

Meeting start time: 30 September 2026, 11:52 GMT+2

Transcript

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Look, that's perfect as it is.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, I think we'll get started then.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: OK.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, I can see the presentation, yes, because I'm going to lose sight of you all in a moment.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Right, first of all, I'd like to say hello to you all and thank you for joining us because, well, for us here at the school, this is such an important moment and, well,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: I think it is also important that all of you involved in the doctoral programme - and you play a vital role, as thesis supervisors - are kept up to date with what is being done, whether or not it applies to you

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: directly because you have a PhD student - a PhD student who is due to submit their thesis next week - well, as if it weren't quite so imminent, but obviously it's going to affect you at one point or another.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Right then, well, before we start - this will basically be covered in the presentation - well, representing the school, I'm here, um, in case anyone doesn't know me, Bacerezo, the director of the school, and Santiago, who is the executive secretary,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: who'll be in charge of recording and then making the material available to you.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And then there's, er, Manuela, right? I'd forgotten about her - she's actually the one who's going to provide you with all the specific training on Sigma, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: because she's the head of department at the school; she's the one who's been overseeing this whole process and, well, she's the one delivering the training for the different roles.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Er, I wanted to take a moment to give you a slightly broader picture, put Sigma into context a bit, and tell you about some important changes that are taking place - and, well, I think it's essential that you're aware of them.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Those of you who are also coordinators will already know this, but the rest of you might not.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And it's important - so I'll take this opportunity to mention a few things before we dive straight into the Sigma section.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, I'm not sure if you're all up to speed or if you're aware, but over the course of the last academic year - and particularly in the second term - we've carried out a review of all the doctoral school's regulations.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, here's a table, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: But basically, everything has been reviewed, from the internal regulations to the regulations governing doctoral theses, and the procedures for the recognition of equivalent qualifications - everything.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, why has this been done?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, on the one hand, because in July 2023 there had already been significant changes to the doctoral programme - for example, the introduction of external reports for theses and a few other changes which, well, had been implemented through some rather hasty agreements,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: but that wasn't actually incorporated into our regulations.

Luis F. de Diego Poza: Why not

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: On another note, as you are aware, the statutes of the University of Zaragoza were approved,

Luis F. de Diego Poza: Pardon?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: which also entailed a series of changes within the school.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And then, well, the whole thesis process - precisely because of the issue with the informants, eh - well, its implementation meant that the timeframes have been significantly extended, from what we used to call the submission or pre-submission right up to the defence; so it was a priority for the

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: to try to streamline and shorten those timeframes, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And that's part of the reason for the review as well, and for the introduction of Sigma, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, simply to say that it's a relevant issue because it has many implications is that the statutes recognise the doctoral school as another centre within the University of Zaragoza, just like the Faculty of Education or the School of Engineering,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: isn't that right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: With members of which you are also a part - the directors, together with the management team and a series of committees - is that correct?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Which is what I've set out here.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, the most significant change, because, well, apart from the fact that I'll now be showing the management team - which includes a few more of us - it still works in the same way

the whole area of doctoral programmes, including their coordinators, academic committee and administrative headquarters,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: but then what had always been the doctoral committee has disappeared, and, so to speak, its successor is the quality assurance committee, which carries out some of the tasks previously performed by the doctoral committee and, above all, is responsible for the entire

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: quality.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: You'll see that there's also a quality committee.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Ah, you'll also see that the management team is now focusing on many quality-related issues, because one of the objectives we've set ourselves is to obtain institutional accreditation for the school as a centre.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: So, we've already undergone an internal audit before the summer, which went very well, and the deadline we're now working to is 15 November, by which time we want to have everything sent to Púa in order to secure accreditation.

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INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: That, amongst other things, will also make the work involved in programme renewal and so on considerably easier.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, well, the Quality Assurance Committee - as I was saying - will now take over certain matters, such as the recognition of research experience previously handled by the Doctoral Committee; these, along with many other procedures previously carried out by the Doctoral Committee, will now be handled

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: to the Standing Committee of the Management Board,

Manuela Harto Martínez: No.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: which is, in a way, the committee that deals with all the school's more administrative matters, so to speak.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I'd also like to mention - because this can lead to some confusion - that, although the Standing Committee officially meets once a month, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, just like the Quality Assurance Committee, that doesn't mean everything comes to a standstill until the Standing Committee meets.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: everything relating to the approval of examination boards and a whole host of other matters concerning leave of absence - for example, temporary leave - all goes through the standing committee.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: If there are no issues, they'll be signed off, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I'll sign them off, I'll process them, and only those that raise doubts or require further action will go to the standing committee, as

the committee issues a statement setting out guidelines, or well, if there are further details in Jundia, then these are either requested or made available to the entire standing committee and debated

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: at the meeting we hold every month.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, I'll take this opportunity - as I don't often get the chance to speak to you - to introduce the management team to you, all right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So there's me, and the deputy directors are Luis Casaló, who is specifically in charge of all matters relating to quality.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: There's an assistant director for quality, María Fernández, who's also helping him with all aspects of institutional accreditation.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: And then there's Marta Aro, who is the deputy director in charge of all international matters relating to joint supervision - for example, if any of you are involved in that - as well as training and all cross-disciplinary aspects; and the programme secretary, Cristina Sánchez,

JUAN CARLOS BUSTAMANTE: Yeah.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: whether it's for certificates or many other matters, at some point you'll need to get in touch with us - and well, here we are, and of course we're at your disposal for whatever you need.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: On the administrative side, a few months ago - last academic year - there was a change, and we now have Belina as our administrator. You may well know her, as she has worked in various departments at the University of Zaragoza, in other roles as well.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, as for the premises, I'd also like to take this opportunity to mention that some time ago - this is almost going to be our second academic year - we moved from where we were in the old rector's office at the Inter, so to speak, to the building next door, and we're now in a block dedicated entirely to the doctoral programme,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: which is next to the athletics tracks, right at the very back, accessed via the entrance on San Juan Bosco, and just behind what used to be the old Faculty of Education.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: So, that's where the whole administrative section is, and well, I'm there quite a lot too.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, there have been quite a few changes.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: I wanted to give you a brief overview of the most significant changes that may affect you in your day-to-day work as doctoral programme directors.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, just to say that as all the regulations have changed, all the forms are changing too.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: So, we have already made a point of reminding doctoral students on numerous occasions to please visit the website, both to view the applicable regulations and to access the form they need to use, as all of these have been or are currently being updated.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, on the website there's a section - a regulations menu - where all the national regulations are listed first, because, as you know, doctoral programmes are actually regulated by royal decrees, but then there are all the applicable regulations that we've drawn up here at the school,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: including agreements reached by the committees which are then implemented.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, if you're in any doubt, the website isn't exactly the most attractive, but we do try to ensure that all the information is there and up to date.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, as I was saying, I'll go through it - you'll see that there's a section down here where it actually says where it is.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, for example, the placements.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: Previously, you had to apply for, er, authorisation for any stay; that is no longer the case.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Right, so now you only need to apply for permission for the stay before you leave in the case of an international placement, is that correct?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: What's more, whereas previously it went through the doctoral school, now the academic committee of the doctoral programme authorises them directly.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Is that clear?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: So that's the same as before, but now it only applies to the 'international' specialisation.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: It's very important to apply in advance because it has to be validated; well, there are a number of conditions regarding the institution you're going to.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: It is therefore important that this is authorised before the placement begins, as this also ensures that no problems will arise when applying for the international designation on the degree.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: The request is also submitted in the case of VIP courses.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The VIPs are blended intensive programmes; these are courses currently being organised in collaboration with UNITA, as part of the UNITA alliance, which involve travel.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: They usually last 5 days at the host university, and so, well, authorisation is also required from the academic committee because, as this is funded through Erasmus, there is a requirement for it to be included in the activity report,

