

Regulation on Doctoral Studies of the LEPL Georgian Technical University

Article 1. Scope of Regulation

1. This Regulation establishes the rules for determining the admission quota for, admission to, study and research within, and assessment of the educational and research components of the doctoral educational programme (hereinafter doctoral studies) of the LEPL Georgian Technical University (hereinafter the University), as well as the parties involved in this process and their rights and obligations.
2. The relevant University Dissertation Council is authorised to award the academic degree of doctor; the rules for its establishment and operation are defined by the Regulation on the University Dissertation Council of the LEPL Georgian Technical University (hereinafter the Regulation on the Dissertation Council).
3. This Regulation has been developed in accordance with the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, the Statute of the University, the legislation of Georgia in force in the field of higher education and the legal acts regulating the activities of the University.
4. The determination of vacant places for admission to doctoral studies, admission and the administration of the educational process are carried out by the University's Department of Educational Process Management (hereinafter the Department).

Article 2. Determination of Vacant Places

1. The tentative number of vacant places for admission to doctoral studies is determined by the relevant academic department of the faculty, with the participation of the head(s) of the doctoral educational programme, no later than one month before the announcement of admission.
2. A representative of the personnel of the faculty or of an independent scientific research unit of the University who meets the requirements established by this Regulation for a doctoral student's scientific supervisor submits to the academic department a written application for the allocation of vacant places, indicating the subject of the research to be carried out within a specific doctoral programme, the tentative title of the topic and its relevance.
3. The relevant academic department, together with the head of the doctoral educational programme, ensures that the applications submitted in accordance with paragraph 2 of this Article are considered at a meeting of the academic department and, on the basis of the decision adopted, submits to the dean of the faculty a request on the number of vacant admission places and the establishment of temporary faculty commissions, for the purpose of bringing the matter before the Faculty Council.
4. The Faculty Council takes a decision on the basis of the request submitted by the academic department regarding the number of vacant places for admission to doctoral studies and the establishment of faculty commissions. On the basis of the decision of the Faculty Council, the dean submits to the Vice-Rector the minutes of the Faculty Council and an internal memorandum requesting the allocation of vacant places and the approval of the composition of the temporary faculty commission(s).
5. The number of vacant places for admission to doctoral studies, the deadlines for submitting applications by prospective students and for their admission, the composition of the temporary faculty commission(s) and the candidacy/candidacies for chairperson of the temporary faculty commission(s) are approved by the Academic

Council on the recommendation of the Department.

6. The temporary faculty commission is composed of professors and/or associate professors, with no fewer than five and no more than seven members.

7. On the basis of the resolution of the Academic Council, the Department ensures the preparation of the draft of the corresponding order of the Rector of the University on the announcement of admission to doctoral studies and on the composition of the temporary faculty commission(s), the University Appeals Commission and the commission for considering complaints regarding the foreign language examination.

Article 3. Admission to Doctoral Studies

1. A person holding a master's degree or an academic degree equivalent thereto who meets the admission prerequisites provided for by the doctoral programme is entitled to be admitted to and pursue doctoral studies.

2. A person wishing to pursue doctoral studies (hereinafter the applicant) must submit to the relevant faculty:

- a) an application addressed to the Rector of the University, indicating the faculty and the doctoral educational programme;
- b) data on education and employment (CV);
- c) as required by the admission prerequisites of the relevant doctoral educational programme:
 - c.a) a research project on the research question, aim and direction/research methodology;
 - c.b) a certificate/document confirming proficiency in a foreign language at no lower than level B2 (the requirement is specified in accordance with the admission prerequisites of the doctoral educational programme);
- d) the diploma (academic certificate) certifying the relevant academic degree and copies thereof;
- e) an identity document and a copy thereof;
- f) two photographs measuring 3×4 (cm), together with their electronic version on a compact disc (CD);
- g) a military registration certificate or military ID (for persons liable for military service) and a copy thereof.

3. If the person has received higher education abroad, he/she is obliged to submit a document confirming recognition of the education received abroad.

4. If necessary, the applicant is obliged to attach to the submitted documentation a certificate issued by the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement confirming his/her right to continue studies on an educational programme of the third cycle of higher education (doctoral studies).

5. The master's degree or equivalent academic degree of an applicant for a regulated educational programme must correspond, by field, to the qualification to be awarded under the chosen doctoral educational programme.

6. Where scientific publications, participation in conferences or other documents relating to educational/research activity (certificates, diplomas of honour, patents, etc.) are indicated in the data on education and employment, the applicant must submit the originals of the said materials and copies thereof.

