



**Thesis Regulations
for
Dissertation Doctorates**

**Within the
International Degree-Programme**

Dr. / PhD

By Thesis

UCN Universidad Central de Nicaragua

September 2013



Professional Doctorate "DBA" PhD Research Doctorate "Doctor"

International University programme of UCN Universidad Central de Nicaragua provided as doctoral Degree-Programme

§ 1 Objective – Qualification

- 1) UCN Universidad Central de Nicaragua (Managua, Nicaragua) – called „University“ – conducts postgraduate and doctoral programmes for international students in distance learning mode.
- 2) The examinations and defences of dissertations (theses) before the examining committee are conducted in compliance with the provisions of applicable Nicaraguan study laws and with the study and examination regulations of the university.
- 3) The examination and defence of the thesis are to prove, on the basis of his/her independent study and research in the given field of study, that the Applicant has gained a deeper insight in the wider basis of the discipline and is capable of acquiring latest theoretical and practical knowledge, s/he is also capable of creative and independent application of the gained knowledge and experiences in practice.
- 4) The examination and thesis defence are conducted in the subject field for which the admission has been approved by the University subject to the degree programme of the University in order to conduct examination and thesis defence.
- 5) The doctoral study programme is available to graduates of Master and postgraduate studies.
- 6) The distance learning study programme has asynchronous design aiming at the transfer and acquisition of knowledge at a high level of independent self-study and research. The opportunity of networking collaboration via the e-learning platform of the University provides practical integration for the participants of the programme, resulting in high-end theses.
- 7) The research findings gained in this programme qualify the alumni as specialists in their given study area.

§ 2 International Accreditation

Universidad Central de Nicaragua UCN offers numerous recognised study areas and is reputed for its approach to international co-operations with universities abroad and for its international study offers as one of the most innovative universities in Nicaragua and the only fully recognised and autonomous university in Nicaragua with institutional accreditation from the United Kingdom government recognised Accreditation Service for International Colleges and Universities ASIC as "Premier University" (2013 – 2017).

§ 3 UCN Universidad Central de Nicaragua

Nicaraguan higher education law is embedded in the principle of freedom of instruction, guaranteeing in Article 125 of the Nicaraguan Political Constitution full autonomy being implemented by Law no. 89 about the Autonomy of the Institutions of Higher Education (No. 89¹). The law 89 determines in Articles 7

¹ Ley de Autonomia de las Instituciones de Educación Superior, 89/1990, Kapitel II, Art. 7-9

and 9 that the institutions of higher education can award academic degrees. UCN is a fully autonomous accredited university with the unrestricted right to award certificates, diplomas, academic degrees and titles and to issue certificates of recognition and validation of studies on equivalent level, completed at other university or centres of higher education, domestic or abroad, entitled to recognise academic degrees, titles and diplomas awarded by foreign university, entitled to award professional rights, except for lawyers and notaries for whom, by law, the Supreme Court is in charge. Furthermore, UCN is entitled to establish relations with academic, scientific and cultural establishments located domestically or abroad. According to Article 82 of the Ley General de Educacion 2006² the explicitly mentioned „Doctorates“ constitute – literally quoted –the „nationally and internationally fully recognised academic degrees“ in Nicaragua.

§ 4 Examining Committee

The University establishes an examining committee for the evaluation and examination of doctoral candidates (theses). Detailed provisions are given in §14.

§ 5 Study Areas

The study areas include:

- Administration (Business Administration, Public Administration)
- Economic and Social Sciences
- Health Sciences
- Psychology
- Education
- Environmental Sciences

§ 6 Master degree and Doctorates

The Master degree is the period of study and intermediate degree to the doctoral research programme.

The doctorates are differentiated as

- Professional Doctorates with the academic degree “Doctor en...”, abbreviated „Dr.“; and
- Research Doctorates with the academic degree „Doctor en ...“, abbreviated „Dr.“ or „PhD“ in English.

§ 7 Workload and Structure of the Study Programme

1) The volume of the study programme is determined by the workload, given in credits (in brackets: ECTS points).