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INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Is that correct?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: But we only accept research placements that are internationally recognised, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: As I was saying, it's important because, well, they're checked.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, it's important that, when it comes to sending your doctoral students, you're aware, aren't you, that, well, it has to be an institution - it doesn't necessarily have to be a university; it can be a prestigious research centre,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, of course, it has to be a research centre.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In the case of companies, well of course, it has to be a company that also has a, shall we say, research component.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In other words, if you have any doubts, please consult the academic committee before sending anyone; the committee, in turn, if it has any doubts, will consult the doctoral school to ensure that there won't be any problems with this later on.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Of course, in certain very exceptional cases, placements cannot be carried out at institutions in the doctoral candidate's country of origin, residence or employment.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: So, please bear this in mind as well, because otherwise it may later cause problems with regard to the placement being recognised for the international specialisation.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Regarding the submission of theses - which is, in fact, the main topic of our discussion today - apart from the provisions set out in the thesis regulations, there is a procedure for submission, authorisation and defence that has also been amended,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: it has been completely revised, and if you are going to be involved in this process, I would encourage you to consult it.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I'll speak now, and I know that Manuela will also highlight what has changed compared to how things were done previously, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, um, all theses submitted from 1 September onwards have already been processed in accordance with the new regulations.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, the proposal for the examination board, in which you'll also be involved, will be drawn up at the very beginning.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, what we used to call 'pre-submission', we now call 'submission for processing' because the term 'pre-submission' was causing some confusion.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, when a doctoral candidate submits their application for processing and this is subsequently approved by the academic committee, the academic committee will also approve the proposed examination board at that time.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And now I'll say something specific about that.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: That is a significant change.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: External reports will still be required.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: You will still be asked to provide a list; the academic committee may then amend it, and the difference is that the reports will be managed directly from the doctoral programme's centres.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: No, it will still be centralised through the school.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: which we hope will, in turn, streamline the process.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The public review period has been reduced from 10 days to 5 days; the deadline for authorising the defence has also been halved - previously, there were 30 days following the end of the public review period,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: has now been reduced to 15 days - the deadline has also been halved.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: We've had some additional support because, as well as Sigma joining us, we've taken on two new staff members who have just joined the doctoral school and who, well, are also working alongside us to try and manage the work

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: ...that is being carried out.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Just to give you an idea, over 300 theses are submitted each year, OK? And right now for example, in September, the thesis office told us they're processing 70 theses, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: since we came back from the summer break.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, as I was saying, one very important change - which we hope will help speed up this submission process - is that it will be carried out in parallel with the external reports; as you know, reviewers are given a month,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: and, er, the review by the, er, examination board.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: In other words, as soon as the thesis is accepted for processing, the centre will begin the necessary procedures, request external reports and send the proposed examination board to the school, where we will review it to ensure that it meets all the requirements for the examination board; if it does not,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: to raise awareness so that any problems that may arise in the examination board whilst the external assessors are carrying out their work can be rectified.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: With regard to the request for external reports - which you are also asked to provide, aren't you? - an initial list of individuals is required; it is true that the academic committee may then, er, amend this if it deems it appropriate, but it is very important,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: as these will now also be carried out from our own premises, we need to be sure that these reports will subsequently be valid - in other words, that the external assessors

meet the requirements, because, of course, as the entire doctoral programme will only come to us at the very end of the process,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: so it is important that the reports are valid and that we do not have to request them again.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, what is important to bear in mind when drawing up a list of external reviewers?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Of course, they must be external; they must not have any links with the University of Zaragoza.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In the case of a thesis under an international agreement, of course, they cannot be from Spanish universities, nor can they be from the same institution.

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INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: I'm focusing on those things which, shall we say, tend to cause the most problems, and of course there can be no co-authorship, can there?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Director: In the articles the doctoral student is writing.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: The female PhD student - there must not have been any co-authorship with any of these people, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: So it is important that all informants comply, and that you set out these conditions so as not to delay the whole process later on because we have to request an additional report from someone else.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Regarding the proposal for the examination board - which is, of course, the responsibility of the academic committees, but for which the thesis supervisors are also consulted - there are important factors that you should bear in mind when proposing candidates for these

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: examination boards.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The school wanted to make it compulsory.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In the end, we didn't include it - well, because it became clear to us that this could cause problems - but we strongly recommend that the secretary of the examination board be from UNIZAR.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, it's true that the regulations allow it, but in our experience, as soon as any sort of problem or issue arises, it causes a considerable delay in the whole process.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: So, please try to ensure they are from the University of Zaragoza.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Then there's the proposal for gender parity.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: That means that, as our panels currently consist of three members, at least one must be a woman, or a man if the opposite is the case.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: That is required by the Royal Decree, so it cannot be bypassed under any circumstances.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, let's do it this way right from the start, because otherwise it will slow everything down.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Furthermore, of course, it must be borne in mind that this requirement must be met, as well as the requirement that there be, for example, a foreign national on the panel - not only amongst the, shall we say, proposed full members, but also amongst the alternates, who must be selected in such a way that it is possible to,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: if there is a vacancy - for example, if the position is left unfilled, or if a woman is appointed to the panel - then there must be at least one woman amongst the alternates; otherwise, if the person initially proposed is unable to take up the post, the panel will be dissolved.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: The same applies to a foreign national; there must be a foreign national amongst the substitutes.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: So, have a quick look at which first-team players and which substitutes you're fielding to consider whether the substitutes need to come on, whilst ensuring that all the examination board's requirements continue to be met.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, you know that up until now, in order to be part of the examination boards - because that's what the Royal Decree stipulates - everyone had to have their research experience recognised, and that was a process which also took time and used to go through the doctoral committee, but now it's going to go through the

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: the successor to the Quality Assurance Committee for Doctoral Studies.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, there's some important news.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: There has been a resolution, dated 9 July, from the school's management committee introducing significant changes.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Firstly, it restricts who can apply for recognition of research experience.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So there are now some additional requirements.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: To begin with, you need to have, say, two years' experience as a doctor, for example.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And, er, but as well as restricting it, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: so that those who are actually eligible for a six-year term can apply for that rather than for recognition.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Equivalent criteria have been defined solely for participation on the examination board.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, does this primarily address, or is it intended to prevent, the problems that arose with the participation of foreign members in tribunals, where they were required to undergo an assessment, and where, moreover, measures or standards were often applied to them that bear no relation to those that might apply in other

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: countries outside Spain.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: So, as things stand at the moment, if you can prove that you have supervised two doctoral theses at any university, right?, then you do not need to apply for recognition of research experience.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: When the proposal for the examination board is submitted, you will need to attach some form of evidence that you have already supervised two doctoral theses, and on that basis you will not need to apply for recognition of research experience.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Otherwise, the criteria for recognition remain the same, as does the application process.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And what we do say is that if you wish to apply for accreditation for a member of the examination board, you should obviously do so as soon as possible.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Administration: It can even be before you've started the application process or just as your application is being processed, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Because it does take some time.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, as you know, we have a 'compendium' thesis format, so there have been changes not only to the thesis regulations but also a new agreement from July regarding the criteria for authorising theses in the 'compendium' format.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, if you're supervising any theses in that format, I'd encourage you to read that agreement carefully.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The general requirements remain unchanged.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Four publications on a specific subject area are still required, three of which must be JCR-indexed.

