

## **Regulations for Doctoral Studies**

Adopted based on subsections 3 (6) and 33 (6) of the Higher Education Act, subsection 2<sup>3</sup> (4) of the University of Tartu Act and clauses 12 (2) 5), 12 (2) 6), 12 (2) 7) and 12 (2) 13) of the Statutes of the University of Tartu.

### **I. General provisions**

1. Regulations for Doctoral Studies ('regulations') regulate doctoral studies, the requirements for doctoral theses and the procedure of applying for and awarding doctoral degrees at the University of Tartu ('university').
2. Faculty councils may not delegate the rights and duties assigned to them in these regulations to the institute or college council.
3. If the dean has not appointed a vice dean for research, the dean performs the duties assigned to the vice dean for research by these regulations. At a college, the rights and duties assigned to the head of institute by these regulations are exercised and performed by the director of college.
4. The university's official environment for exchanging information related to the organisation of study is the Study Information System.
5. In matters of the organisation of study not regulated by these regulations, the rights and duties of the student and the principles of the organisation of study provided for in the Study Regulations apply to doctoral students, visiting doctoral students and external students. When processing cases of improper behaviour not regulated by these regulations, the rights and duties given to the vice dean for academic affairs or the vice rector for academic affairs in chapters VIII.9 and VIII.10 of the Study Regulations are exercised and performed by the vice dean for research and the vice rector for research, respectively. A decision related to the organisation of study the challenging of which has not been regulated by these regulations can be challenged on the same bases as and in accordance with the procedures provided for in the Study Regulations.

### **II. Doctoral studies**

#### **II.1. Learners in doctoral studies**

6. Doctoral studies may be undertaken as a doctoral student or, without being matriculated, as a visiting doctoral student and an external student.

##### **II.1.1. Doctoral student**

7. A doctoral student is a student matriculated to the university under a doctoral curriculum. An international doctoral student is a doctoral student who does not have Estonian citizenship, long-term residence permit or permanent right of residence.
8. A doctoral student is matriculated by a directive of the vice rector for research. The directive indicates the time given to complete the curriculum according to the standard period of study of the curriculum. A person may be matriculated to one curriculum at a time.

### **II.1.2. Visiting doctoral student**

9. A visiting doctoral student is a doctoral student of another higher education institution who is registered for studies at the university for one semester or one academic year by a directive of the vice rector for research.
10. To get the status of a visiting doctoral student, the person submits an application to the vice rector for research, including approval by the faculty's vice dean for research and by the person responsible at the home institution. The vice dean for research may dismiss the application if the applicant does not meet the requirements established in the curriculum or course or if the maximum number of persons attending the course has been reached. The directive of the vice rector for research about registering the person as a visiting doctoral student and the application of the visiting doctoral student provide the basis for registering the person to the courses listed in the application according to chapter II.3 of the Study Regulations.
11. The person applying for registration as a visiting doctoral student must certify that their proficiency in the language of instruction is at least level B2 by the Common European Framework of Reference for languages.
12. At the end of the study period, the dean's office issues the visiting doctoral student a transcript of records.
13. The studies of a visiting doctoral student may be extended for up to one academic year by a directive of the vice dean for research.
14. The university discontinues the visiting doctoral student's studies by a directive of the vice rector for research based on an application by the visiting doctoral student or based on the proposal of the vice dean for research if the visiting doctoral student has failed to observe the university's requirements concerning the organisation of study or internal rules.

### **II.1.3. External student**

15. An external student is a person who has been granted the right to follow a doctoral curriculum, incl.:
  - 15.1. take exams and pass-fail evaluations for up to 30 ECTS in an academic year and
  - 15.2. do research, incl. defend the doctoral thesis, in the volume prescribed by the curriculum.
16. To apply for the status of an external student in doctoral studies, the person must hold a master's degree or equivalent qualification. A person who has obtained the master's degree or its equivalent outside Estonia must prove language proficiency at the level required by the Admission Rules in Doctoral Studies unless the person has been previously matriculated under the same curriculum.
17. The status of an external student in doctoral studies is granted for up to one academic year by a directive of the vice dean for research. To get the status of an external student, the person submits an application and the draft individual plan for doctoral studies to the vice dean for research.
18. The vice dean for research may dismiss the application if the applicant has outstanding tuition fees to the university, has previously failed to fulfil the individual plan, incl. received a negative assessment or if their progress was not reviewed, or for another valid reason.

19. Before registering a person as an external student, the relations between the external student and the university are defined by an agreement concluded between the university and the external student.
20. The university discontinues the external student's studies by a directive of the vice dean for research based on an application by the external student or if the external student has failed to observe the university's requirements concerning the organisation of study or internal rules.

## **II.2. Supervision**

21. Before matriculating a doctoral student, the faculty council or, by the decision of the faculty council, the council of the institute that manages the curriculum appoints (a) supervisor(s) to the student, including the supervisor in charge, and approves the topic of the doctoral thesis. The supervisor presents the topic of the doctoral thesis to the council in Estonian and English and in the original language, if the original language is not Estonian or English, and up to three fields of research based on the category classifications of the Common European Research Classification Scheme to classify the thesis.
22. Before registering a person as an external student, the faculty council or, by the decision of the faculty council, the council of the institute that manages the curriculum appoints (a) supervisor(s) to the external student, including the supervisor in charge.
23. The supervisor of a learner in doctoral studies must hold a doctoral degree. In justified cases, a leading practitioner in the field may be appointed as one supervisor regardless of holding a doctoral degree. If the supervisor in charge does not have an employment contract with the university, one supervisor holding a doctoral degree must be appointed from among the university's staff.
24. A doctoral study agreement is concluded between the doctoral student or external student, the supervisor(s) and the university within one month of the matriculation of the doctoral student or registration of the external student. If the external student has already concluded the doctoral study agreement in the course of previous studies and its conditions do not need to be changed, the agreement is extended.
25. Based on the application of the learner in doctoral studies or the supervisor, the council that appointed the supervisor has the right to appoint a new supervisor or relieve the supervisor from the supervision duty.

