

APPROVED by Regulation No. 23 of the
Senate of the University of Tartu of
20 December 2013 (entered into force on
1 January 2014)

PROCEDURE FOR AWARDING DOCTORATES

Adopted based on clause 5 of subsection 3 of section 14 of the Universities Act, clause 6 of subsection 4 of section 2³ of the University of Tartu Act and subsection 8 of section 32² of the Statutes of the University of Tartu.

I. Scope of application

1. The Procedure for Awarding Doctorates (hereinafter the Procedure) regulates the requirements applicable to doctoral dissertations (hereinafter dissertation) and the procedure for applying for and awarding doctorates in the University of Tartu (hereinafter the University).
2. The name of the research degree awarded to graduates of doctoral curricula is Doctor of Philosophy (abbrev. PhD). The name is accompanied by the name of the curriculum or a narrower specialisation under the curriculum.

II. Right to award doctorate

3. A doctorate is awarded on the basis of a doctoral curriculum approved by the Senate, including on the basis of a joint curriculum.
4. The council awarding doctorates (hereinafter the Council) is appointed by the Senate upon approval or amendment of a doctoral curriculum. The composition of the council is published on the website of the University. The Council must always comprise of at least six members who hold a doctorate or equivalent qualifications. The right to award doctorates may be granted to:
 - 4.1. the council of a faculty;
 - 4.2. the council of an institute;
 - 4.3. a joint council established on the proposal of multiple faculties and/or institutes;
 - 4.4. a joint council of higher educational institutions established on the basis of a joint curriculum cooperation agreement.
5. The composition of the joint council specified in section 4.3 will be approved by the Rector. The joint council specified in section 4.4 will be established in accordance with the procedure specified in the joint curriculum cooperation agreement.
6. For the purpose of defence of a dissertation, the Council may expand its composition by adding one or more members who hold a doctorate or equivalent qualifications.
7. In the rules of the Council, the Council will establish requirements for the submission of documents, including the number of copies of a dissertation to be submitted to the Council and the procedure for defence and voting at a defence. In the rules, the Council may specify the prerequisites for allowing a person to defend their dissertation. The rules of procedure for accepting dissertations for defence and the rules of procedure for defending dissertations under a joint curriculum cooperation agreement will be set out in the agreement.

8. The Rector will establish the procedure for publication of dissertations. The procedure for publication of dissertations to be defended under a joint curriculum cooperation agreement will be set out in the agreement.

9. Only the members of the Council who hold a doctorate or equivalent qualifications participate in deciding issues relating to a dissertation. The supervisor(s) of a dissertation do not have the right to vote or chair the meeting in deciding issues relating to the dissertation. The members of the Council who do not hold a doctorate or equivalent qualifications have the right to speak on issues relating to the dissertation, but they cannot participate in voting on the issues.

10. Upon defence, the Council has a quorum if, inclusive of additional members, at least six members with decision-making authority are present. Regarding other dissertation-related issues, the Council has a quorum if over half of the members of the Council with decision-making authority participate in the meeting.

11. A decision of the Council regarding dissertation-related issues is adopted if over half but not less than four of the members of the Council with decision-making authority participating in the meeting voted in favour thereof.

12. If the composition or acts of the Council are not in accordance with this procedure, the Senate may deprive the Council of the right to award doctorates and appoint a new Council awarding doctorates.

III. Requirements of applicant for doctorate

13. An applicant for a doctorate must hold a Master's degree or equivalent qualifications and must have completed the respective doctoral curriculum to the extent required in the Study Regulations.

IV. Requirements of dissertation

14. A dissertation is an independent research paper that presents a well-argued, original solution to a specific scientific problem and whose results are published in international professional literature. In art specialisations, a dissertation can be an independent research paper of which part is a creative project related to a specific research problem and whose results are published in international professional literature or presented to the public. A dissertation must contain the following:

14.1. an overview of the current situation of the field of research and the position of the research problem therein;

14.2. the formulation of the research task;

14.3. the statements presented for defence;

14.4. a description of the methodology;

14.5. the course and proof of the resolution of the research task;

14.6. a summary;

14.7. a list of references;

14.8. an exhaustive Estonian summary of various parts of the paper if the dissertation has been written in a foreign language or an exhaustive foreign-language summary of various parts of the paper if the dissertation has been written in Estonian;

14.9. in the case of a creative project, a documented and published public presentation.