7. The preliminary verification of the documentation submitted by the applicant is carried out at the faculty by the person authorised to receive documentation. After verification, the original document is returned to the applicant and the copy remains in the personal file.
8. The application certified by the person authorised to receive documentation, together with the attached documents, is sent to the University's Records Management Department through the University's electronic records management system (eFlow). The registered application is forwarded to the Department for verification by resolution of the Rector.
9. Satisfaction of the prerequisites of the specific doctoral educational programme is a mandatory condition for admission to doctoral studies.
10. In accordance with the requirements of the doctoral educational programme, one of the admission prerequisites may be the submission of a certificate/document confirming proficiency in a foreign language at no lower than level B2. If the relevant certificate/document is not submitted, the applicant takes the corresponding examination in the foreign language. An applicant who has received higher education in the relevant foreign language is not required to take the examination or to submit a certificate/document.
11. The foreign language examination is held within the deadline and in the manner established by order of the Rector. The minimum pass mark in the foreign language examination is 51%.
12. The format of the interview with the applicant (topics, assessment criteria) is determined in accordance with the doctoral educational programme by order of the Rector, on the basis of proposals submitted by the faculty.
13. The chairperson of the temporary faculty commission holds a meeting of the temporary faculty commission within the deadline set by order of the Rector. At the meeting, the applicants' applications and the attached documentation/information are considered and interviews are held with them, as a result of which the commission issues a positive or negative recommendation on admission to doctoral studies. The decisions of the meeting of the temporary faculty commission, with appropriate reasoning, are reflected in the minutes of the commission's meeting.
14. The minutes of the meeting of the temporary faculty commission must indicate, for each applicant to be admitted to doctoral studies:
 - a) the title of the doctoral programme;
 - b) surname, name, personal number;
 - c) qualification;
 - d) brief information on work experience;
 - e) the existence of a document confirming foreign language proficiency or the results of the foreign language examination (where applicable);
 - f) the commission's positive or negative recommendation on the applicant's admission to doctoral studies.
15. The minutes of the meeting(s) of the temporary faculty commission are signed by the chairperson and members of the temporary faculty commission.
16. An extract from the minutes of the meeting of the temporary faculty commission (the list of applicants to be admitted) is published no later than the working day following the meeting.

17. A decision of the temporary faculty commission issuing a negative recommendation on admission to doctoral studies may be appealed once, in the form of a written complaint submitted to the University Appeals Commission, within 2 working days of the announcement of the results provided for in paragraph 16 of this Article.

18. The University Appeals Commission takes a decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within 1 working day of the submission of the complaint. The list of applicants to be admitted to the doctoral educational programmes is formed taking into account the decision of the University Appeals Commission.

19. Within 5 working days of the publication of the list of applicants to be admitted to educational programmes, the applicant is obliged to conclude an academic (educational) and administrative (financial) agreement with the University.

20. The minutes of the meeting(s) of the temporary faculty commission and the applicants' agreements are submitted by the dean of the faculty, together with an internal memorandum (which constitutes the basis for admission to doctoral studies), to the Department, which, within the deadline set by order of the Rector, prepares a draft order on the admission of the applicant to doctoral studies.

21. The Rector's order on admission is published on the University website.

Article 4. Approval of Scientific Supervisors and Dissertation Topics

1. Within one month of the start of the first semester of studies, the dean of the faculty, in agreement with the head of the academic department and the head of the doctoral educational programme, submits to the Faculty Council proposals for the approval of the doctoral student's scientific supervisor(s). The dean submits the decision of the Faculty Council provided for in this paragraph, together with an internal memorandum, to the Department. On the basis of the documentation submitted by the dean of the faculty, the Department prepares a draft order of the Rector of the University on the approval of the scientific supervisor(s) of each doctoral student.

2. The scientific supervisor may be a professor or associate professor of the faculty (including invited), an emeritus, or a chief or senior researcher of an independent scientific research unit of the University (institute, centre) who has scientific research experience in the area of the doctoral student's research topic and who ensures:

a) coordination of the doctoral student's completion of the educational and scientific research components;

b) regular consultations with doctoral students on methodological, structural, conceptual and other matters of research, as well as on research design, research methods, professional development, the process of writing the thesis/scientific research paper/dissertation, the process of integration into local and international scientific networks, participation in local and international scientific events and presentation of results, publication of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals, and other relevant areas.

3. A co-supervisor may be: a professor or associate professor of the University, a chief or senior researcher of an independent scientific research unit of the University, or a person holding the academic degree of doctor with relevant scientific research experience, on the basis of a corresponding institutional agreement concluded with the University. The co-supervisor (where there is one) supports the doctoral student in the implementation of the scientific research component on the basis of mutual

agreement with the supervisor and the doctoral student.

