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## **Tallinn University Regulations for Doctoral Studies and Defence of Doctoral Theses**

Adopted pursuant to § 14(3)11) of the Republic of Estonia Universities Act and § 9 18)19) of the Tallinn University Statute, and on the basis of the proposal of January 18, 2016, of the Research Committee and Academic Affairs Committee of TU Senate.

### Chapter 1

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

##### **§ 1. Doctoral studies**

- (1) Doctoral studies constitute the highest tier of higher education during which the student masters 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 *TU*) Senate and registered in the Estonian Education Information System. The structure of doctoral programme and the requirements and procedure of its opening, developing and closing are governed by Statute of TU Study Programme
- (3) Admission to a doctoral programme takes place by way of public competition pursuant to the

university's admission requirements and procedure, except where students are matriculated on the basis of international cooperation agreements.

## **§ 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 the Universities Act, the Standard of Higher Education, the Quality Agreement of Estonian Universities, TU Research and Development Regulations and other legislation governing doctoral studies and research activities.
- (3) Aspects of study organisation not covered by these regulations are governed by TU Study Regulations, Statute of TU Study Programme and the procedure for organising feedback surveys and analyses in degree studies.

## Chapter 2

### PARTIES TO DOCTORAL STUDIES

## **§ 3. General provisions**

- (1) A doctoral student is a student who is matriculated to a doctoral programme and whose membership in an academic unit shall be determined by a study programme or a version thereof.
- (2) An external student is a person who completes the studies specified by the doctoral programme and defends a doctoral thesis without having the status of a student.
- (3) A doctoral student and the 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. [Amended 05.03.2018]
- (4) Other parties to doctoral studies from behalf of the university include the academic unit, head of the study programme, doctoral studies council, defence committee, doctoral school and units

providing 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 must hold a PhD degree or an equivalent qualification and, as of 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 artist. The co-supervisor of a doctoral student may be a member of research or teaching staff 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.
- (2) 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 staff of the university.
- (3) A doctoral student may also retain a recognised specialist of the field as a consultant.

#### **§ 5. Doctoral studies council**

- (1) Doctoral studies council is area-specific and consists of three or four members of the university's staff qualified to be supervisors on the basis of these regulations. [Amended 21.05.2018]
- (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.
- (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. Doctoral studies agreement**

- (1) Reciprocal rights and obligations of the doctoral student, the supervisor and the academic unit which have not been laid down in these regulations shall be determined by an agreement of the appropriate form. In doctoral studies agreement, an area-specific doctoral studies council shall be determined inter alia to which the doctoral thesis shall be submitted for defence.
- (2) Agreements shall be concluded on October 30 at the latest.

### Chapter 3

## ORGANISATION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

### Division 1

#### General Provisions

## **§ 7. General provisions**

- (1) After matriculation, the head of the study programme and the doctoral student coordinate both 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 Estonia, English or Russian, the language of the thesis shall be coordinated as well. [Amended 21.11.2016]
- (2) The head of the study programme 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 commencement of the autumn semester. 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 referred to in the second sentence of subsection 1 of this section. [Amended 21.11.2016]
- (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 at the end of the third week of the autumn semester at the latest. 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. [Amended 21.11.2016]

- (4) A first-year doctoral student presents an individual study plan for the first year of studies to the head of the study programme for approval by September 30 at the latest. The individual study plan must be endorsed by the supervisor. At the first year's progress review meeting, the doctoral student presents an individual study plan that covers the entire study period and is endorsed by the student's supervisor. As of the second year of studies, the doctoral student presents in the progress review meeting an individual study plan for the following academic year that is endorsed by the student's supervisor.
- (5) The completion of the study programme is assessed once a year during the progress review that takes place after the exam session of the spring semester. The university is entitled to organise progress reviews also at other times. [Amended 21.11.2016]
- (6) The doctoral student is deemed to have completed the programme of studies once he/she has completed all studies stipulated in the programme and defended the doctoral thesis.
- (7) A person who wants to carry out studies as an external student must enter into a study agreement in due form. Separate agreements will be concluded for the purpose of taking the courses (including for writing the doctoral thesis) and for the purpose of defending the doctoral thesis (including for the preliminary defence).
- (8) External students are subject to the conditions and policies set out in these regulations for the doctoral studies and the defence of the doctoral thesis, including the obligation to undertake the progress review.
- (9) In order to be able to take courses at the university (including to be able to write the doctoral thesis) as an external student, a person shall submit an application to the head of the academic unit administering the study programme prior to the start of the beginning semester at a time determined in the academic calendar. The academic unit has the right to request further documents specified in the Requirements and Procedure for Admission to Degree Studies. A person who has previously not received a score above the qualifying score in a doctoral entrance examination at Tallinn University is required to participate in the admission procedure and to pass the admission threshold. If the application is granted, the applicant will enter into a study