15. A dissertation is published in the University's dissertation series (*Dissertationes ... Universitatis Tartuensis*) and is formalised as follows:

15.1. as a summarising article that complies with the requirements set out in section 14, along with previously published research publications on the topic of the dissertation, of which at least three have been published in the publications specified in sections 16.1 and 16.2. In accordance with sections 17.1 and 17.2, the existence of at least one of the aforementioned publication and at least two (in the case of two publications, at least one) inventions or patent applications is considered equal to the

aforementioned publications. If a publication or invention has multiple authors, the specific contribution of the applicant for a doctorate in the completion thereof must be indicated;

15.2. as a monograph that complies with the requirements set out in section 14, which has been pre-reviewed at an international level by at least two renowned independent researchers of the specialisation and on whose related topic at least one research publication has been published in the publications specified in sections 16.1 and 16.2;

15.3. as a summary article that complies with the requirements set out in section 14, along with the monograph specified in section 16.3;

15.4. in art specialisations, as a summary article that complies with the requirements set out in section 14, along with the creative project whose results have been published by way of at least three public and documented presentations of which at least one has taken place abroad or in the framework of an international project and which has been internationally pre-reviewed by at least two independent specialists or researchers of the respective specialisation.

16. The following research publications are deemed publication of the results of research contained in a dissertation:

16.1. articles in other leading international pre-reviewed scientific journals of the specialisation, which have an international panel, which are internationally distributed, which are indexed in several international databases and which are open to contributions;

16.2. articles or chapters in the publications of renowned international research publishing houses;

16.3. a monograph published by an internationally renowned research publishing house.

17. The following is deemed equal to the publication of the results of research contained in a dissertation:

17.1. patents registered in a region or country where the patentability has been subjected to expert assessment;

17.2. submitted patent applications if, in the case of an international patent application, a positive written opinion on the patentability of the invention is given by the patent office that carried out the international search or if, in the case of a national patent application, a positive written opinion on the patentability of the invention is given by the national patent office.

18. The requirements applicable to dissertations to be defended under joint curricula cooperation agreements or joint supervision agreements and the conditions of publication of such dissertations are set out in the respective agreements.

V. Procedure for accepting dissertation for defence

19. An applicant for a doctorate must submit to the Council the following documents electronically or, if the original document is not electronic, on paper:

19.1. an application to allow the applicant to defend their dissertation, specifying the exact title of the doctorate applied for;

19.2. the manuscript of the dissertation, which complies with the requirements established for manuscripts by Tartu University Press;

19.3. a *curriculum vitae* that contains a list of research publications and patents related to or forming part of the dissertation;

19.4. (a) written opinion(s) of the supervisor(s) regarding the originality of the dissertation, the contribution of the applicant and compliance with the requirements of substance and form;

19.5. a brief popular science summary (up to 2000 characters) in Estonian and English, which is aimed at a broad audience.

20. The Council will, within three working days of receipt of the documents specified in section 19, send them to the Academic Secretary, who will assess the formal compliance of the submitted

materials with the requirements of the Procedure, involving experts therein, where necessary. The Academic Secretary will submit their written opinion to the Council within five working days.

21. Within six weeks of receipt of the documents submitted by the applicant, the Council will make one of the following decisions, which will be minuted:

21.1. allow the dissertation to be defended;

21.2. reject the dissertation;

21.3. submit the dissertation for a pre-review;

21.4. in the event of deficiencies, demand that the dissertation be reformulated and corrected and, after corrections have been made, make a new decision to allow the dissertation to be defended or to reject the dissertation.

22. Once pre-reviews are received, the Council will make one of the following decisions, which will be minuted:

22.1. allow the dissertation to be defended;

22.2. in the event of deficiencies, demand that the dissertation be reformulated and corrected and, after corrections have been made, make a new decision to allow the dissertation to be defended or to reject the dissertation;

22.3. reject the dissertation.

