FULL TEXT

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Tallinn University Regulations for Doctoral Studies and Defence of Doctoral Theses

TLU Senate Regulation No. 7 of May 9, 2022

These regulations are established pursuant to clause 3 of subsection 4 of § 5 of the Tallinn University Act, and clause 2 of subsection 2 of § 9 of the Tallinn University Statutes.

Chapter 1

GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 1. Doctoral studies

(1) Doctoral studies constitute the highest tier of higher education during which the student acquires the skills and knowledge required for independent research and development work or for creative professional work, and compiles and defends a doctoral thesis.

(2) Doctoral studies are conducted pursuant to the study programme approved by the Tallinn University (hereinafter referred to as the *university* or *TLU*) Senate and registered in the Estonian Education Information System. The structure of a doctoral programme and the requirements and procedure of its opening, developing and closing are governed by the TLU Statute of Study Programme.

(3) Admission to a doctoral programme takes place by way of public competition pursuant to Tallinn University's admission requirements and procedure.

§ 2. The purpose

(1) The purpose of the Regulations for Doctoral Studies and Defence of Doctoral Theses (hereinafter referred to as the *regulations*) is to set out the organisation of doctoral studies, conditions and policies for the progress review of doctoral students, conditions and policies for defending theses, and the rights and obligations of the parties in the organisation of doctoral studies.

(2) These regulations are based on legal acts governing doctoral studies and research activities.

(3) Aspects of the organisation of studies not covered by these regulations are governed by other legal acts.

Chapter 2

PARTIES TO DOCTORAL STUDIES

§ 3. General provisions

(1) A doctoral student is a student who is matriculated in a doctoral programme and whose membership in an academic unit is determined by the study programme or a version thereof. The doctoral student meets one of the following conditions:

1) junior research fellow – works in TLU under an employment contract as a junior research fellow;

2) doctoral student without an employment contract – does not have an employment-related contractual obligation linked to doctoral studies;

3) knowledge transfer doctoral fellow – works in an external institution or in an enterprise that has a cooperation agreement with the university (hereinafter referred to as the *partner to the knowledge transfer doctoral studies*), where he/she performs duties related to the doctoral studies under an employment contract.

(2) An external student is a person who defends a doctoral thesis without having the status of a student.

(3) A doctoral student and an external student must have a supervisor, the council of an academic unit may also appoint a co-supervisor and/or consultants for the doctoral student at his/her request. The supervisor or the co-supervisor of a knowledge transfer doctoral fellow is a university employee and the partner to the knowledge transfer doctoral studies must designate a person who is responsible for achieving the research and development objectives from the side of the partner (a supervisor, co-supervisor or consultant). [Amended 16.09.2024]

(4) Other parties to doctoral studies from behalf of the university include the academic unit, partner to the knowledge transfer doctoral studies, study programme administrator, doctoral studies council, defence committee, doctoral school and units providing the relevant support services.

(5) Roles of the parties in the organisation of doctoral studies are established in Chapter 3 of these regulations and described in Annex 1.

§ 4. Supervisor

(1) The supervisor of a doctoral student may be a person who holds a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification and, at the date of his/her appointment as a supervisor, has published research publications in the amount equivalent to at least two doctoral theses in total, and during the last five years, in the amount equivalent to at least one doctoral thesis. Three publications defined by ETIS (Estonian Research Information System) categories 1.1, 1.2 or 3.1 or one monograph defined by ETIS category 2.1, are regarded as equivalent to the amount of a doctoral thesis. In specialities falling in the field of arts, the supervisor may be an internationally recognised creative person.

(2) The co-supervisor of a doctoral student may be a member of research staff or a lecturer who holds a research degree conferred in Estonia or an equivalent degree conferred in a foreign country, and has published at least three peer-reviewed research publications or an internationally distributed research monograph during the last five years. In specialities falling in the field of arts, the co-supervisor may be an internationally recognised creative person.

(3) A doctoral student may have one supervisor and up to two co-supervisors.

(4) Where the supervisor is not a member of the university staff, the council of the academic unit may, with the consent of the doctoral student, appoint a co-supervisor from among the academic employees of the university.

(5) A recognised specialist of the field may also act as a consultant for the doctoral student.

§ 5. Doctoral studies council

(1) Doctoral studies council is area-specific and consists of three to eight members of the university staff qualified to be supervisors of doctoral theses on the basis of these regulations. In the event a member of the doctoral studies council becomes an emeritus, he/she may participate in the work of the doctoral studies council by the end of the council's mandate. [Amended 16.09.2024]

(2) Members of the doctoral studies council are approved by the university Senate for a term of five years on the proposal of the council of the academic unit responsible for the development of the corresponding field of studies and research. If the area of the doctoral study council covers study programmes of multiple academic units, the proposal will be coordinated by the councils of all academic units.

(3) Doctoral studies council elects a chair of the doctoral studies council from among its members. The chair of the doctoral studies council has the right to delegate his/her duties to a member of the council.

§ 6. [Repealed as of 16.09.2024]

§ 7. Partner to the knowledge transfer doctoral studies

(1) The pre-condition for the creation of a knowledge transfer doctoral studies study place is the interest by the partner organisation and willingness to contribute to conducting research and development in cooperation with the university, which will be covered or has been covered a relevant agreement, or a joint project will be created.

(2) In order to apply for a knowledge transfer doctoral studies study place, the partner:

1) confirms that the candidate for the knowledge transfer doctoral studies has an employment contract or will enter into an employment contract and his/her work in the organisation is

closely linked to the future doctoral thesis, and the remuneration of the knowledge transfer doctoral fellow paid by the partner for the duties related to the doctoral thesis corresponds to at least the minimum rate of remuneration of a junior research fellow established by the TLU Remuneration Regulation;

2) specifies whether there is a concrete candidate for the study place or the study place will be filled by way of open competition (in the case of a concrete candidate, submits data on the candidate, incl. supporting documents on qualifications).