agreement which also stipulates, if necessary, the supervision obligation (the supervisor and the external student will enter into an additional supervision agreement where the obligations of the parties are stipulated). The study agreement is entered into for a term of one semester. The agreement is extended on the basis of a relevant application submitted by the external student. The extension of the agreement shall be decided on the basis of the successful results of the external student's studies and the results of the progress review.

(10) 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 included in the study programme must submit to the head of the academic unit administering the study programme an application together with doctoral thesis and documents demonstrating the completion of courses included in the study programme. The head of the academic unit coordinates the topic of the doctoral thesis of the external student 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 a 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 shall be submitted to the person concerned. [Amended 21.11.2016]

(11) As regards the conclusion and conditions of the study agreement of an external student as well as the determination of the version of the study programme, study regulations shall be followed.

## Division 2

### Progress Review

#### **§ 8. 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. [Amended 21.11.2016]

- (2) In making a progress review decision, the progress review committee shall follow the field-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 field-specific criteria. [Amended 05.03.2018]
- (3) Passing the progress review is a prerequisite for continuing one's doctoral studies.
- (4) Doctoral students who are on academic leave are not required to undertake progress review.

#### **§ 9. Progress review committee**

- (1) A progress review committee consists of at least three members holding a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification in a study field 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. [Amended 05.03.2018]

#### **§ 10. 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. [Amended 05.03.2018]
- (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 shall 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 in advance. 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 shall be announced to the parties at least one week in advance before the interview. [Amended 05.03.2018]

#### **§ 11. Decision of the progress review committee**

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

25.04.2016]

- 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;
  - 2) to declare the doctoral student to have passed the progress review positively, adding a proposal to allow the student to continue in part-time studies;
  - 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 in respect of non-compliance with the requirements of part-time studies;
  - 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 unsatisfactory academic progress in respect of completing the individual study plan below the volume of 50%;
  - 5) 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 plan for the following academic year by the deadline.
- (2) In case of an external student, the progress review committee confirms the volume of credit points awarded for both research and studies, and recommends/refuses to recommend the extension of the study agreement.
- (3) The full-time and part-time workload of a student shall be determined on the basis of the total sum of calculated credit points and for credit points awarded for studies. The requirements for part-time and full-time workload of students have been established in the university's Study Regulations.
- (4) 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.
- [Amended 21.11.2016]
- (5) Progress review decision can be challenged pursuant to the procedure specified in the Study Regulations.



- (6) 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

#### **§ 12. 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 field of the study programme. In specialities falling in the field of arts, a doctoral thesis can be an internationally recognised creative work together with a scholarly analysis or research paper (hereinafter referred to as *creative doctoral thesis*). [Amended 21.11.2016]
- (2) A doctoral thesis can be formalised as a monograph that is published as part of the series of dissertations of the university, as a monograph that is 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. [Amended 21.11.2016]
- (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. [Amended 21.11.2016]
- (5) The doctoral studies council has the right to establish further field-specific requirements for doctoral theses in conformity with these regulations.

#### **§ 13. Monograph**

- (1) A monograph is a scientific 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 shall include 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 shall be 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; [Amended 21.11.2016]
- 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 and a summary;
- 7) summary covering all parts of the thesis; if the thesis is in Estonian, the summary will be in another language, if the thesis is in another language, the summary will be 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.

(3<sup>1</sup>) 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 shall be annexed to the monograph according to the procedure established by the doctoral studies council.

