

APPROVED

by Resolution No. S-2017-10-3 of 24 October 2017  
of the Senate of Vilnius University  
(wording of Resolution No. SPN-44 of 17 October 2023  
of the Senate of Vilnius University)

## **THE REGULATION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY**

### **CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Regulation of Doctoral Studies at Vilnius University (hereinafter the ‘Regulation’) establishes the procedures for the organisation and admission to doctoral studies; academic supervision of doctoral students in science (hereinafter the ‘doctoral students’); drawing up work plans of doctoral students; carrying out of doctoral studies and doctoral students’ research; the assessment of the knowledge and abilities of doctoral students; preparation, review and defence of doctoral dissertations (hereinafter the ‘dissertation’); awarding of academic doctoral degrees; examination of appeals and complaints; financing of doctoral studies and retention documents of doctoral studies conducted at Vilnius University (hereinafter the ‘University’) or carried out by Vilnius University in cooperation with other universities and/or research institutes (hereinafter jointly the ‘Institutions’, and individually the ‘Institution’).

2. The purpose of doctoral studies is to train researchers to be able to carry out research and experimental development works independently and solve scientific problems. A person who has successfully completed doctoral studies and has been awarded a doctoral degree is expected to have mastered the state of the art in research, specific areas of science and their interaction, as well as acquired specialised skills and methodologies of addressing problems within and outside the realm of academic research, enhancing their knowledge and developing their practical professional activities; they are also expected to have developed the ability to perform independently and acquired academic competencies and professional aptitude for the generation and application of new ideas and processes in studies and elsewhere.

3. The Regulation is in force at the University and at the Institutions of shared doctoral studies and shall be applied in those areas of doctoral, or third cycle, studies in respect of which the right to conduct doctoral studies is granted to the University or the Institutions, unless specified otherwise in the legal acts regulating the right to conduct doctoral studies. In the case of shared doctoral studies, the University shall be the coordinating institution. The terms used in the Regulation shall be understood as they are defined in the Regulations of Doctoral Studies, approved by Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-739 of 18 May 2020 “On the Approval of the Regulations of Doctoral Studies” (as subsequently amended) (hereinafter the ‘Regulations of Doctoral Studies’).

#### ***Amendments to the Item:***

*by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-43 of 21 May 2024.*

3<sup>1</sup>. Agreements shall be concluded with the Institutions of shared doctoral studies on the commitment to implement doctoral studies together. The agreements shall establish the following: the functions of the coordinating institution; the coordination between institutions of the qualification requirements for members of doctoral studies committees, academic supervisors of doctoral students, and members of the Dissertation Defence Panel, and the procedure for the approval and amendment of the aforementioned requirements; the approval and revision procedures for the admission to doctoral studies; the funding of doctoral studies; the regulations of doctoral studies; the conditions for the organisation of

doctoral studies; the usage of shared infrastructure; the termination of doctoral studies on the initiative of one or several institutions; the organisation of further doctoral studies, as well as other provisions.

*Supplemented with the Item:*

*by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-43 of 21 May 2024.*

4. An academic doctoral degree shall be awarded to a person who has successfully completed full-time (up to four years) or part-time (up to six years) doctoral studies and has completed and defended a doctoral dissertation, or to a person who has defended a dissertation completed externally.

5. A doctoral student is a third cycle student and researcher. Subject to the approval of their academic supervisor, a doctoral student may be employed in a full-time or part-time position at the units of the University or the Institutions, ensuring their participation in research and/or studies. The doctoral student shall be paid for the work performed following the procedure set out by the Institution concerned. With the approval of the Doctoral Studies Committee in the science field (hereinafter the 'Committee') and with the consent of the doctoral student, an unpaid pedagogical internship of up to 128 academic hours may be provided for a student throughout the entire period of doctoral studies. Following the procedure established by the Committee and upon its decision, the pedagogical internship may be credited as general skills application activities.

6. With a view to promoting and developing international relations, joint doctoral studies may be implemented in cooperation with foreign universities (hereinafter the 'joint doctoral studies'). In that case an agreement on joint doctoral studies shall be signed between the University and the cooperating foreign university. In case the joint doctoral studies are pursued in the field in which the University conducts shared doctoral studies, the agreement on joint doctoral studies must be also harmonised with the Institution(s) of the shared doctoral studies. When joint doctoral studies are conducted by implementing an individual work plan of the doctoral student, an agreement on joint doctoral studies shall be concluded between the University and the foreign university and shall be also signed by the doctoral student. The agreement shall cover the matters of the implementation of the joint doctoral studies, defence of the dissertation, and the financial obligations of the cooperating universities.

7. In order to further the cooperation between research and businesses as well as the applicability of scientific research, doctoral studies may be implemented with a company, institution, or organisation conducting high-level scientific research and experimental development works in the field of the doctoral studies, by signing an agreement on joint activities between the University and the company, institution, or organisation. Doctoral studies with companies, institutions, or organisations shall be organised following the procedure established in this Regulation.

8. In science fields where the University has been granted the right to conduct doctoral studies individually or with other Institutions, shared doctoral studies in several science fields may be implemented, i.e. interdisciplinary scientific research may be carried out and interdisciplinary doctoral dissertations may be prepared (hereinafter the 'interdisciplinary doctoral studies'). The procedure for organising interdisciplinary doctoral studies and the requirements for the defence of doctoral dissertations shall be established in Chapter XII of the Regulation.

*Amendments to the Item:*

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9. When defending a doctoral dissertation that is positioned among several different science fields, the requirements applied for publications summarised in this dissertation and/or based on which the dissertation is submitted for defence shall be of the science field in which higher requirements are set for the publication of the doctoral student's research results.

## CHAPTER II THE ORGANISATION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

10. Doctoral studies and scientific research are organised by the Committee and/or the school of doctoral studies, if such a school has been established at the University (hereinafter, the concept of the school of doctoral studies is used assuming such a school is present).

11. The functions of the school of doctoral studies and its relations with the Committees are defined in the Regulations of the Schools of Doctoral Studies of Vilnius University.

12. The Committee is a group of researchers conducting high-level scientific research, responsible for the content, quality and implementation of doctoral studies in a specific field(s). The Committee shall be set up at the initiative of the University, or, in the case of shared doctoral studies, at the initiative of all Institutions seeking the right to conduct shared doctoral studies. The composition of the Committee shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years. When necessary to update an existing or establish a new Committee, the researchers of the unit(s) of the Institution(s) where the relevant doctoral studies are or will be implemented may nominate candidates to Committee members (they can also nominate themselves) within a term set by the head of the core academic unit of the University which is responsible for the doctoral studies in the relevant science field. The head of the unit shall submit the nominations for consideration to the Council of the Unit responsible for the implementation of the relevant doctoral studies. The Council, upon selecting the candidates to Committee members, shall submit them to the Rector of the University or their authorised person who then selects Committee members and agrees upon them with the Research Council of Lithuania. The composition of the Committee shall be approved by an order of the Rector of the University. The Chairperson of the Committee shall be elected during a Committee meeting from the members of the Committee for a five-year term of office.

13. The Committee shall be comprised by at least nine researchers conducting high-level scientific research. The members of the Committee shall be researchers holding at least 0.5 full-time position at the Institution (when they hold that position through a competition or they held at least 0.5 full-time position at the Institution for the last three years). Foreign researchers may also be members of the Committee; the requirement of holding or having held a position at the Institution through a competition shall not be applicable to them. The Committee shall consist of representatives of all Institutions, and if the right to conduct doctoral studies has been granted involving a foreign research and studies institution, more than half of the researchers in the Committee shall be from Lithuania and no less than two-thirds of the members shall be of the science field in which the right to conduct doctoral studies has been granted. A member of the Committee can be the Chairperson of the Committee for no longer than two consecutive five-year terms of office. A researcher may be a member of no more than two Committees at a time.