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INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In principle, that hasn't changed.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: What is changing?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, the application must include a narrative - a narrative that discusses, doesn't it, the thematic coherence of the articles and clarifies certain aspects that will subsequently be assessed.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: For example, what else will be taken into account from now on?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, we're going to check that the journals' peer-review processes are verifiable, that there have been no editorial conflicts of interest, and that there have been no instances of poor publishing practice involving the same content being published,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: for example, well, in several of the publications, aren't they? That they are practically identical, or that there is multi-authorship that is not sufficiently justified.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Administration: this is specifically for cases where there may be something that could raise doubts for the committee; that is what the narrative is for - so that the doctoral candidate can explain, for example, what their role was in the case of co-authorship, or why they have chosen a particular journal in a

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: a particular moment, and so on.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Furthermore, the compendium is to be reviewed; the Standing Committee, which is now responsible for this, will review the compendium before requesting reports and proceeding with the entire process.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In other words, when a thesis is submitted for inclusion in the compendium of publications - once it has been accepted for processing - everything is put on hold; the standing committee is asked for its approval; if it agrees, the compendium is approved, and if so,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: well, then the process will continue as it would for any other thesis, with the request for reports and everything else.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Administration: Another thing that has changed - and I'll wrap this up here - is the issue of thesis defences via videoconference, because previously you had to request it as soon as one of the members of the examination board was going to join online, whereas now you simply have to request it - and, in fact, it is the doctoral candidate who must make the request,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: When a doctoral candidate submits their application for admission, this is done when they anticipate that they will not be present; in other words, it is the doctoral candidate who will be present at the ceremony.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: This is considered an exceptional circumstance, and the academic committee must grant authorisation for it.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In all other cases, if just one member of the examination board is going to join the meeting online, there is no need to seek authorisation from the doctoral school.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, finally, I should mention that the regulations on special awards have also changed, but that is the only change that will actually come into force for the next academic year, isn't it?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Actually, the process is already underway; the old regulations are being applied, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: But as regards the theses to be examined this academic year, the new regulations on special awards are now in force, which, shall we say, also bring about some changes to the way theses are assessed by the committees.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And, well, if that is the case, I would also encourage you to read the new regulations on special awards when the time comes.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: And that's something I'm really good at - well, I've already told you a bit about all the changes that are taking place, which I think are important. Well, it's good for you to be aware of them, or at least to know that things are changing, and as I say,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: If you're in any doubt, why not check the new regulations, or get in touch with us - the team - if you have any queries?

Manuela Harto Martínez: Ah.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, I'm now going to hand over to Manuela.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Harto, who's going to talk to you specifically about Sigma, will explain that the Sigma thesis module is something that had already been developed and is, in fact, being used at other universities, but was missing here,

María Carmen Peña Ardid: Ha.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Let's say, well, a bit of fine-tuning and adapting it to our university, and that's what's been done over the last few months.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: She'll give you the details.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: What we are aiming to do with this module is to digitise the entire process, thereby streamlining it and ensuring it is transparent, because a constant complaint from doctoral students was not only that the process was very long, but also that, from the moment they submitted their pre-submission, they entered a sort of 'black box' where they were not quite sure

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: where was the thesis; was it still at the main campus; were external reports pending; was it awaiting action from the standing committee?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, well, our idea is also that this will go a long way towards ensuring greater transparency throughout the whole process, as we'll all be able to see where we are at any given moment, from the moment an application is accepted for processing right through to the defence.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And on that note, I'll stop there and hand over to Manuela, who will go on to explain in more detail all the specific aspects of Sigma.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: I've stopped sharing, Manuela.

00:25:00

Manuela Harto Martínez: Good morning, everyone.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Er, well, I'm Manuela Harto Martínez, the head of section at the doctoral school and the person who has been responsible for fine-tuning this Sigma module.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We've adapted everything to suit our circumstances.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, let's have a look at how this doctoral thesis process is managed.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Er, we've set up this account to deal with queries, issues and enquiries, OK?

Manuela Harto Martínez: I'll be handling these myself, eh, sigma.

Manuela Harto Martínez: PhD.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Er,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The presentation will be made available to you,

Manuela Harto Martínez: to

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: after the talk.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, let's take a look at the general procedure for submitting doctoral theses.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We'll look at the processes strictly within SIGMA.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We'll then move on to look at how a PhD student - who will be the first party involved - creates the application for processing.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Next, under point four, validation by the director.

Manuela Harto Martínez: In point five, we'll look at the basics of validation by the administrative headquarters, and here we'll see the submission of external reports and the proposal for the examination board.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And finally, in the last point, we'll look at the documentation processed outside SIGMA.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Here we can see the general procedure.

Manuela Harto Martínez: thesis repository.

Manuela Harto Martínez: In grey, we've highlighted the processes carried out within Sigma, and in orange those that take place externally.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, it all starts with the PhD student's online application; they complete it and finally click the 'submit' button, after which it moves on to the next person involved, who is the supervisor, who will, of course, have to validate it,

Manuela Harto Martínez: We'll also upload the report and, er, the proposal for external examiners.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And next would be the administrative headquarters of the PhD programme.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And this is where the programme's academic committee issues its first resolution.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This resolution approves the acceptance of the case for consideration, the external examiners and the proposed examination board, and sets a deadline of 15 working days from the date of the student's application.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The process then continues within Sigma: the administrative office enters the informants into the system and requests the external reports from them; these informants have five days to withdraw from the process.

Manuela Harto Martínez: assessors have 30 days to produce the report and upload it to the application here.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Next, based on the reports, the programme's academic committee either approves the submission or requests a response to the issues raised by the examiners, or may also request amendments to the

Manuela Harto Martínez: thesis.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And once this has been rectified and the final submission has been approved, the application would be forwarded to the doctoral school where the validation takes place and, if everything is in order, we would begin a five-working-day public consultation period, which, as the director has said,

Manuela Harto Martínez: has been reduced by exactly half.

Manuela Harto Martínez: After that, the process then continues outside Sigma.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Authorisation would be granted to the defence.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This is approved by the Standing Committee, and there is a period of 15 working days from the end of the public consultation for this.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This point is also very important because the deadline has been halved, and thereafter the procedures will be carried out as they have been up to now; that is to say, the summons will be issued by the chair of the tribunal,

Manuela Harto Martínez: the notification to the defence by the clerk, and then we at the school will handle all the documentation, the minutes and so on.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This is the flowchart of the processes in Sigma; in other words, the application goes through various stages, which are shown here.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It all starts with the incomplete application in the blue box at the top left, whilst the student is filling it in.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, whilst they're filling it in, there are three possibilities.

Manuela Harto Martínez: They might be filling it in but fail to click 'Submit'.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, if you don't submit it within two months, Sigma will consider it to have lapsed; you can also withdraw it at any time and resubmit it whenever you like.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And if you go ahead and submit the application, it would move on to the next person involved, which is the director.

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Manuela Harto Martínez: When the director arrives, the first time they do so they will be in 'incomplete director' status; they will upload the report, validate everything and, once submitted, it will be forwarded to the administrative headquarters.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The status is 'VA'; it is then passed to the coordinator, and the status becomes 'CO',

MARÍA PALMIRA VÉLEZ JIMÉNEZ: M.

Manuela Harto Martínez: then to the doctoral school.

Manuela Harto Martínez: When the school is reviewing it, the status is 'ED', and once everything is in order, it will change to 'OK'; we would then begin the presentation and it would be ready for the defence.

Manuela Harto Martínez: However, the application could be returned from any of these blue statuses; if any documents are missing or if there is anything that needs rectifying, it can be sent back to the previous parties involved.

Manuela Harto Martínez: For example, the coordinator might return the application to the PhD student; it would then be in SR status, and once the student has rectified the issue, it would re-enter the validation process, which will always follow the same sequence, that is to say,

Manuela Harto Martínez: it will move from the PhD student to the supervisor, so the status will be 'R' (returned by supervisor), then it will go through the 'VR' stage and finally to the coordinator ('CR').

Manuela Harto Martínez: The PhD student has a link to access the system, which we've provided on the website alongside the Sigma manuals.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, you log in using your PIN and password and are taken to this first home screen, which displays your personal details and the name of the programme.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, across all the screens, there are a series of blue boxes with information on everything they need to do or where

María Carmen Peña Ardid: Right.

Manuela Harto Martínez: you need to look up, for example, the documents you need to provide.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, on this home screen, what you need to do is click on the 'Create application' button, and you'll be taken to - or rather, a series of screen buttons will appear, as shown here - specifically, personal details,

Manuela Harto Martínez: thesis details, Zahuanteso, attach documentation, another one to attach the thesis and to confirm the application - we'll look at them all because we'll be going through all the profiles and viewing these screens.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, the first one is the personal details form; you need to check everything.