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

- 1) at least one article in ETIS categories 1.1, 1.2 or 3.1 or which has been published in collections issued by Tallinn University Press and which is not older than five years as of the date the doctoral thesis is to be submitted for defence. 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 an official confirmation regarding its acceptance for publication has been granted; [Amended 05.03.2018]
- 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 domestic 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. [Amended 21.11.2016]

**§ 14. Article-based dissertation** [Amended 21.11.2016]

- (1) An article-based dissertation is a series of research publications comprehensively dealing with the research topic together with an analytical overview. In case of a creative doctoral thesis, at least one presentation of the creative work must be added.
- (2) The series of research publications includes at least three, in case of a creative doctoral thesis, at least two articles in ETIS categories 1.1, 1.2 or 3.1 accepted for publication or published in collections issued by Tallinn University Press. [Amended 05.03.2018]
- (2<sup>1</sup>) Creative article-based dissertation includes a creative work which has resulted in at least one public screening, a play, exhibition or any other internationally peer reviewed presentation open for international audience.
- (3) Analytical overview integrates the series of articles, and, in case of a creative article-based dissertation, presentation(s) of the creative work into a whole, follows the structure described

in section 13(2) of these regulations and its main part consists of 30-40 standard pages.

- (4) Publications presented as the doctoral thesis are annexed to the analytical overview, and, in case of a creative article-based dissertation, also a recording of the creative work or the most authentic representation possible in another modality according to the procedure established by the doctoral studies council.

#### **§ 15. Format requirements** [Amended 21.11.2016]

- (1) The monograph presented as dissertation and the analytical overview must follow the format and publishing requirements established in the university. If creative work forms a part of the doctoral thesis, presentation(s) of the creative work shall be annexed to the monograph presented as dissertation or analytical overview according to the procedure established by the doctoral studies council.
- (2) If a 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. [Amended 05.03.2018]

#### **§ 16. Publication of 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 the provisions of section 24(5) of these regulations and the publication of which is not impeded by copyright restrictions, will be published electronically in the TU dissertation series of the respective field and, in agreement with the academic unit, also on paper.
- (2) Electronically published doctoral theses will remain available at the TU 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

#### **§ 17. 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 the arrangements of the preliminary examination.
- (2) The PhD candidate submits to the head of the academic unit his/her doctoral thesis together with the supervisor's consent for allowing the thesis to be submitted to the preliminary defence.
- (3) The head of the academic unit decides (where necessary, in consultation with the doctoral studies council) upon 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 a 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 or she will delegate the task of making this decision to the head of the study programme 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 7<sup>1</sup> 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. [Amended 05.03.2018]
- (5) If the decision is negative, the head of the academic unit will transmit the decision to the doctoral student together with 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 will receive the reviewers' opinions for examination at least three days before the preliminary defence.

(7<sup>1</sup>) In the event that both reviewers' opinion is negative, the preliminary defence committee decides to return the thesis to the doctoral student for further work without the meeting of the preliminary defence committee. [Entry into force 05.03.2018]

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

### **§ 18. 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 members of the preliminary defence committee shall include at least one member 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 shall coordinate the membership of the preliminary defence committee with the Vice-Rector. [Amended 05.03.2018]

(2) The supervisors and co-supervisors of a doctoral thesis may not be members of a preliminary defence committee.

### **§ 19. Result of preliminary defence**

(1) The result of a preliminary 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 shall confirm 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 or she may not submit a new version for preliminary defence until six months have passed.
- (5) After a second negative result in 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.

## Division 2

### Submission of a Doctoral Thesis for Defence

#### **§ 20. 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 the 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; [Amended 21.11.2016]
  - 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 to be 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 republication of the articles in the doctoral thesis both in the electronic form and on paper;
- 5) confirmation from the academic unit regarding the completion of the student's studies within the study programme;
- 6) the decision of the preliminary defence committee to allow the doctoral thesis to be submitted for defence;
- 7) preliminary defence reviews, and the supervisor's signed confirmation regarding the making of corrections which were recommended at the preliminary defence or reasons for having a differing opinion;
- 8) any additional materials if desired.

(2) The secretary of the doctoral studies council transmits the electronic doctoral thesis to the members of the doctoral studies council (except where the monograph is unavailable in electronic form).