4. Within two weeks of approval, the scientific supervisor(s) submits to the faculty's Educational Process Management Division the doctoral student's personal work plan (Annex 1).

5. Under the procedure provided for in paragraph 1 of this Article, the dissertation topic(s) of the doctoral student(s) is approved no later than one month after the start of the second semester of studies. The topic of a doctoral student on a foreign-language doctoral educational programme is approved both in Georgian and in the language of instruction of the doctoral programme.

Article 5. Change/Addition of Scientific Supervisor and Change of Dissertation Topic/Adjustment of its Title

1. No later than one month after the start of the semester, the doctoral student has the right, in agreement with the head of the academic department and the head of the programme, to apply to the Rector for a change or addition of scientific supervisor. A personal reasoned request submitted in writing by the scientific supervisor and bearing a positive resolution of the head of the academic department may also serve as grounds for changing the scientific supervisor.

2. A decision on the change/addition of a scientific supervisor is taken in the manner established by this Regulation for the approval of scientific supervisor(s). For the Faculty Council to take a decision on this matter, the consent of the head of the academic department, based on consultation with the scientific supervisors, is required. The dean submits an internal memorandum on the change/addition of the scientific supervisor, together with the decision of the Faculty Council, to the Department, on the basis of which the Department prepares a draft order of the Rector.

3. At the joint reasoned request of the doctoral student and the scientific supervisor(s), in the manner established for the approval of a dissertation topic, no later than two months after the start of the semester, the dissertation topic may be changed (except in the final semester) or its title adjusted within the same doctoral educational programme.

4. After the preliminary defence, on the recommendation of the commission, the title of the dissertation topic may be adjusted.

5. During the period of doctoral studies, a change of dissertation topic is permitted only once, within the scheduled period of study.

6. In the event of a change of dissertation topic, the stages of the research component completed by the doctoral student are subject to a recognition procedure, as a result of which it may be determined that the stages of the research component completed during the period of study must be repeated.

7. The draft order of the Rector on the change of the dissertation topic/adjustment of its title is prepared by the Department.

Article 6. Doctoral Studies

1. The process of teaching and research in doctoral studies is regulated by the legislation of Georgia, the Statute of the University and other legal acts regulating the educational process.

2. The duration of the doctoral educational programme is no less than 3 years, and its educational component comprises no more than 60 credits.

3. The educational component of the doctoral educational programme facilitates the implementation of the doctoral student's scientific research component at an appropriate level of quality by developing transferable skills and/or by deepening the doctoral student's knowledge of current issues/trends in the field. It also provides methodological guidance for the proper planning and implementation of the research component.
4. The aim of the research component of the doctoral educational programme is to deepen the practical skills of independently conducting scientific research and to form and develop a professional research culture.
5. As a rule, it is not permitted to complete other stages of the research component and/or educational components in parallel with the stages of the research component "preliminary defence of the dissertation" and "completion and defence of the dissertation", except where this necessity, independently of the doctoral student, arises from a modification of the doctoral programme.
6. The description of the methods, criteria and scales for assessing knowledge provided for by the doctoral educational programme is given in the syllabi of the courses; the rules for assessing the educational and scientific research components of the educational programme are defined in accordance with the annex to this Regulation (Annex 2).
7. In the first year of study, the doctoral student, together with the scientific supervisor, draws up a detailed plan of the dissertation research project, which includes a list of issues to be developed: introduction, scientific novelty, relevance, aims and theoretical/practical significance.
8. The structure of the dissertation research project consists of the following items:
 - a) review of the scientific literature (history of research on the question, the place of the research question in contemporary science, why this question is relevant);
 - b) research methodology;
 - c) main research questions (what problems the doctorate aims to solve);
 - d) tentative structure of the dissertation;
 - e) tentative schedule for completing the dissertation (research plan);
 - f) expected research results (the extent to which this research contributes to the development of the field).
8. The stages of the scientific research component to be completed by the doctoral student are:
 - a) project/prospectus;
 - b) colloquium 1, 2, 3;
 - c) preliminary defence of the dissertation;
 - d) completion and defence of the dissertation.
9. In exceptional cases, taking into account the specifics of the doctoral educational programme, a composition of the research components different from that indicated may be established. Each stage of the scientific component is a mandatory prerequisite for the next stage.
10. The doctoral student's completion of the stages of the scientific research component is confirmed by the scientific supervisor in the electronic register after the

completion of each stage of the component.

11. Colloquia are assessed by a commission. The commission, composed of 5-7 persons, is approved by order of the dean of the faculty on the recommendation of the academic department. The proceedings of the colloquium are recorded electronically. The recording (on a compact disc) is kept in the student's personal file.