***Amendments to the Item:***

*by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-43 of 21 May 2024.*

14. No less than half of the members of the Committee shall meet at least the minimum qualification requirements for research professors set out in the Vilnius University Regulations for the Organisation of Teaching Staff and Research/Art Staff Recruiting Competitions and Certification, whereas other members of the Committee shall meet at least the minimum qualification requirements set out for senior researchers. The members of the Committee shall also meet the certification requirements for their position set out for a five-year period.

15. The Committee is responsible for the selection of dissertation topics, the admission of doctoral students, the selection of the candidates for academic supervisors and consultants of doctoral students and submitting them to be appointed by the head of the Institution, the approval of doctoral students' work plans, the certification of doctoral students, passing decisions on the language of dissertations (when a doctoral student requests to write their dissertation in a language other than Lithuanian or English), reviewing the submitted dissertations, and setting up the Dissertation Defence Panels. In cooperation with the school of doctoral studies, the Committee plans and coordinates the implementation of doctoral studies and research,

draws up conclusions regarding compliance with the requirements for modules of doctoral studies and those for academic supervisors of doctoral studies, consultants, members of the Dissertation Defence Panels, and other researchers involved in the process of doctoral studies. The Committee may set higher requirements for the dissertations submitted for defence than those set out in Chapter VII of this Regulation. The requirements shall be published on the website of the unit(s), indicating the doctoral students that these requirements are applicable to.

16. With a view to ensuring the quality of doctoral studies, every year the Committee, in cooperation with the school of doctoral studies, shall evaluate and analyse the experience acquired in the course of doctoral studies and the quality of the defended dissertations, and submit summarised conclusions and recommendations to the unit and/or the person responsible for doctoral studies at the Institution.

17. The activities of the Committee are based on the principles of collegial consideration of issues, impartiality, transparency, tolerance, legality, as well as personal responsibility of members of the Committee for their activities.

18. The Committee passes decisions at its meetings. The meetings of the Committee shall be convened by the Chairperson of the Committee, or, in their absence, by a member of the Committee appointed by the Chairperson. A meeting may be also conducted by means of telecommunications. A resolution of the Committee is passed provided that at least two-thirds of all members of the Committee vote in favour of it. All the proposals of the Committee and the school of doctoral studies as well as the Minutes of resolutions shall be transferred by electronic means to the unit responsible for doctoral studies at the University and/or the Institution (hereinafter the 'Doctoral Studies Division'), which processes documents related to doctoral studies: drafts orders of the Rector of the University or the head of the Institution or their authorised person, collects and summarises information, draws up reports, handles documents related to the defence of the dissertations, and performs other functions established in the legal acts regulating its activities. In its activities, the Doctoral Studies Division follows the Republic of Lithuania Law on Higher Education and Research, the Statute (Articles of Association) of the Institution at which the doctoral student studies, the Regulations of Doctoral Studies and this Regulation.

19. The Pro-Rector for Research (hereinafter the 'Pro-Rector') authorised by the Rector of the University is responsible for doctoral studies at the University, and at the Institutions this responsibility lies with persons appointed by the heads of these Institutions.

20. The members of the Committees, the academic supervisors of doctoral students, the members of the Dissertation Defence Panels, and consultants need to have impeccable reputations, as defined in the Republic of Lithuania Law on Higher Education and Research.

### **CHAPTER III THE ADMISSION TO DOCTORAL STUDIES**

21. Persons holding a master qualification degree or an equivalent higher-education qualification are eligible to participate in an open competition for doctoral studies. Admission to doctoral studies shall be conducted on the basis of the Rules for Admission to Doctoral Studies (hereinafter the 'Rules'), approved by the heads of the Institutions; the Rules are published on the websites of the Institutions.

22. In case the right to conduct doctoral studies has been granted to the University together with other Institutions, these Institutions can announce admission to doctoral studies independently.

23. State-funded places for doctoral studies in each area (field) of research shall be allocated to Institutions by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport on the basis of the results of research and doctoral studies.

24. With no less than two months left before announcing the open call to doctoral studies, the selection of dissertation topics and academic supervisors of doctoral students shall be organised, initiated by the Doctoral Studies Division. The Committee shall carry out the selection and pass decisions, taking into account the novelty and relevance of the suggested topics and the compliance of the academic supervisors'

qualifications with the requirements set out in the legal acts. The school of doctoral studies or other structural bodies of the unit (science centres, institutes, etc.) shall participate in the consideration of dissertation topics. The list of selected topics for dissertations and of the academic supervisors shall be recorded in the Minutes and approved by an order of the head of the Institution(s). The selected topics shall be published on the website(s) of the Institution(s).

24<sup>1</sup>. In the event that there are such topics among the selected topics for dissertations the implementation of which shall require the infrastructure of a company implementing high-level scientific research and experimental development works in the field of doctoral studies to be used, a conclusion of a cooperation or joint venture agreement shall be initiated with the aforementioned company before the student who is admitted to implement the aforementioned topic starts their studies.

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25. The selection of the candidates to doctoral studies shall be organised by publishing a notice about an open competition on the website(s) of the Institution(s). The notice shall specify the document submission form, and the requirements specific for each science field.

26. The candidates to the doctoral studies shall submit an application to participate in the open competition of a respective science field; the application shall be addressed to the head of the Institution and shall specify the study form (full-time or part-time), the preferred topic for the dissertation, and the type of financing. The application shall be supported with the following documents:

26.1. a copy of the master diploma or of a higher education diploma equivalent to it, and the copies of the supplements to the diploma;

26.2. Curriculum Vitae;

26.3. references by two researchers from the science field concerned;

26.4. a list of research papers (if any) and their copies if so established in the Rules;

26.5. a copy of the personal identification document, and, if relevant, a document certifying the change of the surname;

26.6. a certificate on the recognition of the higher education qualification acquired abroad, if so established in the Rules.

27. The competition for the admission to doctoral studies shall be organised by the Doctoral Studies Division and executed by the Committee. The school of doctoral studies may be engaged in the admission to doctoral studies in individual science fields. The admission commissions are set up by an order of the head of the Institution upon a submission of the Committee; the admission commissions shall assess the research project prepared by the candidate, their research papers, and their preparedness for doctoral studies during an interview with the candidate.

28. The criteria for the selection of the candidate to doctoral studies are the following:

28.1. the average of learning outcomes of the master degree or integrated studies of the candidate;

28.2. the examination or a research project and/or an interview with the candidate that are evaluated in points;

28.3. research qualifications, the significance of research papers, and the research expertise correspondence to the selected topic.

29. The requirements for each science field, such as additional selection criteria, their weight coefficients (if applicable), and the competitive score computation principles shall be set up by the Committees every year. The requirements set out by the Committees shall be approved by an order of the head of the Institution and published on the University's website no less than two months before the deadline for the submission of documents for applicants to doctoral studies.

30. The Committees shall, on the basis of the selection criteria and the score of the assessment by the Admission Commission, place candidates to doctoral studies in a ranking order from the highest competitive score and shall pass a decision regarding the proposal to admit or not to admit the candidate to doctoral

studies. The decision of the Committee shall be recorded in the Minutes and signed by the Chairperson of the Committee or another member of the Committee that chaired the meeting.

31. The candidates selected for doctoral studies on the basis of the Minutes of the Committee shall be admitted to doctoral studies by an order of the head of the Institution; the Institution shall conclude study agreements with the admitted doctoral students.

32. In case some vacancies remain after concluding the study agreements, additional admission may be organised taking into account the quotas assigned to the Institution and carried out following the same procedure.

33. The candidates that were not admitted to the state-funded places may participate in a competition for non-state-funded places in doctoral studies; these may be financed by own funds or those of sponsors by paying a doctoral studies tuition fee established by the Institution.

34. Doctoral students who have voluntarily or by the proposal of the Committee terminated their doctoral studies may not repeatedly apply for state-funded places for doctoral studies if they had studied for more than half of their doctoral studies in a state-funded place.

