

PONTIFICAL ATHENAEUM REGINA APOSTOLORUM

Norms for the Third Cycle

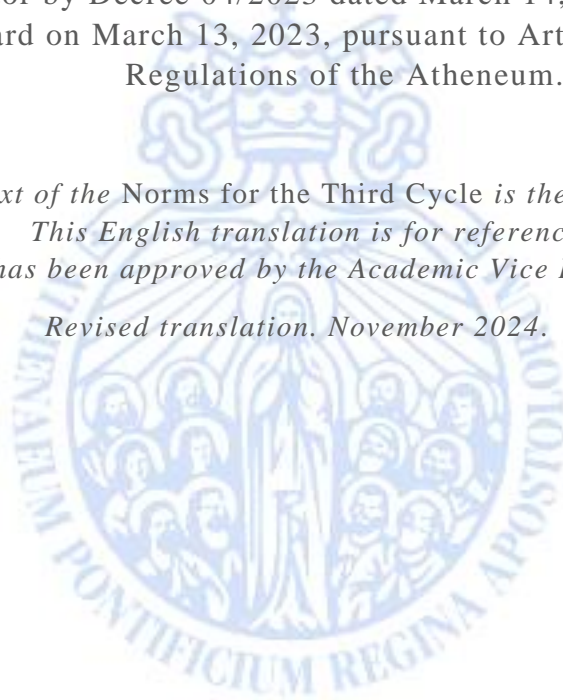
Approved by the Rector by Decree 04/2023 dated March 14, 2023, after hearing the Executive Board on March 13, 2023, pursuant to Article 2.2 of the General Regulations of the Atheneum.

The official text of the Norms for the Third Cycle is the Italian version.

This English translation is for reference only.

The translation has been approved by the Academic Vice Rector for provisional use

Revised translation. November 2024.



NORMS FOR THE THIRD CYCLE

Title I. General Rules	3
Art. 1. The aims of the third cycle.....	3
Art. 2. The duration and structure of the third cycle	3
Art. 3. Authorities over the third cycle.....	3
Art. 4. The third cycle coordinator	4
Art. 5. The committee for the third cycle	4
Art. 6. The research director.....	5
Art. 7. The dissertation reviewer	5
Title II. The Propaedeutic Phase	6
Art. 8. The purpose of the Propaedeutic Phase	6
Art. 9. Admission, matriculation and enrollment in the Propaedeutic Phase.....	6
Art. 10. Advanced studies	6
Art. 11. The scientific article	6
Art. 12. The research project	7
Art. 13. The promotion of the candidate to the Research Phase	7
Title III. The Research Phase	7
Art. 14. The aims of the Research Phase.....	7
Art. 15. Enrollment in the Research Phase and its effects	8
Art. 16. The advancement in research	8
Art. 17. Inclusion in the academic life of the faculty.	8
Art. 18. The dissertation project.....	8
Art. 19. The promotion of the candidate to the Dissertation Phase.....	8
Title IV. The Dissertation Phase	9
Art. 20. The aims of the Dissertation Phase	9
Art. 21. Enrollment in the Dissertation Phase and its effects.....	9
Art. 22. The candidate's other academic activities	9
Art. 23. The elaboration of the dissertation.....	9
Art. 24. The delivery of the dissertation.....	9
Art. 25. The defense of the dissertation.....	10
Art. 26. The conferment of the title of “Doctor”	10

Title I. General Rules.

Art. 1. The aims of the third cycle

- §1. The third cycle of study grants the academic degree of doctorate (*doctoratus*), which qualifies for teaching in an ecclesiastical faculty and enables special ecclesiastical appointments.¹
- §2. The third cycle constitutes an initiation into the highly qualified academic mission in the Church through effective inclusion in faculty study, research, and formation projects.
- §3. During the third cycle, the student perfects scientific education through:
- 1° the design and implementation of research that effectively contributes to the advancement of knowledge;
 - 2° the communication of research results in the form of a dissertation;
 - 3° preparation for teaching through internships and other training activities.