Manuela Harto Martínez: If there is anything you cannot change, you must contact the doctoral school to ensure everything is recorded correctly; then, by clicking the 'Create application' button, you will be taken to the remaining screens.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, the next one - the one with button two - is the thesis details section, which contains a whole host of tabs with the title, research areas, supervisor and tutor, honours, and activities.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, when you click on each of the tabs, the information is displayed, but we also have a button here to expand or collapse everything.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This is very useful.

Manuela Harto Martínez: I use it a lot because it's very easy to overlook or fail to check some of the tabs.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, the first one is for the thesis title.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Here's a box to enter the title.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Next is the one for the language and the number of lines - the language in which it's written, right?

Manuela Harto Martínez: What you need to specify here is the main language; that will then appear here, next to the thesis title, and you can also specify other languages.

Manuela Harto Martínez: In this case, if the thesis is written in French, the other language will be Spanish, as it will have a summary and conclusions in Spanish.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Next, tabs four and five are displayed, showing the supervisor's details and the thesis address. We have already advised students to check these; in other words, if any of the details are incorrect,

Manuela Harto Martínez: they must contact the doctoral school so that we can amend it in Sigma.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then we have the 'mention' tabs here, including the 'international mention' tab.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The programme checks whether the student meets the requirements to apply for the distinction.

Manuela Harto Martínez: In other words, if the student has activities listed in their activities document that are relevant - that are tagged as 'international distinction' in this case.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So it asks them whether they want to apply for the specialisation, yes or no, and if they say yes, this table appears showing the activities from their activity record that are related to the specialisation.

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Manuela Harto Martínez: It shows the university, the start and end dates and the number of days; in other words, the application calculates the number of days required for this specialisation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: What's more, there's also a box on this tab for attaching documents.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, let's ask the PhD students to attach documents that will help us manage this specialisation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We already know that the certificate of stay, for example, is included in the DAT – the PhD student's activity report – but at the moment the application cannot retrieve the document and bring it here.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, specifically for this award, we are going to ask you to attach the application for authorisation of the stay, approved by the programme's academic committee prior to the stay.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The certificate of attendance must be a certificate containing all the relevant details, of course, including the institution's logo and signature, the start and end dates, the duration of the stay, the activities and, most importantly, the full name of the person responsible for the stay

Manuela Harto Martínez: at the reception centre.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And a third document we are requesting – this is a new requirement introduced by the recent regulatory changes – is a certificate signed by the director confirming that the activities have been carried out and that the established plan has been complied with.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So we have introduced a new form.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, we've changed almost all the forms; I'll go into more detail about the changes later, but in this case we've, shall we say, modified the form that was used for the student's activity report,

Manuela Harto Martínez: the one they used to fill in after any study period, and we've now restricted its use to international placements only.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We have provided a box for the directors to sign, to serve as a guarantee, and this document is exclusively for the international specialisation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, next up is the industrial award; the procedure is the same as for the other award.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The programme already checks whether the requirements are met, as the PhD student's activities are tagged with the 'industrial' designation, and it asks them whether they wish to apply for the designation or not.

Manuela Harto Martínez: If they say yes, a pop-up window appears listing all the activities, and they also have to attach supporting documentation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Specifically, for this specialisation, you will need to upload here the application for authorisation to undertake the already-approved specialisation, the report from your thesis supervisor here at the university, and the report from the company representative,

Manuela Harto Martínez: a copy of the employment or commercial contract, and the employment history report from the General Treasury of the Social Security.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We would like to emphasise here that the director's report relates strictly to the industrial component – that is, to the research carried out with the company – as distinct from the overall report on the entire thesis, which must be attached on a separate screen.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Tab eight is the summary of publications.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Here, if a PhD student wishes to apply for this type of thesis, they simply need to tick a box - a tick box - and then submit the relevant application.

Manuela Harto Martínez: In section nine on joint supervision, if a joint supervision agreement has been signed, all the relevant details will be displayed here.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Tab 10 displays the PhD student's activities, but only those activities from the PhD student's activity record that have already been validated and are marked as 'completed' will be included here.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, we have already informed the PhD students that, before submitting their thesis - that is, before making the application here - they must check their activity record and ask them to change the status to 'completed'

Manuela Harto Martínez: or make any necessary amendments.

Manuela Harto Martínez: A question has arisen previously with the PhD students.

Manuela Harto Martínez: There was a PhD student who said that, simply due to a lack of knowledge, there were activities she hadn't marked as - that is to say, she hadn't labelled as 'international mention' - whilst there were others to which she had applied this label, but which perhaps weren't relevant.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So you, as supervisors, can amend this.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The PhD student's details cannot be modified, but they can be updated.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And tab number 11 is for theses via videoconference, which the student simply has to apply for.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It's an extraordinary case, isn't it? And it's one where she won't be defending her thesis at the University of Zaragoza, but will be away and won't be in the presence of any member of the examination board.

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Manuela Harto Martínez: The other members of the examination board, for example, who join via videoconference, do not need to apply for anything.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Only the court clerks need to notify the school here so that we can send them the minutes or the necessary documentation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, so the next screen is for Zaguanteseo.

Manuela Harto Martínez: As you know, it is compulsory to publish the thesis in the University of Zaragoza's institutional repository, which is Zah.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And this publication must take place immediately after the defence.

Manuela Harto Martínez: However, there are two other options, which are, er, to request a publication embargo period - which, at our university specifically, is 12 or 24 months, OK?

Manuela Harto Martínez: You can apply for 12 months and then extend this to 24, and there is also the option of applying for 24 months and then requesting a reduction so that the thesis can be published as soon as possible.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then the third option is for the thesis to be declared confidential, or for part of it to be confidential.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The application also asks about the publication licence, which you have to select from a drop-down list.

Manuela Harto Martínez: You have to enter the keywords for indexing the thesis in Zawan, and it also asks for the codes for indexing the thesis in TESO, which is the Ministry's database.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Yes, I mean, as we've said, publication in Zahwan is compulsory, whilst publication in TESO is optional.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The students specify this.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, they have to select at least one TSEO code and no more than four.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And although the application lists 'Thesaurus codes' on the one hand and 'UNESCO subject headings' on the other, they are the same thing.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The thesauri are the UNESCO subject headings.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It corresponds to this leaflet we have here.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then, on this very screen, there's a box where you can enter an explanatory summary.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This summary is transferred to Teseo.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The summary is compulsory.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Er, so, it has a limit of 600 words,

María Carmen Peña Ardid: OK.

Manuela Harto Martínez: But on the other hand, it has to be broad enough to adequately explain the thesis's argument.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Just two lines aren't enough.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It needs to explain the argument in a bit more detail because this is forwarded to the Ministry, and they have indeed reviewed it.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And now we move on to the screen for attaching documentation, which is, let's say, one of the most important ones because, depending on the type of programme and the details of the student's file, they will need to upload one document or another.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We've also provided a drop-down menu with the names of some documents to give you a guide, but specifically, you'll need to attach this for all theses and types of study.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The application and acceptance form must be signed and uploaded to the system.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Of course, the application form is different; it will be different from the one used today.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Hmm.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It contains far less information, and we have also merged several forms into one, as some of the previous forms contained legal provisions which we have now included in this application form.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Also, for some PhD students, if they've had to complete supplementary training modules, they'll now have to upload the supporting documentation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, students applying to submit a thesis containing protected material need to upload the relevant form here.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Then, if the thesis is a joint supervision project, they must upload the certificates from the universities involved in the agreement.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And if the thesis is a compendium, they must upload three or four documents.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The signed application form for the compendium.

Manuela Harto Martínez: At this stage, we'll need it to be signed by the PhD candidate and the supervisors.

Manuela Harto Martínez: In other words, with this method - this thesis management system via Sigma - there's no other way to submit documentation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: No, no, we don't use 'Solicita', we don't use 'Registro'; everything has to be uploaded here.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, to speed things up, we'd ask that the compendium application be signed by the PhD candidate and their supervisor.