35. Citizens of non-EU member states admitted to doctoral studies must acquire residence permits under the procedure established by the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania.

#### **CHAPTER IV THE SUPERVISION OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

36. An admitted doctoral student shall be assigned to a specific unit within the Institution (hereinafter the 'Unit'). Doctoral studies and research of the doctoral student are supervised by an academic supervisor. The academic supervisor must be an active researcher engaged in research in the field of the doctoral studies. The academic supervisor may supervise no more than five doctoral students at a time.

37. The Committee shall appoint the academic supervisor and submit them for approval to the head of the Institution within one month from the beginning of doctoral studies. The academic supervisor shall be approved within two months from the beginning of doctoral studies. When doctoral studies are implemented together with a company, institution, or organisation, two academic supervisors shall be appointed – one from the Institution and one from the company, institution, or organisation. The academic supervisor from the company, institution, or organisation shall be a researcher in the same field of science as the doctoral student; the qualification requirements set out in this Regulation shall not apply to them.

38. In the process of doctoral studies, the academic supervisor may propose that the Committee appoint a consultant to the doctoral student; the consultant shall be approved by an order of the head of the Institution.

39. The academic supervisor of the doctoral student shall meet the qualification requirements set out in Annex 1 to the present Regulation.

40. The academic supervisor of the doctoral student shall:

40.1. together with the doctoral student, draw up their work plan;

40.2. provide methodological assistance to the doctoral student, supervise their studies and research, consult the doctoral student, monitor the progress of their doctoral studies, review the doctoral student's papers and, if necessary, submit conclusions regarding their publications;

40.3. assist the doctoral student in organisational matters of studies, implementation of their research, mobility or preparation of the dissertation;

40.4. during the certification of the doctoral student, submit a report to the Committee at the meeting or in writing on the progress of the doctoral studies and research of the doctoral student, and proposals for a further course of doctoral studies;

40.5. be responsible for ensuring that the doctoral student prepares and submits for defence the dissertation completed to the required quality standards.

41. The Unit to which the doctoral student is assigned shall:

41.1. submit proposals to the Committee and/or the school of doctoral studies regarding course units to be studied during doctoral studies, the descriptions of the course units and the number of credits;

41.2. ensure appropriate conditions for the doctoral student to carry out the research detailed in their work plan;

41.3. promote the mobility of the doctoral student, provide methodological assistance and support them in pursuing excellence in the research conducted;

41.4. in cooperation with the school of doctoral studies, organise the assessments of doctoral students, submit proposals and conclusions to the Committee regarding the doctoral student's performance, and facilitate the doctoral student carrying out pedagogical internship and acquiring pedagogical experience;

41.5. organise, in the manner set out by the Unit concerned, a preliminary review of the completed dissertation, and submit to the Committee the conclusion regarding compliance of the dissertation with established dissertation requirements.

42. If, for valid reasons, it is necessary to change the academic supervisor and/or a consultant, the change shall be approved in the same manner as set out in Items 37 and 39 of the Regulation.

43. A doctoral student shall have the right to file a motivated request to the Chairperson of the Committee to change the academic supervisor no less than one year before the completion of the doctoral studies. The academic supervisor may be changed less than one year before the completion of the doctoral studies only in exceptional circumstances and for duly substantiated reasons. The Committee shall consider the request to change the academic supervisor and pass a decision on it within one month after receiving the request. In case the request of the doctoral student is approved, a new academic supervisor, taking into account the topic of the dissertation, shall be appointed following the procedure established in this Regulation, and submitted to the head of the Institution for approval. In case the request of the doctoral student is denied by the Committee, the academic supervisor shall continue supervising the doctoral student. The change of the academic supervisor may also be initiated by the Committee in the event that the academic supervisor does not perform the functions established in the Regulation.

## **CHAPTER V THE PROCESS OF DOCTORAL STUDIES**

44. Within two months from the beginning of the doctoral studies, a doctoral student, assisted by their academic supervisor, shall draw up a work plan of the doctoral studies that details the course units to be studied and the terms for passing them, the planned research programme and the stages of its implementation, the publication of the results, and the planned internships. Doctoral study plans are approved and, where necessary, amended upon a decision of the Committee.

45. The scope of doctoral studies amounts to at least 30 credits. A doctoral student studies at least three course units on the topic of the dissertation. It is recommended that the doctoral student's work plan is designed in such a way that that three to five credits of the credits provided for in the work plan would be allocated for the development of general skills (i.e. preparation of project applications, scientific writing, academic ethics, intellectual property, entrepreneurship, communication skills, etc.). Credits may be allocated for the participation in general competence skills development activities or international summer and/or winter schools, as well as other activities in Lithuania or abroad if they are not directly related to the topic of the dissertation being prepared. The decision on giving additional credits shall be passed by the Committee in accordance with the procedure for giving credits for general skills established by the Committee, which must be published on the website of the Unit. It is also recommended that the work plan provides for an internship(s) at a foreign research and studies institution(s) with the total duration of at least three months. Upon the Committee's approval, the doctoral student may also complete their internship at a Lithuanian company, institution, or organisation.

46. Lectures and seminars within the framework of doctoral studies shall be organised by the school of doctoral studies or the Unit whose employees are responsible for the course units in the doctoral studies.

47. A doctoral study programme shall include only the course units approved by the Committee or by the Committee together with the school of doctoral studies. The doctoral student may choose the doctoral course units to study from the doctoral course units offered in all fields of science. Doctoral students shall study by attending lectures, seminars and doing independent work, during which they can consult with the academic consultant of the course unit. Each course unit is completed with an examination. The examinations passed by the doctoral student shall be recorded in the examination report.

48. The doctoral student shall take the examinations detailed in their work plan in presence of the examination panel set up by an order of the head of the Unit responsible for the course unit. The commission shall consist of the chairperson and two members. All three members of the commission shall be holders of scientific degrees. The academic consultant of the course unit may be included in the examination panel. In case the doctoral student fails an examination, they can retake it, but not earlier than two months after the date of the examination. In case the doctoral student fails the examination for the second time, an extraordinary certification of the doctoral student's performance shall be held within one month from the date of the examination. After the certification, the doctoral student shall be allowed to take the examination one more time, with the examination costs covered by the doctoral student. In case the doctoral student fails the examination for the third time, they shall not be certified and shall be expelled from the doctoral studies.

49. After the doctoral student has passed all the examinations, the orders regarding the setting up of the examination panels and the examination dates, as well as the examination reports, shall be submitted to the Doctoral Studies Division.

50. The examinations previously passed by the doctoral student in the course units studied within the framework of the doctoral programme may be credited. Such examinations are accepted as passed on the decision of the Committee based on the examination reports or other documents that attest to the passing of the examinations presented by the doctoral student. All the above documents shall be submitted to the Doctoral Studies Division.

51. Based on valid reasons (illness, secondment abroad, etc.), the Committee may postpone the dates of the examinations or other types of assessment provided for in the work plan.

52. Following an order of the head of the Institution, doctoral students may be sent for partial doctoral studies to universities abroad, to conferences, seminars, etc. having submitted an application to the Doctoral Studies Division that is approved by the academic supervisor of the doctoral student and the Chairperson of the Committee or the head of the school of doctoral studies. Following an order of the head of the Institution, doctoral students may be sent on short-term academic trips (to conferences, seminars, etc.) having submitted an application to the Doctoral Studies Division that is approved by the academic supervisor. The duration of such a trip shall be included in the overall duration of the doctoral studies.

53. The research programme of a doctoral student shall consist of the following: study of research literature, doing individual research, analysis of the collected data, publication of results, preparation of the dissertation, etc. The progress of the doctoral student's research activities is evaluated during the certification.

54. A doctoral student shall be granted access to the equipment needed for their research that is available at the units of the Institution in accordance with the procedure set out thereby. A doctoral student may conduct their research at other Lithuanian or foreign research centres or companies that carry out research in their field of doctoral studies.