#### **§ 21. Allowing the doctoral thesis to be submitted for defence**

(1) The doctoral studies council shall make 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 a 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 shall be transmitted to the doctoral student and the supervisor(s). The doctoral studies council shall approve 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 PhD candidate shall not participate in making the decision(s) in question. [Amended 05.03.2018]

(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 shall register the doctoral student in the ÕIS as the defender of the final thesis. [Amended 05.03.2018]

- (3) If the decision is negative, the doctoral studies council will transmit the decision to the doctoral students together with 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 to study, the thesis must be defended again at the preliminary defence.
- (4) One month before the defence, the university will display 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 pursuant 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.

## **§ 22. 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 must not 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 shall be submitted at least one week before the defence to the chair 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

##### **§ 23. Defence committee**

- (1) The Vice-Rector approves the members of the defence committee on the basis of a proposal from the chair of the doctoral studies council for each individual defence.
- (2) The defence committee comprises of at least two members of the doctoral studies council and of at least three other 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.
- (3) A member of the doctoral studies council who is the supervisor or co-supervisor of the PhD candidate cannot be a member of the defence committee.

##### **§ 24. 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 at least one month before the date of the defence.
- (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 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.
- (3) Defence of the doctoral thesis is public and takes place in the form of an academic debate at a

meeting of the defence committee.

- (4) The meeting of the defence committee is valid if at least five members of the committee are present. The presence of at least one reviewer is required at the defence. In unforeseeable circumstances which hinder the attendance of the reviewer, the doctoral studies council may decide to carry out the defence also if at least one reviewer participates in the defence through a communication channel that enables real-time two-way picture and sound (e.g. videoconference). [Amended 21.11.2016]
- (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.

## **§ 25. Defence meeting**

- (1) The meeting is chaired by the chair of the doctoral studies council or, in the absence of the chair of the doctoral studies council, by another member of the doctoral studies council.
- (2) At the meeting, the secretary of the doctoral studies council introduces the doctoral student to the public, 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 audience are 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.

## **§ 26. 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 is not awarded a doctoral degree.
- (2) In case of successfully defended doctoral theses, an additional assessment shall be given by the committee for the doctoral thesis and its defence as follows:
- 1) defended with distinction (*laudatur*);
  - 2) meets the requirements (*approbatur*);
- (3) Before the secret voting in which the assessment is given to the doctoral thesis, a discussion takes place with the participation of the reviewer(s) and the members of the defence committee, at the end of which the reviewer(s) present will make a recommendation for the assessment.
- (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. [Amended 25.04.2016]
- (6) The decision of the defence committee will be recorded on a general blank form of the Tallinn University.
- (7) If defence was unsuccessful, the PhD 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.
- (7) The defence committee or TU area-specific doctoral studies council may annul the defence committee’s decision in the event of proved plagiarism or academic fraud. The respective decision will be made public.
- (8) Appeals with regard to the violation of procedural rules at the defence may be presented in written form to the Vice-Rector within 10 days after the defence meeting.

## Division 4

### Conferral of the PhD Degree and Award of the Diploma

#### **§ 27. Conferral of PhD degree**

- (1) The secretary of the doctoral studies council transmits the decision of the defence committee to the Academic Affairs Office for the execution 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 indefinitely 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. [Amended 05.03.2018]

## Chapter 6

### JOINT SUPERVISION AGREEMENT

#### **§ 29. General provisions**

- (1) Tallinn University may conclude an agreement with a foreign university, 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 TU and the foreign university; award graduation documents and academic degrees from TU and the foreign university to the doctoral

student on the basis of a decision made by the joint committee.

- (2) In a joint supervision agreement with a foreign university, at least the following conditions shall be agreed:
- 1) the terms of admission and registration to studies of a doctoral student in TU (including the study programme to be completed) and at the foreign university, and the planned time of study;
  - 2) the topic of the doctoral thesis;
  - 3) the supervisors of the doctoral thesis at TU and at the foreign university and their obligations in the supervision of the doctoral student;
  - 4) the individual study plan, including compulsory courses and the estimated time schedule, following the principle that the doctoral student shall complete at least 40% of the courses specified in the study programme at TU; [Amended 21.11.2016]
  - 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 (and the preliminary examination before the 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 amendments and termination of the supervision agreement.