## **II.3. Filling a vacant student place**

26. A vacant student place is filled in accordance with the conditions and procedure provided in the Study Regulations, taking into account the following adaptations:
  - 26.1. a vacant student place is filled by a directive of the vice rector for research based on the person's application and the proposal by the vice dean for research;
  - 26.2. before matriculation, the applicant for a vacant student place must undergo progress review pursuant to the procedure established in clauses 37–61.

## **II.4. Organisation of study**

### **II.4.1. General principles**

27. The responsibility for organising the studies of the learner in doctoral studies lies with the programme director and the supervisor(s) of the doctoral student.

28. When calculating the doctoral student's workload, the courses prescribed in the curriculum are taken into account; optional courses are not taken into account in a larger volume than that prescribed in the module of optional courses.
29. A doctoral student going to study or do research abroad for at least 12 days is registered as studying abroad by a directive of the vice dean for research based on the doctoral student's individual plan. In other matters, the provisions of the Study Regulations regarding studies abroad apply.
30. In the recognition of previous studies and work experience (RPL), the provisions of the Study Regulations apply.
31. Doctoral students are fully released from the obligation to study during the period when they participate in a reservist training or additional reservist training or when they cannot take part in studies due to mobilisation. A doctoral student who has received a call-up notice must inform the programme director and supervisor(s) of his or her absence from studies.

#### **II.4.2. Individual plan**

32. Doctoral studies take place according to conditions prescribed in the doctoral curriculum based on the individual plan, specifying the planned studies and research.
33. The individual plan is compiled by the learner in doctoral studies in cooperation with the supervisor.
34. The doctoral student completes the doctoral studies according to the individual plan either full time or part time in compliance with clause 39 of the Study Regulations.
35. A doctoral student compiles the individual plan for the entire study period and enters it in the Study Information System within two weeks after matriculation. With the progress review report, the doctoral student submits the updated individual plan for the next review period.
36. An external student compiles the individual plan for the period of being an external student and enters it in the Study Information System within two weeks after registration as an external student.

#### **II.5. Progress review**

37. The level of completion of the doctoral curriculum is assessed during progress review. A doctoral student is transferred to the next study year of the curriculum after one standard study year (two studied semesters) has passed from matriculation or the last transfer according to clause 40 of the Study Regulations, if the student has completed the curriculum in the prescribed volume. The workload of a doctoral student is defined pursuant to clause 42 of the Study Regulations.
38. A studied semester is a semester during which the learner studies in the student place for more days than a half of the semester (more than 70 days) and during which the student is on academic leave or extended standard period of study for less than a half of the semester.
39. Progress review is the review committee's assessment of the learner's academic progress in doctoral studies and research of his or her curriculum. In the course of the progress review, the fulfilment of the learner's individual plan is assessed and feedback to supervision is given.
40. In the progress review, the credit points earned for completed courses and the credit points earned for research are taken into account.

### **II.5.1. Assessment of research**

41. The review committee assesses the learner's academic progress in research in credit points, considering the following criteria and the corresponding requirements established by the faculty council:
  - 41.1. stage of the doctoral thesis;
  - 41.2. printed publications and equivalent patents or patent applications, artistic projects and applied solutions specified in clauses 96 and 98 of these regulations related to the topic of the doctoral thesis;
  - 41.3. participation in conferences and seminars related to the doctoral thesis, whereas the review committee assesses the level of the conference or seminar and the doctoral student's contribution;
  - 41.4. other research activities related to the doctoral thesis (incl. practical training outside the university, participation in research projects, obtaining new methods and work at the library).

### **II.5.2. Schedule of progress review**

42. Progress review is organised at least twice during the academic year: before the beginning of the autumn semester and before the beginning of the spring semester. The vice dean for research issues a directive to fix the dates of progress review and approve the members of the review committee(s) by 1 March and 1 November, respectively. The dates of progress review are published on the faculty's website.
43. The progress review of a doctoral student takes place after one studied semester from matriculation, after two studied semesters from matriculation and, after that, once in an academic year after one standard study year (two studied semesters) from the latest progress review.
44. The progress review does not take place during academic leave.
45. The progress review of an external student following a doctoral curriculum takes place after two studied semesters.

### **II.5.3. Review committee**

46. The review committee consists of at least three members who hold a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification. If the curriculum is managed by an institute, at least one member of the review committee must be from outside the institute.
47. The review committee has the quorum if at least three of its members with the right to vote attend the meeting. The member of the review committee is obliged to participate in voting except in the case specified in clause 48. The member of the review committee cannot abstain from voting. A decision is adopted if more than half of the members of the committee with the right to vote have voted in favour.
48. The requirements for the involvement of supervisors in the progress review meeting are approved by the faculty council. If a member of the review committee is the supervisor of a reviewed person or a connected person for the purposes of the Anti-corruption Act, the member withdraws from taking the progress review decision regarding this particular person and the quorum is reduced by one.

### **II.5.4. Progress review report**

49. At least eight working days before the date of progress review, the learner in doctoral studies enters the progress review report in the Study Information System.

50. The report on fulfilling the individual plan and the individual plan for the next review period signed by the learner in doctoral studies and the supervisor(s) as well as additional materials required by the progress review rules of the faculty must be submitted to the review committee.

#### **II.5.5. Progress review meeting**

51. The progress review takes place at a meeting of the review committee, which may be public according to the rules established by the faculty council.
52. The learner in doctoral studies must participate in the progress review meeting. In the case of justified reasons, based on an application by the learner in doctoral studies, the review committee may give the learner permission not to participate in the meeting.
53. The progress review meeting may be held using real-time two-way audio-video communication.

