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Regulation

Master of Arts in Governance, Leadership and Democracy Studies

Article 1

General provisions

1. The Catholic University of Portugal, through the Institute for Political Studies, confers the degree of Master's in Studies of Governance, Leadership and Democracy.
2. The award of the master's degree presupposes the attendance and approval of the curricular units (57 ECTS) and the preparation, discussion, and approval of the thesis (33 ECTS), and students must complete a total of 90 ECTS.
3. Students who complete only the curricular part are entitled to obtain a Postgraduate Certificate.

Article 2

Duration

1. The Master's Degree lasts three semesters: two semesters for the curricular part and one semester for the preparation of the thesis.
2. The program can also be attended intensively, for only two semesters, as long as this is requested to the Board of the Institute for Political Studies and approved by it.

Article 3

Program Objective

The main objective of the Master's Degree is to provide its students with training in governance, leadership, and democracy through high-quality teaching and discussion.

Article 4

Program Composition

1. The program consists of two phases: the curricular phase and the thesis preparation and discussion phase.
2. The curricular phase (57 ECTS) covers compulsory curricular units and optional curricular units.
 - a) The curricular phase must be completed in two semesters.
 - b) All curricular units and seminars are mandatorily face-to-face.
 - c) At the end of the curricular phase, a thesis project must be submitted to the Coordination of the program.
3. The thesis preparation phase must be completed in one semester, and may be extended for another two semesters, upon request addressed to the IEP Board, with a favourable opinion from the advisor.



- a) This phase can be carried out simultaneously with an internship and/or exchange or, in the case of international students, in their country of origin.
- b) At this stage, the student's presence is mandatory only in the discussion of the thesis.
- c) The thesis must be written in English.

Article 5

Master's application requirements

1. Holders of a bachelor's degree can apply for the master's degree.
2. There will be applications for the Autumn semester and the Spring semester, and students may start the program indiscriminately in any of these semesters.

Article 6

Applications

1. Applications are formalized digitally, in a specific format, and must be accompanied by the following elements:
 - a) Curriculum vitae;
 - b) Certificate of Qualifications;
 - c) Identification Document;
 - d) Passport-style photo
 - e) Two letters of recommendation
 - f) Two essays by the candidate with approximately 2500 words each, in English.
2. The application period is announced in a specific announcement.
3. All candidates will be called for an interview, which aims to understand the candidate's motivations for attending the course, evaluate their professional experience, and clarify additional elements to the curricular evaluation.
 - a) The interview invitation will be emailed to the candidate's email address.
 - b) When scheduled, unjustified absence from the interview will result in incompleteness and consequent disregard of the application.
4. After submitting the form, the candidate will receive an email with instructions for paying the registration fee, a necessary condition to start the evaluation process.

Article 7

Selection of candidates

1. The selection of candidates to be admitted is carried out according to the following criteria:

Interview	30%
Bachelor's Certificate	20%
Curriculum vitae	20%



Letters of Recommendation	15%
Essays	15%

2. The results will be communicated to students via email, expressed as follows:
Admitted/Not Admitted.

Article 8

Curricular Phase

1. During the curricular phase, master's students must obtain 57 ECTS, through evaluation in the mandatory curricular units and in the chosen optional curricular units until they complete the aforementioned number of ECTS.
2. Teaching is face-to-face, and students must attend a minimum of 2/3 of the classes of each curricular unit of their program.
3. Evaluation in the different mandatory or optional curricular units is done, among others, through participation in classes, tests, presentation of essays, assignments (written and oral), and written and oral tests.
4. The appeal and improvement exam period is identified in the IEP Academic Calendar and takes place in July.
5. The completion of appeal and improvement exams requires prior registration and can only be requested until the presentation of the thesis project that concludes the curricular phase.
6. The student can take a maximum of three appeal or improvement exams.
7. Students who only complete the curricular part of the program without moving on to the next phase may apply to the IEP Board of Trustees for a Graduate Certificate in Governance, Leadership and Democracy Studies.

