

**Minutes of the Academic Board of the SAAF PhD n. 3 (Cycle XLI)**  
**Meeting of 12 november 2025**

Composition of the Academic Board:

|     |             |                   | P | AJ | J |
|-----|-------------|-------------------|---|----|---|
| 1.  | Abdelfattah | Ahmed             |   |    | X |
| 2.  | Abenavoli   | Maria Rosa        |   |    | X |
| 3.  | Agosteo     | Giovanni          |   |    | X |
| 4.  | Badagliacca | Giuseppe          | x |    |   |
| 5.  | Barreca     | Francesco         |   |    | X |
| 6.  | Benalia     | Souraya           | X |    |   |
| 7.  | Bernardi    | Bruno             |   |    | X |
| 8.  | Bombino     | Giuseppe          | X |    |   |
| 9.  | Campolo     | Orlando           |   | X  |   |
| 10. | De Luca     | Anna Irene        | X |    |   |
| 11. | Di Fazio    | Salvatore         | X |    |   |
| 12. | García-Ruíz | Roberto           |   |    | X |
| 13. | Gelsomino   | Antonio           | X |    |   |
| 14. | Giuffrè     | Angelo Maria      |   |    | X |
| 15. | Gulisano    | Giovanni          |   | X  |   |
| 16. | Gullo       | Gregorio          |   |    | X |
| 17. | Li Destri   | Giulia            | X |    |   |
| 18. | Lombardi    | Fabio             | X |    |   |
| 19. | Lucas-Borja | Manuel Esteban    |   |    | X |
| 20. | Lupini      | Antonio           |   |    | X |
| 21. | Marcianò    | Claudio           |   |    | X |
| 22. | Marziliano  | Pasquale          |   | X  |   |
| 23. | Modica      | Giuseppe          |   | X  |   |
| 24. | Monti       | Michele           | X |    |   |
| 25. | Musarella   | Carmelo Maria     | X |    |   |
| 26. | Muscolo     | Adele Maria       |   | X  |   |
| 27. | Nicolosi    | Agata             |   |    | X |
| 28. | Palmeri     | Vincenzo          |   |    | X |
| 29. | Piscopo     | Amalia Rosa Maria | X |    |   |
| 30. | Poiana      | Marco             | x |    |   |
| 31. | Porto       | Paolo             |   |    | X |
| 32. | Praticò     | Salvatore         | X |    |   |
| 33. | Proto       | Andrea Rosario    |   | X  |   |
| 34. | Scerra      | Manuel            | X |    |   |
| 35. | Schena      | Leonardo          | X |    |   |
| 36. | Sicari      | Vincenzo          | X |    |   |
| 37. | Sidari      | Rossana           | X |    |   |
| 38. | Sorgonà     | Agostino          | X |    |   |
| 39. | Spampinato  | Giovanni          | X |    |   |
| 40. | Strano      | Alfio             |   | X  |   |
| 41. | Sunseri     | Francesco         |   |    | X |
| 42. | Tassone     | Valentina C.      |   |    | x |

|     |            |                  |   |   |  |
|-----|------------|------------------|---|---|--|
| 43. | Zema       | Demetrio Antonio | x |   |  |
| 44. | Zimbalatti | Giuseppe         |   | X |  |
| 45. | Zimbone    | Santo Marcello   | X |   |  |

The meeting takes place in person in the Francesco S. Nesci room of the Department of Agriculture. The meeting is chaired by the Coordinator, Prof. Leonardo Schena. Prof. Prof. Manuel Scerra 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, Dr. Valentina C. Tassone). Dr. Abdelfattah, Dr. Tassone, Prof. García-Ruíz, and Dr. Lucas-Borja are considered absent because they have not sent any requests of justification and do not connect to the meeting on the platform. The Coordinator, noting that the Board has been duly convened by invitation sent by e-mail on 7 November 2025 (Prot. 0042038, 07.11.2025) and that it is in the position to deliberate, declares the meeting open at 1:10 p.m.

The agenda is as follows:

1. Communications
2. Approval of Minutes No. 2 of 10.09.2025
3. Change in the composition of the PhD Quality Assurance (QA) Group
4. Assignment of scholarship types to PhD candidates admitted to the XLI cycle
5. Allocation of co-funding provided by the Agreement with CIHEAM Bari
6. Appointment of Supervisors (Tutors)

### 1. Communications

The Coordinator reports that on 03.11.2025 he received an email communication from Prof. Agostino Sorgonà entitled "Resignation from the PhD Quality Group". The email specified that the resignation request is aligned with a series of actions undertaken by the Scientific Disciplinary Sector SSD AGRI-06/B – Agricultural Chemistry, previously communicated to the Head of Department via email dated 08.09.2025 by the SSD coordinator, Prof. Muscolo.

The Coordinator further reports that the PhD QA group met on 11.11.2025 to discuss the following agenda items: 1. Communications; 2. Collection of PhD students' feedback; 3. Planning of the PhD Training Program (XLI cycle); 4. Criteria for the allocation of CFUs for teaching and research activities (XL cycle). The decisions adopted by the QA group will be submitted to the Council for approval in a future meeting.

The Council takes note of this.

### 2. Approval of Minutes No. 2 of 10.09.2025

The Coordinator reminded attendees that the draft of the minutes of Meeting No. 2 held on 10.09.2025, prepared in both Italian and English, was circulated to all members of the Board on 9 November 2025. The minutes, in both language versions, were unanimously approved.