Manuela Harto Martínez: You'll need to upload the contextualisation statement - which, as we've mentioned, is a new requirement - the waivers from the co-authors holding a PhD, and the letter of acceptance for publication if the paper hasn't yet been published in a journal.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Oh, and you can also attach other documents.

Manuela Harto Martínez: These would already be attached in the 'SR' status for a returned request, as shown in the reports.

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Manuela Harto Martínez: Perhaps the PhD candidate needs to upload the document responding to the external examiners or the document detailing the changes made.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then there's also a 'Miscellaneous' tab so that the PhD candidate can upload any documents they deem appropriate.

Manuela Harto Martínez: You just need to identify it correctly, and you could do it using this.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, the next screen is where you attach your thesis, and here we're going to go over the requirements it needs to meet.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The thesis must be in PDF format with the standard University of Zaragoza front cover, as it will be published on Zah as part of the thesis collection; however, it may have a non-standard back cover.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This is optional, or it might look nicer with the logos of a collaborating institution, right?

Manuela Harto Martínez: It's optional.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It must contain an abstract and conclusions within the thesis itself; furthermore, if it is written in another language, it must also include an abstract and conclusions in Spanish.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then, if the thesis contains protected material, the PhD candidate will have to attach the full version, right?

Manuela Harto Martínez: This version will only be available to members of the academic committee, members of the examination board and external examiners, and they will all have to sign a confidentiality agreement and then also attach the abridged version,

Manuela Harto Martínez: which will be the version suitable for publication.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, let's now move on to validation by the director, who, as we've said, will see the application in 'incomplete' status the first time they view it, and whenever there has been a setback with the application, they will see it in 'DR' status,

Manuela Harto Martínez: 'returned by the director'.

Manuela Harto Martínez: On the school's website, we have access to the Sigma manuals.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Er, er, you'll need to log in via the same access point you always use, and we also have a user guide for the application available, with full details of the screens and options.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Once you're inside Sigma, you'll see the various modules you'll have access to.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, some of us have certain modules, whilst others do not.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Specifically, you need to go to the online thesis repository.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Once you're inside the module, you can search for applications, filter by specific criteria, and if not, it will display all the students you're supervising who have submitted their thesis.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So the student's name and programme appear here, and, um, there are some buttons on the left.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Specifically, to carry out the validation checks on this screen, you need to use the 'Modify' button.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And once you're in, this series of screens appears - six screens, in fact - which are the validation summary, the thesis details, Faguanteseo, documentation, reports and the final screen, which is the confirmation screen.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, on the first screen - the validation summary screen - this is where all the validations carried out by the previous users are displayed.

Manuela Harto Martínez: If the request is in a 'pending' status - as this is the first time anyone has validated it - then they won't see anything.

Manuela Harto Martínez: But if they're at stage R - which may have been handled by several people before - here you can see what each one has approved.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, what does the director do?

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, you have to check all the data on every screen, especially on screens two, three and four - that is, the thesis details, the bibliography and, above all, the documentation screen.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And how are you going to do that?

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, you have to tick the 'correct' or 'incorrect' icons.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And if they tick the wrong box, this 'reason for rejection' box appears with a drop-down menu from which you can select an option.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Then, on button five, you'll find the reports screen, and here each headteacher will need to attach their signed report in PDF format, as well as the proposal for external assessors - which, as you know, is optional.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, um, the tab opens up, you can select the document, and then you have to attach the report.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The application also asks whether - that is to say, you have to check whether the report is favourable or unfavourable.

Manuela Harto Martínez: You need to select the relevant option and, most importantly, click the 'Save' button.

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Manuela Harto Martínez: There's a 'Save' button on every screen, but it's particularly important to save on this screen.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And once all the data has been saved, we'll move on to the confirmation screen.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, if any of the details have been flagged as incorrect on any screen, on this screen too you must mark them with the red 'incorrect' tick, and you can write in the comments box exactly what the

Manuela Harto Martínez: the PhD student.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And that's it - we'd click the 'Confirm' button and it would be returned; the student would then move to the 'Mr' status. Er, in conclusion, the tick box in each of the sections we've validated simply unlocks

Manuela Harto Martínez: the change and allow the PhD student to make changes.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And the red button on the confirmation screen allows the application to be returned to one of the previous parties.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The supervisor can only provide feedback to the PhD student, but, for example, the programme coordinator can provide feedback to three participants.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It would have the host institution, the supervisor and the PhD student.

Manuela Harto Martínez: A drop-down menu would then appear, and you would have to select who you wish to send the feedback to.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We'll now take a brief look at what the validation process involves at the administrative headquarters and the work that needs to be done there.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We can distinguish between two phases: an initial phase of data review and validation, and a second phase when the programme's academic committee meets and approves the application for processing.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, in the first stage of the review process, what you need to do is check that the student meets the requirements for their application to be accepted for consideration.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, if they have completed the activities stipulated in that programme - the courses, the publications, everything the programme requires - you also have to check that the student meets another requirement, which is that they have at least two

Manuela Harto Martínez: passes in the regular assessment period, right?

Manuela Harto Martínez: Another thing you need to do is check the documentation you provide to the student - that whole list of documents we've looked at, depending on the mode of study - and also check the copy of the thesis to ensure it includes the abstract and the conclusions,

Manuela Harto Martínez: to make sure everything is there.

Manuela Harto Martínez: They must check that all the details in the application are correct, and if anything is incorrect, they must return it immediately to the relevant party so that the error can be rectified as soon as possible.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, the administrative office can return the application to the PhD student and the supervisor if it detects any errors.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then, in a second stage here at the headquarters, once the programme's academic committee has approved the application for consideration, they also approve the external examiners, the order in which they will sit, and the proposed examination board.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, this authorisation is sent to the PhD student by email and communicated to the doctoral school via the registry, because at this stage they need to submit the proposal for the examination board.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Next, at the programme's headquarters, they have to enter the proposed panel of members into SIGMA and, most importantly, enter the external assessors and initiate the process of gathering the reports.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The most important thing about this design, this procedure - as the director has already said - is that the stages of reviewing the examination board's proposal, which takes place within the doctoral school, and the stage of managing the reports are carried out in parallel,

Manuela Harto Martínez: In other words, the programme's central office simply has to check whether the reports are being received.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This streamlines the procedure considerably.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Let's recap - although this has already been mentioned - the key points we've gone over regarding external reviewers, who must not be affiliated with either Unizar or the PhD programme.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Furthermore, if the thesis is to be recognised under an international agreement, there must be two examiners from non-Spanish institutions or universities, and they must also be from different universities; they cannot both be from the same one.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Of course, the supervisor of the research placement cannot be an external examiner; nor can they be a member of the examination board; nor can they be an external examiner if they are a co-author with the PhD candidate; nor can they be a member of the examination board; and so, well, we would have to

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Manuela Harto Martínez: We'll check it at head office, because in the doctoral programme this is, of course, checked, and if we spot a problem and have to return the application, it will be lost.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It takes a long time.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, let's see how the branches enter the details of external members. Manuela Harto Martínez: They need to enter all the details they've been given, OK?

Manuela Harto Martínez: The ORC, surnames, email address.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Once you've entered them, a table will appear.

Manuela Harto Martínez: You'll see this box.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Right, right, this is where the names and email addresses appear.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Oh, the suitability report is also uploaded; the head office uploads it so that we don't have to bother the informants about uploading this document.

Manuela Harto Martínez: We upload it from head office - that's the two publications at the end.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then, well, in this last column there's a tick box; by clicking on it, you'll set the process in motion, which involves sending an invitation email to the informant.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, in this email, we've already informed them that they have five days to withdraw.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, they submit their resignation to an email address at the doctoral school and have 30 days to upload their report.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, as we've said, the informant receives an invitation email with the subject line 'Self-registration for external experts' and a link.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, by clicking on this link, you'll be taken to a screen where you need to enter your email address. It's particularly important to note here - although it's already stated in the message - that it must be the same address registered with Sigma,

Manuela Harto Martínez: In other words, the same address where you'll receive the invitation, because otherwise it won't work.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, next, the informant receives a login code and, using that code, can access this screen we can see here, which displays the suitability report - which we will have already uploaded -

Manuela Harto Martínez: and the thesis, which can be downloaded, and that's it - they upload the report by clicking on the 'attach' button.