### **§ 30. Concluding a joint supervision agreement**

- (1) A doctoral study candidate or a doctoral student enrolled at TU and a supervisor selected from TU shall make a proposal to conclude an agreement of joint supervision by submitting to the secretary of the doctoral studies council at TU, a draft joint supervision agreement which must be in compliance with the conditions set out under § 25(2) and also be approved by the foreign university. The secretary shall verify the compliance of the terms established in the agreement with the conditions set out in the present regulations and shall transmit the materials to the doctoral studies council of the field.
- (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 doctoral studies council of the field shall approve 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 TU Senate is required in addition to the approval of the doctoral studies council.
- (3) A joint supervision agreement that has been approved shall be 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 shall be forwarded to the secretary of the doctoral studies council.

### **§ 31. 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 application, a valid joint supervision agreement must exist between TU and a foreign university 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 must have completed the required studies under TU doctoral study programme as defined in the joint supervision agreement, and at least 40% of the courses specified in the study programme must have been completed at TU. [Amended 21.11.2016]
  - (2) In order to apply for a PhD degree on the basis of a joint supervision agreement, a doctoral student shall submit an application, doctoral thesis and other prescribed documents to the secretary of the TU doctoral studies council as established in § 20(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 doctoral studies council of the field together with the representatives of the foreign university has the authority to award a TU doctoral degree pursuant to the requirements and procedure agreed upon in the joint supervision agreement. The joint defence committee of TU and the foreign university shall include at least two members of the TU area-specific doctoral studies council. The supervisors of the degree applicant shall not be members of the defence committee.
  - (4) The secretary of the doctoral studies council shall forward the decision of the joint defence committee, formed by TU and the foreign university, to the TU Academic Affairs Office.
  - (5) The joint defence committee or the TU doctoral studies council of the field 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 § 26(8).



## IMPLEMENTING PROVISIONS

### **§ 32. Repeal of regulation**

Tallinn University Senate Regulation No 10 of October 17, 2011 'Regulations for Doctoral Studies and the Defence of Doctoral Theses' is hereby repealed.

### **§ 33. Activities of doctoral studies council**

- (1) If the activities of the doctoral studies council are in violation with these regulations, the Vice-Rector will make a proposal to the university's Senate for the disbandment of the doctoral studies council.
- (2) The work of the members of the doctoral studies council is remunerated on the basis of rates established by the Rector.

/signed digitally/

Tiit Land

Rector

/signed digitally/

Hille Erik

Secretary of the Senate

## ROLES OF PARTIES TO DOCTORAL STUDIES

### Doctoral Student

#### **A doctoral student is entitled:**

- 1) to receive competent advice from his/her supervisor in relation to the dissertation pursuant to the procedure established in the doctoral studies agreement;
- 2) to receive doctoral allowance during the standard period of studies pursuant to national legislation and the university's legal acts;
- 3) to request academic leave pursuant to the procedure established in the university's Study Regulations;
- 4) to apply for funding from the university's funds for the support of research and/or creative work pursuant to the established procedure; [Amended 21.11.2016]
- 5) to examine the reviews of his/her thesis at least three days before the defence of the doctoral thesis;
- 6) to challenge decisions relating to the organisation of doctoral studies pursuant to the procedure established in the university's Study Regulations.

#### **A doctoral student is obligated:**

- 1) to prepare an individual study plan in cooperation with his/her supervisor(s) and to pursue it;
- 2) to present a progress review report and an individual study plan for the next academic year at the progress review meeting at the end of each academic year;
- 3) to present reports on activities related to his/her research topic and versions of the doctoral thesis to the supervisor(s) pursuant to the procedure agreed in doctoral studies agreement;
- 4) to write, draw up and present to the supervisor(s) a doctoral thesis in accordance with the requirements established in TU;
- 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 to 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. [Amended 05.03.2018]

#### Supervisor of the Doctoral Student

##### **The supervisor of a doctoral student is entitled:**

- 1) to receive from the supervised doctoral student reports on activities related to his/her research topic and versions of the doctoral thesis pursuant to the procedure and by deadlines agreed in the doctoral studies agreement;
- 2) to be remunerated for the supervision of the doctoral student in accordance with the procedure established in TU.

