



3.

UC's Academic Structure  
Bylaws and regulations

Structure of academic programs  
**UNIVERSITY  
GOVERNANCE**

“We want to integrate, break down barriers and structures that don’t allow us to work well”.

University Superior Council Day

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

The Universidad Católica is a higher education institution that stands out for its academic quality, its contribution to the country, its leadership in innovation and its management. This is endorsed in the institutional accreditation report of the Chilean Accreditation Commission CNA<sup>11</sup>, in its 7 years of accreditation and in the position it occupies in international rankings. The quality and prestige of the UC is the result of the efforts of talented students, first class professors and a group of professionals and administrators who for years have worked with excellence, as well as a university structure and governance that has favored, until now, the development and quality of our institution.

The great changes that society has undergone and the new challenges facing the university require us to review our structure and governance in depth. We need an academic and management structure that fosters collaboration and flexibility, in keeping with the new times. In this line, the integration initiatives that have been recently proposed are the beginning of a networked and more integrated work towards which we are moving.

## UC’s Academic Structure

The academic structure we have today is the result of the university reform of the late sixties, where we moved from a teaching university to a research university. In these five decades, the world and our country have changed drastically. Today there is full consensus that the great challenges facing humanity must be addressed in a collaborative and multidisciplinary way, which imposes on us the need to review how we carry out our training programs, the form and focus of our research, and our public role.

The academic structure has a strong impact on our educational project, on the programs we offer, and on the way we train future scientists, artists, humanists and professionals. At present, this structure makes it difficult to make timely changes to our educational offerings. Every day it becomes more evident that today’s challenges, in the areas of teaching, research and public engagement, cannot be fully assumed with a structure and operation designed to face a reality that is already past.

11. Institutional Accreditation Resolution No. 473 of the National Accreditation Commission, January 2019.



**REVIEWING THE STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN ORDER TO MOVE TOWARDS GREATER INTEGRATION, MORE INTERDISCIPLINARY WORK, GREATER COLLABORATION AND GREATER SYNERGY**

**OBJECTIVE / 1**

University governance: objectives and actions

- / Designing an academic management model that allows for the alleviation of the internal structures of the faculties.
- / Implementing intra and inter-faculty integration initiatives that promote collaboration and coordination of academic management based on major areas of knowledge.
- / Ensuring that the standards, academic requirements, management modalities and distribution of resources are similar among the different academic units.

“We must establish collaborative learning networks among teachers”.

UC Dialogue / 2020

On the other hand, the university has voluntarily submitted itself to reviews by international peers who have evaluated the operation and development of different areas of its work. This exercise, which has been carried out at the level of the Superior Direction, faculties, schools and institutes and even in some programs, has allowed us to improve in many academic and management

processes and has identified weaknesses precisely in our academic structure. In this line, one of the recurring recommendations that have emerged from these visits is related to the atomization of our academic activity, a diagnosis that is shared within the university. Our compartmentalized structure has hindered, in many cases, the operation, consolidation and development of important interdisciplinary initiatives created in recent years.

To avoid the atomization that has occurred globally in higher education as a result of the scientific advances of the 20th century and the trend towards hyper-specialization, the university has carried out important initiatives in the last 20 years.



These include the introduction of the General Education Plan, the establishment of interdisciplinary centers and programs, and the creation of the College program – which promotes multidisciplinary training, as well as the creation of shared positions and appointments among faculties. More recently, interdisciplinary academic units have been created to respond to current needs and build bridges between disciplines. Our challenge for the coming years will be to move towards a higher stage of collaboration between academic units that seeks, on the one hand, greater integration of knowledge and, on the other, better academic management.

A commission of the University Superior Council proposed that a revision of the academic structure should start from the disciplinary base of the university, which is in the institutes, schools, and monodisciplinary faculties. In recent years, four new disciplinary and five interdisciplinary schools and institutes have been added to these academic units. Both the recently created Institute for Sustainable Development and the future Institute of Applied Ethics, which is in the process of being created, are cross-cutting initiatives that involve all the academic units of the university and respond to the current needs of our institutional identity.

“We need an organizational change, where in our goals we share best practices to other faculties”.