(3) Upon the matriculation of the knowledge transfer doctoral student, the partner designates a person who is responsible for achieving the research and development objectives of the organisation (the co-supervisor or the consultant of the doctoral student) and who enters into a tripartite doctoral studies agreement. [Amended 16.09.2024]

Chapter 3

ORGANISATION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

Division 1

General provisions

§ 8. General provisions of the organisation of doctoral studies

(1) After matriculation, the study programme administrator and the doctoral student coordinate the topic of the thesis and the choice of the supervisor (also of the co-supervisor and/or consultant(s), where necessary). If the doctoral thesis has not been written in Estonian, English or Russian, the language of the thesis is coordinated as well.

(2) Study programme administrator transmits a submission to the council of the academic unit for the approval of the topic and appointment of the supervisor(s) within two weeks from the matriculation of the doctoral student. The submission must also indicate the research area that is required for the entry in the Estonian Education Information System and the language of the doctoral thesis in cases referred to in the second sentence of subsection 1 of this section.

(3) The council of the academic unit approves the topic of the doctoral thesis, the supervisor(s) and

the language in cases referred to in the second sentence of subsection 1 of this section within a week of the receipt of the submission referred to in subsection 2 of this section. A representative of the academic unit enters the information regarding the approved topic, supervisor(s) and the research area to the Study Information System, and transmits the decision of the council of the academic unit to the Research Administration Office.

(4) A first-year doctoral student presents a detailed individual study and research plan for the first year of studies, endorsed by the supervisor(s), to the academic unit for approval no later than within 60 days from the matriculation, and an individual study and research plan, endorsed by the supervisor(s), for the whole period of studies no later than within 4 months from the matriculation. At the progress review meeting, the doctoral student presents a detailed study and research plan endorsed by the supervisor(s) for the following period. [Amended 16.09.2024]

(4[1]) Amendments to the individual study and research plan, or the extension of the period is approved by the director on the proposal of the progress review committee. [Entry into force 16.09.2024]

(5) The progress of the doctoral student according to the individual study and research plan is assessed in a progress review generally once during an academic year. On the basis of a reasoned decision of the head of the academic unit or the progress review committee, a doctoral student may be declared to have passed the progress review after one completed semester. Generally, progress review is conducted during the exam session of the spring semester or autumn semester. [Amended 16.09.2024]

(6) The doctoral student may pause his/her studies:

1) for childcare until the child turns 3, and for participating in the conscript or alternative service. The nominal period of studies will increase by the time spent away;

2) in another case set out in the individual study and research plan. Extension of the nominal period of studies in connection with pausing the studies must be applied for, where necessary.

(7) Pausing the doctoral student’s studies is conditional upon a reasoned application together with the amended individual study and research plan. Amendments to the individual study and research plan are approved by the supervisor(s) and the head of the academic unit. Pausing the

studies is subject to the decision of the head of the academic unit.

(8) The study programme is deemed to be completed if studies foreseen therein have been completed and the doctoral thesis has been defended.

§ 9. Provisions applicable to external students

(1) External students are subject to the conditions and policies set out in these regulations for the doctoral studies and the defence of the doctoral theses.

(2) In order to be able to carry out the preliminary defence and to defend the doctoral thesis as an external student, the person who has completed the courses of the study programme must submit to the head of the academic unit administering the study programme an application together with the doctoral thesis and documents demonstrating the completion of courses of in the study programme. The head of the academic unit coordinates the topic of the doctoral thesis of the external student and the language and the supervisor of the thesis, where necessary, with the council of the academic unit, and decides (where necessary, in consultation with the doctoral studies council) whether the application is approved or rejected within a month as of submission of the application. If the application is submitted during the Christmas or summer break (as fixed in the academic calendar) or within a period of less than two weeks before the start of the Christmas or summer break, the head of the academic unit may make the relevant decision within one month after the end of the break. If the application is approved, the person concerned will enter into a study agreement with the university for the purpose of the preliminary defence and defence of his/her doctoral thesis. If the application is rejected, a written statement of reasons for the rejection will be submitted to the person concerned.

(3) As regards the conclusion and conditions of the agreement of an external student as well as the determination of the version of the study programme, the Study Regulations are followed.

Division 2

Progress review

§ 10. Progress review

(1) Progress review means an assessment by the progress review committee of the doctoral student's progress both in terms of studies and research work, in specialities falling in the field of arts, also in terms of creative work.

(2) In making a progress review decision, the progress review committee follows the area-specific criteria established by the Vice-Rector for Research (hereinafter the *Vice-Rector*) appointed by the Rector. The corresponding doctoral studies council submits a proposal for the establishment of area-specific criteria.

(3) Passing the progress review is a prerequisite for continuing one's doctoral studies.

(4) The doctoral student shall not be declared to have passed the progress review if he/she has paused the studies for childcare until the child turns 3, or for participating in the conscript or alternative service.

§ 11. Progress review committee

(1) A progress review committee consists of at least three members holding a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification in a field of study that corresponds to the study programme.

(2) Members of a progress review committee are approved by the Vice-Rector in his/her order on the basis of a proposal coordinated by the study programme administrator and the head of the academic unit.

§ 12. Progress review arrangements

(1) A doctoral student submits by the established deadline to the progress review committee a report in established format either on paper or in electronic form, signed by the doctoral student and the supervisor(s), together with all required annexes.

(2) The progress review committee has the right to request additional materials (questionnaires, test protocols, documents, etc.) in order to assess the work done by the doctoral student.

(3) Standard formats of documents necessary for the progress review will be made public on the university's webpage. The deadline for the submission of documents required for the progress review is announced via e-mail to the doctoral student and the supervisor(s) at least one month

before the relevant deadline. If necessary, an interview with the doctoral student and/or the supervisor(s) will be arranged for the purpose of the progress review. Time and place thereof are announced to the parties at least one week before the interview.