23. By a decision to allow a dissertation to be defended, the Council confirms that the dissertation complies with the requirements provided for in sections 14-16 and that the applicant deserves a doctorate in the event of successful defence.

24. The decision specified in sections 21.2, 21.4, 22.2 and 22.3 must state the reasons.

25. If the Council decides to allow a dissertation to be defended, the Council simultaneously appoints the opponent(s) of the dissertation, the time and place of defence and, if necessary, additional members of the Council.

26. An internationally recognised researcher of the respective specialisation who holds a doctorate or equivalent qualifications and does not have a conflict of interests upon performing the task can be appointed as an opponent and pre-reviewer of a dissertation. At least one of the opponents of a dissertation must come from outside Estonia, unless the Rector decides otherwise based on a proposal of the Council. A pre-reviewer of a dissertation can also be an opponent of the dissertation.

27. The minutes of a meeting on allowing a dissertation to be defended must, in addition to the standard formal elements of the minutes, also contain the names of the members of the Council with decision-making authority as well as their research degrees, the voting results, the name of the applicant, the original and Estonian titles of the dissertation or, if the dissertation is in Estonian, the Estonian and English titles of the dissertation, the names of the supervisor(s), opponent(s) and additional members (if any) and their research degrees and institutions, the time and place of defence and the exact title of the degree applied for.

28. After the applicant has been allowed to defend their dissertation, the applicant will submit the manuscript of the dissertation to the Council electronically and, if provided for in the rules of the Council, the required number of paper copies.

29. A paper copy of the dissertation must be accessible in the University Library and an electronic copy of the dissertation must be available on the website of the University Library at least one month before the defence, unless the defence of the dissertation has been declared private and/or restrictions have been established on the publication of the dissertation. Information on defence will be published in the University magazine *Universitatis Tartuensis* and on the University website.

30. The provisions of this chapter apply to applications for doctorates awarded under a joint curriculum, unless otherwise provided in the joint curriculum cooperation agreement.

VI. Defence of dissertation

31. The defence of a dissertation takes place at a meeting of the Council as a public academic discussion (hereinafter defence). If a dissertation contains a state secret, trade secret or other classified information, the Rector may, on the proposal of the Council, declare the meeting private and/or establish restrictions on the publication of the dissertation. A defence can only take place if the applicant for a doctorate, at least one of the opponents and, along with additional members, at least six members of the Council with decision-making authority are present. One can also participate in a defence via a real-time two-way audio-visual communications channel (e.g. Skype or video conference).

32. The defence (except a private discussion specified in section 34) will be recorded as an audio or video file and preserved in accordance with the procedure in force in the University. In the event of a private defence, access restrictions will be established on the files.

33. A defence consists of the following parts:

33.1. introduction;

33.2. presentation by the applicant (*lectio praecursoria*);

33.3. remarks by the opponent(s);

33.4. academic discussion between the applicant and the opponents;

33.5. academic discussion in the presence of the members of the Council and the attendees;

33.6. adoption of the decision of the Council;

33.7. declaration of the decision of the Council;

33.8. final remarks of the applicant.

34. In a closed discussion (involving the members of the Council, opponents and supervisors who do not have the right to vote), the Council will discuss the applicant's presentation and ability to defend the main statements of the dissertation in the discussion. Considering the assessments of the opponent(s) regarding the dissertation and discussion, the Council will, in a public vote, make one of the following decisions, which will be minuted:

34.1. the dissertation was defended successfully (grade: 'defended'). To award a doctorate to the applicant;

34.2. the dissertation was not defended successfully (grade: 'not defended'). Not to award a doctorate to the applicant;

34.3. not to make a decision due to suspicion of plagiarism or academic fraud. To send the dissertation to experts for assessment.

35. The decision of the Council must state the reasons. If the Council decides not to award a doctorate to the applicant, the substantive deficiencies found in the dissertation and/or defence which did not allow for the awarding of the doctorate must be indicated.