#### **II.5.6. Decisions of the review committee**

54. Based on the materials submitted by the learner in doctoral studies and the results of the progress review meeting, the review committee gives the learner in doctoral studies credit points for research which are entered in the Study Information System within four working days.
55. The review committee gives the learner in doctoral studies recommendations on fulfilling and improving the individual plan.
56. Based on the submitted materials and the reached assessment, the review committee initiates activities for improving the progress of the learner in doctoral studies.
57. Based on the results of the progress review meeting, the review committee makes one of the following decisions:
  - 57.1. to give the doctoral student a positive assessment if the student has fulfilled the requirements of at least part-time study or submitted the doctoral thesis for defence ('defence') according to clause 99;
  - 57.2. to give the doctoral student a positive assessment after the first semester if the student has fulfilled at least 50% of the first semester's individual plan;
  - 57.3. to give the doctoral student a negative assessment if the student has not fulfilled the requirements of part-time study or if the volume of studies and research in the review period falls short of 50% of the volume set out in the individual plan;
  - 57.4. not to review the progress of the learner in doctoral studies if the person did not submit the documents listed in clause 50 to the review committee by the deadline specified in clause 49 or was absent from the progress review meeting without the review committee's permission;
  - 57.5. to give the external student a positive assessment if the student has fulfilled the individual plan at least to the extent of 50% or submitted the doctoral thesis for defence according to clause 99;
  - 57.6. to give the external student a negative assessment if the student has fulfilled less than 50% of the individual plan.

#### **II.5.7. Repeat progress review and appealing the review decision**

58. If the learner in doctoral studies was not reviewed pursuant to clause 57.4, the review committee has the right to allow the learner in doctoral studies to repeat the progress review, if there were good reasons for failure to submit the documents or being absent

from the meeting. Proof of good reasons must be submitted to the review committee within five working days of the date of the progress review meeting or immediately after the removal of the cause of non-compliance.

59. If the procedure of progress review has been violated, the vice rector for research may repeal the review decision and obligate the review committee to review the progress of the learner in doctoral studies anew within 14 days of the repealing of the decision.
60. If a learner in doctoral studies does not agree with the decision of the review committee, the learner has the right to submit a written appeal to the vice dean for research within seven days from the announcement of the decision of the review committee. To review the appeal, the vice dean for research convenes a committee in a new composition within seven days from receiving the appeal. The committee makes a decision on the appeal within seven days from convening the committee. Minutes are recorded of the committee's meeting and the decision can be challenged within 30 days from the announcement of the decision by submitting an appeal to the appeals committee specified in clause 153 of the Study Regulations who will then review the appeal according to the procedure provided for in the Study Regulations.
61. If the appeal has been submitted to contest the number of credit points given for research in the course of progress review, the committee convened by the vice dean for research specified in clause 60 is entitled to leave the number of credit points given for the research the same, increase the number of credit points given or decrease it. The appeals committee convened by the senate is not entitled to change the number of credit points given for research.

## **II.6. Extending the period of studies**

62. A doctoral student who has studied full time has the right to apply for the extension of studies (postponement of the end date of studies) for 12 months to complete the curriculum. A doctoral student who has studied part time has the right to apply for the extension of studies for the period spent in part-time study, but not for a shorter period than 12 months, to complete the curriculum. If the student has studied part time for longer than one study year, the extension of studies can be applied for one study year at a time.
63. The prerequisite for applying for an extension of studies is a positive progress review decision.

## **II.7. Exmatriculation**

64. On the initiative of the university, a doctoral student is exmatriculated by the directive of the vice rector for research based on the proposal of the vice dean for research or the head of finance, or based on the decision of the council awarding doctoral degrees, for the following reasons:
  - 64.1. completion of the curriculum;
  - 64.2. expiry of the end date of studies;
  - 64.3. insufficient academic progress:
    - 64.3.1. the doctoral student received negative assessment at the progress review or could not be reviewed;
    - 64.3.2. the doctoral student has received four negative exam results in the same course;
    - 64.3.3. the degree was not awarded after a repeat defence;

- 64.4. the first-year doctoral student has not submitted the individual plan specified in clause 35;
- 64.5. the doctoral student is matriculated or rematriculated to another curriculum;
- 64.6. failure to pay the tuition fee by the due date specified in the Conditions of Reimbursement of Study Costs in Degree Study;
- 64.7. the termination of the contract for the funding of the student place of the doctoral student;
- 64.8. the curriculum is closed, provided the doctoral student has not requested a transfer to another curriculum by the time of closing;
- 64.9. a student studying under a joint curriculum or a cross-border curriculum that follows the principles of a joint curriculum is exmatriculated from the university coordinating the joint curriculum;
- 64.10. a student who completed the previous level of study abroad fails to submit the documents certifying the previous level of education by the due date specified in the admission rules;
- 64.11. by resolution of the vice rector for research due to improper behaviour in the following cases:
  - 64.11.1. academic fraud;
  - 64.11.2. intentional criminal offence while a student, provided the corresponding criminal conviction has taken effect;
  - 64.11.3. forgery of documents;
  - 64.11.4. major violation of generally recognised norms of behaviour or academic traditions.
- 65. Exmatriculation on the university's initiative is effected within three weeks of the event specified in clause 64 (except for 64.6 and 64.12). Exmatriculation based on clause 64.6 is effected before matriculation to a new student place. If the student has challenged the decision of the university on which the exmatriculation is based, the time limit for the formalisation of exmatriculation is suspended during the resolution of the dispute.
- 66. Exmatriculation on the doctoral student's initiative takes place by the directive of the vice rector for research based on the doctoral student's application. The university is entitled to ask the reason for the application and require the application to be coordinated with the supervisor and programme director to offer counselling.
- 67. The university exmatriculates the doctoral student by the directive of the vice rector for research based on the proposal of the vice dean for research in the following events independent of the parties:
  - 67.1. the court has appointed the student a guardian due to the student's restricted active legal capacity;
  - 67.2. the student has died.
- 68. Rematriculation takes place according to the conditions and procedure provided in the Study Regulations, taking into account the following adaptations:
  - 68.1. rematriculation is decided by the vice rector for research based on the person's application and approval by the vice dean for research;
  - 68.2. before matriculation, an applicant for rematriculation must undergo progress review pursuant to the procedure established in clauses 37–61.