55. At the end of each year of doctoral studies, the doctoral student shall report on the implementation of their work plan following the procedure set out by the Committee which shall include the procedure for submitting doctoral students' reports and the implementation of the certification of doctoral students in accordance with the potential methods for preparing and defending the dissertation (dissertation as an integral research paper, a research monograph, a set of research articles). The procedure shall also establish the requirements for a dissertation manuscript (a research monograph, a set of research articles) that the doctoral student must submit to the Committee at the end of the last year of their doctoral studies. It is recommended for the reporting to take place at the units or at the school of doctoral studies in the presence

of the doctoral student and their academic supervisor. In case, for any objective reasons, the academic supervisor of the doctoral student is unable to attend the reporting of the doctoral student, they shall report on the student's progress in writing. The Unit shall submit its conclusion to the Committee that may decide to certify the doctoral student (thus authorising the continuation of the doctoral studies and approving the work plan of the doctoral student for the next year), to postpone the certification for a period set out by the Committee, or not to certify the doctoral student. An uncertified doctoral student shall be expelled from the doctoral studies by an order of the head of the Institution. The doctoral student's certification documents shall be submitted to the Doctoral Studies Division. Upon the Committee's decision or following the legal acts, the certification of the doctoral student may also take place twice a year.

## **CHAPTER VI ANNUAL LEAVE, ACADEMIC TRIPS, AND OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF DOCTORAL STUDIES**

56. In July and/or August each year, doctoral students are granted an uninterrupted annual leave of at least one month. An annual leave may be granted at a different time if it is approved by the academic supervisor of the doctoral student or otherwise provided for in the work plan of the doctoral student.

57. A doctoral student is entitled to take an academic leave of absence due to valid reasons (e.g. childbirth, child care leave, illness, etc.). Once in the study period, but for no longer than one year, and subject to the approval of the academic supervisor and the Chairperson of the Committee, the doctoral student may take an academic leave of absence for valid personal reasons, following an order of the head of the Institution. A doctoral student willing to take an academic leave of absence shall submit an application to the Doctoral Studies Division that is signed by the academic supervisor and the Chairperson of the Committee. The time of the doctoral student's leave of absence shall not be included in the duration of the doctoral studies. No scholarship shall be paid during the academic leave of absence.

58. The doctoral student who for no valid reason fails to start their studies as scheduled, present the work plan, or return from academic leave of absence, a study trip, etc. to continue his doctoral studies within 15 days, shall be expelled from doctoral studies.

59. The doctoral student may also be expelled from doctoral studies due to behaviour incompatible with the norms laid down in the Code of Academic Ethics of the University, as well as due to failure to fulfil their financial obligations if such are established in their study agreement.

60. The doctoral student may spend part of their time studying or doing research at other Lithuanian or foreign institutions. The period shall be included in the overall duration of the doctoral studies, and the doctoral student shall be paid full scholarship for the period concerned. A doctoral student is sent on such trips following an order of the head of the Institution, based on an application in an established form and approved by the academic supervisor of the doctoral student and the Chairperson of the Committee or the head of the school of doctoral studies.

61. The expenses of the trip shall be covered from the resources allocated for the doctoral studies or from other sources. The expenses of the trip may also be covered from the projects or programmes administered by the Research Council of Lithuania, by the Unit of the doctoral student, the student foundations at the Institution of the doctoral student, the hosting institution or other sources. In case an academic trip of a doctoral student was financed with the funds of the Institution, the doctoral student shall, within five working days upon returning from the trip, submit to the accounting department of the Institution documents that prove the expenses incurred during the trip.

## CHAPTER VII DISSERTATION AND ITS DEFENCE

62. The dissertation, as an integral research paper (except in the case referred to in Item 63 of the Regulation), shall contain the text of the dissertation, its summary (in a language different from that of the dissertation), and a list and copies of the research papers of the person submitting the dissertation for defence (hereinafter ‘the author of the dissertation’). The dissertation may be printed as an integrated single publication or it may be divided into parts.

63. A research monograph written without co-authors may be also presented for defence as a doctoral dissertation. A summary of the monograph shall be submitted with the monograph. Other research publications are submitted if they are necessary for a comprehensive presentation of the topic of the dissertation.

64. At the proposal of the academic supervisor of the doctoral student and subject to the approval of the Committee, the dissertation completed as a set of research articles may be submitted for defence. In that case, the dissertation shall consist of an overview of at least one author’s sheet in length, a summary in Lithuanian or a foreign language (in a language different from that of the overview, with a recommended length of up to 0.5 author’s sheet), and copies of the research publications of the author of the dissertation on the basis of which the dissertation is defended, indicating the specific personal contribution of the author. The most important findings of the research carried out by the author must be published in at least four articles (in at least two of them the author of the dissertation must be the only author or the main co-author) published or accepted for publishing (having a digital object identifier (hereinafter the ‘DOI’) or other proof of acceptance for publishing):

64.1. in natural, technological, medicine and health sciences – in international research journals with a citation index in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* database. In these areas of research, it is considered that the author of the dissertation is the main co-author of the research article if they are the first author of the article, provided that it is not indicated otherwise in the journal where the article is published or the article itself. The Doctoral Studies Committee is responsible for determining the compliance of the personal contribution of the doctoral student with the requirements for the dissertation.

64.2. in humanities and social sciences – in international research journals with a citation index in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* database and/or the *Elsevier Scopus (Scopus)* database. In these areas of research, it is considered that the author of the dissertation is the main co-author of the research article if they are the first author of the article, provided that it is not indicated otherwise in the journal where the article is published. All authors of the article are considered the main co-authors if the article states that their contribution is equal. The Doctoral Studies Committee is responsible for determining the compliance of the personal contribution of the doctoral student with the requirements for the dissertation.

64.3. The dissertation has to indicate the research articles on the topic of the dissertation that the doctoral student is the main co-author of.

65. The dissertation must be an original research paper, whose author substantiates the problem researched, defines the relevance of the research topic, formulates the goal and objectives of the paper, specifies the novelty of the research paper and presents the statements set out for defence, as well as an overview of the research and studies on the topic of the dissertation (in Lithuania and globally), presents the study methodology (methods), discusses the research results, substantiating their reliability and their relation to the data obtained by other researchers, draws up conclusions, and describes other aspects that in their view are relevant. Along with the dissertation, the doctoral student shall submit a list of scientific events where the research results of the dissertation were made public as well as the Curriculum Vitae and a description of the research and creative activities of the author of the dissertation.

66. The dissertation must be written in a grammatically correct language in accordance with the writing standards and language norms. The text of the dissertation shall be written in Lithuanian or English, or, subject to the approval of the Committee, other than the Lithuanian or the English language. The

recommended scope of a dissertation (except a dissertation submitted on the basis of a set of research articles) is from four to ten author's sheets (one author's sheet equals 40,000 characters).

67. The summary or the overview of the dissertation when it is submitted for defence on the basis of a set of research articles shall contain a description of the problem researched in the dissertation, the goal and objectives of the research paper, disclosure of the novelty of the research, a brief description of the research methodology, the key results and conclusions based thereon that the doctoral student defends, as well as concise information about the doctoral student. The recommended scope of the dissertation summary when the dissertation is submitted for defence not on the basis of a set of research articles shall be between 0.5 and 1 author's sheet; the summary of the dissertation shall be written in the Lithuanian or the English language (other than the language of the dissertation). The summary of the dissertation must be written in a grammatically correct language in accordance with the writing standards and language norms.

***Amendments to the Item:***

*by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-43 of 21 May 2024.*

68. The summary of the monograph that is defended as a dissertation shall be at least one author's sheet in scope and prepared in the Lithuanian or the English language (other than the language of the monograph).