12. If a colloquium presentation is delivered in a foreign language (foreign-language programmes), the process may, where necessary, be conducted with the assistance of an interpreter.

13. With the permission of the Rector, a doctoral student may hold a colloquium online, before a commission.

Article 7. Preliminary Defence of the Dissertation

1. A prerequisite for submitting the dissertation for defence, together with the other requirements defined by this Regulation, is the preliminary defence of the dissertation at an extended meeting of the academic department. The preliminary defence is held in the final semester and its dates are determined by order of the Rector.

2. Before the preliminary defence of the dissertation, the doctoral student is obliged to submit one copy each of the dissertation and the abstract (avtoreferat), prepared in the language of instruction of the doctoral programme and signed by the supervisor(s);

3. The dissertation and the abstract must be formatted in accordance with the relevant requirements (Annexes 3 and 4); an outer cover is not required when binding the dissertation submitted for preliminary defence.

4. The abstract must present only the list of those published works and patents of the doctoral student whose content corresponds to the subject matter of the dissertation and is included in the dissertation.

5. The Scientific Secretary of the faculty is responsible for the organisational arrangements of the preliminary defence.

6. Representatives of the academic and scientific personnel of the relevant field, invited professors, emeriti and specialists from other institutions may attend the preliminary defence. The meeting elects a chairperson and a secretary from among its members. The chairperson of the meeting must be a holder of an academic position at the University. The attendance of the doctoral student's scientific supervisor(s) at the meeting is mandatory.

7. The doctoral student reports to the meeting the main provisions of his/her work and the results obtained, clearly states the relevance, scientific novelty and practical value of the dissertation, and presents the problem posed in the dissertation and the ways of solving it. The doctoral student answers the questions put by the participants of the meeting.

8. During the defence of the dissertation, the doctoral student may use visual materials: posters, a video projector and other technical means.

9. The results of the preliminary defence are formalised in minutes signed by the chairperson and secretary of the meeting. The minutes are also confirmed by the signature of the head of the academic department. The proceedings of the preliminary defence are recorded electronically. The recording (on a compact disc) is kept in the student's personal file. The Division ensures that one copy of the said minutes and of the supervisor's(s') reference on the doctoral student is forwarded to the Scientific

Secretary within one week.

10. In exceptional cases, subject to the permission of the Rector issued on the basis of a reasoned petition of the academic department, the doctoral student may complete the preliminary defence stage remotely, using an online platform. At the same time, it is not permitted to hold the extended meeting of the academic department in its full composition remotely for the purpose of conducting the preliminary defence stage.

Article 8. Preparation and Verification of the Dissertation and the Relevant Documentation

1. Within three weeks of the preliminary defence of the dissertation, the doctoral student must submit to the Scientific Secretary of the faculty:

- a) the doctoral student's application addressed to the dean requesting that the dissertation be accepted for consideration;
- b) 4 bound copies of the dissertation, prepared in the language of instruction of the doctoral programme and signed by the supervisor(s), and its electronic version (in PDF format);
- c) 20-25 copies of the abstract, prepared in the language of instruction of the doctoral programme, and its electronic version (in PDF format);
- d) the supervisor's(s') reference on the doctoral student regarding the professional qualities displayed during the period of doctoral studies and preparation of the dissertation (2 copies).
- e) information reflecting the main results of the research related to the dissertation topic (materials of scientific conferences, seminars, forums, congresses and symposia (at least one presentation), official documents confirming inventions and patents (where they exist) and a list thereof, certified by the head of the relevant academic department, including no fewer than three scientific articles published during the doctoral student's period of study in accordance with the established rules, one of which must be without co-author(s). Of the no fewer than three scientific articles published by the doctoral student during the period of study in accordance with the established rules, at least one must be published in a scientific publication indexed in Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar or another relevant database provided for by the doctoral educational programme. The list of information materials must be certified by the head of the relevant academic department;
- f) a copy of the master's or equivalent diploma (persons who have received their education abroad submit a copy of the document confirming recognition of the education received, issued by the LEPL National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement);
- g) biographical information (CV).

2. Within 1 week of the preliminary defence, the faculty's Educational Process Management Division (hereinafter the Division) forwards to the Scientific Secretary information on the doctoral student's completion of the educational and scientific research components (transcript; audio/video recordings of the colloquia, seminars and preliminary defence, copies of the corresponding minutes and of the electronic registers of all components), as well as information on the doctoral student's fulfilment of his/her financial obligations.

3. Within 3 days of the submission of the documentation by the doctoral student, the Scientific Secretary of the faculty ensures that the dissertation is forwarded for

checking for the absence of plagiarism.

4. The checking of the dissertation for the absence of plagiarism is carried out in the manner established by the legal acts of the University.