2) The Master degree requires a minimum workload of 75 credits (60 ECTS points) with an admission level of 300 credits (240 ECTS points). The Master level comprises a total of 10 semesters and a workload of 375 credits (300 ECTS points).

3) The professional doctorate requires as thesis doctorate a workload of 150 credits (120 ECTS points), to be achieved in the event of Applicants with 375 credits (300 ECTS) on admission by thesis only; in the event of Applicants with 300 credits (240 ECTS) on admission to be achieved by thesis of 75 credits (60 ECTS points) and by transfer of credits from positively completed postgraduate courses in the extent of 75 credits (60 ECTS points). This

² Ley General de Educación, 382/2006, Art. 82

corresponds with a duration of 4 semesters. The accumulated minimum requirement for the professional doctorate is 450 credits (360 ECTS points).

4) The research doctorate requires a workload of 225 credits (180 ECTS points), to be achieved by thesis of 150 credits (120 ECTS points) and by transfer of credits from positively completed postgraduate courses in the extent of 75 credits (60 ECTS points). This corresponds with a duration of 6 semesters. The accumulated minimum requirement for the research doctorate is 600 credits (480 ECTS points).

§ 8 Admission

1) Applicants can be admitted to the asynchronic distance education programme throughout the year.

2) Admission Requirements:

a) Persons meeting the following requirements can be admitted to the Professional Doctorate: Completed university or college study programme of at least 8 semesters with no less than 300 credits (240 ECTS points) from a diploma programme with a recognised university or college at level 2 and entitling for admission to doctoral programmes in the country of origin of the awarding institution; and a postgraduate specialisation or master degree of at least 75 credits (60 ECTS points). (Master level)

b) Persons meeting the following requirements can be admitted to the Research Doctorate: Completed university or college study programme of at least 10 semesters with no less than 375 credits (300 ECTS points) from a diploma programme with a recognised university or college at level 2 and entitling for admission to doctoral programmes in the country of origin of the awarding institution; and a postgraduate specialisation or master degree of at least 75 credits (60 ECTS points). (MPhil level)

3) The admission-commission of the university rules on the grounds of the formal requirements and the application per single case and upon request of the Applicant according to available enrolments and tutoring capacities, as well as of the submitted research proposal for the thesis. The admission-commission can require an admission-test.

4) Application procedure and admission: Applications for admission to the respective doctoral programme must be submitted with the required documents (application form, curriculum vitae, proof of degrees earned and professional experiences gained, passport copy, passport photo). The admission-commission may require the submission of "original transcripts" directly from the awarding tertiary education institutions.

5) Persons who have been admitted to the programme and who have paid the programme tuitions and fees, will be admitted by the study department of the university as international students.

§ 9 Application

1) The Applicant submits his/her application to the admission-commission.

2) The application for the admission has to be submitted in a written form and the Applicant shall state in addition to his/her personal data the following:

a) the subject field in which s/he has obtained a university degree,

b) the subject field chosen for the thesis examination in line with these regulations,

c) the topic of the thesis,

d) the research project of the thesis.

- 3) The Applicant can choose the subject field in which s/he has completed university study or a related subject field.
- 4) The Applicant can suggest his/her own topic of the thesis.
- 5) The application for the thesis examination has to include the following enclosures:
 - a) the completely filled and signed application form,
 - b) copy of the Diploma and Diploma Supplement (transcript),
 - c) the graduate of a foreign university has to include the proof that the awarding institution is a recognised institution of higher education in the country of its origin, this requirement can be waived, however, if this fact is evident,
 - d) Curriculum Vitae of the Applicant,
 - e) copy of passport or identification document of the Applicant,
 - f) passport photo in colour.
- 6) The admission commission shall examine the application for the thesis examination and within 30 days from its delivery shall announce the decision to the Applicant in writing.
- 7) In the event the application complies with the requirements as stated in the Paragraphs 2, 3 and 5, the admission commission shall, according to available enrolments and tutoring capacities, confirm its acceptance in writing. The admission commission shall simultaneously notify the Applicant of the subjects which shall become part of the postgraduate specialisation as the wider basis of the discipline in the chosen subject field.
- 8) In the event the application does not comply with the requirements as stated in the Paragraphs 2, 3 and 5, the admission commission shall ask the Applicant to complete the missing data before the stated deadline.