69. The dissertation and its summary shall detail the academic supervisor of the doctoral student, the consultant (if any), the summary shall also detail the composition of the Dissertation Defence Panel (if the dissertation is printed as an integrated publication, the composition of the Dissertation Defence Panel is specified at the very beginning of the publication). In case the academic supervisor was changed, the dissertation and its summary shall detail the previous academic supervisor and the period of their supervision. Examples of the title and second pages of the dissertation and the summary are presented in Annexes 3 and 4 to the Regulation.

70. The doctoral student shall defend their dissertation during the period of doctoral studies. If the doctoral student submits the dissertation to the Committee before the end of the doctoral studies but fails to defend it in due time, the dissertation can be defended within 12 months after the end of the doctoral studies under the regular procedure. The dissertation that was not defended within this period shall be defended externally according to the requirements of Chapter VIII of the Regulation. The dissertation defended within one year of the end of the doctoral studies is deemed defended in time.

71. A doctoral student may submit their dissertation for defence provided the student:

71.1. has passed all the examinations provided for in the work plan of doctoral studies;

71.2. while preparing a dissertation provided for in Item 62 of this Regulation, has produced at least two articles (where they are the only author or the main co-author in at least one of them) on the main research findings published or having the DOI or other proof of acceptance for publishing in peer-reviewed research journals, or in a research monograph. When the doctoral studies are implemented together with a company, the co-authorship of the doctoral student on an invention patent (or a patent application after expert evaluation in accordance with the procedure established in the Regulation) related to the topic of their dissertation at the European Patent Office (EPO), the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Japan Patent Office (JPO), Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), or China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) may be equalled to one article. A doctoral student shall publish the findings of their research:

71.2.1. in humanities and social sciences – in at least two articles in peer reviewed research journals, of which one is an international journal with more than half members of the editorial board from outside the country of the journal, or in international research journals with a citation index in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* or *Elsevier Scopus (Scopus)* databases, or in a research monograph. In these areas of research, it is considered that the author of the dissertation is the main co-author of the research article if they are the first author of the article, provided that it is not indicated otherwise in the journal where the article is published. All authors of the article are considered the main co-authors if the article states that

their contribution is equal. The Doctoral Studies Committee is responsible for determining the compliance of the personal contribution of the doctoral student with the requirements for the dissertation.

71.2.2. in natural, technological, medicine and health sciences – in at least two articles in international research journals with a citation index in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* database. In these areas of research, it is considered that the author of the dissertation is the main co-author of the research article if they are the first author of the article, provided that it is not indicated otherwise in the journal where the article is published or the article itself. The Doctoral Studies Committee is responsible for determining the compliance of the personal contribution of the doctoral student with the requirements for the dissertation.

71.3. has presented the findings of their research in at least two international academic events;

71.4. has completed the dissertation.

72. The doctoral student shall present the dissertation at a meeting of the doctoral student's Unit in the presence of the academic supervisor and the consultant of the doctoral student. Following the procedure set out at the Institution, the researchers of the Unit shall review the dissertation and the research articles published by the doctoral student, the competencies of the doctoral student, their acquired competence as a researcher, and shall submit their conclusions to the Committee.

73. Having received the manuscript of the dissertation and the doctoral student's application to defend the dissertation, the Chairperson of the Committee shall, within no later than two weeks (except in July and August), convene a meeting of the Committee at which the reviewers of the dissertation shall be appointed (it is recommended that one reviewer is from a foreign research and studies institution and may later be invited to join the Dissertation Defence Panel). The reviewers shall give a detailed examination of the paper and submit their reviews in writing within a month, and, if possible, present their reviews at the meeting of the Committee.

74. Following the discussions at the meeting of the Committee and having reviewed the dissertation, the articles published on the topic of the dissertations, the passed examinations, the doctoral student's participation at scientific events and internships, the Committee shall pass one of the following decisions:

74.1. the dissertation has been properly completed and meets the requirements prescribed, the doctoral student has fulfilled the work plan of doctoral studies, and the dissertation, in the opinion of the reviewers and the members of the Committee, may be submitted for defence;

74.2. the dissertation needs revision. The dissertation shall be returned to the author of the dissertation, and the revised dissertation shall be repeatedly discussed at a meeting of the Committee within one month after the reviewers submit their conclusions on the revised dissertation to the Committee;

74.3. the dissertation does not meet the requirements prescribed and shall be returned to the author of the dissertation for its further elaboration.

75. In case the dissertation meets the requirements prescribed, the Committee sets the date and place for the defence of the dissertation, determines the language of the defence, and, in exceptional cases, gives reasons for the decision to pursue the defence of the dissertation in a closed meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel, establishes the Dissertation Defence Panel consisting of five members, appoints one of its members the Chairperson of the Panel and submits it for approval to the Rector of the University. Members of the Dissertation Defence Panel must be engaged in research relating to the topic of the dissertation submitted for defence. The order of the Rector of the University shall specify the date and place of the defence of the dissertation.

76. The Dissertation Defence Panel is a panel of researchers who, having reviewed the dissertation submitted for defence and assessed its quality, its compliance with the requirements for dissertations and the competency of the doctoral student, decide whether the candidate meets the requirements for being awarded the doctoral degree.

77. The members of the Dissertation Defence Panel must meet the qualification requirements set out in Annex 1 to this Regulation. There shall be no conflicts of interest between the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel and the author of the dissertation, their academic supervisor, or their consultant (a research consultant when the dissertation is defended externally). A member of the Dissertation Defence Panel may

not have co-authored publications with the author of the dissertation, and more than half of the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel may not have co-authored publications with the academic supervisor (a research consultant when defending the dissertation externally) of the author of the dissertation in the last five years. At least one member of the Dissertation Defence Panel has to be from a foreign research and studies institution. When defending a dissertation concerning Lithuanian studies, researchers from foreign research and studies institutions may be included in the Dissertation Defence Panel as needed upon the Committee's decision.

78. Within no less than 60 calendar days (or another term set out by the Institution) before the scheduled defence of the dissertation, the Committee or the school of doctoral studies shall submit to the Doctoral Studies Division of the University the manuscript of the dissertation (sent by email) and the application of the author of the dissertation to defend the dissertation, addressed to the Rector of the University. The following documents shall be attached:

78.1. copies of the master qualification diploma or of a higher education diploma equivalent to it, and of their supplements;

78.2. the doctoral studies examination report (if it is not kept at the University);

78.3. a list of research papers published on the topic of the dissertation and their copies (in case a paper is not published yet, it is mandatory to attach a copy of the confirmation of the editorial board confirming acceptance of the article for publication);

78.4. the Curriculum Vitae and a description of the research and creative activities of the author of the dissertation;

78.5. minutes of the deliberation of the dissertation at the unit of the Institution and the Committee;

78.6. consents of the researchers to act as members of the Dissertation Defence Panel and the Chairperson;

78.7. lists of research papers of members of the Dissertation Defence Panel and its Chairperson as proof that they meet the established qualification requirements (if this information is requested by the Doctoral Studies Division).

79. The Doctoral Studies Division, within no later than 30 days before the defence of the dissertation, shall:

79.1. in cooperation with the author of the dissertation ensure that the dissertation is submitted to the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel and the Library of the University (except for the dissertations that will be defended in a closed meeting);

79.2. publish a notice on the forthcoming defence of the dissertation on the website of the University. The notice shall specify the following: full name of the author of the dissertation, the place where the dissertation was completed, the academic supervisor (or consultant, if the dissertation is defended externally) and the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel (academic degree, full name, field (branch) of research represented), the title of the dissertation, the place and date of the defence and the address of the University website where the dissertation can be accessed (except for the dissertations to be defended in a closed meeting);

79.3. provide information on the forthcoming defence of the dissertation to the Research Council of Lithuania in accordance with the procedure established by it.