Art. 2. The duration and structure of the third cycle

- §1. To achieve its purposes, the third cycle lasts for a suitable period of time, divided into three phases:
- 1° In the *Propaedeutic phase*, training and accompanying activities are offered so that the candidate can conceive and design a research project.
 - 2° In the *Research phase*, the candidate carries out the research, collecting and analyzing data related to the problem posed, and prepares the dissertation project.
 - 3° In the *Dissertation phase*, he communicates the results from his research through the editing and public defense of the dissertation with a view to its subsequent publication.
- §2. The candidate is required to complete each phase within a minimum of two semesters to a maximum of four.
- 1° The minimum total duration for the doctoral degree is 3 years.
 - 2° As a rule, the concluding dissertation is delivered and defended by the 6th year after enrollment in the Propaedeutic phase.
 - 3° Those who do not complete a phase within the allotted time, may reenroll in the same phase after a careful evaluation of the case and the authorization of the dean.
- §3. The cycle concludes at the end of the semester in which the defense is held. The doctoral degree is conferred after verification of the publication of the thesis.
- §4. In the third cycle, the ordinary procedures for suspending and reactivating a program of studies are excluded. Candidates who are not regularly enrolled in one of the phases lose the right to continue in the third cycle. If they wish to resume their research, a new application must be submitted.

Art. 3. Authorities over the third cycle

- §1. It shall be the responsibility of the dean, after consultation with the relevant bodies:
- 1° Admit candidates to the propaedeutic phase and authorize their program of studies;
 - 2° Promote candidates judged suitable for the higher phases of the third-cycle;
 - 3° Authorize the defense and publication of the thesis;
 - 4° Appoint the third cycle coordinator;
 - 5° Establish the committee for the third cycle;

¹ *Veritatis Gaudium*, art. 50, 1

6° Confer the appointment of a structured faculty member of the Faculty, whether stable, invited or appointed as research director;

7° Appoint the dissertation reviewer;

8° Authorize re-enrollment in a third-cycle phase.

9° Grant handouts of subjects from the *Propaedeutic Phase*.²

§2. It is the responsibility of the academic vice rector:

1° Approve the procedures for the third cycle;

2° Give *approval for the* appointment of a stable faculty member from another faculty as research director, after hearing the opinion of the two deans;

3° To authorize a student's extended enrollment beyond the ordinary limits;

4° For considered reasons, and having heard the authorities and officers concerned, grant dispensation *ad casum* of the application of the articles of these rules or the procedures of the third round.³

Art. 4. The third cycle coordinator

§1. At the beginning of his term, and after consultation with the Faculty Council, the dean shall appoint *ad triennium* a third cycle coordinator for the Faculty.

§2. The coordinator is responsible for:

1° Evaluating applications for the *Propaedeutic Phase* and present applicants, along with his judgment, to the dean for admission;

2° Ensuring that students in the *Propaedeutic Phase* receive adequate guidance in their studies;

3° Convening and chairing meetings and other consultations of the committee for the third cycle;

4° Submitting the committee's evaluations for the third cycle to the dean;

5° Communicating assessment results to candidates.

§3. If the role of the coordinator remains vacant, the dean assumes the duties of the coordinator.

Art. 5. The committee for the third cycle

§1. At the beginning of his term of office, the dean constitutes a committee for the third cycle *ad triennium*.

§2. The committee shall consist of at least three stable faculty members, one of whom shall be the coordinator of the third cycle, who shall serve as its chair.

§3. The committee is an advisory body, whose task is to evaluate:

1° The results of the propaedeutic course and the validity of the research program;

2° Research findings and dissertation program proposals.

§4. The committee should provide a formative evaluation of the candidate, highlighting strengths and offering suggestions for project improvement.

§5. For the promotion of candidates to the next phase, the committee offers the Dean an advisory vote.

Based on the outcome of the evaluation, the Dean authorizes or rejects the promotion. In cases of a tie in the vote, the Dean considers the arguments for and against and makes the decision.

² Cf. *Standards for the Recognition of Credits* (2022), Art. 3.

³ By the same act of approving the Norms, the rector routinely delegates to the academic vice rector this power to dispense.

