2025)**

The Coordinator reminds those present that the draft minutes of meeting no. 19 of 10.09.2025, written in Italian and English, was sent on October 17, 2025 to all Board members, together with the notice convening the present meeting. The minutes, in both versions (Italian and English), are unanimously approved.

#### **5. Evaluation of PhD students of the XL cycle for admission to the second year**

The Coordinator brings to the attention of the Board the evaluation of the Doctoral Students of the XL cycle: Davide Ritorto, Giada Zucco, and Giulio Scarpino. The Coordinator reminds that the documentation necessary for the evaluation of the doctoral students has been made available on the Team called "PhD SAAF (Cycles XXXVIII/IX/XL)" to which all members of the Doctoral Board have access. The available documents are:

- Annual report of activities carried out;
- Training plan with the list of educational and research activities carried out for the acquisition of credits;
- Supervisors' assessment;
- Three-year doctoral project;
- Evaluation forms completed by the expert committees appointed at meeting no. 18 of 16.07.2025 for the evaluation of the three-year doctoral project.

The Board members present confirm that they have reviewed this documentation.

**The Board, taking into account all available documentation, having noted that all doctoral students have acquired the credits for educational and research activities required for the first year according to the "Doctoral Program Training Plan Schedule (XXXIX cycle)" (resolution no. 13 of 18.12.2024), after brief discussion, unanimously resolves to admit to the second year the doctoral students: Davide Ritorto, Giada Zucco e Giulio Scarpino.**

This item is read and approved during the session.

#### **6. Evaluation of PhD students of the XXXIX cycle for admission to the third year**

The Coordinator brings to the attention of the Board the evaluation of the Doctoral Students of the XXXIX cycle: Roberta CARIDI, Laura MISALE, Emanuele PORCU, Antonio ZUMBO, Giuseppina PROCOPIO, and Matteo SBAGLIA.

The Coordinator reminds that the documentation necessary for the evaluation of the doctoral students has been made available on the Team called "PhD SAAF (Cycles XXXVIII/IX/XL)" to which all members of the Doctoral Board have access. The available documents are:

- Annual report of activities carried out;
- Training plan with the list of educational and research activities carried out for the acquisition of credits;
- Supervisors' assessment.

The Board members present confirm that they have reviewed this documentation and that all doctoral students of the XXXIX cycle have acquired the credits in educational (40) and research (79) activities cumulatively required in the first two years of the doctoral program as per the resolution of the Academic Board (see meeting no. 8 of 21.11.2023).

**The Academic Board, having reviewed the available documents and having listened to the doctoral students' presentations, taking into account the credits acquired, expresses a favorable opinion and unanimously resolves to admit to the third year the doctoral students: Roberta CARIDI, Laura MISALE, Emanuele PORCU, Antonio ZUMBO, Giuseppina PROCOPIO e Matteo SBAGLIA.**

This item is read and approved during the session.

### **7. Evaluation of PhD students of the XXXVIII cycle, (starting activities in November 2022), for approving the submission of the PhD thesis to external evaluators**

The Coordinator brings to the attention of the Board the evaluation of the Doctoral Students of the XXXVIII cycle who started activities in November 2022: Francesco CANINO, Iolanda CILEA, Ilaria LATELLA, Giuseppina VIZZARI, and Maria Teresa RODINO'. The Coordinator reminds that the documentation necessary for the evaluation of the doctoral students has been made available on the Team called "PhD SAAF (Cycles XXXVIII/IX/XL)" to which all members of the Doctoral Board have access. The available documents are:

- Annual report of activities carried out;
- Training plan with the list of educational and research activities carried out for the acquisition of credits;
- Supervisor's assessment.

The Board members present confirm that they have reviewed this documentation and that all doctoral students of the XXXVIII cycle who started activities in November 2022 have acquired the credits in educational (45) and research (135) activities cumulatively required over the three years of the doctoral program (total of 180 credits), as per the resolutions of the Academic Board (see meetings no. 3 of 02.03.2023 and no. 04 of 21.11.2023).

**The Academic Board, having reviewed the documents and having listened to the doctoral students' presentations, taking into account the credits acquired, expresses a favorable opinion and unanimously resolves to approve the submission of the thesis to external reviewers for the doctoral students: Francesco CANINO, Iolanda CILEA, Ilaria LATELLA, Giuseppina VIZZARI and Maria Teresa RODINO'.**

This item is read and approved during the session.