UC Dialogue / 2020

The structural changes that the university will undertake in the coming years should be aimed at fostering collaboration among academics, facilitating interdisciplinary and collective creation. International evidence shows that these processes of revision and restructuring are complex and must be gradual and participatory, so instances such as UC Dialoga and the University Forum are especially important for the community to participate and reflect on how to carry them out.

Some of the proposals put forward in this axis are processes that require important cultural changes within the university, so they have a projection beyond the period of this plan. The Science 2030 project, which strengthens the collaborative academic work of five faculties, is a model that should be followed and replicated by other faculties. Along these lines, the university will support, as resources permit, initiatives that promote collaboration and reduce the atomization of academic work.

On this path towards greater collaboration within the university, it is important to highlight the integration initiatives that have recently been proposed. The objective of these initiatives is to join efforts and integrate activities that are carried out in the various areas of the Superior Direction together with the academic units. The first measures have already been defined and we must work to achieve their correct implementation in order to advance towards a more integrated and streamlined functioning of the university's work.

### OBJECTIVE / 2

University governance: objectives and actions

## Structure of academic programs

A structure that promotes collaboration among academics will generate more and better conditions for the creation of new programs with a multidisciplinary outlook. The new General Education Plan approved in 2019 is an important step in this direction. The next step will be the review of all our undergraduate programs, identifying parts of the curricula that can be constituted into majors and minors, so as to move towards a College-type structure. With this we will be able to promote greater curricular flexibility in the different degree programs, allowing students to take minors from other programs as part of their curriculum and not as part of their general education.

This academic architecture should also have an impact on graduate programs, optimizing the use of installed capacities. In the master's degree programs, this should lead to growth based on the diversification of an innovative and attractive interdisciplinary offer. A change in the academic structure is expected to improve and strengthen coordination and collaboration, establishing policies for the expeditious transfer of credits, courses and students. The recently created Graduate School should complete an in-depth analysis of UC doctoral training, reviewing the adequacy of the number, structure and governance of current PhD programs, where atomization is high and knowledge integration is low. A reorganization at this level should lay the groundwork for the establishment of spaces that allow a better training of our doctoral students, preparing them for work in academia and also in the non-academic world.

### MOVING TOWARDS GREATER FLEXIBILITY OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS THROUGH CHANGES IN THEIR STRUCTURE

- / Making decisive progress so that undergraduate programs are structured in the College modality, with majors and minors, which allow and encourage greater curricular flexibility in the different programs.
- / Setting up an academic governance structure for the master's degree programs in order to achieve better coordination and greater collaboration to promote their growth based on the diversification of the interdisciplinary offer, making better use of existing capacities and establishing policies for the transfer of credits, courses, and students.
- / Reviewing the current governance of the PhD programs with the purpose of reorganizing and establishing spaces for greater collaboration between students and academics from different faculties.

“The atomization of knowledge slows down research”.

University Superior Council Day

### UPDATING REGULATIONS AND STATUTES IN LIGHT OF THE CHANGES AND NEW CHALLENGES FACING THE UNIVERSITY

#### OBJECTIVE / 3

University governance: objectives and actions

- / Reviewing the university's fundamental regulations and norms and make changes in internal regulations that allow for the implementation of changes in the structure, governance, and management of the university.
- / Modifying the composition of the University Superior Council to incorporate representatives of the institutes and schools, alumni, and the administrative and professional staff.
- / Strengthening the autonomy of the University General Secretariat and provide it with the necessary resources and means to carry out its task diligently and efficiently.

In turn, this should enhance and diversify the opportunities for collaboration of our academics with a view to the contributions made to the country. It is expected that the changes will produce not only an increase in the number of doctoral students, but also that thesis work will address areas of disciplinary frontiers and emerging topics.

### Statutes and regulations

The university's statutes and general norms, together with the various regulations in force, are fundamental elements of university governance. Our work is governed by a set of 214 general and specific regulations, 18 faculty statutes and 25 academic unit regulations, several of which require revision and updating.

As a goal for the next five years, we will review those regulations that were promulgated 40 years ago and have not been modified, such as the Declaration of Principles of 1979 and the General Statutes of 1982. We will work to update these documents to adapt them to today's university. In addition, we will make adjustments to internal regulations as necessary to implement future changes in structure and governance as they are implemented.



In the short term, we will propose a modification of the General Statutes to change the composition of the University Superior Council, in order to incorporate representatives of the interdisciplinary institutes and schools, alumni, administrative and professional bodies.