Art. 6. The research director

- §1. The research director shall be a structured member of the faculty, holding an appropriate doctorate, appointed by the dean to guide the student in the investigation and subsequent writing of the dissertation.
- §2. Appointment of the director of research shall take place during the first semester of the *Propaedeutic Phase*.
- 1° In order for research within the third cycle to be included in the lines and projects recognized by the faculties, and to ensure that due attention is given to the student in his or her professional development, research directors are appointed preferably from among the stable faculty members of the faculty, then next from among the structured faculty, such as invited professors, adjunct professors or researchers.
 - 2° In order to validly appoint a faculty member from another faculty of the Athenaeum, the approval of the corresponding dean and the academic vice rector must be sought.
 - 3° If the dean intends to appoint an external professor, who is not yet structured as a non-stable faculty member, as research director, he or she must propose to the Rector that the director be appointed to the corresponding category, according to current regulations.⁴
 - 4° Each stable faculty member, in agreement with the priorities set with the dean, must supervise a congruent number of third-cycle students, either as research director or dissertation reviewer. To ensure adequate attention to candidates, a faculty member should not take over the direction or review of more than ten projects at the same time.
- §3. The appointment of the director of research shall be valid as long as the student remains enrolled in the third cycle. It may terminate by resignation or removal, with or without the request of the candidate.
- 1° The director of research, for good cause, may submit his or her resignation to the dean, either in writing or orally before two witnesses. The resignation does not need to be accepted to take effect.⁵ Should the same faculty member subsequently wish to resume as research director, he/she will need a new appointment.⁶
 - 2° For weighty reasons, a candidate may request a change of director; the dean reviews the case, hearing the views of the director and the cycle coordinator; after being satisfied that the proposed change will benefit the research, he or she may appoint a new director, exonerating the former.
 - 3° For good cause and after hearing the Faculty Council, the Dean has the authority to withdraw the appointment of one director and confer it on another.

Art. 7. The dissertation reviewer

- §1. The reviewer is a structured, stable or non-stable faculty member who, during the *Dissertation Phase*, accompanies the candidate and the director in the dissertation writing process. He/she provides suggestions for improvement of the dissertation, and together with the director, is responsible for the final evaluation of the dissertation.

⁴ Cf. *General Statutes*, Art. 33-34; *General Regulations*, Art. 40.

⁵ Cf. CIC 187 and 189.

⁶ Cf. CIC 189§4.

- §2. The reviewer shall be appointed by the dean, after consultation with the third cycle coordinator and the director, once the candidate has been promoted to the *Dissertation Phase*.
- §3. The appointment of the reviewer is valid while the student remains enrolled in the third cycle. It may terminate by resignation or removal, with or without the candidate's petition, as in Art. 6, §3.

Title II. The Propaedeutic Phase

Art. 8. The purpose of the Propaedeutic Phase

- §1. The purposes of the *Propaedeutic Phase* are:
- 1° Verify the candidate's suitability to pursue highly qualified research within the Faculty;
 - 2° Place the candidate in the main lines of investigation of the faculty through the selection of a director and the proposal of a research project.
- §2. To achieve these aims, the main exercises include.
- 1° The completion of advanced studies.
 - 2° The writing of a scientific paper relevant to the research area.
 - 3° The preparation of a research project.

Art. 9. Admission, matriculation and enrollment in the Propaedeutic Phase

- §1. In order to enroll in the *Propaedeutic Phase*, with which the third cycle begins, the candidate must have fulfilled the admission requirements for the cycle, indicated in the Faculty's order of studies.
- §2. The third cycle coordinator evaluates the applications for admission, ensuring that the applications are complete; within the stipulated time, he or she submits the candidate's dossier to the Dean, together with his or her judgment on the candidate's suitability and an academic judgment on possible missing prerequisites and other advanced studies.
- §3. In the case of a positive judgment of the coordinator, it is the responsibility of the dean to admit the candidate to the *Propaedeutic Phase* and approve the program of advanced studies.
- §4. Once admitted by the dean, the candidate, by the dates provided in the Atheneum's general calendar, shall proceed to finalize enrollment in accordance with current regulations.
- §5. Enrollment in the *Propaedeutic Phase* lasts for one academic year with the possibility of two additional semesters of extended enrollment.

Art. 10. Advanced studies

- During the propaedeutic course, the student must fulfill any missing prerequisites and other complete further studies indicated at the time of enrollment, which may include:
- 1° the study of languages if the student does not demonstrate sufficient knowledge of one of the necessary languages related to his or her research area.
 - 2° seminars for doctoral students, including the methodological seminar of the third cycle.

Art. 11. The scientific article

- §1. Each student must write, under the guidance of the research director, a written work in the form of a scientific article, relevant to the research area.
- §2. This work has several formative purposes:
- 1° Provides the candidate with an opportunity to demonstrate and refine his or her research skills;

- 2° Offers specific training in a literary genre important for academic careers;
- 3° Verifies whether the collaborative relationship with the director is suitable to continue together in the research phase.