### **III. Applying for a doctoral degree**

#### **III.1. Completion of a doctoral curriculum**

69. A doctoral student who has fully completed the curriculum, i.e. passed the courses prescribed in the curriculum and defended the doctoral thesis, is considered to have finished studies and is exmatriculated.
70. A person who has completed the doctoral curriculum is issued the diploma certifying the award of the doctoral degree and the diploma supplement in Estonian and in English. The diploma is issued based on an officially recorded decision of the council awarding doctoral degrees.
71. The name of the research degree awarded to the person who has completed a doctoral curriculum is Doctor of Philosophy (abbreviation PhD). The name is accompanied by the name of the curriculum or a narrower specialisation under the curriculum in brackets.

#### **III.2. Council awarding doctoral degrees**

72. A doctoral degree is awarded based on a doctoral curriculum approved by the senate, including based on a joint curriculum.
73. The council awarding doctoral degrees ('council') is appointed by the senate upon approving or changing a doctoral curriculum. The composition of the council is published on the website of the university. The council must always comprise at least six members who hold a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification. The right to award a doctoral degree may be granted to
  - 73.1. the faculty council;
  - 73.2. the institute council;
  - 73.3. a joint council established on the proposal of the councils of multiple faculties or institutes;
  - 73.4. a joint council of higher education institutions established based on a cooperation agreement for a joint curriculum or joint supervision.
74. The composition of the joint council specified in clause 73.3 is approved by the vice rector for research. The joint council specified in clause 73.4 is formed as specified in the cooperation agreement for a joint curriculum or joint supervision.
75. For the defence of a particular doctoral thesis, the council may expand its composition by (an) additional member(s) who hold a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification.
76. In its procedure rules, the council establishes the requirements for the submission of documents, including the number of copies of the doctoral thesis to be submitted to the council and the procedure for organising the defence and voting at the defence. In its procedure rules, the council may specify the prerequisites for allowing a doctoral thesis to be defended.
77. Only the members of the council who hold a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification participate in deciding issues regarding a doctoral thesis. The supervisor(s) of a doctoral thesis do(es) not have the right to vote or chair the meeting when deciding issues regarding the doctoral thesis. The members of the council who do not hold a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification have the right to speak on issues regarding the doctoral thesis, but they cannot participate in voting on the issues.
78. At the defence, the council has a quorum if, inclusive of additional members, at least six members with decision-making powers are present. In other issues related to the doctoral thesis, the council has a quorum if over half of the members of the council with decision-making powers participate in the meeting.

79. A decision of the council regarding issues related to the doctoral thesis is adopted if over half of the members of the council with decision-making powers participating in the meeting, but not less than four members of the council with decision-making powers, vote in its favour.
80. If the composition or activities of the council do not comply with these regulations, the senate may deprive the council of the right to award doctoral degrees and appoint a new council awarding doctoral degrees.

### **III.3. Requirements for doctoral candidate**

81. A doctoral candidate must hold a master's degree or equivalent qualification and must have fully completed the doctoral curriculum except for the defence of the doctoral thesis.

### **III.4. Requirements for doctoral thesis**

#### **III.4.1. General requirements for doctoral thesis**

82. A doctoral thesis is an independent research paper that presents a well-argued original solution to a specific scientific problem and the results of which are published in international professional literature.
83. A doctoral thesis contains
  - 83.1. an overview of the current situation of the field of research and the position of the research problem in it;
  - 83.2. the formulation of the research task;
  - 83.3. the statements presented for defence;
  - 83.4. a description of methodology;
  - 83.5. the course and/or proof of the resolution of the research task;
  - 83.6. conclusions;
  - 83.7. a summary;
  - 83.8. a list of references;
  - 83.9. an exhaustive Estonian summary of different parts of the thesis if the doctoral thesis has been written in a foreign language or an exhaustive foreign-language summary of different parts of the thesis if the doctoral thesis has been written in Estonian;
  - 83.10. in the case of an artistic project, its documented and published public presentation;
  - 83.11. the author's curriculum vitae including the name, date of birth, an email address that continues to be valid after graduation, education and professional history, information about the main fields of research, research publications or patents, and membership in professional organisations.
84. A doctoral thesis may be formalised as an integrated collection of research publications, as a monograph or as artistic research. A doctoral thesis is published in the university's publication series "Dissertationes ... Universitatis Tartuensis".
85. If a publication, artistic project, invention or applied solution has several authors or if the doctoral thesis forms a part of a joint research or artistic project, the contribution of the doctoral candidate must be significant and thoroughly described in the doctoral thesis.

#### **III.4.2. Doctoral thesis as an integrated collection of research publications**

86. An integrated collection of research publications generally includes three research articles and a summarising review article.
87. In an integrated collection of research publications,

- 87.1. the summarising review article must meet the requirements stipulated in clause 83 and, if it has been written in a language that does not allow it to be peer-reviewed and reviewed by a specialist meeting the requirements stipulated in clause 108, the doctoral candidate must have it translated into the required language;
- 87.2. at least two of the three research articles must have been accepted for publishing by a journal meeting the requirements of clauses 96.1 or 96.2 and the third may have been peer-reviewed by the editorial board of a leading international research journal or collection or by two internationally recognised independent researchers selected by the council.
- 88. An integrated collection of research publications may comprise
  - 88.1. at least one publication meeting the requirements of clauses 96.1 or 96.2 and at least two invention patents or patent applications; if there are two publications meeting the requirements, one patent or patent application is required, or
  - 88.2. at least two publications meeting the requirements of clauses 96.1 or 96.2 and one applied solution.
- 89. The council, based on a calculated and justified decision, has the right to allow a doctoral thesis in the form of an integrated collection of research publications to be defended also if it contains fewer publications than required in clause 86, provided at least one of them includes research at an internationally outstanding level which has a clearly visible and comprehensible result that changes the scientific worldview of the specialisation, and of which the doctoral candidate is the primary author.