5. The conclusion on the checking of the dissertation for the absence of plagiarism is prepared by the relevant academic department within 3 days.

6. If plagiarism is confirmed or the established similarity norms are exceeded, the dissertation will not be submitted for defence. The doctoral student has the right, subject to additional periods of study, to revise the dissertation.

7. If there is no plagiarism and/or the similarity norm is not exceeded, the documentation submitted by the doctoral student and the conclusion of the relevant academic department are forwarded within 3 days by the Scientific Secretary of the faculty to the Department for verification. The Department is also entitled to request from the faculty information on the doctoral student's completion of the educational and scientific research components (transcript; audio/video recordings of the colloquia, seminars and preliminary defence, copies of the corresponding minutes and of the electronic registers of all components), as well as information on the doctoral student's fulfilment of his/her financial obligations.

8. The Department ensures the verification and endorsement of the documentation within two weeks.

Article 9. Approval of the Composition of the Dissertation Defence Board

1. Within two weeks of the preliminary defence of the dissertation, the dean of the faculty, with the participation of the head of the faculty Quality Assurance Service and the Scientific Secretary, submits to the University Dissertation Council for approval the candidacies for membership of the dissertation defence board (hereinafter the defence board), including the candidacies of the reviewers of the dissertation, who are selected by the relevant academic department of the faculty; the date and venue of the dissertation defence are also determined, with the participation of the head of the doctoral educational programme. The corresponding internal memorandum must be endorsed by the head of the Department.

2. A dissertation defence board is established for the defence of each dissertation, and its composition must be selected in accordance with the requirements provided for by the Regulation on the University Dissertation Council.

3. A reviewer must be a person holding the academic degree of doctor or an equivalent academic degree (professor, associate professor, including invited, chief/senior researcher of an independent scientific research unit) who has scientific research experience and published works in the field/speciality/area corresponding to the doctoral educational programme.

4. No fewer than two reviewers are approved for each dissertation.

5. A reviewer may not be a co-author of any work carried out by the doctoral student. It is not permitted for both reviewers to be employees of the same structural unit of any organisation, nor for a reviewer to be the chairperson, deputy chairperson or secretary of the dissertation defence board.

6. The doctoral student's scientific supervisor may not be a member of the dissertation defence board.

7. The chairperson, deputy chairperson and secretary of the dissertation defence board are elected by the dissertation defence board from among its members no less than two weeks before the defence.

Article 10. Forwarding of the Dissertation to the Reviewers

1. Within 3 days of the approval of the dissertation board by the University Dissertation Council, the Scientific Secretary of the faculty forwards to the reviewers one copy each of the dissertation and the abstract.

2. The reviewers are given 20 calendar days to submit their conclusions.

3. The reviewer must submit a written conclusion (review) in two copies and return the copy of the dissertation. The Scientific Secretary of the faculty forwards one copy each of the reviewer's conclusion (review) to the secretary of the defence board and to the doctoral student.

4. The reviewer's conclusion (review) must reflect: the relevance and novelty of the dissertation topic, the scientific level of the research, the scientific value of the results of the scientific research and/or the potential practical applicability of the research results, financial indicators (where applicable), the methods used (methodology) and the quality of formatting of the dissertation. The conclusion must state the reviewer's opinion as to whether the dissertation meets the requirements set and whether the doctoral student deserves to be awarded the academic degree of doctor. The reviewer's conclusion must be confirmed by signature.

5. If any reviewer is unable to submit a conclusion due to objective circumstances (accident, illness, etc.), another reviewer is approved in the manner established by this Regulation upon submission of the relevant certificate or memorandum.

6. If the reviewers submit positive conclusions, the dissertation will be submitted for defence.

7. In the event of a negative conclusion by one reviewer of the dissertation, a third reviewer is approved in the manner established by this Regulation; if that reviewer reviews the dissertation positively, the dissertation will be submitted for defence.

8. In the event of two negative conclusions by the reviewers of the dissertation, or a negative conclusion by the doctoral student's scientific supervisor, the dissertation is not admitted to defence and is returned to the doctoral student, who has the right, subject to additional periods of study, to continue working on the dissertation.

Article 11. Submission of the Dissertation to the Dissertation Defence Board

1. In the cases provided for in paragraph 6 or 7 of Article 10 of this Regulation, within 3 days of the submission of the reviewers' conclusions, the Scientific Secretary of the faculty ensures:

- a) the forwarding of the reviewers' conclusions, the dissertation, the abstract and the documentation relating to the doctoral student to the secretary of the dissertation defence board;
- b) the forwarding of one copy each of the dissertation and the abstract, and their electronic versions, to the University Library;
- c) the posting of the electronic versions of the dissertation and the abstract on the faculty website.

