

Stakeholder Meeting Summary – Doctoral Course in Methods, Models and Technologies for Engineering

On 29 May 2025, a stakeholder meeting was held at the University of Cassino to discuss the structure, aims, and future directions of the Doctoral Programmes, with a special focus on the Engineering programme. The session was attended by academic coordinators, doctoral candidates, and representatives from industry, associations, and public bodies.

In the presentation of Unicas' doctoral programmes, parallel to the alignment with departmental research priorities and emphasis on tailored academic pathways, particular attention was given to the role of external partners – both public and private – in co-designing and co-financing research grants, especially through incentives under Italy's National Recovery and Resilience Fund (PNRR).

The coordinators of the doctoral programmes highlighted the strategic importance of integrating academia with industry to foster innovation. Especially within the doctoral programme in engineering, with over 30% of students coming from abroad and several active international co-tutorship agreements, the programme promotes cross-border mobility and scientific collaboration.

In the discussion, several academic voices emphasised the advanced problem-solving and analytical skills fostered by the PhD process, and described industrial doctorates as a successful convergence model between higher education and industry, enabling doctoral researchers to gain a systemic understanding of organisational processes.

Further exchanges underscored the need for continuous professional development and the importance of transversal skills, including leadership and strategic thinking. Participants agreed on the value of strengthening ties between academia and industry through collaborative projects, targeted training, and clearer alignment of competencies with labour market needs.

The meeting concluded with a structured feedback session, during which stakeholders were invited to respond to questions regarding desired competencies, employment prospects for PhD holders, and potential collaboration models. Participants concluded the meeting by reaffirming the commitment to ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, aiming to enhance both the scientific and societal impact of the doctoral programme.