#### **III.4.3. Doctoral thesis as a monograph**

- 90. A monograph must comply with the requirements of clause 83 and have been peer-reviewed at an international level by at least two independent recognised researchers of the specialisation.
- 91. The author of a monograph to be published in the university's series of doctoral theses must have published or received an acceptance for publication for at least one research publication on the topic of the doctoral thesis meeting the requirements of clause 96.1 or 96.2.
- 92. A monograph published or accepted for publication outside the university's series of doctoral theses must meet the requirements of clause 96.3. This must be supplemented by a summarising review article meeting the requirements of clause 83.

#### **III.4.4. Doctoral thesis as an artistic research**

- 93. In the case of a doctoral thesis as an artistic research, a creative project or a series of projects the results of which have been published as at least three documented presentations open to the public and related to the particular research question is considered equal to a research publication.
- 94. At least one of the presentations must have taken place abroad or as a part of an international project and must have been internationally peer-reviewed by at least two independent recognised specialists or researchers of the corresponding field.
- 95. Doctoral thesis as an artistic research must be supplemented by a summarising review article meeting the requirements of clause 83. If the summarising review article has been written in a language that does not allow it to be peer-reviewed and reviewed by a specialist meeting the requirements stipulated in clause 108, the doctoral candidate must have it translated into the required language.

### **III.4.5. Requirements for research publications**

96. The following research publications are considered as a publication of the results of research included in a doctoral thesis:
  - 96.1. articles in leading international peer-reviewed scientific journals of the field of research, which have an international panel, are internationally distributed, indexed in several international databases and open to contributions (ETIS publication categories 1.1 and 1.2);
  - 96.2. articles or chapters in publications of recognised international research publishing houses (ETIS publication category 3.1);
  - 96.3. a monograph published by an internationally recognised research publishing house (ETIS publication category 2.1).
97. An official confirmation about acceptance for publishing must be submitted for a research publication accepted for publication but not yet published.

### **III.4.6. Requirements for patents, patent applications and applied solutions**

98. The following are considered equal to the publication of the results of research included in a doctoral thesis:
  - 98.1. patents registered in the region or country where the patentability has been subjected to expert assessment;
  - 98.2. pending patent applications if, in the case of an international patent application, a positive written opinion on the patentability of the invention has been given by the patent office that conducted the international search or if, in the case of a national patent application, a positive written opinion on the patentability of the invention has been given by the regional or national patent office;
  - 98.3. an applied solution, i.e. an engineering-technical or software solution, which has been peer-reviewed by two internationally recognised independent experts selected by the council.

## **III.5. Allowing a doctoral thesis to be defended**

### **III.5.1. Documents submitted by the doctoral candidate**

99. The doctoral candidate must submit to the council the following documents electronically or, if the original document is not electronic, on paper:
  - 99.1. an application to allow the doctoral thesis to be defended, specifying the exact title of the doctoral degree applied for;
  - 99.2. the text of the doctoral thesis, which complies with the requirements established for manuscripts by the University of Tartu Press;
  - 99.3. a curriculum vitae containing the list of research publications, patents, applied solutions or artistic projects related to or forming a part of the doctoral thesis;
  - 99.4. (a) written opinion(s) of the supervisor(s) on the originality of the doctoral thesis, the contribution of the doctoral candidate and compliance with the requirements of the content and form of the doctoral thesis;
  - 99.5. a brief popular science summary (up to 2,000 characters) aimed at a broad audience in Estonian and English.
100. After the doctoral candidate has been allowed to defend the doctoral thesis, the doctoral candidate submits the text of the doctoral thesis to the council electronically and, if

provided for in the procedure rules of the council, also the required number of paper copies.

### **III.5.2. Council's decisions**

101. Within three working days of receiving the documents specified in clause 99, the council chair forwards them to the academic secretary, who assesses the compliance of the submitted materials with the requirements of these regulations, involving experts, if necessary. The academic secretary submits his or her written opinion to the council within eight working days.
102. Within six weeks of receiving the documents submitted by the doctoral candidate, the council makes one of the following decisions, which is included in the minutes:
  - 102.1. to allow the doctoral thesis to be defended;
  - 102.2. to submit the doctoral thesis for a review;
  - 102.3. in the case of deficiencies, to demand the reformulation and correction of the doctoral thesis and, after the corrections have been made, makes a new decision;
  - 102.4. not to allow the doctoral thesis to be defended.
103. Once the reviews are received, the council makes one of the following decisions, which is included in the minutes:
  - 103.1. to allow the doctoral thesis to be defended;
  - 103.2. in the case of deficiencies, to demand the reformulation and correction of the doctoral thesis and, after the corrections have been made, makes a new decision;
  - 103.3. not to allow the doctoral thesis to be defended.
104. By its decision to allow a doctoral thesis to be defended, the council confirms that the doctoral thesis complies with the requirements provided for in chapter III.4 and that the doctoral candidate deserves a doctoral degree in the event of a successful defence.
105. The decision specified in clauses 102.3, 102.4, 103.2 and 103.3 must state the reasons.
106. If the council decides to allow a doctoral thesis to be defended, it also appoints the opponent(s) of the thesis, the time and place of defence and, if necessary, additional members of the council.
107. In addition to the standard formal elements, the minutes of the meeting on allowing a doctoral thesis to be defended must also contain the names of the members of the council with decision-making powers, their research degrees, the voting results, the name of the doctoral candidate, the title of the doctoral thesis in the original language and Estonian or, if the doctoral thesis is in Estonian, the Estonian and English titles of the doctoral thesis, the names of the supervisor(s), opponent(s) and additional members (if any) and their research degrees and institutions, the time and place of defence and the exact title of the degree applied for.