2. After the submission of the dissertation and the documentation, the secretary of the defence board, within 3 days, checks the documentation, the compliance of the abstract and the dissertation with the formatting requirements and the compliance of the dissertation with the doctoral educational programme, and, in the absence of any deficiency, ensures that a copy of the dissertation and the abstract is forwarded to the members of the defence board for consideration.
3. The members of the dissertation defence board must familiarise themselves with the dissertation and the documentation no less than two weeks before the defence of the dissertation.
4. No less than one week before the defence of the dissertation, the Rector's order on the scheduling of the defence is issued. The order must indicate the title of the doctoral educational programme and of the dissertation topic, the doctoral student's name, surname and personal number, the date of admission to GTU and the number of the order, the scientific supervisor(s), the composition of the defence board (indicating the chairperson, deputy chairperson, secretary, reviewers and invited members), and the date, time and venue of the defence.
5. The preparation of the draft of the order referred to in paragraph 4 of this Article and the public availability of the information are ensured by the faculty's Educational Process Management Division by publication on the faculty website and posting in a prominent place.

Article 12. Dissertation Defence Procedure

1. The defence of the dissertation (hereinafter the defence) is held at a meeting of the defence board. The dissertation defence meeting is public.
2. If, for a valid reason, one of the reviewers who has submitted a positive conclusion does not attend the defence of the dissertation, the conclusion must be read out in full during the defence. If neither reviewer attends the defence, the defence is postponed and a new date for the defence is scheduled in the established manner.
3. If the doctoral student is unable to appear at the defence of the dissertation for a confirmed valid reason, or the defence board lacks authority due to the absence of a quorum, or there is another objective circumstance impeding the continuation of the work of the defence board, a new date for the defence is scheduled in the established manner.
4. The defence is held in Georgian. In the case of a foreign-language doctoral programme, the defence is held in the language of instruction of the doctoral educational programme (with the participation of an interpreter where necessary).
5. The meeting is opened by the chairperson of the defence board, who confirms the existence of a quorum (no less than two thirds of the full composition) and informs those present of the agenda of the meeting.
6. The maximum duration of the presentations of the doctoral student and the official reviewers, as well as of the speeches of the members of the defence board and others, is determined by the defence board on the proposal of the chairperson.
7. The secretary of the meeting announces the identity of the doctoral student, brief biographical information about him/her, the completion of the stages of the educational and research components by the candidate, including the results of the preliminary defence, the topic of the dissertation and the identity of the reviewers, and informs those present of the documents submitted by the doctoral student and the procedure for the defence of the dissertation.

8. On the proposal of the chairperson of the meeting, the doctoral student, within the time allotted by the rules of procedure, clearly states the relevance and scientific novelty of the dissertation, the other main provisions of the work and the results obtained, and reads out the conclusions.

9. The doctoral student answers the questions put by the members of the defence board and those present, after which the chairperson informs the defence board of any responses to the dissertation (where they exist). All critical remarks must be read out in full. The doctoral student is obliged to respond to all remarks. A discussion between the reviewers and the doctoral student begins, after which the floor is given to the scientific supervisor(s) to give a reference on the doctoral student. Both members of the defence board and other persons present may participate in the discussion.

10. During the defence of the dissertation, the doctoral student may use visual materials: posters, a video projector and other technical means.

11. The proceedings of the dissertation defence are recorded by audio/video technical means, recorded on an electronic medium (CD or DVD) and kept in the doctoral student's personal file.

Article 13. Assessment Procedure

1. The work presented by the doctoral student is assessed immediately after the end of the defence by each member of the board, by secret ballot, using an assessment ballot of the established form (Annex 2).

2. For the purpose of conducting this procedure, on the proposal of the chairperson of the meeting, the defence board elects from among its members, by open vote, a vote-counting commission composed of 3 members, which is responsible for the confidentiality of the procedure.

3. The vote-counting commission elects a chairperson from among its members, who is responsible for drawing up the relevant documents and for other organisational matters.

4. Before the start of the procedure, the secretary of the defence board informs the members of the board of the said procedure and of the rules for completing the assessment ballot.

5. The members of the defence board must participate in the procedure in person. Delegation of the right of assessment to another person is not permitted.

6. On the basis of the assessments of the members of the defence board, the arithmetic mean of the scores they have given is determined, on the basis of which the final assessment is recorded in accordance with paragraph 8 or 9 of this Article.