Manuela Harto Martínez: It's very simple and happens automatically: once they've uploaded the report, they're issued with a certificate - a certificate as an external assessor signed by the lecturer-secretary.

Manuela Harto Martínez: OK?

Manuela Harto Martínez: As we've said before, if you don't accept the invitation, you must notify the thesis reports team within 5 days, and we manage this account here at the university.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, the key aspects of the proposal regarding the tribunal members that we did review at the school and that should be reviewed at head office, at least before it arrives here, are that, well,

Manuela Harto Martínez: it is recommended that the secretary be from UNIZAR, as this could help with the organisation of, for example, travel arrangements or other matters.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So the proposal must ensure gender parity.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The majority of the members of the examination board must be from outside the programme and the university.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And in the case of a thesis under an international agreement, one of the members must be from a non-Spanish university or research centre.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Er, please bear in mind that you are not considered an external member if you are employed by the company or institution where the thesis was carried out.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And we should bear in mind, as the director rightly pointed out earlier, that, um, for academic staff on leave of absence or retired, um, there are a number of requirements, and that the recognition of research experience for members of the examination board who

Manuela Harto Martínez: This requirement has now been restricted to certain cases.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Specifically, for lecturers on leave of absence or who have retired, they must either be registered in a role recognised by the university or research centre with assigned research duties, or they must have

Manuela Harto Martínez: recognised scientific publications in their field within the last five years.

Manuela Harto Martínez: In other words, a retired lecturer who is no longer involved in research would not be able to sit on an assessment panel.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And with regard to the recognition of research experience, this is restricted to cases where the applicant is unable to access the assessment of research achievements; furthermore, in any case, they must have held a PhD for at least two years.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The criteria remain unchanged.

Manuela Harto Martínez: A series of qualifications are defined which are considered equivalent - excuse me - and which allow participation on the panels, such as being accredited by NECA as a full or senior lecturer, or being a full or senior researcher at CESIC,

01:00:00

Manuela Harto Martínez: to have supervised two doctoral theses at any university or to be the principal investigator or co-principal investigator on a project funded by the Spanish Research Agency.

Manuela Harto Martínez: or a European Commission project.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And finally, let's take a look at what is processed outside Signor; this is the aspect that highlights how unique our university is.

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, we could break it down into these six steps.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The first two are carried out within SIGMA, whilst the others are processed outside the system.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, first the PhD student indicates their application if they wish to opt for this scheme by ticking this box we mentioned earlier.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then they also have to attach the relevant documentation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, as we've already mentioned, the application must be signed by the PhD student and the supervisors.

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then, outside the system, the department downloads the application and all the supporting documents to forward them to the programme's academic committee for a decision; once a decision has been made - if it is favourable - they return the form and everything else,

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, the form is only sent to the doctoral school.

Manuela Harto Martínez: This is already done via the registry, through internal communication.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Then, at the doctoral school, this is dealt with by the standing committee of the governing board, and once the compendium is approved, the doctoral student is notified, and the main office is also informed so that they can proceed to, er, launch the

Manuela Harto Martínez: the process for requesting external reports and inviting external examiners.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Here we'll go over briefly what the requirements are for thesis-by-compilation.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, until now, you had to have a certain number of publications of a certain standard.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Specifically, you had to have published, or have four articles with a common theme accepted for publication.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The publication or acceptance date must be after the start date of the PhD programme, and of these four articles, at least three must be published in a JCR-listed journal or be of comparable quality.

Manuela Harto Martínez: OK?

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, in addition to this, under the new regulations, the transparency and integrity of the publication process will now also be monitored.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Specifically, the key aspects that will be reviewed here at the school are whether the applications contain a narrative.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, the requirements for approving agreements haven't changed, but we'll be checking that there haven't been any review processes that cannot be verified, or editorial conflicts of interest, or poor publication or authorship practices

Manuela Harto Martínez: insufficiently justified.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The most important thing of all is to emphasise that the compendium must be approved before requesting the external reports, OK?

Manuela Harto Martínez: And then, once the compendium has been approved, the process continues as if it were a normal thesis, proceeding through the rest of the validation stages until completion.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Well, thank you for your attention.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Thank you, Manuela.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: So, are there any questions? If you like, we can start with these I've seen in the chat. One question is: in the event that there are two supervisors, is the validation carried out by just one or by both?

Manuela Harto Martínez: It is sent to both directors at the same time. INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral

School Management: And there's another similar question, um, well, Manuela Harto Martínez: Exactly.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: in this case, there are two directors from outside the University of Zaragoza and one supervisor from the UZ.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, does the supervisor from the University of Zaragoza have to approve anything or not?

Manuela Harto Martínez: Supervisors do not play any part in this process; only the directors do.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Right, I can't see any more questions in the chat, so if you'd like to take this opportunity to ask a question, please do so directly now.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Yes, Guillermo Palacios.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Yes. Er, can you hear me?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Yes, I can hear

you now. Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Yes. Er, well, a few things.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Hi.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I've looked at the infographic and the thesis submission procedure on the website, and I've spotted a few errors.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I'm not sure if those documents are final yet

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: No, let's have a look.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The thing is, the procedure with Sigma starts tomorrow, the 1st.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Or

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: So, as for the, well, the infographic - I seem to recall that, in theory, it didn't change - but the thesis guidelines have changed completely because it's going to be done via Sigma.

01:05:00

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Then tomorrow you'll see which one applies.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I'm saying this because, up to and including today, theses are still being submitted without Sigma, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So all Sigma documentation from tomorrow onwards will be...

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: It's, er,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: tomorrow.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: The public consultation says 5 days in one place and 10 in another.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: That's wrong, isn't it?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, yes.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I mean, Guillermo

Palacios Navarro: It's five.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Under the new regulations, it's five.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In any case,Guillermo

Palacios Navarro: And then the approval.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: If you spot any errors, please could you send them to us?

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: There are also broken links,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: we'd be grateful. INSTITUTIONAL

Doctoral School Administration: Right, well, send it to us by email, Guillermo

Palacios Navarro: Eh?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Eh?

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: And then the approval,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: via Ado, sorry, I'll put it here: adcto@unizar.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: You can send whatever

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Then the examination board's approval sets 30 teaching days in this guide,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: whatever you like.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: But that's not the case, is it?

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: The examination board's approval by the Doctoral School, INSTITUTIONAL

Doctoral School Management: Where?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, Guillermo

Palacios Navarro: page five of the PDF.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: No, I mean, the new one is 15 days from when

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: OK, in any case,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: it's taken off display

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: in any case, er, INSTITUTIONAL

Doctoral School Management: public.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I have seen that you said that procedure was carried out in parallel.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Er, seriously, it takes 15 days to approve an INSTITUTIONAL

one. Doctoral Programme Management: No, no, no, no.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: examination board.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: No, let's... Ah, well, what happens in parallel is the review by the examination board.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Yes, but does an examination board that's already been approved by the department and by the programme's academic committee really need 15 days to be approved?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: I repeat, those 15 days are not for validation by the examination board.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I'm just asking.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: The examination board will already have been verified beforehand, and in fact there is a one-month period set aside for this; it is necessary because, in fact, one of the main reasons for delays is that the examination board presented does not meet the requirements or, for example, that recognition had not been requested.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Right.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So when students arrive, it's not that it takes us a month to approve the examination board, but if, for example, their prior learning hadn't been recognised, we'd have to start the process from scratch, and that process did take time, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Or if, suddenly - I'll say it again - if everything goes perfectly,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Right,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: obviously, but if not, we'll have to take some action; some of these matters had indeed been dragging on for some time and were, in fact, a constant source of delays later on in the process.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Right.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I'll keep this brief because I don't want to get bogged down in the narrative either,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Yes,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: on the slide that Manuel showed before the narrative,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Administration: in the compendium,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: You'll put it in the compendium.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: That's just for the compendium. Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Yes. You're going to include a template

that says, INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: No, no,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: no,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: no.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: What we have is... well, we need to make it clear in the agreement that these things are explicitly stated

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: That's it

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The four aspects that will be assessed, and the narrative is one in which you can refer to any of those aspects - which are the ones that will, shall we say, validate or verify the... No,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I find it hard to see how a PhD student could do this.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The point is, the PhD student won't be the one doing it. Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Eh,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Supervision: this should be carried out by the doctoral student in consultation with their supervisor.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Yes, sorry, that's right.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Er, poor publication practices. Guillermo

Palacios Navarro: What do we mean by poor practices? Guillermo Palacios

Navarro: There's a

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: There are examples, more examples, set out in the regulations.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Thing.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I've given a clear example, which is, well, publishing the same article three times.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Ah, right, but not editorial processes.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Ah, no, yes,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: That's in another

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: review processes that cannot be verified.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: point.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Exactly, how do we know what is verifiable and what isn't?

