



Dottorato in
Management
for digital transformation:
business, communication
and ethics

Organizational and Educational
Regulations of the Ph.D. Course:

MANAGEMENT FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION:
BUSINESS, COMMUNICATION AND ETHICS



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Art. 1) Establishment of the Doctoral Program and Area of Application

This Regulation, sets out the organizational and educational provisions governing the PhD programme in *Management for digital transformation: business, communication and ethics*, at the Niccolò Cusano University of Rome (hereinafter “Unicusano”). This Regulation governs the organizational and educational aspects of the Ph.D. course

Art. 2) Description and Area of Application of the Ph.D. course

Digital transformation requires the implementation of the so-called enabling technologies of the ‘Industry 4.0’ paradigm, which act as a powerful driver for the transition of enterprises and society toward innovative and sustainable models. Such implementation must be accompanied by a cultural, strategic and organizational transformation process, together with the consequent redefinition of the economic, social, cultural, temporal and, above all, human resources involved. These transformation processes have accelerated in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and call for new competencies oriented toward applied ethics and responsibility, centered both on the individual and on the common good of emerging socio-digital configurations.

Through an appropriate interdisciplinary methodology of critical analysis that synergistically integrates the specificities of various scientific fields—business administration, mathematical statistics, law, sociology, media and cultural studies—the PhD course adopts two main research perspectives, corresponding to the two curricula:

- Innovation and Sustainability in Global Markets
- Digital Communication and Net-Media

A philosophical approach (epistemological, ethical and meta-communicative) runs transversally across both curricula, providing the foundations for the intersubjective interaction required to train competent professionals capable of understanding ongoing socio-cultural processes and contributing to the development of cutting-edge institutions, enterprises and social formations.

Art. 3) Program objectives

The PhD course focuses on digital transformation, understood as a set of changes involving innovation, technology and global sustainability—economic, environmental and social. It pays particular attention to business, statistical-economic, social and communication contexts.

Addressing these transformations requires a multidisciplinary approach that integrates knowledge from various fields (economics, statistics, law, sociology, ethics and industrial/management engineering). This integration enables the study of frontier issues such as market, labor and consumer evolution, the human–machine relationship and the social impact of new information technologies.



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The course is structured around two main research perspectives:

- Business and Management: analyzing corporate governance and management in relation to technological innovation and sustainable development in global competitive environments.
- Sociology and Communication: developing a hermeneutic approach to interpret ongoing transformations within international digital cultures.

To support these activities, the course includes two laboratories: one dedicated to enterprise competitiveness and sustainable innovation in global markets, and another focused on digital communication.

Art. 4) Career and professional opportunities

The PhD course develops advanced scientific and cross-disciplinary skills to enhance employability in fields that integrate business, quantitative, sociological, cultural-communication, bioethical and problem-solving competencies. It prepares highly qualified professionals for managerial roles or advanced research in digital transformation, sustainable markets and international communication. The innovation-oriented curriculum addresses the complexity of socio-economic phenomena in global markets, while the communication-focused curriculum trains experts in research, analysis, design and management of cultural and communication processes.

Main career outcomes include:

- Managerial roles in digital transformation, innovation and sustainability
- Specialized professional positions in ethics committees, publishing, media production, and institutional for corporate communication
- Research careers in universities and research institutions

Art. 5) Governing Bodies of the Ph.D. course

The governing bodies of the PhD programme are:

- a) the Coordinator
- b) the Academic Board
- c) The Quality Review Team



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Art. 6) The Coordinator

The role of Coordinator is held by a full-time Full Professor or, where duly justified, by a full-time Associate Professor who meets the requirements set out in Art. 4, paragraph 1, letter a), no. 3), of Ministerial Decree 226/2021. The Coordinator may serve in only one PhD programme.

The Coordinator:

1. Is responsible for the PhD programme, oversees its activities and represents it;
2. Coordinates and organizes the educational and administrative activities of the programme;
3. Convenes and chairs the Academic Board, ensuring the implementation of its resolutions;
4. Authorizes Ph.D. candidates, in agreement with their supervisors, to travel within Italy or abroad for training and/or research activities of up to six months;
5. Appoints a Vice-Coordinator who may act on his/her behalf in case of impediment or illness;
6. Promptly notifies the University administration of any change in the status of a PhD candidate.

Art. 7) The Academic Board

The Academic Board carries out all tasks provided for in these Regulations and, in particular:

1. Designs and implements the PhD programme;
2. Meets periodically, including online, to verify the proper progress of activities and, where necessary, to take corrective action;
3. Prepares the annual activity report for evaluation purposes, in accordance with the guidelines of the University Evaluation Committee;
4. Authorizes any work activities undertaken by Ph.D. candidates, provided these do not compromise participation in the programme's overall activities;
5. Proposes to the Rector the exclusion of Ph.D. candidates from the programme;
6. Grants extensions for submission of the final thesis or suspensions of the programme, upon explicit request of the candidate and for justified reasons, in accordance with Art. 8 of Ministerial Decree 226/2021;
7. Assigns each candidate a supervisor and, where necessary, one or more co-supervisors—at least one of whom must be an academic—who may also be selected from outside the Board if meeting the required qualifications;
8. May invite other individuals to attend Board meetings or discussions on specific items, without voting rights;
9. Is convened by the Coordinator, who sets the agenda and notifies members by email;
10. Prepares the annual educational plan and calendar;
11. Monitors the research progress of each candidate;
12. Approves the candidates' educational programme at the beginning of each academic year;



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13. Approves candidates' participation in internships at public or private institutions, in Italy or abroad, when lasting more than three months;
14. May authorize candidates to carry out teaching support, supplementary teaching and extracurricular research activities;
15. Approves, at the end of each academic year, the admission of candidates to the subsequent year;
16. Promotes connections with other Italian and foreign universities and with public and private institutions to enhance research activities;
17. Proposes to the Rector the members of the admission examination committees;
18. Appoints, after consulting supervisors, at least two reviewers for the thesis prior to the public defence, pursuant to Art. 8, paragraph 6, of Ministerial Decree No. 45/2013;
19. Proposes to the Rector the members of the final examination committees;
20. Approves the PhD Programme Regulations and any amendments thereto.