§ 10 Transfer Credits

- 1) The evaluation of degrees and transfer-credits is subject to the provisions of UCN. In the international evaluation of credits UCN applies the full study year transfer-factors on the credits.
- 2) Total autonomous UCN Universidad Central de Nicaragua offers the doctoral programme according to Nicaraguan study law. In evaluating degrees and transfer-credits UCN applies the standards in compliance with Article 9 Paragraph 2 of the Law no. 89 on the Autonomy of the Institutions of Higher Education³.
- 3) 75 credits (60 ECTS points) earned in postgraduate specialisations or Master programmes must be transferred by Applicants with 300 credits (240 ECTS) on admission into the curriculum of the Professional Doctorate, as far as they match the research topic of the chosen specialisation.
- 4) 75 credits (60 ECTS points) earned in postgraduate specialisations or Master programmes must be transferred into the curriculum of the Research Doctorate, as far as they match the research topic of the chosen specialisation.
- 5) Credits can be accepted from coursework taken with recognised institutions of higher education, recognised degree programmes, or programmes validated by the University, or from course-work taken with the University at the postgraduate level, according to a study plan matching the chosen specialisation.

§ 11 Doctorate by Publication

A doctorate for scientific publications is possible in compliance with the exclusion clause of § 13 Paragraph 4, as far as this procedure is provided in the particular

³ Ley de Autonomia de las Instituciones de Educación Superior, 89/1990



plans and programmes of study and the conditions thereof are regulated by these plans and programmes.

§ 12 Duration of Programme

- 1) The thesis examination programme starts with the confirmed acceptance of the application form by the admission-commission of the University and is becoming effective upon the payment of the non-refundable study-tuitions by the Applicant with the receipt of the payment by the University.
- 2) The thesis examination programme ends:
 - a) by the act of granting and awarding the academic title by the university,
 - b) by the decision of the examining committee that the Applicant did not meet the requirements including the retake options,
 - c) by delivering the written request to the examining committee to terminate the thesis examination,
 - d) by failing to complete thesis examination programme within the allowed retake options in compliance with the Letter b.

§ 13 Dissertation Thesis

- 1) The range of themes for theses, their extent and particulars, as well as the requirements for theses are announced by the University based on the proposals examining committee for the thesis examination.
- 2) A doctoral thesis is a monothematic work which brings about new findings, it is not a compilation of literature, as a rule it presents personal original research pursued by the Applicant.
- 3) In general, the thesis is written in Spanish language. An Applicant of different nationality or a foreign Applicant shall ask the admission commission for a possibility to write the thesis in a foreign language. In case of available language capacity the admission commission shall approve the request. A thesis written in a language other than Spanish or English shall include a summary written in Spanish or English language in extent of up to 10 pages.
According to available enrolments and tutoring capacities particularly the following study languages are approved: Spanish, English, German.
- 4) The use of Master-theses or doctoral theses having already been used for the award of an academic degree is not allowed. The Applicant cannot submit as a rigorous thesis his/her diploma thesis or any other qualification thesis, neither the work of a compilation character. The University can accept a prior dissertation and doctorate only for the purpose of revalidation of the degree in order to award the equivalent degree.
- 5) The Applicant submits to the examining committee the thesis. The thesis has to be written in text editor, printed and bound in hard cover. Upon request of the Applicant or order recommendation of the examination committee the submission of an electronic version is permitted. Two hardcopy editions of the thesis must be sent to the University.
- 6) To evaluate a thesis the examining committee nominates at least one staff member possessing the "assistant professor" or "professor" title or the academic title PhD, Dr. or an equivalent degree at doctoral level. The evaluator/s are appointed by the examining committee.
- 7) The evaluator first evaluates the methodological aspect of the thesis. In the event of the positive evaluation, the thesis shall be evaluated from a specialized, subject-specific perspective. Positive evaluations of the thesis are necessary

preconditions for the invitation of the Applicant to the thesis defence and examination.