7. Five positive and two negative assessments are used for the single assessment of the dissertation.

8. The positive assessments are:

- a) excellent (*summa cum laude*) – an outstanding work – 91-100 points;
- b) very good (*magna cum laude*) – a result that exceeds the requirements set in every respect – 81-90 points;
- c) good (*cum laude*) – a result that exceeds the requirements set – 71-80 points;
- d) average (*bene*) – a work of average level that meets the basic requirements set – 61-70 points;

e) satisfactory (rite) – a result that, despite deficiencies, still meets the requirements set – 51-60 points of the maximum assessment.

9. The negative assessments are:

a) unsatisfactory (insufficient) – a work of unsatisfactory level that does not meet the requirements set – 41-50 points;

b) wholly unsatisfactory (sub omni canone) – a result that does not meet the requirements set at all – 40 points or fewer.

10. The chairperson of the vote-counting commission announces the results of the procedure to the defence board. If a decision is taken by 2/3 of the members of the defence board present, the results are formalised in minutes signed by the chairperson and members of the defence board.

11. The minutes of the vote-counting commission are approved by open vote; the minutes and the ballots are kept by the defence board together with the doctoral student's documents.

12. If the minutes of the vote-counting commission are not approved, the assessment procedure must be repeated or postponed to the next working day. The vote-counting commission ensures that new ballots are handed to the members of the defence board, and the defence board conducts the secret procedure anew.

13. After the approval of the minutes of the vote-counting commission, the chairperson of the defence board announces the final decision to the doctoral student and the audience.

14. In the event of an "unsatisfactory (insufficient)" assessment, the dissertation defence board determines for the doctoral student the conditions and deadlines for resubmitting the dissertation (with retention of status), whereas in the event of a "wholly unsatisfactory (sub omni canone)" assessment or a repeated "unsatisfactory" assessment, the doctoral student loses the right to submit the same dissertation. In such a case his/her student status is terminated.

15. Upon receipt of a positive assessment provided for in paragraph 8 of this Article, the dissertation defence documentation is submitted by the Scientific Secretary of the faculty, within 5 calendar days of the assessment, to the relevant University Dissertation Council for the award of the academic degree of doctor.

16. The scientific supervisor's assessment of the defence is entered in the electronic assessment register within the established deadline.

Article 14. Organisational Support for Doctoral Processes

1. Organisational support for doctoral processes is provided by the Department, the faculty's Educational Process Management Division, the academic department and the Scientific Secretary of the faculty.

2. A professor/associate professor may be elected Scientific Secretary of the faculty for the remaining term of his/her election to the relevant academic position.

3. The Scientific Secretary of the faculty is elected by the Faculty Council.

4. The powers of the Scientific Secretary of the faculty are:

a) organising the submission of the dissertation for preliminary defence;

b) preparing, recording and verifying the doctoral student's dissertation documentation;

- c) forwarding the dissertation to the Strikeplagiarism.com operator for checking;
- d) forwarding to the Department the documentation required for the dissertation defence procedures;
- e) forwarding the dissertation to the reviewers;
- f) forwarding the conclusions submitted by the reviewers to the secretary of the defence board;
- g) forwarding to the defence board the documentation specified in sub-paragraph "a" of paragraph 1 of Article 11 of this Regulation;
- h) forwarding the abstract and the dissertation to the University Library and posting them on the faculty website;
- i) in accordance with the decision taken by the defence board on the assessment of the doctoral student, forwarding the dissertation and the documentation to the University Dissertation Council;
- j) exercising other powers defined by this Regulation.

5. The powers of the faculty's Educational Process Management Division are:

- a) verifying the applicant's documents;
- b) preparing the draft admission order;
- c) organising the holding of colloquia (determining the composition of the commission and the time and venue of the meeting), as well as preparing the corresponding draft order;
- d) preparing the corresponding draft order relating to student status;
- e) preparing the draft order on the defence of the dissertation;
- f) preparing, on the basis of the decision (minutes) of the University Dissertation Council on the award of the academic degree of doctor, the draft order for the issuance of the doctor's diploma;
- g) ensuring the timely posting of information on the faculty website;
- h) preparing the matter of the appointment, change or addition of scientific supervisor(s);
- i) preparing the matter of the approval or change of the dissertation topic or adjustment of its title;
- j) carrying out the activities necessary to ensure the organisation of meetings of the academic department in connection with the matters defined by this Regulation;
- k) exercising other powers defined by the Regulation of the faculty and other legal acts of the University.

6. The powers of the head of the doctoral educational programme are:

- a) participating in the consideration of the tentative dissertation topic(s) submitted to the academic department for the purpose of determining the admission quota for doctoral studies;
- b) participating in the temporary faculty commission;
- c) participating in establishing the compatibility of the learning outcomes achieved by a student transferred to the programme through mobility under

another educational programme with the chosen programme;

d) participating in establishing the compatibility of the learning outcomes achieved by a student with the relevant programme upon restoration of the status of a student whose status was suspended, or in the event of a modification of the programme;

e) performing other functions defined by legislation, the relevant resolutions of the Academic Council of the University, this Regulation and other legal acts of the University.