80. The members of the Dissertation Defence Panel shall review the dissertation, indicate its strengths and weaknesses, assess the novelty, relevance and originality of the dissertation, and express an opinion whether the paper meets the requirements for dissertations; the Dissertation Defence Panel shall submit their written comments on the dissertation no later than five days before the defence of the dissertation (also possibly by email) to the Doctoral Studies Division which shall forward them to the doctoral student without delay. The comments shall be submitted in a printed form before the defence of the dissertation.

81. The defence of the dissertation shall be held at an open meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel (except when a closed meeting is scheduled) according to the Regulation of the Dissertation Defence Panel (Annex 2 to the Regulation), and shall be audio-recorded. The defence of the dissertation may be conducted

in Lithuanian or another language, with interpreting provided if necessary. The language for the dissertation defence procedure shall be determined by the Committee. The meeting shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Dissertation Defence Panel. The meeting shall be considered lawful if attended by more than half of the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel (including those participating by means of teleconference). The reviews of the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel not attending the meeting and of other specialists shall be read at the meeting. The members of the Dissertation Defence Panel shall pass their decisions in accordance with the principles of objectivity, impartiality, transparency and legality, as well as personal responsibility for one's deeds and decisions.

82. In the event that the matters analysed in the dissertation include information which is considered a commercial secret in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Republic of Lithuania Law on Legal Protection of Commercial Secrets or is related to national security in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Republic of Lithuania Law on the Basics of National Security, the dissertation shall be defended at a closed meeting. The decision as to who may attend the meeting, apart from the author of the dissertation, their academic supervisor, the consultant, the Chairperson of the Dissertation Defence Panel and its members, shall be taken by the Committee.

83. During the meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel, the author of the dissertation shall present the key research results and the conclusions of their paper and indicate their contribution to the publications presented in the dissertation. The members of the Dissertation Defence Panel present a well-reasoned review of the scientific level of the dissertation, the novelty and originality of the research results, the reliability and validity of conclusions, and note the strengths, weaknesses or inaccuracies of the paper, as well as the research competency of the author of the dissertation (the latter is noted during its defence). The author of the dissertation answers the questions asked and comments on the provided feedback. During the discussion, the author of the dissertation shall substantiate the conclusions of their dissertation and exhibit their competency as a researcher.

84. Following the discussions with the author of the dissertation, the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel shall, with the author of the dissertation and the other participants of the meeting not present, and each individually having voiced the arguments for their decision, decide in an open vote whether the author of the dissertation can be awarded the doctoral degree. The members of the Dissertation Defence Panel participating in the dissertation defence by means of teleconference shall also vote. The decision to award the doctoral degree shall be passed if more than half of all the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel vote in favour of the decision. If a decision is passed not to award the doctoral degree, the arguments should be stated in the Minutes of the vote. The Minutes of the vote shall be signed by all physically present members of the Dissertation Defence Panel.

85. Within two weeks from the defence of the dissertation, the Doctoral Studies Division shall present one copy of the defended dissertation (except for the dissertations defended in a closed meeting) to Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania and the doctoral student shall publish the dissertation and its summary on the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library (eLABa).

86. Within one month from the defence of the dissertation, the Doctoral Studies Division shall submit the results of the defence to the Research Council of Lithuania by uploading the relevant data on the dissertation database managed by the Research Council following the procedure established by it.

87. In case the Dissertation Defence Panel decides that the doctoral student does not qualify for the doctoral degree, a revised and/or supplemented dissertation may be submitted for defence not earlier than after one year. In that case, the doctoral degree shall be acquired externally, in accordance with the requirements laid down in Chapter VIII of the Regulation.

88. Where instances of scientific dishonesty are established, the dissertation cannot be defended.

## CHAPTER VIII OBTAINING A DOCTORAL DEGREE EXTERNALLY

89. A doctoral degree may be sought externally by a person who has a master qualification degree or a higher education degree equivalent to it (hereinafter the ‘external student’). The external student must have completed a dissertation summarising the research published in at least two peer-reviewed research articles referred to in Item 71(2) of the Regulation, or must have published a monograph without any co-authors and have presented their research results at scientific events. The opportunity to defend a dissertation on the basis of a set of research articles meeting the requirements set out in Item 64 shall only be given to persons who have studied doctoral studies at the University or at an institution with the right to conduct shared doctoral studies.

90. Alongside with an application to defend the dissertation addressed to the Rector of the University, the external student shall submit the following documents:

90.1. the manuscript of the dissertation or a published research monograph;

90.2. a list of research publications and their electronic copies;

90.3. copies of the master qualification diploma (or of a higher education diploma equivalent to it) and its supplements;

90.4. report(s) on the passed doctoral examinations (if any);

90.5. the Curriculum Vitae and a description of the research and creative activities.

91. The Doctoral Studies Division shall register the external student’s application and the supporting documents and, having concluded that the documents meet the requirements of the Regulations, shall submit the documents to the Rector of the University (or their authorised Pro-Rector) who shall transfer the application with the supporting documents to the Committee of the respective science field.

92. The Committee shall appoint at least two reviewers to evaluate the level of completion of the submitted dissertation, and no later than within three months from receipt of the external student’s application, organise a meeting of the Committee at which the Committee members examine the conclusions of the reviewers and the supporting documents and establish whether the paper meets the requirements for a dissertation.

93. In case the Committee decides that within the period of one year the dissertation may not be properly prepared for the defence, a repeat application to defend the dissertation may be submitted no earlier than one year after the Committee decision.

94. Having decided that the submitted or revised dissertation of the external student may be recommended for defence, the Committee shall:

94.1. appoint and submit to the Rector of the University for approval a research consultant (the research consultant must be a researcher in the same science field);

94.2. establish the course units to be taken in doctoral studies and the terms of their examinations, whereas in case the examinations were successfully passed, pass a decision regarding their crediting;

94.3. if necessary, set up an examination commission(s);

94.4. set the final date for the defence of the dissertation that cannot be later than within one year from the date of the decision of the Committee.

95. The examinations of the external student shall be organised following the requirements of Chapter V of the Regulation, and the dissertation shall be reviewed and defended following the requirements of Items 74–88.

96. The expenses of the University and/or the Institution that are directly related to obtaining the doctoral degree shall be covered by the external student, unless the legal acts of the University or of the Institution sharing the right to conduct doctoral studies with the University provide otherwise.

## **CHAPTER IX**

### **AWARDING THE DOCTORAL DEGREE, APPEALS, AND ISSUES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS**

97. After the dissertation has been published on the eLABa, the University shall award the doctoral degree and issue the doctoral degree diploma registered in the manner set out thereby to the person who has defended their dissertation.

98. A substantiated appeal or a complaint regarding refusal to award the doctoral degree or regarding the rejection of an application of the external or the full-time doctoral student shall be submitted to the Rector of the University within 15 calendar days. The Rector of the University shall, within five calendar days, set up an expert panel to discuss the appeal or the complaint; the expert panel shall submit its conclusion to the Rector within 15 calendar days. The Rector shall pass a final decision regarding the appeal or the complaint within 10 working days; the final decision shall be communicated to the applicant.

99. The decision to annul the doctoral degree (including awarded prior to the effective date of the Regulation) shall be passed by the Rector of the University subject to the approval of the Senate, where:

99.1. a fact of scientific dishonesty is established;

99.2. the doctoral degree has been granted in breach of the legal acts governing the award of doctoral degrees;

99.3. the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania has passed a decision obligating to rescind the doctoral degree.

100. The form of a doctoral diploma and the procedure for printing, accounting and registration of diploma forms are determined by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania.

101. Upon the loss of the doctoral diploma, a duplicate of the diploma is issued upon the researcher's request following the procedure set out in the legal acts of the University.

## **CHAPTER X**

### **THE FINANCING OF DOCTORAL STUDIES**

102. The doctoral student studying in a state-funded place shall be paid a scholarship in the amount set out by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania (hereinafter the 'scholarship') during the period of their doctoral studies. In case the doctoral student fails to fulfil their work plan, payment of the scholarship may be suspended by an order of the head of the Institution upon a proposal from the Committee. The payment of the scholarship shall be resumed once the Committee concludes that the doctoral student resumed the fulfilment of the requirements of the doctoral student's work plan.