8) The nominated evaluator shall submit to the examining committee within 60 days from the delivery of the thesis to the evaluator the evaluation of the thesis in which s/he shall state if the thesis does or does not meet the requirements determined by the examining committee and this given study plan. In the evaluation the evaluator shall also present comments on the content of the thesis and, in conclusion of the evaluation, state if s/he does or does not recommend the thesis for the oral defence, or if s/he recommends to rewrite the thesis.

9) In the event that the evaluator does not recommend the thesis for the defence, the Applicant can rewrite the thesis and resubmit it for evaluation on the next deadline for theses submission as determined by the examining committee. If s/he fails to submit the thesis on the given deadline s/he shall be excluded from the registration of Applicants for examinations and thesis defences. The Applicant can ask the examining committee in writing for the extension of the thesis submission deadline not more than twice.

10) Within the six months from the thesis submission before the thesis examination the examining committee shall notify the Applicant in writing of the place, date and time of the online-examination and at the same time notify him/her the result of the evaluation of the thesis.

11) Precondition of the invitation to the thesis defence and examination is the positive evaluator evaluation.

§ 14 Examining Committee

1) The examination and thesis defence take place in front of the examining committee via video conference.

2) The right to act as examiners is granted only to university teachers occupying the posts of professors or assistant professors or other experts possessing at least the academic title PhD, Dr. or comparable qualification at doctoral level, approved by the University.

3) The committee is appointed by the University, the nominees are selected from the eligible staff members as stated in Paragraph 2.

4) The committee consists of a chairman and a minimum of two other members. An external evaluator is appointed.

5) As a general rule, the committee is appointed for a period until dismissal.

§ 15 Examination and Defence of Thesis

1) The examination can take place only when a chairman and a minimum of two other members are present online. The procedure of the examination is delivered by means of electronic tele-communications media (video-conference).

2) The examination is generally conducted in the language of the thesis.

3) The examination consists of two parts. It starts with the thesis presentation and defence and continues immediately by the oral examination by the examining committee. In defence of thesis the Applicant responds to the comments and answers the questions of the committee members.

4) The committee members vote upon the result of the examination in the non public part of the session on the day of the doctoral examination. The examination result is expressed in words as "passed" or "failed".



5) The examination procedure is recorded in writing. All documents including the notation and the evaluation are kept in the Archive in compliance with the valid regulations.

§ 16 Retaking Examinations

1) In the event the Applicant cannot take the online-examination on the given date and gives a written apology for his/her absence within seven days thereafter, the examining committee shall provide on the basis of Applicant's request and consultation with the committee chairman a substitute date for taking the examination.

2) In the event the Applicant fails to appear in the stipulated time for the online-examination without giving a written apology within seven days thereafter, s/he shall be evaluated as if s/he had "failed" in the examination.

3) In the event the Applicant failed in the defence of the thesis or in the oral examination, the examination can be repeated on the next date announced for the examinations; the examining committee shall determine the date of the repeated examination. The examining committee can permit two further repetitions of the examination.

§ 17 Academic Degree

1) In compliance with the provisions of the Ley de Autonomía de las Instituciones de Educación Superior, applicable to UCN in Nicaragua, after passing the examination of the thesis the following academic degrees are conferred:

By UCN Universidad Central de Nicaragua:

- Professional Doctorate: Doctor en Administración de Empresas, abbreviated „Dr.“ (English diploma: DBA Doctorate in Business Administration)

- Research Doctorate: Doctor, abbreviated „Dr.“ or „PhD.“

3) The doctoral degree of the fully autonomous UCN Universidad Central de Nicaragua, validating and accrediting the programme, is a fully recognised doctoral degree in the sense of Article 82 of the Ley General de Educación (Nicaragua) and legally awarded in compliance with Articles 7 and 9 of the Law on Autonomy of the Institutions of Higher Education (Nicaragua).