§ 13. Decision of the progress review committee

(1) The progress review committee will adopt one of the following decisions:

1) to declare the doctoral student to have passed the progress review positively, adding a proposal to allow the student to continue in full-time studies according to the individual study and research plan;

2) to set an additional deadline of up to three months for improving the results or complementing the individual study and research plan. The doctoral student is obliged to notify his/her acceptance of the additional deadline within seven days as of the notification of the decision;

3) to declare the doctoral student to have passed the progress review negatively, adding a proposal to delete the doctoral student from the matriculation register due to unsatisfactory academic progress;

4) to declare the doctoral student to have failed the progress review, adding a proposal to delete the doctoral student from the matriculation register due to failure to submit a proper progress review report, and the individual study and research plan for the following academic year by the deadline.

(2) A signed decision in due form is registered in the university's document management system. The decision is transmitted to the doctoral student, student's supervisor, Academic Affairs Office and Research Administration Office within a week following the progress review.

(3) The progress review decision can be challenged pursuant to the procedure specified in the Study Regulations.

(4) The progress review committee may, on the basis of the submitted materials and the opinion it has formed, make a proposal to the council of the academic unit to change the supervisor of the doctoral student.

Chapter 4

DOCTORAL THESIS

§ 14. Doctoral thesis

(1) A doctoral thesis is an independent research work which offers a novel solution to a significant problem in a discipline related to the area of the study programme. In specialities falling in the field of arts, a doctoral thesis can be an internationally recognised creative work developing the speciality, together with a scientific analysis or research paper (hereinafter referred to as *creative doctoral thesis*).

(2) A doctoral thesis can be formalised as a monograph published as part of the series of dissertations of the university, as a monograph published outside the series of dissertations of the university accompanied by an analytical overview, or as an article-based dissertation.

(3) A doctoral thesis is written in one of the languages widely used in the respective research or creative area.

(4) The research results of a doctoral thesis must be presented at speciality-specific international research conferences and published in scientific publications. In specialities falling in the field of arts, creative work that forms a part of the doctoral thesis must be publicly presented at international level and internationally peer reviewed.

(5) The doctoral studies council has the right to establish further area-specific requirements for doctoral theses in conformity with these regulations.

§ 15. Monograph

(1) A monograph is a research work which constitutes a systemic and comprehensive treatment of a clearly defined research topic or problem.

(2) The format of a monograph published in the series of dissertations of the university includes the following:

1) title page;

2) reverse side of the title page to be filled out after the decision to allow the doctoral thesis to be submitted for defence has been made, and where the decision of the doctoral studies council, names of the supervisor(s), reviewers, time and place of the defence are indicated;

3) table of contents;

4) list of the author's articles, and in case of a creative doctoral thesis, list of creative works wherein the principal results of the doctoral thesis have been published or expressed;

5) foreword (optional);

6) principal part of the thesis which includes an overview of the essence of the research problem, formulation of the research question, description of the methodology, the course of solving the research question and/or the proof thereof, conclusions, a summary;

7) summary covering all parts of the thesis; if the thesis is in Estonian, the summary is in another language, if the thesis is in another language, the summary is in Estonian;

8) list of sources referred to in the thesis;

9) list of tables and figures (optional);

10) CV (in Estonian and in the language of the summary of the doctoral thesis).

(3) The analytical overview annexed to a monograph published outside the series of dissertations of the university provides a comprehensive overview of the research work following the structure described in subsection 2 of this section, and its main part consists of 30-40 standard pages.

(4) In case of a creative doctoral thesis, recordings of related creative works or representations in other modalities which provide the most authentic overview of the creative work are annexed to the monograph.

(5) In case of a monograph, the prerequisites for the defence include at least one of the following:

1) at least one article related to the topic of the doctoral thesis that is defined by ETIS categories 1.1, 1.2. or 3.1 or has been published in collections issued by Tallinn University Press. The doctoral thesis may be allowed to be submitted for defence also if the article which meets the abovementioned requirements has not yet been published, but official confirmation regarding its acceptance for publication has been granted. In the event that the monograph that is a part of the doctoral thesis has been published by an internationally renowned publishing house, doctoral thesis may be allowed to be submitted for defence also without the article related to

the topic of the doctoral thesis;

2) a patent or a filed patent application when, in case of an international patent application, accompanied by a positive written opinion from the patent office that performed the international search regarding the patentability of the invention, or, in the case of a national patent application, positive decision of the national patent office regarding the patentability of the invention;

3) in specialities falling in the field of arts, at least one public screening, a play, exhibition or any other internationally peer reviewed presentation open for international audience.

§ 16. Article-based dissertation

(1) An article-based dissertation is a series of research publications comprehensively addressing the research topic together with an analytical overview. In case of a creative doctoral thesis, a creative work that has been presented publicly at international level and internationally peer-reviewed is added.

(2) The series of research publications generally includes at least three articles in ETIS categories 1.1, 1.2. or 3.1 accepted for publication or published in collections issued by Tallinn University Press. In specific cases, the series of research publications may comprise at least two articles, supplemented by at least one of the following:

1) a creative work that has been presented publicly at international level reviewed by two independent internationally recognised experts selected by the university;

2) a patent or a patent application accompanied by a positive written opinion regarding the patentability of the invention from the patent office that performed the search;

3) another applicable solution reviewed by two independent internationally recognised experts selected by the university.

(3) An article-based dissertation may also be allowed to be defended when an official confirmation for at least two articles exists, stating that these have been accepted for publication and the third article has been positively peer-reviewed by two independent internationally recognised researchers selected by the doctoral studies council. Reviewing by the university is applied for upon the submission of the dissertation for the preliminary defence. [Amended 18.09.2023]

(4) Analytical overview integrates the series of articles and, in specific cases referred to in subsection 2, the creative work, patent(s), patent application(s) or other applicable solution(s) into a whole, follows the structure described in section 13(2) and its main part amounts to 30-40 standard pages.

