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Guidelines for awarding Doctoral Credits (DCs) for training and research

Table A – Distribution of DCs between research and training

Type of activity	Total number of DCs	%
Research activities	144	80
Training activities	36	20
Total	180	100

Table B – Requirements for DC distribution between training activities

Type of activity	Minimum number of DCs	Maximum number of DCs (optional)
Disciplinary and multidisciplinary training	4	
Soft skills	1	
Extra-curricular training	1	
Dissemination	1	
Supplementary teaching and tutoring	4	

Table C – Training DCs to be acquired at the end of each course year

Training DCs to be acquired	Recommended	Minimum (optional)
at the end of the 1st year	12	
at the end of the 2nd year	24	
at the end of the 3rd year	36	

Table D – Correspondence between workload hours and acquired DCs

Type of activity	Hours in class	Self-study hours	Total hours	DCs
Courses (disciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching)	7	18	25	1
Soft-skills courses	15	10	25	1
Laboratory courses	7	18	25	1
Seminars that require self-study	7	18	25	1

Type of activity	Hours in class	Self-study hours	Total hours	DCs
Seminars that do not require self-study	25	0	25	1
Supplementary teaching and tutoring	7	18	25	1
Extra-curricular training	1 day			0,4
Dissemination	1 day			0,4

TABLE A

Doctoral Credits (DCs) measure the **workload** that the Doctoral student is required to invest in **research and research training** activities to obtain the Doctoral degree. As far as research training is concerned, a DC is equivalent to a European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credit. Doctoral students must complete **60 DCs per year**, corresponding to **1,500 hours of activity**; **each DC is worth 25 hours of the doctoral student's commitment (including both frontal teaching and independent study).** Each course divides the total number of DCs (180 DCs for three-year courses, 240 DCs for four-year courses) between research activities and research training activities. The research activity must be **between 65% and 80% of the total**.

Example*:*

Table A – Distribution of DCs between research, research training and teaching

Type of activity	Total number of DCs	%
Research activities	140	78
Research training and teaching activities	40	22
Total	180	100

TABLE B

The Course establishes the **minimum DC value** to be achieved for each of the following activities:

a) **disciplinary and multidisciplinary training**: this is training on specific topics related to the research project, also in relation to aspects of relevant scientific and technological achievements, but also to more general topics (multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary), aimed at filling the training gaps of interest for all the scientific domains included in the PhD programme and/or in its Curricula;

b) **training related to soft skills**: research valorisation (e.g. technology transfer, entrepreneurship, innovation management, etc.); methods, techniques and tools for research management (e.g.

bibliographic sources, data management, publishing policies and practices, open science, etc.); dissemination and communication of research activity (e.g. skills for writing articles and giving scientific presentations, written/oral/visual communication techniques, advanced study of foreign languages, etc.); impact of scientific research on society and sustainable development; knowledge of European and international research systems, with their mechanisms for access to competitive funding; job orientation and career planning; training in teaching; basic principles of ethics, gender equality and integrity; etc.

c) **extra-curricular training**: this guarantees and stimulates the growth of doctoral students as members of a scientific community, e.g. through participation in national and international training schools (summer schools, winter schools, etc.), or formative moments of exchange/presentation of research results (PhD symposia, etc.)

d) **dissemination**: this refers to the participation of PhD students in congresses, conferences, workshops, etc. as speakers or poster presenters;

e) **supplementary teaching and tutoring**: the PhD course may allow and encourage the participation of PhD students in supplementary teaching and tutoring activities within the limits of consistency and compatibility with the research activities carried out.

The activities relating to points a) and b), concerning disciplinary, multidisciplinary and transversal training, constitute the so-called **curricular training.** This training may be organized by the individual Courses/Departments or by the University. Curricular training activities may be borrowed from similar activities already available in the University's portfolio of degree programmes. Nonetheless, **curricular activities specifically designed for the PhD programme must be envisaged, which differ from the cycle I and II didactics** (the Ministerial Decree 301 of 22.03.2022, containing the Guidelines for the accreditation of PhD programmes, requires an average annual number of at least 20 hours per cycle), also for the use of specific PhD methodologies, such as seminar cycles, scientific events, exchange/presentation events of research results, etc.

The **minimum DC value** to be achieved for each of the activities **under points a), b), c) and d) cannot be zero**. The Course may instead choose a minimum value of zero for supplementary teaching and tutoring (point e).

The Course may also indicate minimum values for subclasses of activities (e.g. within the class ‘disciplinary and multidisciplinary training’, it may indicate minimum values for disciplinary courses, multidisciplinary courses, seminars, workshops, etc.).