§ 18 Distance Learning Mode

1) Notification: the International Doctoral Programme – Double Degree Programme is a distance education programme only to be completed by means of electronic media of tele-communications and e-learning directly at the University in Nicaragua, and that no elements of the study programme are conducted in third countries.

§ 19 Quality Assurance

1) Universidad Central de Nicaragua UCN was founded in 1997 as a private, non-profit and authorized by the National University Council in session CNU No. 10-98 of 18. November 1998 and approved by the Assembly of the Republic Decree No. 2822 according to the Constitution of Nicaragua and the Law No. 89 on the Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education. Universidad Central de Nicaragua UCN is a fully autonomous Nicaraguan university participating in the mandatory programme of auto-evaluation and quality assurance of National Council of Evaluation and Accreditation CNEA in Nicaragua. All professional titles and academic degrees are recognised by the professional associations and public services; UCN in 2010 is again among the best university in Central America and



has been awarded by the Central American Coalition USA as „Exemplary Central American University 2010“ in the United States of America. UCN is internationally accredited by ASIC Accreditation Service for International Colleges (ENQA and CHEA listed), a UK government Home Office approved and recognised Accreditation Body: systems accreditation of UCN covers the range of educational establishments and courses as Premier University (2013-2017).

2) Written Assignments will be checked with a plagiarism-analysis-programme for authenticity.

3) Online-examinations are standardised „Computer-Marked-Assignments“.

4) Written assignments and course-papers are „Tutor Marked Assignments“.

5) Scientific articles and publications are subject to a „peer-review“.

§ 20 Degree Recognition

The professional and research doctorates subject to these thesis guidelines are validated and approved as distance-education programmes of postgraduate study by Universidad Central de Nicaragua UCN, and, therefore, all academic degrees and titles awarded by UCN are fully recognised in compliance with Articles 7 and 9 of the Nicaraguan Law 89 on the Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education in the sense of Article 82 of the Nicaraguan General Law of Education.



Annex:

Higher Education System in Nicaragua

Stages of Study:

Grados (graduate degrees) and Postgrados (Specialist, Master and Doctor)

University level first stage: Licenciatura

The Licenciatura is awarded after four to six years' study, depending on the subject. A professional qualification is awarded after studies lasting five years in Engineering (Ingeniero) and Architecture (Arquitecto) and six years in Medicine (Doctor).

University level second stage: Maestría, Especialización

A Maestría is conferred after studies lasting for one to two years after the Licenciatura. Students must present a thesis. There are also postgraduate courses in various specialities in Medicine, Health Sciences, Law, Psychology, Education, Economics and Social Sciences.

University level third stage: Doctorado

A Doctorado is conferred after studies lasting for two to three years after the Maestría or graduate degree. Students must present a thesis. There are also doctoral research courses in various specialities including Business Administration, Education, Law, Psychology and Health Sciences.

Nicaraguan Higher Education Legal Framework /Marco Legal de la Educacion Superior de Nicaragua

Quotation from Political Constitution of Nicaragua:

Article 125

"Universities and Higher Technical Education Centers enjoy academic, financial, organizational and administrative autonomy, in accordance with the law.

They shall be exempt from all taxation and tax contributions, regional and municipal. Their assets and income shall not be subject to intervention, expropriation or seizure, unless the obligation is asserted, has its origin in civil contracts, commercial or labour.

Teachers, students and administrative workers are involved in university management.

Universities and Higher Technical Education Centres which by law must be funded by the state, will receive an annual contribution of 6% of the general budget of the Republic, which will be distributed in accordance with the law. The State may grant additional contributions for extraordinary expenses of such universities and centres of higher technical education.