(5) Publications presented as the doctoral thesis and, in specific cases referred to in subsection 2, the records or the most authentic representation possible of the creative work, patent, patent application or other applicable solution, have been annexed to the analytical overview.

§ 17. Format requirements

(1) The monograph and the analytical overview presented as dissertation must follow the format and publishing requirements established in the university.

(2) If the doctoral thesis forms a part of a joint research work or creative work, and/or the articles have been published in cooperation, the contribution of the doctoral student to the joint articles, joint study and/or joint creative work must be stated clearly and in detail in the introduction of the monograph or of the analytical overview or, in the case of an article-based dissertation, by the list of the author's articles and creative works.

§ 18. Publication of the doctoral thesis

(1) The doctoral theses to be defended at the Tallinn University which have not been previously published as monographs and the defence of which has not been declared closed according to subsection 26(5) of these regulations and the publication of which is not impeded by copyright restrictions, are published electronically in the TLU dissertation series of the respective area and, in agreement with the academic unit, also on paper.

(2) Electronically published doctoral theses will remain available at the TLU Academic Library repository for an unlimited period.

(3) In case of a creative doctoral thesis, recordings of creative works or representations in other modalities will be published according to the procedure established by the doctoral studies council.

Chapter 5

PROCEDURE FOR APPLYING FOR A DOCTORAL DEGREE

Division 1

Preliminary defence of the thesis

§ 19. Arrangements for the preliminary defence of a doctoral thesis

(1) Before a doctoral thesis can be submitted to the doctoral studies council, it must pass the preliminary defence. The head of the academic unit is responsible for arranging the preliminary defence.

(2) The PhD candidate submits to the head of the academic unit his/her doctoral thesis and the results of the verification by the plagiarism detection system together with the supervisor's consent for allowing the thesis to be submitted to the preliminary defence.

(2^1) If one applies for reviewing the third article by the reviewers chosen by the area-specific doctoral studies council pursuant to subsection 3 of § 16, the relevant article is submitted for preliminary defence in the composition of the article-based dissertation, with an added confirmation that it has not been submitted for publication and reviewing to other publications, and also will not until the decision concerning reviewing by the university has become clear. The application for the review of the article is processed with the application for allowing the article to the preliminary defence. The head of the academic unit coordinates the decisions on reviewing with the area-specific doctoral studies council. The head of the academic unit has the right not to accept the application for reviewing and thus make a decision not to allow the article to the preliminary defence. [Entry into force 19.09.2023]

(2^2) If one applies for reviewing a creative work or other applicable solution pursuant to subsection 2 of § 16 by the reviewers chosen by the area-specific doctoral studies council, the principles described in subsection 2^1 of § 19 apply in accordance with the process of reviewing a creative work or other applicable solution. [Entry into force 19.09.2023]

(3) The head of the academic unit decides (where necessary, in consultation with the doctoral studies council) on allowing/not allowing the doctoral thesis to be submitted to the preliminary defence within two weeks as of the submission of the doctoral thesis (if the doctoral thesis is

submitted during the Christmas or summer break (as determined in the academic calendar) or within a period of less than two weeks before the start of the Christmas or summer break, the head of the academic unit may make the decision within two weeks after the end of the break). If the head of the academic unit is the supervisor or the co-supervisor of the thesis submitted for preliminary defence, he/she will delegate the task of making this decision to the study programme administrator or to a member of the doctoral studies council.

(4) If the decision is positive, the head of the academic unit will arrange the discussion of the version of the doctoral thesis submitted to preliminary defence, except as provided for in subsection 8 below. The discussion takes place as a meeting of the preliminary defence committee and can follow the format of a doctoral seminar. The decision of the preliminary defence committee is recorded in minutes.

(5) If the decision is negative, the head of the academic unit will communicate the decision to the doctoral student together with the reasons and recommendations.

(6) For preliminary defence, the head of the academic unit appoints two reviewers, in concordance with the doctoral studies council, of whom at least one must be from outside the university.

(7) The doctoral student receives the reviewers' opinions at least three days before the preliminary defence.

(8) In the event that the opinions of both reviewers are negative, the preliminary defence committee decides to return the thesis to the doctoral student for further work without holding the meeting of the preliminary defence committee.

(9) After a successful preliminary defence, at least one of the reviewers will receive a proposition to act as a reviewer in the defence.

§ 20. Preliminary defence committee

(1) A preliminary defence committee consists of at least three members appointed by the head of the academic unit in concordance with the chair of the doctoral studies council. The preliminary defence committee includes at least one and a maximum of two members of the doctoral studies council; it is also recommended to include the administrator of the corresponding doctoral programme among its members. If the head of the academic unit is at the same time the chair

of the doctoral studies council, he/she coordinates the membership of the preliminary defence committee with the Vice-Rector.

(2) The supervisors and co-supervisors of a doctoral thesis are not appointed as members of the preliminary defence committee. [Amended 16.09.2024]

§ 21. Result of preliminary defence

(1) The result of the preliminary defence may be one of the following:

1) the doctoral thesis is recommended to be submitted for defence in its current form;

2) the doctoral thesis is recommended to be submitted for defence after the corrections proposed by the preliminary defence committee have been made;

3) the doctoral thesis is returned to the doctoral student for further work.

(2) The doctoral thesis is allowed to be submitted for defence in its current form if both reviewers make the relevant proposal and the preliminary defence committee gives its consent.

(3) If, at the preliminary defence, the doctoral thesis is allowed to be submitted for defence after the corrections proposed by the preliminary defence committee have been made, the supervisor of the doctoral student confirms the corrections or the reasons for having a differing opinion.

(4) The doctoral thesis will be returned to the doctoral student for further work if this is proposed by at least one reviewer. If the doctoral thesis is returned to the doctoral student for further work, he/she may not submit a new version for preliminary defence until six months have passed.

(5) After a second negative result of the preliminary defence, the progress review committee may declare the doctoral student to have failed to meet the requirements of part-time studies and propose to delete the doctoral student from the matriculation register due to unsatisfactory academic progress.