### **III.5.3. Opponent and reviewer**

108. An internationally recognised researcher of the respective specialisation who holds a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification and does not have a conflict of interests upon performing the task can be appointed as an opponent and reviewer of a doctoral thesis. At least one of the opponents of a doctoral thesis must be from outside Estonia unless the rector decides otherwise based on a proposal of the council. A reviewer of the doctoral thesis can also be an opponent of the doctoral thesis.

#### **III.5.4. Information about the defence and making the doctoral thesis publicly available**

109. A paper copy of the doctoral thesis must be accessible in the university library and an electronic copy of the doctoral thesis must be available on the website of the university library at least one month before the defence unless the defence has been declared closed or restrictions have been established on the publication of the doctoral thesis.
110. Information about the defence is published on the website of the university.

#### **III.6. Publication of the doctoral thesis**

111. The doctoral thesis is published on paper and electronically with the Creative Commons license CC BY NC ND 4.0, which allows the work to be reproduced, disseminated and directed to the public as long as appropriate credit is attributed to the author, and prohibits the creation and commercial use of the derived work. At least 15 paper copies of the doctoral thesis must be printed.
112. If the doctoral thesis is defended based on (a) published monograph(s), it must include a reference to the monographs(s).
113. If the doctoral thesis is defended as an integrated collection of research publications, it must include the review article together with research publications specified in clauses 87 and 88. If the publications cannot be published due to the proprietary rights of the author belonging to other persons, the doctoral thesis must contain a reference to the source of publication along with the reference to the internet source. The author has the right to prohibit the electronic publication of an unpublished manuscript before the first publication.
114. If the doctoral thesis or publications cannot be published due to the Personal Data Protection Act, a state secret, trade secret or other classified information, the doctoral thesis is published without this information or as a list of the publications drawn up by the author on paper and electronically. The author submits a reasoned application to establish restrictions on the publication of the doctoral thesis. The rector establishes the restrictions on the proposal of the council.
115. The doctoral thesis is printed by the University of Tartu Press unless the doctoral candidate chooses otherwise in exceptional cases. The author and the university conclude an agreement to have the doctoral thesis printed.
116. If the doctoral thesis is not printed by the University of Tartu Press, one paper copy and the electronic file of the doctoral thesis are submitted to the university library. If necessary, the conditions for publishing the doctoral thesis are agreed upon in the agreement.
117. The doctoral thesis is printed according to uniform technical requirements with the cover design of the faculty.
118. At least seven weeks before the date of the defence, the author submits to the University of Tartu Press the electronic manuscript of the doctoral thesis and a brief popular science summary (up to 2,000 characters) aimed at a broad audience in Estonian and English, and the separates or PDF-files of the publications. The author submits to the University of Tartu Press an excerpt from the minutes of the council meeting on allowing the doctoral thesis to be defended, the publisher's licence of republication of a previously published article (if applicable), and the copy of the rector's directive in the case specified in clause 114.

119. The author is responsible for ensuring that the publication of the doctoral thesis does not violate the intellectual property rights of other persons, the requirements for the protection of personal data or other requirements arising from legislation.
120. The University of Tartu Press ensures the identity of the electronic and paper version of the doctoral thesis, taking the provisions of clauses 113 and 114 into account. The University of Tartu Press sends one paper copy to the Rector's Strategy Office and the Office of Academic Affairs. If fewer than 50 paper copies of the doctoral thesis are printed, the University of Tartu Press sends one paper copy and the electronic version to the university library, the National Library of Estonia, the archive library of the Estonian Literary Museum and the Tallinn University Academic Library.
121. The university ensures the publication, preservation and availability of the electronic and paper version of the doctoral thesis.

### **III.7. Defence of the doctoral thesis**

#### **III.7.1. Defence meeting**

122. The defence of the doctoral thesis takes place at a meeting of the council as a public academic discussion. If the doctoral thesis contains a state secret, trade secret, information not subject to publication due to personal data protection requirements or other classified information, the rector may, on the proposal of the council, declare the meeting closed.
123. The defence can only take place if the doctoral candidate, at least one opponent and, along with additional members, at least six members of the council with decision-making powers are present. One can also participate in the defence using real-time two-way audio-video communication.
124. The defence (except the closed discussion specified in clause 126) is recorded as an audio or video file and preserved in accordance with the procedure established at the university. In the case of a closed defence, access restrictions to the files are established.
125. The defence consists of the following:
  - 125.1. introduction by the chair of the meeting and introduction of the doctoral candidate;
  - 125.2. presentation by the doctoral candidate (*lectio praecursoria*);
  - 125.3. remarks by the opponent(s);
  - 125.4. academic discussion between the doctoral candidate and the opponent(s);
  - 125.5. academic discussion with the participation of the members of the council and the audience;
  - 125.6. adoption of the council's decision;
  - 125.7. announcement of the council's decision;
  - 125.8. final remarks of the doctoral candidate.