The course is also free to indicate the **maximum DC value** to be achieved for each activity.

Example:

Table B – Requirements for distribution of DCs among various research training and teaching activities.

Type of activity	Minimum number of DCs	Maximum number of DCs (optional)
Disciplinary and multidisciplinary training:	8	-
- disciplinary and multidisciplinary courses	5	
- seminars	3	
Soft skills	4	-
Extra-curricular training	2	-
Dissemination	3	-
Supplementary teaching and tutoring	3	-

TABLE C

The Course establishes the **recommended number of DCs** to be acquired for training activities in each year of the course, to ensure a balanced performance of these activities with respect to research activities. A doctoral student who obtains a lower number of DCs with respect to the expected annual amount will carry over his/her DC debt to the following year. The Course may establish, for each year of the course, a **minimum number of DCs** below which the Doctoral student is excluded from the Doctorate. The Course may also establish minimum DC values to be acquired for each type of activity for each year of attendance**.**

Example:

Table C – Training DCs to be acquired at the end of each course year

DCs for research and teaching training to be acquired	Recommended	Minimum (optional)
At the end of the 1st year	15	7,5
At the end of the 2nd year	30	15
At the end of the 3rd year	40	40
At the end of the 4th year	-	-

TABLE D

The number of DCs to be attributed to curricular training activities is calculated by adding the presumed self-study effort to the lecture hours.

The Course establishes its **own general criteria** for determining the number of DCs to be allocated for extra-curricular training and dissemination activities. However, it is recommended that **each day** of attendance at a conference or a summer school be considered equivalent to **8h÷12h**, also counting transport time.

For supplementary teaching and tutoring activities, reference is made to the number of hours stipulated in the corresponding contract multiplied by a factor that considers the preparation effort. As a term of reference, it can be assumed that preparation time is comparable to the learners' self-study time, so it is reasonable that the ratio between DCs and actual hours of supplementary teaching or tutoring may be similar to the ratio between CFUs and lecture hours, for a given subject area. However, the course is free to make different assessments.

In any case, it is always possible for individual activities to provide their own specific distribution of the doctoral student's commitment between classroom hours and self-study hours. It follows that **if the activity (carried out at the University of Bologna or elsewhere) provides for the formal award of a certain number of ECTS credits, 1 ECTS credit is equivalent to the acquisition of 1 DC.**

If the activity is limited to the **mere attendance of an event** (e.g. a seminar), without the provision of a specific additional autonomous study commitment, **25h of activity necessarily corresponds to 1 DC**.

Example:

Table D – Correspondence between workload hours and acquired DCs

Type of activity	Hours in class	Self-study hours	Total hours	DCs
Courses (disciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching)	8	17	25	1
Soft-skills courses	15	10	25	1
Seminars that require self-study	15	10	25	1
Seminars that do not require self-study	25	0	25	1
Supplementary teaching and tutoring	8	17	25	1
Extra-curricular training	1 day			0,4
Dissemination	1 day			0,4

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Doctoral students, in agreement with their supervisors and co-supervisors, **flexibly define their specific training and research pathways**, choosing the activities to be carried out, in terms of type and quantity, in compliance with the minimum and maximum constraints established by the Academic Board for each activity and year of the course.

Doctoral students may acquire DCs for activities carried out **both at the University of Bologna and elsewhere**.

Periods spent at bodies other than the University determine the achievement of DCs **depending on the type of activity** carried out at such bodies (research, disciplinary training, interdisciplinary training, etc.). The Course may decide whether to include time constraints for periods of training and research outside the University.

The acquisition of DCs is verified during the Academic Board meeting deciding the **transition to the following year**, with rules and procedures established by each Course. Doctoral students who, at the end of their doctoral course, have acquired a number of DCs for training and teaching purposes in excess of the number indicated in Table A, will have these DCs recognized in excess of the theoretical 180/240. However, the Board is called upon to monitor that no imbalance occurs that hinders the doctoral students' research activity.

The Academic Board may request the acquisition of additional DCs from individual doctoral students if the acquisition of such credits is necessary to complete the preparation in fields essential for their research projects.

The allocation of **DCs for research activities** is based on an examination of the research activity carried out and the results achieved (in particular, the research products included in the University's Publication Catalogue), taking into consideration the opinion of the supervisor and co-supervisors. DCs for research activities (specified in Table A) are formally awarded upon admission to the final examination.

To verify the soundness of what is reported in Tables A, B, C and D, it is recommended that the Course proposes a scenario of appropriate acquisition of DCs for a typical PhD student.