(6) Contesting the decision of the preliminary defence committee takes place following the procedure for contesting decisions related to studies as laid down in the TLU Study Regulations.

Division 2

Submission of a doctoral thesis for defence

§ 22. Submission of the doctoral thesis

(1) In order to apply for a doctoral degree, the doctoral student must submit to the secretary of the doctoral studies council the following:

1) a signed application for the examination and defence of the doctoral thesis addressed to the chair of the doctoral studies council. The application must include a statement of the doctoral student that the doctoral thesis in question has not been defended previously at any other higher education institution and that the doctoral thesis constitutes the student's own original research work. If the English title of the thesis is not reflected in the doctoral thesis, the doctoral student also submits the English version of the title;

2) the manuscript of the doctoral thesis meeting the requirements specified in Chapter 4 in electronic form (if the published monograph is unavailable in electronic form, it is submitted in ten hard copies);

3) copies of the publications published on the topic of the doctoral thesis;

4) in case of an article-based dissertation, permissions from the publishers for the republication of the articles in the doctoral thesis both in the electronic form and on paper;

5) in specific cases referred to in subsection 16(2), the records or the most authentic representation possible of the creative work, patent, patent application or other applicable solution; in case of a creative doctoral thesis, a confirmation on its public presentation at international level and a recording of the creative work or its presentation;

6) the supervisor's signed confirmation regarding the making of corrections which were recommended at the preliminary defence or reasons for having a differing opinion, and the results of the verification by the plagiarism detection system;

7) any additional materials if desired.

(2) The secretary of the doctoral studies council transmits the documents referred to in the clauses

of subsection 1 of this section together with the annexes received from the academic unit (confirmation by the academic unit that the doctoral student has completed the studies under the study programme, the decision of the preliminary defence committee on allowing the thesis to be submitted to the defence, reviews of the preliminary defence) electronically to the members of the doctoral studies council (except a monograph submitted on paper in the case it is unavailable in electronic form).

§ 23. Allowing the doctoral thesis to be submitted for defence

(1) The doctoral studies council makes a recorded decision at its meeting whether to allow or refuse the doctoral thesis to be defended within two weeks as of the submission of the doctoral thesis to the doctoral studies council (if the doctoral thesis is submitted during the Christmas or summer break (as determined in the academic calendar) or within a period of less than two weeks before the start of the Christmas or summer break, the doctoral studies council may make the decision within two weeks after the end of the break). The decision establishes the title of the thesis and the names of supervisor(s), and it is transmitted to the doctoral student and the supervisor(s). The doctoral studies council approves the reviewers of the thesis in the decision to allow the thesis to be defended or in a separate decision within two weeks as of making the decision to allow the thesis to be defended. A member of the doctoral studies council who is the supervisor or co-supervisor of the degree candidate does not participate in making the decision(s) in question.

(2) If the decision is positive, the doctoral studies council will, in concordance with the doctoral student and the supervisor(s), approve within two weeks the time (date, time) and location of the defence (in specialities falling in the field of arts, the presentation of creative works). The representative of the academic unit registers the doctoral student in the Study Information System as the defender of the final thesis.

(3) If the decision is negative, the doctoral studies council will transmit the decision to the doctoral students together with the reasons and recommendations. After a second negative decision by the doctoral studies council, the progress review committee may declare the doctoral student to have failed to meet the requirements of part-time studies and propose to delete the doctoral student from the matriculation register due to unsatisfactory academic progress. If the student continues the studies, the thesis must be defended again at the preliminary defence.

(4) One month before the defence, the university displays on its homepage the information regarding the time and place of the defence, a link to the abstract of the doctoral thesis and a reference to the availability of the full version of the thesis (except in special cases resulting from the law), in specialities falling in the field of arts, also information regarding the presentations and performances of creative works.

(5) The defence must take place within four months, but not sooner than eight weeks after the approval of the decision allowing the doctoral thesis to be submitted for defence.

§ 24. Reviewing of doctoral thesis

(1) The reviewers of a doctoral thesis are two internationally recognised scholars or scientists in the given field, at least one of them from outside the university, who hold a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification, and who have conducted internationally recognised research in the area related to the topic of the doctoral thesis at least in the amount equal to one doctoral thesis during the previous five years. The reviewer cannot be a co-author of the publications submitted as the doctoral thesis.

(2) In specialities falling in the field of arts, one reviewer may be an internationally recognised artist.

(3) The reviews are submitted at least one week before the defence to the secretary of the doctoral studies council, who transmits them at least three days before the defence to the doctoral student and the members of the defence committee. The review must contain the reviewer's assessment of the thesis with regard to its compliance/non-compliance with the established requirements.

(4) If the doctoral thesis fails to receive a positive review, the announced defence will be cancelled. Doctoral thesis together with the negative reviews is returned to the academic unit, where, at the request of the doctoral student, a decision will be made regarding the organisation of a new preliminary defence.

Division 3

Defence of doctoral theses

§ 25. Defence committee

(1) The Vice-Rector approves the members of the defence committee on the basis of a submission from the chair of the doctoral studies council for each individual defence.

(2) The defence committee comprises at least two and a maximum of three members of the doctoral studies council, and at least three members who hold a doctoral degree and have published research publications in fields related to the topic of the doctoral thesis to be defended, or, in case of specialities falling in the field of arts, internationally recognised creative persons, of whom at least one is from outside the university and may also be a reviewer of the doctoral thesis. [Amended 16.09.2024]

(3) A member of the doctoral studies council who is the supervisor or co-supervisor of the degree candidate cannot be a member of the defence committee.

§ 26. General arrangements of the defence

(1) The secretary of the doctoral studies council announces the defence of a doctoral thesis on the basis of the decision of the doctoral studies council via university's communication channels one month before the date of the defence at the latest.