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: It's just very subjective, isn't it?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: No, well, it's not really that subjective; I mean, when it can be verified, it's quite objective, and it's information that the institutions themselves usually have

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Right, moving on to another point.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Er,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: publications.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I'm going to briefly describe my experience, er, with the doctoral school.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Well, out of the five theses I've supervised, at least four have suffered completely unjustified delays.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I'll mention one, but it's happened several times.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: What I'd say is that if we're all going to share our experiences, I'd try to focus at least the first session on questions.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Right, well, then I'll tell you straight out what the problem is.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Er, it's an internal management problem caused by someone who isn't doing their job.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Yes.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: That's how I see it.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I've had, er, problems when the department submits the thesis, er, requests an assessment from the department, er, the department sends it off the very same day, and yet that request remains in limbo for over a month and

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: a bit.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I've had to ring up and ask, 'Hey, what's going on with this thesis - why isn't it available for public viewing yet?'

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: The official on duty tells me, "No, the thing is, we're still missing an evaluation from the department.

INSTITUTIONAL School of Doctoral Studies: Right,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I go to the committee and they say, "It was sent on the same day,"

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Exactly,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: because

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Guillermo,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: please.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Precisely to avoid such issues, this has been one of the reasons for introducing Sigma, so that everything is handled directly through Sigma and we minimise the need to send anything at all.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: That said, we haven't quite achieved 100 per cent because Sigma, well, it can't do everything that might be needed, but that is precisely one of the reasons for introducing it

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Well, given the sheer number of procedures involved,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Directorate: Sigma.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: I very much doubt that will happen.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Well, what I was going to ask you - and I'll wrap up now - is that, of all the roles you have there, someone please takes charge of ensuring that each person does what they're supposed to do, so that there aren't such

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: unjustified.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, delays are usually justified; it's just that the reason isn't always known.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: As I was saying, two more people have been requested in parallel, OK?

01:10:00

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: precisely because, up until now, for example, there have been some very significant delays - and I'll leave it at that as I don't want to dwell on this - but at the end of last year, the person in charge went on sick leave, right?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And that caused a huge delay, compounded, for example, by the university's decision to close for a number of days over Christmas, during which all administrative procedures come to a standstill.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, it's usually a combination of factors, but there's almost always a valid reason.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, we've also strengthened the staff and, as I said, there's a manager - the school administrator - who ensures that those problems don't happen again.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: Right, so that's all

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: If you don't mind, shall we move on to see if anyone has any other questions?

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: more

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: we can talk, if not in person, at any other time,

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: All right.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: If that's fine with you.

Guillermo Palacios Navarro: No.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Thank you very much.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, I'm looking at it.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, Guillermo, Diego had the floor, Diego

Gutierrez: Yes,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I was just looking at the chat.

Diego Gutiérrez: Yes.

Diego Gutiérrez: Hello.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Diego,

Diego Gutierrez: Well, thank you.

Diego Gutierrez: There's a lot of information here that I need to get to grips with, so I don't really have any questions about the new procedure.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: Yes.

Diego Gutierrez: But I do have one question: one of the things we always tend to come up against is that all the documentation is in Spanish, and of course, as soon as you go abroad, we're asked to internationalise things and so on, but international students don't know how to navigate interfaces or deal with documents in Spanish.

Diego Gutierrez: Er, even emails often arrive directly in Spanish and are a bit too

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: Yeah.

Diego Gutierrez: dry, sometimes forgetting that the person writing the report is giving their time for free, aren't they? Generously, for the sake of the process.

Diego Gutierrez: So, a question and a comment.

Diego Gutierrez: The question is whether improvements are being made or have already been made to the INSTITUTIONAL side of the Doctoral School: Sigma is already there, of course - the English version of Sigma is there - Diego Gutierrez: from

INSTITUTIONAL Directorate, Doctoral School: In other words, it's in English, and all the notices and everything are displayed in both Spanish and English.

INSTITUTIONAL DOCTORAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: In fact, all the emails sent out too - and recently, all of them,

Diego Gutiérrez: OK.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: many of them are very long because they start with everything that's usually included - often in Spanish first, followed by

Diego Gutierrez: OK.

Diego Gutierrez: Right.

Diego Gutierrez: And the second part is the comment,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: in English.

Diego Gutierrez: Right?

Diego Gutierrez: That some of those emails are too aggressive; they come across as unnecessarily aggressive to an outside reader, don't they?

Diego Gutierrez: For example, I remember a foreigner who was refused a trip for some reason or other, and the email said, 'Do you remember that this isn't allowed?' It isn't allowed.

Diego Gutierrez: And the bloke wrote to me saying, 'Blimey, I'm doing all this voluntarily; if I've done something wrong, let me know, but I think you lot should work on your soft skills a bit too and be careful, because the image that's

Diego Gutierrez: comes across sometimes - I've got quite a few emails from researchers abroad complaining a bit, haven't I?

Diego Gutierrez: So, this procedure is all very well and I'm glad that it's

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Well, another point is that as everything becomes automated, for example,

Diego Gutierrez: that's an improvement.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Now all the notifications that are sent are messages that have been reviewed and uploaded to the platform so they can be sent at any time.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: So, in other words, most of them don't depend on how you feel or what you decide to answer, but are notices that have already been reviewed and are also available on both

Diego Gutierrez: Ah, right.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: languages.

Diego Gutierrez: You can set up an automated email that starts with, 'Thank you for being part of the panel for such-and-such', and that's automated.

Diego Gutierrez: It's better than saying 'there's a lack of I don't know what, I don't know how many', isn't it?

Diego Gutierrez: Well, that's my comment.

Diego Gutierrez: M.

INSTITUTIONAL DOCTORAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: Very well.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I was actually looking at that one - well, regarding Jaime González's question: do they have to be active projects, completed projects or recent ones, in terms of the requirements for being an IP or ICOIP?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, they don't have to; as I understand it, they don't have to be active.

Jaime González Buesa: Right.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: They do not necessarily have to be active.

Jaime Gonzalez Buesa: Thank you.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Right.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I'm not sure if there were any more listed above. INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And where can you look them up?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: With María Mairal.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, well, er, the idea we're working on is that there's already a section on Sigma where you'll find the guide - which I'd encourage you to have a look at - because there's already a guide that, from tomorrow onwards, you'll be able to use if it's your turn,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: specifically for supervisors, and the plan is to upload not only the guide but also the presentations by Manuela and Mías, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And the video - the recording of this session.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Are there any questions?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Asun Usón.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: Hello, everyone.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: I'd written it down, but I'll explain it to you.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Ah, right,

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: In the thesis, in the

compendium, INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I

might not have

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: Er, the summary has to be authorised first, INSTITUTIONAL

Doctoral School Management: Got it.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: There are still 15 days between the submission of the application and its acceptance for processing.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: I'm not sure if I'm

making myself clear. Manuela Harto Martínez: No, I

mean, the process comes to a standstill. MARÍA ASUNCIÓN

USÓN MURILLO: Or something gets put on hold.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: Yes, Manuela

Harto Martínez: everything comes to a standstill.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: Sorry.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Until the compendium is approved,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: put it on hold.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: Right,

Manuela Harto Martínez: we can't carry on.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: OK,

Manuela Harto Martínez: So, that would be the 15 days starting from when... MARÍA

ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: Right.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: From the date the compendium is approved.