### 3. Change in the composition of the QA Group

The Coordinator stated that, following the resignation of Prof. Agostino Sorgonà from the PhD Quality Assurance (QA) group, as reported under Communications, it is necessary to revise the composition of the QA group originally appointed by the Academic Board during Meeting No. 1 on 16.07.2025 (XLI cycle). A brief discussion follows, during which Dr. Giuseppe Badagliacca's availability emerges.

Considering that the previously appointed members have confirmed their willingness to continue serving, the following composition is proposed:

- Prof. Leonardo Schena (PhD Coordinator)
- Prof. Manuel Scerra (Deputy Coordinator)
- Dott. Giuseppe Badagliacca (Member of the Academic Board)
- Dr. Giulio Scarpino (PhD Candidate Representative)
- Dr. Simone Santacaterina (Technical-Administrative Staff Representative)

Following a brief discussion, the Academic Board approved unanimously.

#### **4. Assignment of scholarship types to PhD candidates admitted to the XLI cycle**

The Coordinator reported that, pursuant to Rectoral Decree (D.R.) No. 381/2025, the acts of the competitive selection for admission to the three-year PhD program in “Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences” (XLI cycle) were approved, for a total of 5 positions, 4 of which with scholarship support, including 1 position primarily reserved for international candidates. All admitted PhD candidates formally commenced their activities on 03.11.2025 (Protocol No. 41705 of 06.11.2025). As specified in Annex A, Sheet 5, of the Call issued by D.R. No. 243 of 30.06.2025, the scholarships are funded partly by University funds (2 scholarships) and partly by Territorial Pacts funds (2 scholarships), although the research topic is the same for all positions (*themes coherent with the EU strategies Farm to Fork, Green Deal and/or One Health*). The Coordinator further explained that, for accounting purposes, the administrative offices require that each available scholarship type (University funds and Territorial Pacts funds) be formally assigned to the successful candidates. The Council to adopt, as allocation criterion, the ranking order under which the candidates were admitted to the PhD program, taking into account the two separate merit lists (Italian and international applicants) as defined in the Call and formalized in D.R. No. 381/2025. In accordance with this criterion, the Council unanimously resolves, to assign the two University-funded scholarships to Dr Elisabetta EMO (ranked 1st in the Italian applicants’ merit list), and Dr Marh M.M. ABU KHMAISH (ranked 1st in the international applicants’ merit list for reserved positions pursuant to Art. 24(8) of the University PhD Regulations, issued by D.R. No. 454 of 09.12.2022). The two scholarships funded under the Territorial Pacts are to be assigned to PhD candidates Paolo FORTUGNO and Annalisa ALIQUÒ, who ranked respectively second and third in the merit list for Italian applicants.

This item was read and approved immediately.

#### **5. Allocation of co-funding provided under the Agreement with CIHEAM Bari**

The Coordinator brought to the attention of the Board the Agreement signed with the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies – CIHEAM Bari, approved by the Academic Senate on 23.07.2025, providing co-funding for one PhD scholarship in Agricultural, Food and Forestry Sciences (XLI cycle), for a total amount of €18,000.00 (eighteen thousand/00) over three years. The Coordinator further noted that, for administrative accounting purposes, the relevant offices requested that the co-funding provided under the agreement be formally attributed to one of the four scholarship holders admitted to the PhD program (D.R. No. 381/2025). The Council, considering that the research project submitted during the selection process by Dr Marh M.M. ABU KHMAISH shows the strongest alignment with the research topic proposed by CIHEAM Bari (“Characterization, detection and control strategies of anthracnose disease of olive and nuts”), resolves to allocate the CIHEAM co-funding contribution to her scholarship.

This item was read and approved immediately.

#### **6. Appointment of Supervisors (Tutors)**

The Coordinator highlighted the need to appoint supervisors (tutors) for PhD candidates of the XLI cycle, recalling that, in accordance with the University Regulations governing PhD programmes (Art. 5, paragraph 4, letter e), the Council shall “*assign to each PhD candidate, within the first year of enrolment, a tutor selected from among the members of the Board, acting as academic supervisor, to oversee training and research activities, and to conduct annual monitoring and evaluation, including verification of attendance.*”

Following thorough discussion, and considering both the research proposals submitted during the selection process and the availability expressed by Board members, the following Tutor assignments were made:

- Dr Marh M.M. ABU KHMAISH – Supervisor: Prof. Leonardo Schena, Full Professor, SSD AGRI 05/B
- Dr Annalisa ALIQUÒ – Supervisor: Dott. Salvatore Praticò, RTDB, SSD AGRI 04/C
- Dr Elisabetta EMO – Supervisor: Prof. Pasquale Marziliano, Associate Professor, SSD AGRI 03/B
- Dr Paolo FORTUGNO – Supervisor: Prof. Manuel Scerra, Associate Professor, SSD AGRI 09/B
- Dr Vincenzo PATERA – Supervisor: Prof. Giuseppe Bombino, Associate Professor, SSD AGRI 04/A

The Academic Board approved unanimously.



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Since there are no other topics for discussion and having dealt with all the items on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

The Coordinator  
Prof. Leonardo SCHENA

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The Secretary  
Prof. Manuel Scerra

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