(2) The announcement includes the topic of the doctoral thesis, the name of the doctoral student, information regarding the time and location of the defence, the supervisor(s) and the reviewers of the doctoral thesis, the web address of the analytical summary of the doctoral thesis and/or a reference to the availability of the full version of the doctoral thesis and to the (re)presentation of the creative work or another applicable solution, where necessary.

(3) Defence of the doctoral thesis is public and takes place in the form of an academic debate (discussion) at a meeting of the defence committee.

(4) The meeting of the defence committee is valid if at least four members of the committee are present. The presence of at least one reviewer is required at the defence, either in person or through network connection that enables real-time two-way picture and sound. [Amended 16.09.2024]

(5) The defence may be closed when, pursuant to the Republic of Estonia Public Information Act, the subject matter of the doctoral thesis involves grounds for classifying the information presented in the thesis as information intended for internal use. The doctoral student or a third party with legitimate interest submits the written application to declare the defence closed to the head of the academic unit by the deadline for the submission of the doctoral thesis. On the proposal of the head of the academic unit, the head of the doctoral studies council will decide within five working days whether to declare the defence closed or not.

§ 27. Defence meeting

(1) The meeting is chaired by a member of the doctoral studies council who is a member of the defence committee. [Amended 16.09.2024]

(2) At the meeting, the secretary of the doctoral studies council introduces the doctoral student, after which the doctoral student delivers the introductory lecture on his/her thesis (*lectio praecursoria*), followed by the reviewers' comments and a discussion. After the discussion with the reviewers, the defence committee and the public is allowed to ask questions.

(3) In case the defence is conducted in a foreign language, questions may be posed in Estonian. If necessary, the doctoral studies council will ensure the availability of interpretation.

(4) The doctoral thesis may be withdrawn from the defence before the voting is announced.

§ 28. Assessment of doctoral thesis

(1) The doctoral thesis and its defence will be assessed as follows:

1) the defence was successful, corresponding to "passed" within non-differentiated assessment. The PhD candidate is awarded a doctoral degree;

2) the defence was unsuccessful, corresponding to "failed" within non-differentiated assessment. The PhD candidate is not awarded a doctoral degree.

(2) In case of successfully defended doctoral theses, an additional assessment is given by the committee for the doctoral thesis and its defence as follows:

1) defended with distinction (*laudatur*);

2) meets the requirements (*approbatur*).

(3) The assessment is given by secret voting with the participation of the members of the defence committee. Before the secret voting, a discussion takes place with the participation of the reviewer(s) and the members of the defence committee.

(4) In order to confer a doctoral degree, at least half of the members of the defence committee are required to vote in favour. If there an equal number of votes is cast for and against, the decision will be made in favour of the doctoral student.

(5) Additional assessment 'defended with distinction' requires the support from two thirds of the members of the defence committee.

(6) The decision of the defence committee will be recorded on a general blank form of Tallinn University.

(7) If defence was unsuccessful, the degree candidate may submit to the head of the academic unit for new preliminary defence a thesis that complies with the requirements, together with the supervisor's confirmation regarding the making of corrections which were recommended at the defence or the reasons for having a differing opinion.

(8) The defence committee or TLU area-specific doctoral studies council may annul the defence committee´s decision in the event of proved disregard for academic practice. The respective decision will be made public.

(9) Contests with regard to the decision of the defence committee may be presented according to the rules for contesting laid down in TLU Study Regulations.

Division 4

Conferral of the PhD degree and award of the diploma

§ 29. Conferral of the PhD degree

(1) The secretary of the doctoral studies council transmits the decision of the defence committee to the Academic Affairs Office for the formalisation of final documents.

(2) A doctoral degree will be conferred on the PhD candidate if the defence was successful.

(3) A person who has defended a doctoral thesis is awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy;

the title of the degree also contains the name of the study programme or area of specialisation as an attribute.

(4) One printed copy of the doctoral thesis is preserved for an indefinite period at the university library. The university also sends one copy of the printed thesis to the National Library and to the libraries of the University of Tartu, the Estonian University of Life Sciences and Tallinn University of Technology.

§ 28. Conferment of doctoral degrees

Doctoral diplomas are awarded once a year at the Doctoral Degree Conferment Ceremony or at the doctoral student's request from the Academic Affairs Office.

Chapter 6

JOINT SUPERVISION AGREEMENT

§ 30. General provisions

(1) Tallinn University may conclude an agreement with a foreign higher education institution, which provides for the joint supervision of a doctoral student (hereinafter referred to as *joint supervision agreement*). The purpose of a joint supervision agreement is to regulate the concurrent studies of a doctoral student at two universities; enable the defence of a doctoral thesis before a joint defence committee from TLU and the foreign higher education institution; award graduation documents and academic degrees from TLU and the foreign higher education institution to the doctoral student on the basis of a decision made by the joint committee.

(2) In a joint supervision agreement with a foreign higher education institution, at least the following conditions are agreed:

1) the terms of admission and registration to studies of a doctoral student in TLU (including the study programme to be completed) and at the foreign higher education institution, and the planned time of study;

2) the topic of the doctoral thesis;

3) the supervisors of the doctoral thesis at TLU and at the foreign higher education institution, and

their obligations in the supervision of the doctoral student;

4) the individual study and research plan, including compulsory courses and the estimated time schedule, following the principle that the doctoral student completes at least 40% of the courses specified in the study programme at TLU;

5) the conditions for recognising prior studies and work experience;

6) the conditions for financing the studies and research carried out by the doctoral student;

7) the requirements for mutual notification and reporting functions (documents to be presented for the progress review, etc.);

8) the procedure for degree application, the compilation of a joint defence committee, and the making and contesting of decisions;

9) the conditions and procedure established for the form and publication of the doctoral thesis, including the language of the thesis;

10) the conditions and procedure established for the defence of the doctoral thesis (incl. the preliminary defence), including the language and place of the defence;

11) the intellectual property rights related to the doctoral thesis;

12) the graduation documents and academic degrees issued at graduation;

13) the conditions and procedure for amending and terminating the supervision agreement.