7. The powers of the head of the academic department are:

a) considering at a meeting of the academic department the matter of admission places (vacancies) for the doctoral programme;

b) considering at a meeting of the academic department the dissertation topic(s) submitted by the prospective supervisor(s) of the doctoral student(s);

c) organising and ensuring the preliminary defence of the dissertation by the doctoral student;

d) performing other functions defined by legislation, the relevant resolution of the Academic Council of the University, this Regulation and other legal acts of the University.

Article 15. Doctoral Studies with the Participation of a Partner Institution

1. The University is entitled to conclude an agreement with an independent scientific research institution, an authorised higher education institution of Georgia or a higher education institution recognised in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country for the implementation of doctoral educational programmes.

2. The University is entitled to implement a doctoral educational programme jointly with an authorised higher education institution of Georgia and/or a higher education institution recognised in accordance with the legislation of a foreign country.

3. Matters relating to the implementation of a doctoral educational programme with the participation of a partner institution are determined by the agreement on cooperation and/or joint doctoral studies concluded with that organisation.

4. With the participation of partner institutions, a candidate for admission to doctoral studies must meet the conditions for admission to doctoral studies defined by the agreement on joint doctoral studies.

5. The application of a person wishing to pursue doctoral studies at the University, together with the documents provided for by this Regulation, must be accompanied by the consent of the representative of the partner institution to supervise the topic.

6. With the participation of a partner institution, the dissertation must be jointly supervised by a professor of the University and a professor of the partner institution or a member of its scientific personnel holding the academic degree of doctor.

Article 16. Mobility in Doctoral Studies

1. A doctoral student acquires the right to mobility after one year of study. The administration of the student mobility process is carried out by the legal entity under public law – the Education Management Information System (hereinafter the Management System). Mobility may be carried out twice during a calendar year, within the deadline established by an individual administrative-legal act of the head of

the Management System.

2. Internal mobility at the University is conducted in accordance with the "Instruction on the Formation of the Student Contingent and Mobility".

3. A prerequisite for admission to doctoral studies through mobility is the compatibility of the doctoral educational programme of the person seeking mobility with the doctoral programme of the University.

4. Where there is competition for a doctoral educational programme, the following are also taken into account:

- a) the existence of scientific publications;
- b) participation in scientific conferences;
- c) other activities relating to educational/research activity (certificates, diplomas of honour, patents, projects, etc.).

5. The compatibility of the doctoral educational programmes, the compatibility of the learning outcomes achieved by the person seeking mobility at another educational institution with the chosen doctoral educational programme and the corresponding number of credits, as well as the number of credits to be earned and the volume of research work to be carried out in order to complete the programme, are determined by the faculty Quality Assurance Service and the head of the doctoral educational programme.

Article 17. Doctoral Student's Personal File

1. After the defence of the dissertation, the doctoral student's personal file remains in the faculty archive and includes:

- a) the documentation submitted by the doctoral student as defined by this Regulation and presented for the defence of the dissertation;
- b) the orders/legal acts issued in respect of the doctoral student;
- c) the decisions taken in respect of the doctoral student by the relevant University Dissertation Council and the defence board (minutes of meetings/extracts from minutes);
- d) the reviewers' conclusions;
- e) the minutes of the vote-counting commission of the defence board, together with the assessment ballots;
- f) the minutes of the dissertation defence and of the award of the academic degree of doctor, certified respectively by the secretary of the Dissertation Council/dissertation defence board;
- g) all documents relating to the defence of the dissertation and the award of the academic degree of doctor.

2. The documentation bound in a hard folder is kept in the faculty archive for three years, after which it is transferred to the University Archive.

Article 18. Transitional Provisions

1. The requirement of sub-paragraph d) of paragraph 2 of Article 8 of this Regulation, in the part relating to the publication by the doctoral student of no fewer than one article in an indexed scientific publication, applies to doctoral students admitted from the first semester of the 2021/2022 academic year. Doctoral students admitted before

the first semester of the 2021/2022 academic year are obliged to publish, during the period of study, no fewer than three scientific articles, one of which must be without co-author(s) and one published abroad in a high-ranking peer-reviewed publication.

2. The procedures and deadlines for the preliminary defence of the dissertation established by this Regulation do not apply to persons who completed the preliminary defence before the entry into force of this Regulation.

Article 19. Entry into Force of the Regulation

1. The Regulation enters into force from the day of its approval.