#### **III.7.2. Council's decision**

126. In a closed discussion (involving the members of the council as well as the opponent(s) and supervisor(s) who do not have the right to vote), the council discusses the doctoral candidate's presentation and ability to defend the main statements of the doctoral thesis in the discussion. Taking into account the assessments of the opponent(s) to the doctoral thesis and the discussion, the council makes one of the following decisions in a public vote, which is included in the minutes:
  - 126.1. The doctoral thesis was defended successfully (grade 'defended'). The doctoral degree is awarded to the doctoral candidate;

- 126.2. The doctoral thesis was not defended successfully (grade 'not defended'). The doctoral degree is not awarded to the doctoral candidate;
- 126.3. The decision is not made due to suspicion of plagiarism or other academic fraud. The doctoral thesis is sent to experts for assessment.
- 127. The council's decision must state the reasons. If the council decides not to award a doctoral degree to the doctoral candidate, the substantive deficiencies found in the doctoral thesis and/or defence that did not allow for the awarding of the degree must be presented.
- 128. In the case specified in clause 126.3, the council asks for at least two expert assessments and letters of explanation from the doctoral candidate and supervisor(s). Within one month of the defence, the council makes one of the following decisions, which is included in the minutes:
  - 128.1. The suspicion of plagiarism or other academic fraud was not confirmed, and
    - 128.1.1. the doctoral thesis was defended successfully (grade 'defended'). The doctoral degree is awarded to the doctoral candidate;
    - 128.1.2. The doctoral thesis was not defended successfully (grade 'not defended'). The doctoral degree is not awarded to the doctoral candidate;
  - 128.2. The suspicion of plagiarism or other academic fraud was confirmed. The council makes a proposal to the vice rector for research to exmatriculate the doctoral student due to academic fraud on the grounds provided for in clause 64.11.1 of these regulations.
- 129. The minutes of the council's meeting serve as the basis for the issuing of a diploma. In addition to the required standard formal elements, the minutes must contain the name of the doctoral candidate, the title of the doctoral thesis in the original language and Estonian or, if the doctoral thesis is in Estonian, the Estonian and English titles of the doctoral thesis, the names of the supervisor(s), opponent(s) and members of the council with decision-making powers attending the defence along with their research degrees, the voting results, the name of the council chair and the decision on awarding the doctoral degree.
- 130. If the council decides not to award the doctoral degree to the doctoral candidate, the doctoral candidate has the right to apply for a repeat defence of the same doctoral thesis once within the time limit set by the council.

### **III.7.3. Repeat defence of a doctoral thesis**

- 131. To be allowed to a repeat defence, the doctoral candidate must submit an application to the council.
- 132. Within one month of receiving the application, the council makes a decision to allow or not to allow the doctoral candidate to the repeat defence. The decision must comply with the requirements provided for in clauses 105–107. A decision not to allow a doctoral candidate to the repeat defence must state the reasons. Based on the council's decision to allow a doctoral candidate to a repeat defence, access to the electronic doctoral thesis is granted on the university library website at least one month before the repeat defence unless the defence of the doctoral thesis has been declared closed or restrictions have been established on the publication of the doctoral thesis. Information about the repeat defence is published on the website of the university.
- 133. A repeat defence takes place in accordance with clauses 122–129.



134. If, in a repeat defence, the council decides not to award a doctoral degree based on clause 126.2, the council makes a proposal to the vice rector for research to exmatriculate the doctoral candidate due to a lack of progress on the grounds provided for in clause 64.3.3 of these regulations.

### **III.8. Applying for a doctoral degree and defence of the doctoral thesis under a joint supervision agreement**

#### **III.8.1. Conclusion of a joint supervision agreement**

135. An agreement for joint supervision of a doctoral student is made between a doctoral student of the University of Tartu, the University of Tartu and a foreign higher education institution. The joint supervision agreement allows defending a doctoral thesis on the conditions specified in the agreement before a joint council of the University of Tartu and the foreign higher education institution and awarding to the doctoral candidate, based on a decision of the joint council, the graduation documents and academic degrees of the University of Tartu and the foreign higher education institution.
136. The joint supervision agreement is signed by the doctoral student, representatives of both higher education institutions and the supervisors of the doctoral student. Before signing, the supervisor sends the joint supervision agreement electronically to the council awarding doctoral degrees of the University of Tartu, which submits the agreement to the Office of Academic Affairs to verify compliance with the requirements established in these regulations.
137. If the conditions and procedure of defending the doctoral thesis agreed in the joint supervision agreement do not meet the conditions of defence of doctoral theses established in these regulations, the senate decides whether to approve the adaptations and then the council awarding doctoral degrees of the University of Tartu decides whether to approve the agreement.
138. If the conditions and procedure of defending the doctoral thesis agreed in the joint supervision agreement meet the conditions of defence of doctoral theses established in these regulations, the council awarding doctoral degrees of the University of Tartu decides whether to approve the agreement.

#### **III.8.2. Conditions of a joint supervision agreement**

139. The prerequisite for the approval of a joint supervision agreement by the council awarding doctoral degrees of the University of Tartu is that the agreement specifies at least the following terms and conditions:
- 139.1. terms and conditions of registration of the doctoral student for studies at the University of Tartu and the foreign higher education institution and the planned period of study;
  - 139.2. research topic and the curriculum followed at the University of Tartu;
  - 139.3. supervisors at the University of Tartu and at the foreign higher education institution and their obligations upon supervising the doctoral student;
  - 139.4. study plan, incl. compulsory courses, and the estimated timetable;
  - 139.5. conditions of the recognition of prior learning and professional experience;
  - 139.6. conditions of financing the studies and research, incl. of participation in conferences and trips;
  - 139.7. requirements for mutual notification and reporting, incl. documents to be submitted for progress review;

- 139.8. procedure of applying for the degree;
- 139.9. conditions and procedure of formalising and publishing the doctoral thesis, incl. the language of the doctoral thesis;
- 139.10. intellectual property rights regarding the doctoral thesis;
- 139.11. conditions and procedure of defending the doctoral thesis, incl. the language and place of defence;
- 139.12. procedure of the formation of a joint council, making decisions and contesting decisions;
- 139.13. graduation documents and academic degrees issued upon graduation;
- 139.14. conditions and procedure of the termination of the agreement.
- 140. A person who has signed a joint supervision agreement with the University of Tartu and a foreign higher education institution which is in force at the time of applying for a degree can apply for the defence of their doctoral thesis on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement if the person
  - 140.1. applies for a doctoral degree under the curriculum of the University of Tartu specified in the joint supervision agreement;
  - 140.2. has fulfilled the conditions specified in clause 81 and completed at least 30 credit points' worth of courses required under the curriculum of the University of Tartu at the University of Tartu.
- 141. If a person wishes to defend their doctoral thesis based on a joint supervision agreement, the application for a doctoral degree, the formalisation, publication and defence of the doctoral thesis and the decision on awarding the degree takes place on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement.