§ 32. Concluding a joint supervision agreement

(1) A doctoral study candidate or a doctoral student enrolled at TLU and a supervisor selected from TLU makes a proposal to conclude an agreement of joint supervision by submitting to the secretary of the doctoral studies council at TLU a draft joint supervision agreement which must be in compliance with the conditions set out under § 27(2) and approved by the foreign higher education institution. The secretary verifies the compliance of the terms established in the agreement with the conditions set out in these regulations and transmits the materials to the area-specific doctoral studies council.

(2) If the conditions and procedure agreed upon in the joint supervision agreement are in

compliance with the requirements set out for the defence of doctoral theses as established in these regulations, then the area-specific doctoral studies council approves the agreement before it is signed. If the requirements and procedure set out for the defence of the doctoral thesis agreed upon in the joint supervision agreement are not in compliance with the requirements set out for the defence of doctoral theses as established in these regulations, then the approval of the TLU Senate is required in addition to the approval of the doctoral studies council.

(3) A joint supervision agreement that has been approved is signed by the doctoral study candidate/doctoral student, representatives of both universities and the supervisors of the doctoral thesis. A copy of the final agreement is forwarded to the secretary of the doctoral studies council.

§ 33. Defence of a doctoral thesis under a joint supervision agreement

(1) A doctoral student may apply to defend a doctoral thesis pursuant to the conditions and procedure agreed upon in a joint supervision agreement, subject to the following requirements:

1) at the time of obtaining the degree, a valid joint supervision agreement must exist between TLU and the foreign higher education institution regarding the doctoral thesis of the doctoral student, and the doctoral studies have been completed and the doctoral thesis has been written in accordance with the joint supervision agreement;

2) a doctoral student has completed the required studies under the TLU doctoral study programme as defined in the joint supervision agreement, and at least 40% of the courses specified in the study programme have been completed at TLU.

(2) In order to apply for a doctoral degree on the basis of a joint supervision agreement, the doctoral student submits an application, doctoral thesis and other prescribed documents to the secretary of the TLU doctoral studies council as established in § 22(1) of these regulations or pursuant to the requirements and procedure agreed upon in the joint supervision agreement.

(3) A joint defence committee consisting of at least six members formed by the area-specific doctoral studies council together with the representatives of the foreign higher education institution has the authority to award a TLU doctoral degree pursuant to the requirements and procedure agreed upon in the joint supervision agreement. The joint defence committee of TLU and the foreign higher education institution includes at least one member of the TLU area-

specific doctoral studies council. The supervisors of the degree candidate may be members of the defence committee in the case it has been agreed in the joint supervision agreement. [Amended 16.09.2024]

(4) The secretary of the doctoral studies council forwards the decision of the joint defence committee, formed by TLU and the foreign higher education institution, to the TLU Academic Affairs Office.

(5) The joint defence committee or the TLU area-specific doctoral studies council may annul the joint defence committee's decision in the event of proven plagiarism or academic fraud. The respective decision will be made public.

(6) In the event of a violation of the procedural rules arising from these regulations or rules agreed upon in the joint supervision agreement, an appeal may be filed as established in § 28(8).

Chapter 7

IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

§ 34. Implementing provisions

A doctoral student, who was matriculated before the academic year 2022/23 and who has been subjected to the rights and obligations set out in subsections 1 and 7 of § 14, clauses 6 and 7 of subsection 2 of § 15, and § 16 of the wording of the Higher Education Act in force until 31 July 2022, is subject to the said rights until the end of his/her nominal period of studies.

§ 35. Repeal of regulation

Tallinn University Senate Regulation No. 4 of January 25, 2016 'Regulations for Doctoral Studies and the Defence of Doctoral Theses' is hereby repealed.

§ 36. Activities of the doctoral studies council

(1) If the activities of the doctoral studies council are in violation with these regulations, the Vice-Rector makes a proposal to the university Senate for the disbandment of the doctoral studies council in question.

(2) The work of the members of the doctoral studies council is remunerated on the basis of rates established by the Rector.

§ 37. Entry into force of these regulations

These regulations enter into force on August 1, 2022.

/signed digitally/	/signed digitally/
Tõnu Viik	Hille Erik
Rector	Academic Secretary

Annex 1

ROLES OF PARTIES TO DOCTORAL STUDIES

1. Doctoral student

1.1 A doctoral student is entitled:

1) to receive competent advice from his/her supervisor(s) as regards his/her thesis; [Amended 16.09.2024]

2) to apply for pausing the studies under the procedure established in these regulations;

3) to apply for funding from the university's funds for the support of research and/or creative work pursuant to the established procedure;

4) to examine the reviews of his/her thesis at least three days before the defence of the doctoral thesis;

5) to challenge decisions relating to the organisation of doctoral studies pursuant to the procedure established in the TLU Study Regulations.

1.2 A doctoral student is obliged:

1) to prepare an individual study and research plan in cooperation with his/her supervisor(s), and to pursue it;

2) to present a progress review report, and an individual study and research plan for the next academic year at the progress review meeting at the end of each academic year;

3) to present overviews of activities related to his/her research topic and versions of the doctoral thesis to the supervisor(s); [Amended 16.09.2024]

4) to write, draw up and present to the supervisor(s) a doctoral thesis in accordance with the requirements established in TLU;

5) to grant the university the right to publish his/her doctoral thesis in the university's series of dissertations;

6) to submit to the secretary of the doctoral studies council a doctoral thesis presented in compliance with the established format requirements and including the corrections made following the recommendations made at the preliminary examination at least ten weeks before the planned defence date;

7) to create an account in the ETIS and keep it up to date;

8) to adhere to the Code of Ethics of Estonian Scientists and good scientific practice in doing his/her research work.