Article 9

Evaluation

1. The evaluation method of each course unit is determined by the teacher and must be mentioned in the course syllabus.
2. For the evaluation to be valid, it is necessary that the assignments, by written works or exam, are free of plagiarism and that the use of all materials respects copyright.
3. Students who are unable to attend one or more exams may take them during the appeal period, provided that they meet the conditions for this purpose and pay the corresponding fee.
4. Students who are unable to attend any exam during the normal period may be exempt from the appeal fee for the following reasons:
 - a) Provision of military service or service to the State;
 - b) Motherhood;
 - c) Serious or prolonged illness of the student, duly justified by the doctor.



5. As the review of tests is an exceptional measure, on the presumption, substantiated, that there are possible errors in the evaluation, it may be requested to the Board of the Institute, upon request, within five working days after the publication of the mark sheet, upon payment of an improvement examination fee, which will be returned when the complaint is upheld.
6. The review will be carried out by another professor in the same area of study, and there will be no appeal.

Article 10

Deadlines for submission of the thesis project

1. Students admitted in the Autumn semester must submit the project between February 1st and June 30th of the same academic year.
2. Students admitted in the Spring semester must submit their project between September 1st and December 31st of the academic year following the year of enrolment.
3. When students are unable to meet the deadline established in the previous numbers, they may request an extension of the deadline for a maximum of two semesters.
4. If the limit set for them is exceeded, it will not be possible to complete the program.

Article 11

Thesis project

1. The thesis project must be sent via email to ma.iep@ucp.pt along with a statement from the supervisor expressing their approval of the submitted project and their intention to supervise the candidate's work.
2. The project will include:
 - a) the title and subtitle of the future thesis;
 - b) a presentation of the theme and methodology that will be followed in a maximum of 2500 words;
 - c) a text on the "State of the Art";
 - d) a first detailed table of contents of the future thesis;
 - e) a first bibliographic survey;
 - f) a shcedule.
3. The acceptance of the project still requires the approval of the Master's Coordination or the Vice-Director of Academic Programs.
4. The project can be approved before the student finishes the curricular part, being, however, conditioned to its completion.



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Article 12

Admission requirements for the thesis preparation phase

1. Students who have completed the curricular phase with a minimum average of 14 values weighted points between the various curricular units and whose thesis project is approved may be admitted to the thesis preparation phase.
2. Students who do not meet the conditions established in the previous number at the end of the curricular part may:
 - a) carry out grade improvement exams, in the mandatory curricular units, to obtain the final average of 14 values;
 - b) request the extension of their curricular phase for another semester, in order to replace the optional curricular units with lower classification, to make up 57 ECTS with a minimum evaluation of 14 values.

Article 13

Thesis supervision

1. The preparation of the thesis must be supervised by a professor or a researcher from the Institute for Political Studies.
2. Professors and researchers from the Catholic University of Portugal, as well as professors and researchers from other national or foreign higher education institutions may also supervise the preparation of the thesis. In the latter case, the Scientific Council may suggest the supervision of a co-supervisor.
3. Specialist with recognised experience and professional competence may also be admitted as supervisors.
4. The appointment of the supervisor in the preparation of the thesis is formalized, for each case, after the presentation of the thesis project, a letter from the guest supervisor saying that he/she accepts to supervise the thesis, and the review of the Master's Coordinator.

Article 14

Preparation and submission of the thesis

1. The thesis must have a minimum of 15,000 and a maximum of 25,000 words, excluding the bibliography and the annexes, with the text typed in two spaces and the footnotes in one space.
2. Each thesis must include, in the opening, the approximate number of words and an abstract that cannot exceed 300 words.
3. The thesis must be written in English.
4. The thesis may be printed or photocopied and its cover and first page must contain:
 - a) the name and emblem of the University and the Institute;
 - b) the speciality;



- c) the name of the supervisor;
 - d) the name of the candidate;
 - e) the title of the thesis.
5. The submission of the thesis must be formalized by means of a request addressed to the Board of the Institute, accompanied by the following elements:
- a) 1 copy of the thesis in physical format;
 - b) 1 copy of the thesis in digital format, in searchable PDF;
 - c) 1 copy of the Curriculum Vitae;
 - d) 1 letter from the supervisor confirming that the thesis is ready to be delivered;
 - e) 1 signed statement authorizing the thesis to be archived in the UCP institutional repository;
 - f) A declaration of honour stating that the thesis is the work of the applicant and that all materials used are referenced in accordance with copyright laws.