##### **The supervisor is obligated:**

- 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 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 and development projects; [Amended 21.11.2016]
- 3) to direct the doctoral student in applying for scholarships;
- 4) to approve the doctoral student's progress review reports;
- 5) to confirm the compliance of the thesis that is to be submitted for preliminary examination with the requirements established for doctoral theses;

- 6) to confirm that the recommendations made at the preliminary examination have been taken into account or have been 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 presenting the creative work publicly; [Amended 21.11.2016]
- 8) to provide feedback to the doctoral student regarding his/her research and doctoral thesis pursuant to doctoral studies agreement;
- 9) to develop his/her supervising skills.

#### Academic Unit

##### **The head of the academic unit:**

- 1) is responsible for the organisation of doctoral studies in his/her academic unit;
- 2) transmits to the Research Administration Office the decision of the council of the academic unit with regard to the approval of the topics of the doctoral theses and the approval of the supervisors;
- 3) [Repealed 05.03.2018];
- 4) decides in cooperation with the doctoral studies council whether to allow a doctoral thesis to be submitted to preliminary defence or not;
- 5) arranges the preliminary defence, involving at least one member of the doctoral studies council.

##### **The head of the study programme**

- 1) coordinates with the doctoral student both the topic of the thesis and the choice of supervisor (also the co-supervisor and/or consultant(s) if required), and makes a proposal to the council of the academic unit for the approval of the topic and the appointment of the supervisor(s);
- 2) simultaneously transmits the proposal described in previous clause to the Research

Administration Office;

- 3) is responsible for informing the doctoral students of deadlines for submitting documents required for progress review.

### **The council of the academic unit**

- 1) approves the topics and supervisors of doctoral theses;
- 2) approves the language of doctoral theses in concordance with the doctoral studies council;
- 3) coordinates the topics of doctoral theses of external students, also the language and the supervisor of the thesis, where necessary; [Amended 21.11.2016]
- 4) makes a proposal to the Senate for the approval of the members of the doctoral study council;
- 5) makes proposals on the development of doctoral studies.

**The academic unit** covers the expenses related to the defence process of a doctoral thesis governed by these regulations.

### 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; [Amended 05.03.2018]
- 1<sup>1</sup>) 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; [Amended 21.11.2016]
- 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; [Amended 05.03.2018]
- 6) arranges the defence of the doctoral thesis at a meeting of the defence committee in the form of an academic debate.

### 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 to 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.

### Doctoral School

#### **A doctoral school**

- 1) is a cooperation project between universities and other organisations for 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) (i.e., offers and organises lectures and seminars, collects and disseminates information on doctoral studies, advises doctoral students, offers opportunities to develop one's supervising skills, etc.).

### Library

## **The library**

- 1) registers doctoral theses and analytical overviews in its electronic catalogue and provides descriptions of them;
- 2) provides public access to the full version and/or analytical overview of the doctoral thesis in the corresponding university database of full versions via university's homepage one month before the defence (except where the defence has been declared closed pursuant to § 24(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 § 24(5) of these regulations);
- 4) in case of a creative doctoral thesis, stores the reproductions of creative works related to the doctoral thesis in the most appropriate way.

## Research Administration Office

### **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 the regulations;
- 3) preserves the doctoral studies agreements signed on paper; [Amended 05.03.2018]
- 4) collects and disseminates information regarding 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 support;
- 6) verifies the compliance of materials presented for defence with requirements set out in § 13 and § 14, and transmits documents listed in § 20(1) of these regulations to the chair of the doctoral

studies council no later than three working days after the presentation of the materials;

- 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 § 24(5) of these regulations);
- 9) transmits electronically the analytical overview and/or the full version of the doctoral thesis to TU 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 TU Academic Library;
- 11) transmits a printed copy of the doctoral thesis to the TU Academic Library no later than two weeks before the defence;
- 13) applies for the ISBN numbers for the doctoral thesis to be published.