2. Supervisor of the doctoral student

2.1 The supervisor of a doctoral student is entitled:

1) to receive from the supervised doctoral student reports, overviews of activities related to his/her research topic and versions of the doctoral thesis by the agreed deadlines; [Amended 16.09.2024]

2) to be remunerated for the supervision in accordance with the procedure established in TLU.

2.2 The supervisor is obliged:

1) to plan in cooperation with the doctoral student the latter's doctoral studies and research, and to help the student to prepare an individual study and research plan;

2) to direct the study and research activities of the doctoral student, and in specialities falling in the field of arts, also creative activities, and to involve the doctoral student in international professional networks as well as research, development and creative projects;

3) to guide the doctoral student in applying for scholarships;

4) to approve the doctoral student's individual study and research plan, and progress review reports;

5) to confirm the compliance of the thesis that is to be submitted for preliminary defence with the requirements established for doctoral theses;

6) to confirm that the recommendations made at the preliminary defence have been taken into account or discarded in case of a justified differing opinion;

7) to give advice to the doctoral student regarding opportunities for publishing the results of the doctoral thesis, and in specialities falling in the field of arts, also regarding the opportunities of public performance of the creative work;

8) to provide feedback to the doctoral student regarding his/her research and doctoral thesis; [Amended 16.09.2024]

9) to develop his/her supervising skills.

3. Academic unit

The academic unit:

1) transmits to the Research Administration Office the confirmation that the doctoral student who passed the preliminary defence has completed the studies under the study programme;

2) makes the decision of the preliminary defence committee on allowing the doctoral student to preliminary defence and reviews submitted for preliminary defence available to the Research Administration Office;

3) covers the costs related to the process of the doctoral thesis defence regulated by these regulations.

4. Partner to the knowledge transfer doctoral studies

The partner to the knowledge transfer doctoral studies:

1) participates in a joint project with the university or enters into a cooperation agreement for conducting research and development;

2) appoints a person who is the doctoral student’s co-supervisor from the partner’s side;

3) enters into an employment contract with the doctoral student or amends the existing employment contract to include duties related to the execution of the individual study and research plan;

4) fully supports the conduct of the doctoral student's study and its completion.

5. Doctoral studies council

The doctoral studies council:

1) formulates the criteria for the assessment of the doctoral student's progress in studies and research, in specialities falling in the field of arts, also for the assessment of the progress in creative activity, and the volumes of creative work required for the creative doctoral thesis, and submits them to the Vice-Rector for establishment;

2) in specialities falling in the field of arts, approves the procedure for peer reviewing and the manner of adding the reproductions of creative works to the dissertation;

2) participates in the process of making the decision allowing the doctoral student to preliminary defence and in arranging the preliminary defence;

3) appoints two reviewers for preliminary defence;

4) decides whether a doctoral thesis is allowed to be submitted for defence or not;

5) appoints the reviewers and, in consultation with the doctoral student and the supervisor(s), determines also the time and place of the defence;

6) arranges the defence of the doctoral thesis at a meeting of the defence committee in the form of an academic debate.

6. Defence committee

The members of the defence committee

1) examine the doctoral thesis submitted for defence before the defence meeting;

2) participate in the defence meeting and ask relevant questions from the doctoral student;

3) participate in the discussion which takes place before giving their assessment and give their assessment regarding the thesis presented for defence in secret voting. When giving the

assessment, the thesis has to be assessed as a whole, taking into consideration the quality of the content of the thesis and arguments presented during the academic debate;

4) the defence committee may annul its decision if it becomes known that the information presented at the doctoral thesis is falsified or plagiarised.

7. Doctoral school

A doctoral school:

1) is a cooperation project between universities and other organisations for a more effective and improved organisation of doctoral studies;

2) participates in the organisation of doctoral studies as agreed with the head(s) of academic unit(s) (incl. offers and mediates lectures and seminars, collects and disseminates information on doctoral studies, advises doctoral students, offers opportunities to develop one's supervising skills, etc.).

8. Library

The library

1) registers and describes doctoral theses and analytical overviews in its electronic catalogue;

2) makes the full version and/or analytical overview of the doctoral thesis publicly available in the corresponding full-text database via the university's homepage one month before the defence of the thesis (except where the defence has been declared closed pursuant to § 26(5) of these regulations);

3) makes at least one hard copy of the doctoral thesis available in the library's reading room two weeks before the defence at the latest and ensures its preservation and availability in the library archives after the defence (except where the defence has been declared closed pursuant to § 26(5) of these regulations);

4) in case of a creative doctoral thesis, stores the representations of creative works related to the

doctoral thesis in the most appropriate way.

9. Research Administration Office

The Research Administration Office

1) manages the university's register of research and development projects, the university's participation in ETIS and the database of creative activities;

2) verifies the compliance of the supervisors with the requirements established in these regulations;

3) [Repealed 16.09.2024]

4) collects and disseminates information regarding the funding opportunities for doctoral students;

5) advises doctoral students on how to apply for targeted funding provided by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research and other institutions, and provides advice on preparing project budgets and using financial resources;

6) verifies the compliance of materials presented for defence with requirements set out in § 15 and § 16, and transmits documents listed in § 22(1) of these regulations to the chair of the doctoral studies council no later than three working days after their submission;

7) participates in the organisation of the defence in accordance with the arrangements agreed upon by the doctoral studies council;

8) arranges the dissemination and publication of the doctoral thesis on paper and/or in electronic form on the basis of an application endorsed by the head of the academic unit (except where there are copyright restrictions or the defence has been declared closed pursuant to § 26(5) of these regulations);

9) transmits electronically the analytical overview and/or the full text of the doctoral thesis to the TLU Academic Library to be stored in the repository no later than one month before the defence;

10) enters into an agreement with the author of the doctoral thesis on behalf of the university to have the doctoral thesis published in the repository of the TLU Academic Library;

11) transmits a printed copy of the doctoral thesis to the TLU Academic Library;

13) applies for the ISBN numbers for the doctoral thesis to be published.