103. Funds for doctoral research, the publication of the dissertation and its summary, the administration of the operations of the school of doctoral studies and/or of the Committee, the remuneration of the academic supervisors of the doctoral students (except the consultants of external students), the academic consultants of course units, the Chairperson and the members of the examination panels, reviewers, and the Chairperson and the members of the Dissertation Defence Panel, and other expenses directly related to the implementation of the doctoral studies shall be covered from the funds allocated for the implementation of the doctoral studies and provided for in the estimates of the Institutions.

104. Upon an order of the head of the Institution or their authorised person, each Institution shall approve its Procedure for the Use of Doctoral Funds which establishes the portion of funds allocated for research carried out by the doctoral students on the topics of their dissertations and to ensure mobility. It is recommended that this portion consists of 50 percent of the funds received by the Institution for the cost of doctoral studies.

105. For the doctoral students defending the dissertation before the end of the doctoral studies or within less than one year from the end of the doctoral studies, all the expenses related to the dissertation (including the expenses of the first-time printing and mailing of the dissertation) shall be covered from the funds of the doctoral student's Institution.

106. The academic supervisor of the doctoral student as well as the consultant or the research consultant of an external student, the Chairperson and the members of the examination panel, the academic consultants of course units and reviewers shall be compensated for their work as set out in the legal acts of the Institution at which the doctoral student studies.

107. The members of the Dissertation Defence Panel may be compensated for the evaluation of dissertation and submitting conclusions in accordance with the procedure set out in the legal acts of the university at which the dissertation is defended.

108. Doctoral students from other research and studies institutions (not sharing the right to conduct doctoral studies with the University) who wish to take the examinations of the course units of doctoral studies shall pay a fee set by the Institution which is responsible for the respective course unit.

109. The remuneration expenses of the consultants of the external students, the Chairman and the members of the examination panels, social security contributions as well as other expenses related to the acquisition of the doctoral degree externally may be covered in accordance with the legal acts of the university at which the dissertation is defended.

## **CHAPTER XI STORAGE OF DOCUMENTS OF DOCTORAL STUDIES**

110. The personal file and documents submitted upon application to doctoral studies of an applicant who was not admitted to doctoral studies shall be stored at the Doctoral Studies Division for half a year from the date of document submission and subsequently destroyed.

111. During the doctoral studies, the personal file of the doctoral student shall be stored at the Doctoral Studies Division of the Institution at which the doctoral student is studying and shall be transferred to the archive of the Institution of the doctoral student upon the expiry of the doctoral studies period. The file shall contain:

111.1. documents on the admission to doctoral studies;

111.2. documents on the appointment of the academic supervisor and the consultants of the doctoral student;

111.3. the programme of doctoral studies and research, the programme of publication of the results and the preparation of the dissertation (the doctoral student's work plan);

111.4. the doctoral student's certification documents;

111.5. documents of postponements of the terms specified in the doctoral student's work plan;

111.6. the decision on the termination of doctoral studies – in case the doctoral student was expelled from doctoral studies on the basis of negative result of the certification or other reasons, or the doctoral student failed to submit the dissertation for defence before the end of the doctoral studies.

112. The personal file of the author of the dissertation shall be stored at the archive of the University. The file shall contain:

112.1. the application to defend the dissertation and the supporting documents (Minutes of the deliberation of the dissertation, other documents of the Committee);

112.2. Order of the Rector of the University on the approval of the Dissertation Defence Panel, and setting the date for the defence;

112.3. an audio recording of the meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel at which the dissertation was defended, and copies of all documents related to the review of the dissertation at that Panel;

112.4. reports on the examinations of doctoral studies;

112.5. the decision of the Dissertation Defence Panel (Minutes of the vote) regarding the award or refusal to award the doctoral degree;

112.6. a copy of the doctoral diploma;

112.7. copies and the list of the doctoral student's research articles published or accepted for publication;

112.8. other documents related to the defence the dissertation.

## **CHAPTER XII INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL STUDIES**

113. In science fields where the University has been granted the right to conduct doctoral studies individually or with other Institutions, shared doctoral studies in several science fields may be implemented, i.e. interdisciplinary scientific research may be carried out and interdisciplinary doctoral dissertations may be prepared (hereinafter the ‘interdisciplinary doctoral studies’). The interdisciplinary doctoral studies shall be organised and the doctoral dissertations shall be defended following the provisions of the Regulation and in accordance with additional requirements set out in this Chapter of the Regulation.

114. The decision on attributing the scientific research carried out on the topic of the dissertation and the dissertation under preparation to interdisciplinary doctoral studies shall be made by the Doctoral Studies Committee in the science field following the decision thereof the doctoral student is admitted to doctoral studies by approving their dissertation topic. This Committee shall be considered the main one (hereinafter the ‘main Committee’) and the science field it represents shall be considered the main science field of the interdisciplinary doctoral studies (hereinafter the ‘main science field’). In the event that the scientific research on the dissertation topic is carried out in the intersection of more than two scientific fields, the field that is most closely related to the topic of the prepared dissertation shall be considered the other science field under the main Committee’s decision.

115. The decision on granting the status of interdisciplinary doctoral studies may also be taken by the Committee during the course of ongoing doctoral studies of a doctoral student.

116. The doctoral student’s studies and scientific research shall be coordinated by the main Committee, it shall approve the work plan of the doctoral student, appoint the academic supervisor and/or consultant(s). The main Committee shall coordinate the issues of the implementation of interdisciplinary doctoral studies, the doctoral student’s certification, and the defence of doctoral dissertations together with the Committee of the other science field, establishing that one or two researchers representing the other science field shall take part in the Dissertation Defence Panel.

117. In the event of interdisciplinary doctoral studies, an academic supervisor shall be appointed for the doctoral student’s studies, as well as a consultant from the main science field when necessary and a mandatory consultant from the other science field (hereinafter the ‘non-main science field consultant’), the nomination of whom shall be agreed upon with the Committee of the other science field. The non-main science field consultant shall consult the doctoral student and provide their opinion on the scientific research carried out by the doctoral student on the topic of their dissertation during their certification. The academic supervisor and the non-main science field consultant shall be active researchers doing research in the relevant science fields of doctoral studies and meeting the qualification requirements set out in Annex 1 to the Regulation.

118. It shall be indicated in the dissertation that it is interdisciplinary, prepared in the intersection of two science fields.

***Supplemented with the Chapter:***

*by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-43 of 21 May 2024.*

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## **QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERS OF THE DISSERTATION DEFENCE PANELS, ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS AND CONSULTANTS OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

1. In the event that Vilnius University has been granted the right to conduct doctoral studies individually, active researchers meeting at least the minimum qualification requirements for senior researchers set out in the Vilnius University Regulations for the Organisation of Teaching Staff and Research/Art Staff Recruiting Competitions and Certification may be appointed as members of the Dissertation Defence Panel and academic supervisors of doctoral students (research consultants for external students).

2. In shared doctoral studies, active researchers meeting at least the minimum qualification requirements for senior researchers set out following the procedure laid down in agreements specified in Item 3<sup>1</sup> of the Regulation of Doctoral Studies at Vilnius University may be appointed as members of the Dissertation Defence Panel and academic supervisors of doctoral students (research consultants for external students).

3. Qualification requirements for members of the Dissertation Defence Panel and academic supervisors of doctoral students (research consultants for external students) shall in all cases apply in the scope that is related to research publications. The requirements that members of the Dissertation Defence Panel and academic supervisors of doctoral students (research consultants for external students) must have met in the last five years shall be established by the Doctoral Studies Committee in the relevant science field (hereinafter the 'Committee'), which shall also take decisions on whether researchers meet the requirements set out in Items 1 or 2 of this Annex. The academic supervisors of doctoral students must carry out research in the field of the dissertation.