§3. This article will be evaluated by the director and one of the members of the committee for the third cycle.

Art. 12. The research project

- §1. To complete the *Propaedeutic Phase*, the candidate must submit a research project with a view to the possible dissertation, according to the characteristics established in the procedures.
- §2. Before the project is submitted to the committee for the third cycle, the director should include his written judgment, indicating the merits and limitations of the project related to this stage of development, and the planned path for the maturation of the research.

Art. 13. The promotion of the candidate to the Research Phase

- §1. Once the candidate has met the educational requirements of the *Propaedeutic Phase*, the committee for the third-cycle will evaluate the candidate's complete dossier, which consists of:
- 1° the results of advanced studies;
 - 2° the scientific article and its evaluation;
 - 3° the research project with the director's judgment.
- §2. Members of the committee give their opinion on the dossier. The outcome of the evaluation may be:
- 1° positive: the dossier provided by the student demonstrates suitability to begin the proposed research under the guidance of the director. If the case merits it, the committee may suggest additions or guidelines for the research project.
 - 2° uncertain: the dossier provided by the student is not sufficient to demonstrate suitability for the *Research Phase*. In particular, the research project requires substantial additions, or even a new orientation.
 - 3° negative: the file provided by the student shows that he/she is not eligible for the *Research Phase*.
- § 3. The third-cycle coordinator shall communicate the outcome of the evaluation to the student, with a copy to the research director, and record the evaluation in the computer platform of the general secretary.
- 1° If the judgment is positive, the candidate can enter the *Research Phase*.
 - 2° In the case of an uncertain judgment, the third cycle coordinator communicates the outcome, explaining the amendments to be made within the time frame. For the new version of the project, we follow the same evaluation process previously followed, but the committee must arrive at a certain judgment, either positive or negative.

Title III. The Research Phase.

Art. 14. The aims of the Research Phase

- §1. The *Research Phase* is an individualized program of study in which the student continues his or her scientific training for research and teaching.

§2. Under the guidance of the research director, the student carries out the project presented in the *Propaedeutic Phase*; collects and analyzes data related to the proposed problem, and hypothesizes a solution in the form of a dissertation project. In addition, he/she begins to become involved in faculty life.

§3. The research phase culminates with the presentation of the so-named dissertation project.

Art. 15. Enrollment in the Research Phase and its effects

§1. Students promoted from the *Propaedeutic Phase* may enroll in the *Research Phase* by paying the relevant administrative fee.

§2. Enrollment in the *Research Phase* lasts for one year, with the possibility of two additional semesters of extended enrollment.

§3. If the student does not turn in the dissertation project by the end of the fourth semester, the course coordinator evaluates the case together with the research director. If the case merits it, the coordinator submits a request to the dean for re-enrollment in the phase.

Art. 16. The advancement in research

§1. Projects approved at the end of the *Propaedeutic Phase* are reserved for the doctoral student while he/she remains enrolled in the third cycle. They are recorded in the secretary's office with a reference number.

§2. Faculties must keep up-to-date the public list of active projects in the third cycle, indicating the name of the candidate, the title of the project, and the name of the director.

§3. Each semester, the doctoral student shall deliver to the third-cycle coordinator a report on the progress of research, indicating major advances and mentioning major obstacles. The report is reviewed by the coordinator and the research director and is recorded with a simple grade of *passed* or *failed*.

Art. 17. Inclusion in the academic life of the faculty.

During the *Research Phase*, and without detriment to research activity, the candidate may cooperate with the faculty as an assistant professor or with other appropriate forms of collaboration.

Art. 18. The dissertation project

§1. When the results of the research are sufficiently mature, after at least two semesters but not more than four, the doctoral student shall solicit approval of the dissertation project prepared under the supervision of the director.

§2. Within seven days after delivery of the project, the director shall add a report with his written judgment on the dissertation project.

Art. 19. The promotion of the candidate to the Dissertation Phase

§1. Once the candidate has met the educational requirements of the *Research Phase*, the committee for the third cycle will evaluate the candidate's completed dossier, which consists of:

1° the semi-annual progress reports;

2° the draft dissertation with the director's judgment.

§2. The committee follows the same evaluation process described for promotion to the *Research Phase* (cf. Art.14, §§2-3)

§3. If the committee deems it appropriate, it may hear the director before passing judgment. The director, however, shall not participate in the voting, and if he is a member of the committee for the third cycle, he shall recuse himself.