Article 15

Deadlines for thesis submission

1. Students who begin their studies in the Autumn semester must submit their thesis between September 1 and January 31 of the academic year following the year of admission.
2. Students who begin their studies in the Spring semester must submit their thesis between February 1 and June 30 of the academic year following the year of admission.
3. The deadline for the submission of the thesis may be extended for a maximum period of two semesters, by means of a duly justified request addressed to the Board of the Institute for Political Studies; after this period, the student will not be able to submit the thesis.

Article 16

Jury and thesis defence

1. The appointment of the Jury at the IEP is made in accordance with the provisions of Order ADM/0017/2019 of the Rectory of the Catholic University of Portugal.
2. According to Order ADM/0017/2019, the jury is regularly appointed by the IEP Board, on the proposal of the Coordination of the master's program.
3. When the document submitted for public discussion and evaluation contains ethically sensitive material, the document must be submitted to the UCP Ethics Committee and the jury must be appointed by the Rector's Office, as provided for in point 7 of Order ADM/0017/2019.
4. The maximum period of 30 days after receipt of the thesis must be observed when the appointment is to be made by the Institute's Board, and 60 days when the procedure requires an opinion from the Ethics Committee and appointment by the Rector's Office.
5. The jury consists of three to five members, one of whom may be the supervisor.
6. Whenever there is more than one supervisor, only one can be part of the jury.



7. The members of the jury must be experts in the field covered by the thesis (Art. 22 of Decree-Law 74/2006) and are appointed from among nationals or foreigners who hold a doctoral degree or are experts who meet the requirements of Decree-Law No. 206/2009 of 31 August.
8. The president of the jury may authorize the participation of members by teleconference in any number, provided that there are technical conditions for their full participation in the proceedings.
9. The decisions of the jury are taken by a majority of its members, through a justified roll-call vote, with no abstentions allowed.
10. Minutes are taken of the jury's meetings, recording the votes of each of its members and the respective reasoning, which may be common to all or some members of the jury.
11. Successful candidates will be assigned one of the following classifications: Rite – Satisfactory (10-13 points); Feliciter – Good (14-15 points); Magna laude – Very Good (16-17 points); Summa laude – Excellent (18-20 points).

Article 17

Diploma and school certification

1. The final classification for the Master's degree is calculated as the ECTS-weighted average of the classifications obtained in the curricular units and the classification obtained in the thesis defence, on a scale of 10-20, from 0 to 20.
2. To be awarded a Master's Degree Diploma and Certificate, students must have completed the curricular part, earning all the credits required in their study plan, and successfully defended their Master's thesis.
3. The Master's certificate must be requested through the student's page (E-SCA). Payment is due for the issuance of the Master's certificate, according to the general table of fees in the academic year in question.
4. The diploma must be requested through the student's page (E-SCA) in the year of completion of the degree. At the time of the request, the absence of debt is validated, and only the diplomas of students who have their financial situation regularised will be issued.
5. Students who complete their studies between 1 January and 30 June and apply for their diploma on E-SCA in accordance with the date announced annually will receive their diploma at the graduation ceremony to be held in the last quarter of the same year.
6. Students who complete their studies between 1 July and 30 September and apply for their diploma on E-SCA in accordance with the date announced annually will receive a letter of congratulations at the graduation ceremony. The diploma must be collected from the academic services between December of the year in which the programme ends and 31 December of the following year.
7. Students who complete their studies between 1 October and 31 December of each year must apply for their diploma on E-SCA in the same year. The diploma will be prepared and can be collected from the School Office from the beginning of March until 31 December of the following year. These students will be invited to attend the graduation ceremony in the year



following their completion of the programme and will be presented with a letter of congratulations.