It guarantees academic freedom. The State promotes and protects the free creation, research and dissemination of science, technology, arts and letters, and ensures and protects intellectual property. "



Quotations from the Law No. 89 on the Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education[1]

Article 7. Universities and Higher Technical Education Centres legally constituted have legal personality. Consequently, they enjoy full capacity to acquire, manage, hold and dispose of property and rights of every kind; issuing academic and professional qualifications and incur obligations in connection with its purposes and shall be governed by this Act and its own Regulations and Statutes. The state will finance all Universities and Higher Technical Education, included in this Act.

Article 8. The Universities and Higher Technical Education in the country shall enjoy academic, financial, organizational and administrative autonomy understood as follows: 1. Teaching or academic autonomy: it implies that it alone can appoint and dismiss teachers and academic staff, through the procedures and requirements of the laws themselves, select their students, by evidence and necessary conditions to develop and approve plans and programs of study and research, etc. (...)

Article 9. Autonomy gives also the power to: 1. Enjoy its own assets. 2. Issue certificates of study, graduate letters, certificates, diplomas, academic degrees and titles and equivalency of studies conducted in other universities and higher education institutions, domestic or foreign. State universities have the authority to recognize academic degrees and diplomas and university diplomas issued abroad. 3. Authorize professional practice except advocacy and notary, which by law is the responsibility of the Supreme Court. 4. The inviolability of the university premises and campuses. The police can only enter them with written authorization from the competent university authorities. 5. Approve their statutes and regulations.

Article 10. Universities and Higher Technical Education Centres will maintain and develop relationships with academic, scientific and cultural institutions based inside or outside the country.

Article 11. Academic freedom is a fundamental principle of higher education in Nicaragua.

Article 12. Universities and private Higher Technical Education Centres shall have all such powers and authorities designate, as provided by its own statutes and regulations.

Quotations from the General Law of Education No. 582[2]

Higher education subsystem

Article 48: The Higher Education Subsystem is the second stage of the education system that consolidates the integral formation of persons, produces knowledge, develops research and innovation and trains professionals in the highest level of expertise and development in all fields of knowledge, art, culture, science and technology to meet the demands of society, ethnic community and contribute to the development and sustainability of the country.



University institutions are governed by Law 89 on Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education.

Article 82: The Centres or Institute for Studies and Research, will meet the needs of professional, scientific, social and economic interest of the nation, not intended to substitute in any case those colleges or universities, which according to current regulations also have the right to award titles themselves, studies of the Centres or Institutes for Studies and Research will include updating studies, postgraduate, specialization, master's or doctoral degrees, certificates whose diplomas, specialist, master's and doctoral enjoy full legal recognition nationally and internationally.

Quotations from the Law No. 704 on Quality Assurance in Education[\[3\]](#)

Section 6 Definitions.

For the purposes of this Act the following definitions: (...)

10. Institution of higher education: Entity legally established in the country, which aims to generate, disseminate and apply knowledge through teaching, research, and extension, authorized to grant academic or professional degrees (...)