Title IV. The Dissertation Phase.

Art. 20. The aims of the Dissertation Phase

- §1. The *Dissertation Phase* is an individualized program of study in which the student completes his or her research, communicating the results through the writing of a dissertation.
- §2. The *Dissertation Phase* lasts between two and four semesters, culminating in the presentation of the dissertation.
- §3. The dissertation can be delivered within the first semester of the phase, and defended during the second semester.

Art. 21. Enrollment in the Dissertation Phase and its effects

- §1. Students promoted from the *Research Phase* may enroll in the *Dissertation Phase* by paying the relevant administrative fee.
- §2. Enrollment in the *Dissertation Phase* lasts for one year with the possibility of two additional semesters of extended enrollment.
- §3. If the student does not turn in the dissertation by the end of the fourth semester, the course coordinator evaluates the case together with the research director. If the case merits it, the coordinator submits a request to the dean for re-enrollment in the phase.

Art. 22. The candidate's other academic activities

During the *Dissertation Phase*, and without detriment to the writing of the dissertation, the candidate, with the positive judgment of the director and at the discretion of the dean, may do a teaching internship with more responsibilities than those of the *Research Phase*, indicated above in Art. 17.

Art. 23. The elaboration of the dissertation

- §1. During the *Dissertation Phase*, the doctoral student submits drafts of the dissertation chapters for correction by both the director and the reviewer. The latter have 30 working days to communicate their comments to the doctoral student.
- §2. The reviewer works alongside the director to ensure the quality of the dissertation. The candidate, under the guidance of the director, works to supplement the reviewer's observations. These observations, however, if in the opinion of the director himself, do not affect the validity of the dissertation, are always of a guiding nature.

Art. 24. The delivery of the dissertation

Before handing in the dissertation, the candidate asks for written *clearance (nulla osta)* from the director and reviewer to proceed with the defense. If both believe that the dissertation has achieved at least the minimum grade to be approved, the candidate delivers the dissertation to the secretary's office in 4 typed copies, following the prescribed procedures.

Art. 25. The defense of the dissertation

- §1. After verifying that the candidate has completed the prescribed requirements, the dean shall admit the candidate to the final examination and set the date for the defense, to be held between 30 and 90 days after delivery.
- §2. Before the defense, both the editor and the reviewer must deliver the grade on the dissertation, together with a written evaluation, giving reasons for their opinion and stating the conditions for full or partial publication of the dissertation.
- §3. The defense is a solemn public academic act that takes place before a committee of three faculty members: a chairperson, the director and the reviewer. During the defense, the doctoral student presents the dissertation and discusses it with the committee. Afterwards, the committee collectively deliberates on the evaluation of the defense, signing the minutes and the certificate for publication. The act closes with the chairman's pronouncement on the outcome.
- §4. Within seven days of the defense, the coordinator shall notify the candidate of any mandatory or optional amendments requested by the director and reviewer and other conditions for publication of the dissertation.

Art. 26. The conferment of the title of “Doctor”

- §1. For the academic degree, the certificate will attest the grades in both number and qualification.⁷
 - 1° Only the evaluation of the *Dissertation Phase* is counted to determine the cycle grade, with the following formula: director's vote on dissertation (50%), reviewer's vote on dissertation (40%), collegial vote on defense (10%).
 - 2° Other third-cycle phases are reported in the certificate as passed.
- §2. The title of 'Doctor' shall be conferred after the dissertation is published and delivered to the secretary's office, following what is prescribed in the procedures. In the meantime, after the defense, it is possible to apply for the certificate of the subjects supported.
- §3. The decree *Vidimus et approbamus* is necessary for the validity of the publication; as a rule, the text of the decree, including the names of the director, the reviewer, the dean, and the date on which it was granted, must be given in the publication.
- §4. The delivery of a text that violates the conditions for its publication is *ipso facto* null and void.
 - 1° If the violation is detected before the title is conferred, the copies of the dissertation delivered will be rejected and it will be the candidate's responsibility to submit the corrected copies.
 - 2° If the violation is found after the title has been conferred, the Dean seeks a just resolution, obliging the delivery of a revised edition or proceeding to annul the degree.

⁷ Cf. *Standards for Examinations* (2022), Art. 7.