4. The researchers to be appointed as consultants of doctoral students must be active researchers doing research on the topic of the dissertation or related areas.

5. The Doctoral Studies Committees in the science fields can establish more stringent requirements. The decision shall be passed at a meeting of the Committee attended by no less than two-thirds of all the members of the Committee.

***Amendments to the Annex:***

*by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-43 of 21 May 2024.*

## **REGULATION OF THE DISSERTATION DEFENCE PANEL**

1. The present Regulation establishes the rules of procedure for the Dissertation (hereinafter the 'Dissertation') Defence Panel (hereinafter the 'Panel') set up on the basis of the Regulations of Doctoral Studies, approved by Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania No. V-739 of 18 May 2020 "On the Approval of the Regulations of Doctoral Studies" (hereinafter the 'Regulations').

2. A meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel at which a dissertation will be defended shall be organised by the Doctoral Studies Committee in the relevant science field (hereinafter the 'Committee') or the school of doctoral studies, while the dissertation defence documents shall be processed by the unit of the University responsible for the coordination and organisation of doctoral studies.

3. The responsibility for a proper preparation for the meeting (audio recording, demonstration of the visual material, and, if necessary, the interpretation of the meeting) shall lie with the core academic unit to which the author of the dissertation was assigned, or with the Committee (the school of doctoral studies).

4. The Chairperson and the members of the Panel shall review in advance and provide, in the reviews, their evaluation of the scientific level of the dissertation, the originality of the research, the novelty and reliability of the results, the reasonableness of the conclusions, indicate the inadequacies and inaccuracies of the paper, and conclude whether the dissertation meets other requirements set for dissertations. Furthermore, the Panel shall assess whether the research papers of the author of the dissertation were published in scientific journals compliant with the requirements of the Regulations, and whether the publications are sufficient and contain the significant results of the dissertation paper.

5. The members of the Panel shall submit their reviews of the dissertation no later than five days before the dissertation defence, so that the author of the dissertation and other members of the Panel have sufficient time to examine the comments.

6. The work of the Panel shall be organised and the meeting at which the dissertation is defended shall be chaired by the Chairperson of the Panel who shall:

6.1. examine in advance the personal file of the author of the dissertation and ascertain that all the required documents have been provided (information on the author of the dissertation, the dissertation reviews, a template of the minutes of the vote, etc.);

6.2. examine the received reviews that must be presented at the meeting of the Panel, or assign the task to another member of the Panel;

6.3. ascertain whether all the preparatory arrangements for the meeting have been made (for audio recording, and, if necessary, interpreting of the meeting);

6.4. chair the meeting of the Panel and sign documents of the Panel meeting as well as the diploma of the granted doctoral degree.

7. Meetings of the Panel are public (except in cases where a closed meeting is set for the defence of the dissertation). The meeting shall be considered legitimate if it is attended by more than half of the members of the Panel (including those participating by means of teleconference). At the meeting:

7.1. having determined that the meeting is attended by more than half of the members of the Panel, including those participating by means of video conference, the Chairperson of the Panel presents the members of the Panel and introduces the documents of the author of the dissertation;

7.2. the author of the dissertation presents the dissertation – its objectives, tasks, problems, the research methodology (methods) used, the obtained research data, the conclusions, indicates their contribution to the research and the publications referred to in the dissertation;

7.3. the author of the dissertation answers the questions or comments of the members of the Panel or other participants of the meeting, a scientific discussion takes place;

7.4. each member of the Panel attending the meeting comments and evaluates the dissertation by providing a well-grounded assessment of the scientific level of the dissertation, the novelty and the originality of its results, the reliability and reasonableness of the conclusions, the weaknesses and inaccuracies of the paper. The Chairperson or the member of the Panel appointed thereby publicly introduces the review(s) of the dissertation by a member(s) of the Panel not attending the meeting (if any);

7.5. the author of the dissertation answers the questions or comments of the member(s) of the Panel;

7.6. the floor is given to the academic supervisor and the consultant of the author of the dissertation.

8. Following the discussions with the author of the dissertation, having assessed their competency as a researcher, ability to substantiate and explain the results presented in the dissertation and the research publications, the members of the Panel shall, in the absence of the author of the dissertation and the other participants of the meeting, having individually commented on the arguments for their decisions, in an open vote decide whether the author of the dissertation should be granted the doctoral degree. The members of the Panel participating by means of teleconference shall also vote.

9. The members of the Panel attending the meeting shall sign the Minutes of the vote and the resolution concerning the award of the doctoral degree to the author of the dissertation.

10. The resolution of the Panel shall be publicly announced to the participants of the meeting.

11. The documents related to the defence of the dissertation along with the audio recording of the meeting shall be presented to the unit responsible for the coordination and organisation of doctoral studies at the University within one week from the date of defence of the dissertation.

**(A model form of the title and second pages of a doctoral dissertation)**

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The name(s) of the institution(s) to which the right to conduct doctoral studies has been granted.

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(Full name of the author of the dissertation)

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(The title of the doctoral dissertation)

Doctoral Dissertation

Science area, science field (code of the field)

Vilnius, 20\_\_

The dissertation was under preparation from 20\_\_ to 20\_\_ (the name of the institution at which the dissertation was prepared). The research was supported by (e.g. the Research Council of Lithuania, if the doctoral studies were financed from the EU structural funds or a scholarship was granted for academic accomplishments).

*(In case the doctoral dissertation is defended externally, include an entry ‘**The dissertation is defended externally**’)*

**Academic Supervisor:**

**Prof. Dr (HP) Full name** (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field). (In case there were two academic supervisors of the doctoral student, indicate periods of their supervision.)

**Research Consultant:**

**Prof. Dr (HP) Full name** (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field).

**(A model form of the title and second pages of the summary of a doctoral dissertation)**

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The name(s) of the institution(s) to which the right to conduct doctoral studies has been granted.

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(Full name of the author of the dissertation)

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The title of the doctoral dissertation

**Summary of the Doctoral Dissertation**

Science area, science field (code of the field)

Vilnius, 20\_\_

The dissertation was under preparation from 20\_\_ to 20\_\_ (the name of the institution at which the dissertation was prepared). The research was supported by (e.g. the Research Council of Lithuania, if the doctoral studies were financed from the EU structural funds or a scholarship was granted for academic accomplishments).

*(In case the doctoral dissertation is defended externally, include an entry ‘The dissertation is defended externally’)*

**Academic Supervisor:**

*(If the dissertation is defended externally, include an entry ‘Research Consultant’)*

**Prof. Dr (HP) Full name** (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field). (In case there were two academic supervisors of the doctoral student, indicate periods of their supervision.)

**Research Consultant:**

Prof. Dr (HP) Full name (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field).

The doctoral dissertation will be defended in a public / closed meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel:

**Chairperson – Prof. Dr (HP) Full name** (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field).

**Members:** (the members shall be listed in alphabetical order of surnames)

**Prof. Dr (HP) Full name** (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field);

**Assoc. Prof. Dr Full name** (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field);

**Dr Full name** (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field);

**Prof. Dr Full name** (the name of the institution, science area, science field, code of the field).

The dissertation shall be defended at a public / closed meeting of the Dissertation Defence Panel at \_\_\_\_\_ (time) on \_\_\_\_ (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (month) 20\_\_ (year) in the meeting room / auditorium \_\_\_\_\_ of the faculty / institute (name of the institution).

Address: street, building number, room number, city, Lithuania

Phone: +370 \_\_\_\_\_ ; email:

The text of the dissertation can be accessed at the libraries of (name of the institutions granted the right to conduct doctoral studies in alphabetical order) as well as on the VU website: [www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiu-kalendorius](http://www.vu.lt/lt/naujienos/ivykiu-kalendorius)