8. If the diploma is not collected by December 31 of the year following the completion of the course, the diploma will be paid for in accordance with the current table of tuition fees.

Article 18

Study Plan of the Program

The Master's Study Plan is available on the IEP website.

Article 19

Readmission rules

1. Curricular readmission becomes necessary in cases where the established deadlines are not met, resulting in expiry, and/or in cases where the student suspends their enrolment.
2. Students who interrupt their studies must apply to re-enter the programme. In the event of a suspension of more than two semesters, students must attend the International Seminar for the year in which they request re-entry, even if they have already done so before the request for suspension of enrolment.
3. In the event of suspension of enrolment without completion of the curricular phase, readmission is granted upon request and by the possible attribution of equivalencies to the curricular units already completed. To complete the respective curricular phase, the student must comply with the requirements of the curricular plan in force on the date of their readmission.
4. Applications for re-entry by students in the curricular phase must be submitted at least 10 days before the start of the semester. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be accepted. Applications for re-entry by students in the thesis phase may be submitted at any time during the academic year. Regardless of the month of re-entry, the full semester fee must be paid.

Article 20

Disciplinary issues

Considering that the seriousness, prestige, and good name of educational institutions depend on the seriousness and correctness of the behaviour of the entire academic community and especially of students in their study, research, and assessment work;

Considering that the relationship between a school and its students requires scrupulous compliance with legal rules and good academic practice;

Considering that the authenticity and originality of texts presented as one's own work constitute an ethical requirement to be met by members of an academy:



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1. It is unacceptable that, in legal relations between schools and their students, violations of the law imposing respect for copyright or breaches of good academic practice with centuries-old traditions should be tolerated. Whenever plagiarism is detected, the student will have their assessment annulled and receive a mark of zero;
2. The verification of such fraud constitutes a serious contractual and institutional offence, which constitutes just cause for termination of the school-student relationship;
3. In all matters not covered by these regulations regarding disciplinary offences, the disciplinary regulations of the Catholic University of Portugal shall apply.

Article 21

Award of Excellence

1. The Institute for Political Studies awards the Lord Acton and Alexis de Tocqueville awards to the MA program in Governance, Leadership, and Democracy Studies.
2. Any of the awards mentioned in 1 are strictly honorary and do not include any form of financial compensation. The awards of Excellence are listed in the diploma supplement and constitute an effective promotion of the qualifications of the award-winning students.
3. For both awards, only master's students who are effectively enrolled and whose financial situation is regularized on the date the results are determined and announced will be eligible.
4. Each academic year, the IEP awards the Alexis de Tocqueville Prize to the best student who is currently enrolled in the program and who has completed 57 ECTS in a maximum of two semesters.

Article 22

Pedagogical Committee

1. The Pedagogical Committee aims to reflect on and discuss matters brought to its attention by its members that relate to the functioning of the 2nd and 3rd Cycle Programmes of the IEP.
2. The Pedagogical Committee is composed of one member of the Board of Directors and one member of the Coordination of each 2nd and 3rd cycle Programme, a representative of the teachers, as well as one student from each 2nd cycle Programme and two students from the 3rd cycle Programme, one of whom must be from the first phase of this Programme and one from the second or third phase of it.
3. The representatives of students and teachers are elected by their peers, in elections held annually on a date set in the IEP academic calendar.
4. The Pedagogical Committee meets ordinarily once every semester and extraordinarily whenever convened by the Board.
5. The meetings of the Pedagogical Committee are moderated by the Deputy Director of Academic Programs or, in his delegation, by a Programme Coordinator.



Article 23

Exceptions, doubts, and omissions

1. The Board shall have the final decision in all exceptional cases and, for scientific matters, shall consult the Specialized Committee of the Scientific Council of the Institute for Political Studies.
2. Cases of doubt and omission in the interpretation or application of these Regulations shall be resolved by the Board of the IEP, at the request of the interested parties.

Article 24

Revision of the Regulation of the MA Programme in Governance, Leadership and Democracy Studies

These Regulations may be revised by decision of the IEP Board, under consultation and approval of the Rector's Office.

Lisbon, October 2025