Manuela Harto Martínez: Approved.

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: Right, right.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Yes,

MARÍA ASUNCIÓN USÓN MURILLO: Thank you, and thank you for the presentation and for

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Yes.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well,

Manuela Harto Martínez: You're welcome.

INSTITUTIONAL - Doctoral Programme Management: If anyone has added someone to the chat, as has happened before, please raise your hand; if not, please don't mention it again, as there may still be some messages lying around that haven't been seen.

01:15:00

Manuela Harto Martínez: OK.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Following on from what you said, Diego Gutiérrez has also spoken up, and the topic of travel has come up.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, well, I'd just like to say that we're aware there are many problems with travel arrangements for court hearings, but whenever you write to me and ask, I try to explain the same thing.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: The rules aren't set by the doctoral school; they're set by the finance department.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: We don't set the rules because, in fact, the school doesn't have the budget to pay for examination boards.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In other words, this is paid for directly by the Financial Vice-Chancellery, and they set their own rules - which we obviously try to get them to change and adapt - but these are not our own regulations.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Furthermore, we are obliged to arrange travel through the university's travel agency, which, as we are all well aware, has certain issues.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, from there, we try to help or improve things as much as we can, but it's actually something quite separate from the doctoral school itself, because we have neither the budget nor the capacity to organise travel - that's handled externally.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: OK, I'm not sure if there's anything in the chat from Demaru's informants.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: there should be an automatic mechanism so that if the respondent declines, it is clear that they have declined and the system moves on to the next one; but if they do not decline, yet we do not know whether they have read it or not,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: is there an automatic procedure,

Manuela Harto Martínez: Automatic, isn't it?

Manuela Harto Martínez: We'd already considered this,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: that's not the main campus.

Manuela Harto Martínez: But, well, the only solution is that, whichever way you're dealing with those informants, you should ring or write to them to ask whether they're going to submit the report or not - so you can move on to the next one or wait for them, as has also happened,

Manuela Harto Martínez: that they need a bit more time.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: That's what the programme used to do in the past,

Manuela Harto Martínez: Oh.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: if it didn't look like it was going to work out, then contact them directly as well.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Address: That goes to the campuses, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: To the branch offices.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Right.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I'm not sure if there are any further issues.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Yes, I can see Francisco Jesús Sala Franca here.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Er, right, so how long does it take from the time an application is accepted for processing until the defence?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, um, what's the minimum? How much can we reduce it?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I don't know.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, previously, under the old process, there wasn't really a set timeframe; I think it used to take about five, didn't it?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: 5 months or 6 months - that was the duration of the entire process.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: What we're trying to do here is reduce it.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: By how much should we consider reducing it?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Well, let's look into it.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: And simply reflect on it.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I believe that when most of us were doing our doctorates, there was no process involving external examiners.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I remember that, at the time, if everything went smoothly, it took about two months from the start of the process until the thesis was examined.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: So if everything went more or less smoothly, it would be ready in two months; if not, then three months, and you'd definitely have it examined.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: In this case, it must be said that, however much we try to speed things up, the informants are given a month, and the doctoral students then have another month to make the changes.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, I think it's difficult to imagine—I mean, I reckon we'd easily need to allow for four months if everything goes smoothly.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: If we manage to get it down from that, that'll be perfect.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: And in fact it can be reduced if the informant doesn't take a month,

Manuela Harto Martínez: OK.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: If the doctoral student makes the changes within a day, and if the academic committee meets the very next day instead of waiting 15 days.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In other words, if everything goes perfectly, then it could probably be reduced, but if things continue at roughly the current pace, well, that might be a possible measure, wouldn't it?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Then there's another point: if a thesis is bound, what happens to the standardised cover page?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Er, if the defence is at another university, well, regardless of the defence, er, let's see, the cover page is a strong recommendation, but a thesis isn't going to be held up because of that.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So,

Manuela Harto Martínez: Let's see,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er,

Manuela Harto Martínez: It's just that if there's a joint supervision arrangement, the thesis has to be submitted to both universities,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Office: Yes, that's right, but it says 'yes' at the other university. Right,

Manuela Harto Martínez: You have to go through the procedures in parallel,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: but she's talking specifically about the title page.

Manuela Harto Martínez: But here at the University of Zaragoza, you'll be submitting a thesis to which you can include a title page.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Administration: The title page is... Yes, that's what it's called.

Manuela Harto Martínez: The thing is, the cover is necessary because the library has to publish it with the cover, and it's better for Dr Andu to put it on than for a civil servant to tamper with it and have to add it; and besides, they're going to add some

01:20:00

INSTITUTIONAL Address, School of Doctoral Studies: right

Manuela Harto Martínez: codes, an ISSN number – in short, it's needed, it's needed

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: OK.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: There are other questions regarding joint supervision; if you don't mind,

Manuela Harto Martínez: OK.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: I'm going to leave those out because they're very specific questions - not about the submission itself, but more generally about joint supervision and the examination board.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Just to say, as a general rule, that in cases of joint supervision, a joint supervision agreement has been signed setting out what the examination board must comply with in order for the thesis to be accepted by both universities.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, the relevant document is actually the joint supervision agreement; and, well, if you have any more specific queries about joint supervision, we can deal with those separately.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: There's also someone at the school who is practically dedicated entirely to joint supervision, so you can contact them directly.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: laedoc, OK?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Just ask her, or else the Deputy Director for Internationalisation, Marta Aro, and they'll sort out the specifics of joint supervision for you straight away.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Er, from Juan Bueno Notibol: is the validation process for the compendium carried out separately, or is it part of the submission process? In other words, can it be done beforehand, or no, it can't be done beforehand.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Well, we need to initiate the admissions process, and at that stage we must indicate that it is an agreement or a compendium; from there, the next step is to forward everything to the academic committee and the standing committee for evaluation and approval.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: No, what we do recommend is consulting, for example, the academic committee beforehand; in other words, if there are any doubts as to whether the requirements will be met or not, we do encourage supervisors and doctoral candidates to consult with the coordinator,

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: isn't that right? regarding the specific case, so that person can say whether they think the requirements are met or not.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Right, I can't see any new or additional questions in the chat at the moment.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, if there aren't any questions and I don't see anyone else who wants to say anything either, well, you know, this kicks off tomorrow the 1st. I know that theses submitted tomorrow must be uploaded via Sigma because the previous process will no longer be

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: the previous process will no longer be available.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, we know that, as with any new venture, the start is going to be tricky for everyone.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: It's new for you, the directors, for the doctoral students, for the campuses, for the coordinators, and for the doctoral school.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: So, it's something new that's going to take us all a while to get used to.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral Programme Management: Well, we've launched it because we think it might improve things - or, above all, put an end to some of the major problems that existed in the submission process.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: In any case, we ask for your patience. Please also note that there is a specific email address for this purpose, so if you notice anything that isn't working properly, could be improved or is particularly cumbersome, please let us know so that we can try to improve it.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Did you know that Sigma has its own issues?

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: It doesn't depend entirely on Zaragoza either; it's a more general issue. There are changes we would have liked to make but haven't been able to because they depend on Sigma - let's say, at national level - and they take a long time, but we'll take everything you tell us into account so we can implement it gradually, or immediately if it's an error or a minor issue.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Well, perhaps it's a bit more in-depth.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Right, well, let's leave it at that then, if that's all right with you, and we'll post it later today; if not, all the information will be available on our website by tomorrow.

INSTITUTIONAL Doctoral School Management: Thank you very much, and well, see you later.

Antonio Lozano, ICB: Thank you.

The meeting ended after 01:23:53 ☐☐

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