### **8. Proposal to appoint external evaluators**

The Coordinator recalls that, according to the University Regulations on Doctoral Programs, the Academic Board, for each doctoral student in the final year, must propose a panel of three reviewers, two full members and one alternate, to be transmitted to the Department Director who, by their own Decree, appoints the external reviewer committees. The Coordinator informs the Board that by email sent on 14.10.2025, the Supervisors of the XXXVIII cycle doctoral students who started activities in November 2022 were asked to identify panels of possible external reviewers (two full members and one alternate) to propose to the Academic Board. The following proposals were received:

#### **Francesco CANINO** (supervisor Prof. Adele Muscolo)

Full members:

- Prof. Aldo Todaro, Associate Professor SSD AGRI-07/A Food Science and Technology, University of Catania. E-mail: aldo.todaro@unict.it
- Prof. Giuseppe Celano, Associate Professor AGR/03A General Arboriculture and Tree Crops, University of Salerno. E-mail: gcelano@unisa.it

Alternate member:

- Prof. Luca Rastrelli, Full Professor SSD CHEM-07/B Food Chemistry, University of Salerno. E-mail: rastrelli@unisa.it

#### **Iolanda CILEA** (supervisor Prof. Marco Poiana)

Full members:

- Dr. Paola Conte, Fixed-term Researcher SSD AGRI-07/A Food Science and Technology, University of Sassari. E-mail: pconte@uniss.it.
- Prof. Vito Paradiso, Associate Professor SSD AGRI-07/A Food Science and Technology, University of Salento. E-mail: vito.paradiso@unisalento.it.

Alternate member:

- Prof. Monica Loizzo, Associate Professor AGRI-07/A Food Science and Technology, University of Calabria. E-mail: monica\_rosa.loizzo@unical.it

**Ilaria LATELLA** (supervisor Prof. Orlando Campolo)

Full members:

- Dr. Michele Ricupero, Fixed-term Researcher type B SSD AGRI-05/A - General and Applied Entomology, University of Catania. E-mail: michele.ricupero@unict.it
- Prof. Giulia Giunti: Associate Professor SSD AGRI-05/A - General and Applied Entomology, University of Salerno. Email: ggiunti@unisa.it

Alternate member:

- Prof. Antonio Biondi, Full Professor SSD AGRI-05/A - General and Applied Entomology, University of Catania. E-mail: antonio.biondi@unict.it

**Giuseppina VIZZARI** (supervisor Dr. Ahmed Abdelfattah)

Full members:

- Prof. Anna Maria Vettraino, Associate Professor SSD AGR-05B Plant Pathology, University of Tuscia. E-mail: vettrain@unitus.it
- Prof. Marcela Hernández, Group Leader, University of East Anglia, Norwich, U.K. E-mail: Marcela.Hernandez@uea.ac.uk

Alternate member:

- Prof. Alejandro Caro Quintero, Assistant Professor, Universidad Nacional de Colombia. E-mail: acarq@unal.edu.co

**Maria Teresa RODINO'** (supervisor Prof. Michele Monti)

Full members:

- Prof. Claudio Marzadori, Full Professor SSD AGRI-06/B Agricultural Chemistry, Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna. E-mail: claudio.marzadori@unibo.it
- Prof. Luigi Badalucco, Full Professor SSD AGRI-06/B Agricultural Chemistry, University of Palermo. E-mail: luigi.badalucco@unipa.it

Alternate member:

- Prof. Vito Armando Laudicina, Full Professor SSD AGRI-06/B Agricultural Chemistry, University of Palermo. E-mail: vitoarmando.laudicina@unipa.it

The Board, after brief discussion in which some clarifications regarding the competencies of the suggested reviewers were requested, unanimously approves the proposals made by the Supervisors.

This item is read and approved during the session.

**9. Authorization of the foreign period**

No requests were received

**10. Appointment of co-tutors**

No requests were received

As there are no other matters for discussion and all items on the agenda have been addressed, the meeting is adjourned at 14:00.

The Coordinator  
Prof. Leonardo SCHENA

The Secretary  
Prof. Orlando CAMPOLO