### **III.8.3. Joint council awarding doctoral degrees**

- 142. The joint council awarding doctoral degrees formed on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement has the right to award the doctoral degree of the University of Tartu. The joint council comprises representatives of the council awarding doctoral degrees of the University of Tartu and the representatives of the foreign higher education institution. The joint council has at least six members who hold a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification. At least three members of the joint council must be representatives of the council awarding doctoral degrees of the University of Tartu.
- 143. Supervisors who have been appointed as members of the joint council have the right to vote in deciding on the awarding of the doctoral degree unless agreed otherwise in the joint supervision agreement.
- 144. The meetings of the joint council may be held using real-time two-way audio-video communication.

### **III.8.4. Joint council's decisions**

- 145. The minutes of the joint council serve as the basis for awarding a diploma of the University of Tartu to a person who has defended the doctoral thesis on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement. In addition to the required standard formal elements, the minutes must contain the name of the doctoral candidate, the title of the doctoral thesis in the original language, Estonian and English, if the original language of the doctoral thesis is not English, or, if the doctoral thesis is in Estonian, the Estonian and English titles of the doctoral thesis, the names of

the supervisor(s), opponent(s) and members of the council with decision-making powers attending the defence along with their research degrees and institutions, the name of the council chair, the voting results and the decision on awarding the doctoral degree.

146. In the case of violation of the conditions of and procedure for the defence of doctoral theses set out in the joint supervision agreement, the doctoral candidate can file an appeal against the decision of the joint council regarding the awarding of a doctoral degree of the University of Tartu in accordance with the procedure set out in clauses 148–149.
147. The council awarding doctoral degrees of the University of Tartu can, in the case specified in clause 149, overrule the decision of the joint council on awarding the degree in accordance with the procedure established in clause 151.

### **III.9. Contesting and overruling the decisions of the council awarding doctoral degrees**

148. In the case of a violation of the rules of applying for and awarding of doctoral degrees, the doctoral candidate may file an appeal against a decision of the council with the vice rector for research within five working days after the day the council's decision was announced. The vice rector for research forms an appeals committee comprising at least three members to process the appeal. The vice rector for research is the chair of the appeals committee. At least three members of the appeals committee must hold a doctoral degree or equivalent qualification.
149. The appeals committee must decide, within 30 days of the submission of the appeal, whether the contested decision remains in force or is overruled and sent back to the council that made the decision so that the council can make a new decision. The decision of the appeals committee is not subject to appeal in the university.
150. The council has the right to overrule a decision to allow a person to defend the doctoral thesis or a decision on the awarding of a doctoral degree if the council has a reason to suspect plagiarism or other academic fraud. If the curriculum under which the degree was defended has been closed, the rights and duties of the council are exercised by the faculty council.
151. In the case of suspicion of plagiarism or other academic fraud, the council asks for at least two expert assessments and letters of explanation from the doctoral candidate and the supervisor(s) and makes, according to the results, within one month of receiving the suspicion, one of the following decisions, which is included in the minutes:
  - 151.1. The suspicion of plagiarism or other academic fraud was not confirmed, and
    - 151.1.1. the decision to allow a doctoral thesis to be defended stands;
    - 151.1.2. the decision to award the doctoral degree stands;
  - 151.2. The suspicion of plagiarism or other academic fraud was confirmed, and
    - 151.2.1. the decision to allow the doctoral thesis to be defended is overruled and the council makes a proposal to the vice rector for research to exmatriculate the doctoral student due to academic fraud on the grounds provided for in clause 64.11.1 of these regulations;
    - 151.2.2. the decision to award the doctoral degree is overruled. The corresponding decision of the council is published on the website of the university.
152. In the case of decisions specified in clauses 128.2, 132, 134, 151.2.1 and 151.2.2, the doctoral candidate must submit a new doctoral thesis in accordance with clause 99 to receive a doctoral degree from the university.

### **III.10. Preservation of the doctoral thesis**

- 153. The doctoral thesis is preserved in the university library in printed and electronic form.
- 154. If a decision to allow a person to defend the doctoral thesis is overruled according to clause 151.2.1, the defence was not successful as specified in clauses 126.2, 128.1.2 and 128.2 or the awarding of a doctoral degree is overruled in accordance with clause 151.2.2 after the defence, access to the electronic doctoral thesis is closed based on the council's proposal.

### **IV. Implementing provisions**

- 155. The Procedure for Awarding Doctorates approved by the Senate of the University of Tartu regulation no. 23 of 20 December 2013 and amended by regulation no. 12 of 29 May 2015 and regulation no. 1 of 31 January 2020 is repealed.
- 156. Clause 2.3 of Job Descriptions of Academic Staff, adopted by the Senate of the University of Tartu regulation no. 8 of 15 December 2017 and amended by regulation no. 10 of 21 December 2018, regulation no. 8 of 19 June 2020, regulation no. 2 of 30 April 2021 is amended and worded as follows: "2.3. The volume of a doctoral thesis is the volume of research work which is defined as a minimum requirement for a doctoral thesis in the Procedure for Awarding Doctorates established by the senate."
- 157. A doctoral student matriculated before the 2018/2019 academic year may be matriculated to only one curriculum per level of higher education at a time.
- 158. In the 2021/2022 academic year, the rector has the right to issue directives to establish derogations to the Regulations for Doctoral Studies necessary for preventing the spread of COVID-19. The rector submits a report to the senate by the February 2022 session about derogations established in the autumn semester and by the August 2022 session about derogations established in the spring semester.
- 159. The regulations take effect on 30 August 2021.