For meetings to be valid, at least half plus one of the members must be present, excluding justified absences. Resolutions are adopted by majority vote; in the event of a tie, the Coordinator's vote prevails.

Art. 8) The Quality Review Team

The Quality Review Team is composed of the Ph.D. Coordinator, who also chairs it, one or more faculty members elected from the Academic Board, and one or more Ph.D. students elected by their peers. The Committee serves for up to three years and is convened by the Coordinator.

The Quality Review Team is responsible for:

1. Drafting the review report at least every five years;
2. Preparing an annual monitoring report on the PhD programme indicators;
3. Proposing possible improvement actions to the Academic Board for approval;
4. Monitoring the implementation of approved improvement actions;
5. Preparing the draft self-assessment for periodic accreditation requirements, as required by ANVUR.

Art. 9) The Supervisor

Each PhD candidate is assigned a faculty supervisor by the Academic Board during the first year. The main functions and responsibilities of the Supervisor are:

- a) To prepare, together with the candidate, the training plan and define any teaching activities;
- b) To guide the candidate's scientific activity;
- c) To provide an evaluation of the candidate's work to be submitted to the Academic Board for progress assessment.



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The Supervisor is responsible for guiding the candidate's research activities through periodic meetings, with the primary goal of fostering the candidate's progressive autonomy in conducting scientific research. This includes the written and oral dissemination of research results, the preparation and management of parts of research projects, and integration into the international scientific community. The Supervisor must notify the Academic Board if the candidate's research work does not meet programme standards. The Board may revoke the Supervisor's appointment if obligations are not fulfilled. The Board may also assign one or more co-supervisors, including individuals external to Unicusano.

Art. 10) Admission Requirements and Procedures

Admission requirements and procedures are governed by the University's Doctoral Regulations. Admission is granted through a competitive selection process evaluating the candidate's academic preparation and research aptitude. The admission procedures and selection criteria are detailed in the official Call for Applications. Candidates are admitted according to the merit ranking established by the examining committee.

Art. 11) Training Activities

Training activities are designed to provide fundamental knowledge related to the programme's fields. Educational paths are tailored to each student, depending on their prior academic background. However, in-depth knowledge of the core areas of the PhD programme is considered essential and is identified by the student together with the Supervisor, in line with the Board's guidelines.

Training activities, to be completed within the first two years, include mandatory attendance at courses and seminar sessions on topics related to the Ph.D. programme. These activities are delivered both by members of the Academic Board and by external lecturers specifically invited by the Coordinator. Students are also required to participate in workshops and conferences organized by the University Niccolò Cusano whose themes fall within the scope of the Ph.D. programme.

Each year, the Board approves a set of training activities, published on the Ph.D. website at the start of the academic year.

Training activities also include participation in Summer Schools, organized within the Ph.D. course or by Italian or foreign universities, subject to prior approval by the Board.

The educational path normally includes a research stay abroad, in compliance with current regulations, for a total period not exceeding 6 months, during which the candidate may carry out part of their research at qualified foreign institutions (universities, research bodies or companies conducting R&D).

The Board strongly encourages participation in national and international conferences, which are considered highly valuable for Ph.D. training.



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The programme also allows candidates to undertake tutoring or supplementary teaching activities, up to 40 hours per year, defined together with the Supervisor and subject to Board approval. The Ph.D. students may also tutor Bachelor's and Master's students and collaborate in supervising theses. In total, supplementary teaching and tutoring must not exceed 400 hours over the three-year period.

Art. 12) Evaluation for Admission to the Next Year and Final Examination

At the end of the first and second year, by January, the students must submit a written report (in Italian or in English) detailing all research and training activities carried out. Based on this report the Board decides on admission to the next year. The Coordinator may also require candidates to deliver a presentation of the report before the Academic Board.

Before the end of the programme, final-year students must apply for admission to the final examination, submitting a report (in Italian or in English) covering all activities carried out. The Board, having reviewed the Supervisor's assessment of the thesis and the submitted report, decides on admission to the final examination. Only candidates who receive a positive evaluation of their activities are admitted to the final exam. For students admitted, the Supervisor appoints two or more reviewers to evaluate the thesis. The candidate sends the thesis manuscript to the reviewers designated by the Board.

The Board's opinion, together with the reviewers' reports, is attached to the copies of the thesis sent to the examination committee at least 30 days before the final examination date, except in cases of justified necessity.

Art. 13) Award of the Degree

The final examination consists of a public presentation and defence of the thesis, in Italian or in English, before the examination committee appointed by the Rector by decree. The committee normally consists of at least three members, two external and one internal to the Academic Board, none of whom have served as Supervisor or collaborated with the candidate in their research activities. If necessary, the examination committee may meet via videoconference.

Art. 14) Final Provisions

The PhD course carries out self-assessment and verification of the results achieved, including through the periodic activities of the Quality Review Team. This regulation supplements, for the matters expressly provided herein, the applicable national legislation and the University's Doctoral Regulations, which remain fully in force.