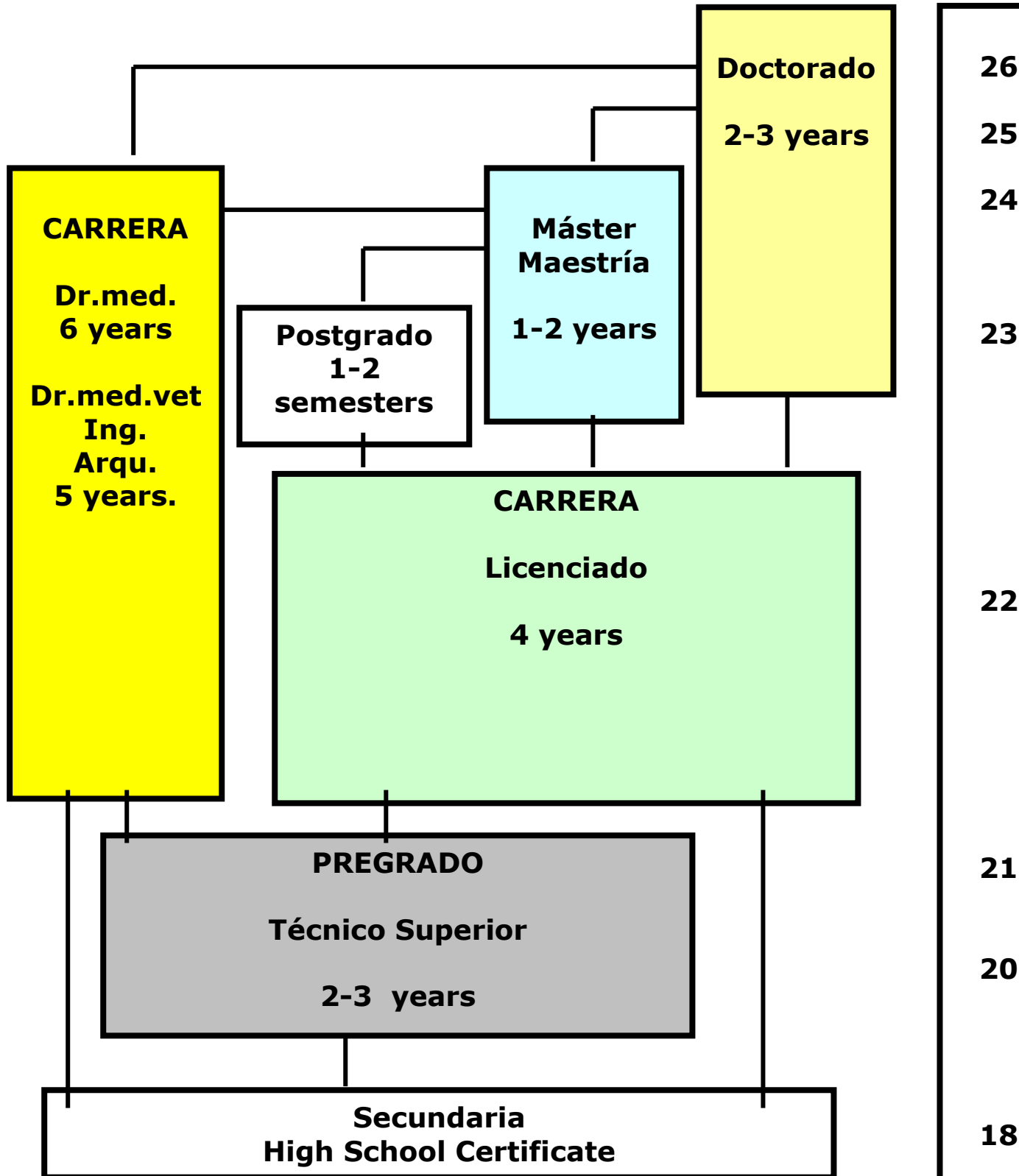
13. Academic Programs: Educational offers oriented on granting academic or professional degrees at the levels of higher technical degree, licenciatura or engineer, specialist, doctor and others which qualify for the practice of a profession, (...)

[\[1\]](#) Ley No. 89 Ley de Autonomía de las Instituciones de Educación Superior, published in the Official Journal on April 20, 1990

[\[2\]](#) Ley General de Educación, Ley 582 de 2006

[\[3\]](#) Ley No. 704, LAW ON CREATION OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE OF EDUCATION AND REGULATING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION - Law No. 704

Nicaraguan System of Higher Education





Impressum

Universidad Central de Nicaragua UCN
Dean of European Programmes
<http://www.ucn.edu.ni>

2013

Contact

Universidad Central de Nicaragua UCN
Name, telephone number and email address for an institutional contact person
Universidad Central de Nicaragua UCN
Semaforos del Zumen 3 C. abajo (oeste), 1 C. al lago (norte)
+ 505 2279-1160 + 505 2269-3103
Lic. Danilo Avendaño Martínez
Dirección de Relaciones Públicas e Internacionales
Coordinador de Programas Internacionales
Universidad Central de Nicaragua UCN
internationalprogramip@ucn.edu.ni