36. The Council may evaluate a dissertation and its defence on the following scale: *summa cum laude* ('with highest praise'), *cum laude* ('with praise'), *optime approbatur* ('meeting the requirements in the optimal way') and *approbatur* ('meeting the requirements'). A description of the evaluations must be given in the curriculum.

37. In the event specified in section 34.3, the Council will ask for at least two expert assessments and letters of explanation of the applicant and supervisor(s) and will, within one month of the defence, make one of the following decisions, which will be minuted:

37.1. the suspicion of plagiarism or academic fraud was not confirmed, and

37.1.1. the dissertation was defended successfully (grade: 'defended'). To award a doctorate to the applicant;

37.1.2. the dissertation was not defended successfully (grade: 'not defended'). Not to award a doctorate to the applicant;

37.2. the suspicion of plagiarism or academic fraud was confirmed. To make a proposal to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs for the applicant to be deleted from the matriculation register on the grounds provided for in the Study Regulations.

38. The minutes of the meeting of the Council serve as the basis for the issuing of a diploma. In addition to the required standard formal elements, the minutes must contain the name of the applicant, the original and Estonian titles of the dissertation or, if the dissertation is in Estonian, the Estonian and English titles of the dissertation, the names of the supervisor(s), opponent(s) and members of the Council with decision-making authority attending the defence along and their research degrees, the voting results, the name of the chairperson and the decision on awarding a doctorate.

39. If the Council decides not to award a doctorate to an applicant, the applicant will be entitled to apply for a repeat defence of the same dissertation once within the time limit set by the Council.

40. The provisions of this chapter apply to the defence of a dissertation under a joint curriculum, unless otherwise provided in the joint curriculum cooperation agreement.

VII. Repeat defence

41. In order to be allowed to defend their dissertation again, an applicant for a doctorate must submit an applicant to the Council.

42. The Council will make a decision to allow or not to allow the applicant to defend their dissertation again within one month of receipt of the application. The decision must comply with the requirements provided for in sections 25 to 27. A decision not to allow an applicant to defend their dissertation again must state the reasons. In the event of a negative decision, the applicant must submit a new dissertation in accordance with section 19 in order to obtain a doctorate from the University of Tartu.

43. On the basis of a decision to allow an applicant to defend their dissertation again, access to the electronic dissertation will be granted on the University Library website one month before the repeat defence, unless the defence of the dissertation has been declared private and/or restrictions have been established on the publication of the dissertation. Information on the repeat defence will be published in the University magazine *Universitatis Tartuensis* and on the University website.

44. A repeat defence will take place in accordance with sections 31 to 38.

45. If, in a repeat defence, the Council decides not to award a doctorate based on section 34.2, the Council will make a proposal to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs to delete the applicant from the matriculation register due to a lack of progress on the grounds provided for in the Study Regulations.

VIII. Application for doctorate and defence of dissertation on conditions and in accordance with procedure set out in agreement entered into for joint supervision of student

46. An agreement for joint supervision of a doctoral candidate (hereinafter joint supervision agreement) will be made between a doctoral candidate of the University of Tartu, the University of Tartu and a foreign higher educational institution for the purpose of allowing for the defence of a dissertation on the conditions specified in the joint supervision agreement before the joint council of the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution and in order to award to the applicant for a doctorate, based on a decision of the joint council, the graduation documents and academic degrees of the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution.

47. The joint supervision agreement will be signed by the student, representatives of both higher educational institutions and the supervisors of the dissertation. To sign the agreement, the consent of the Council awarding the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu and, in the

event specified in section 47, that of the Senate is required. Before signing, the supervisor of the dissertation will send the joint supervision agreement electronically to the Council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu and the Council will submit the agreement to the Office of Academic Affairs for the purpose of verifying compliance with the requirements established in this Procedure.

48. If the conditions of and procedure for defending the dissertation agreed in the joint supervision agreement do not meet the conditions of defence of dissertations established in this Procedure, the agreement will be approved by the Council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu and thereafter the Senate will approve the agreement.

49. If the conditions of and procedure for defending the dissertation agreed on in the joint supervision agreement meet the conditions of defence of dissertations established in this Procedure, the agreement will be approved by the Council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu.

50. The prerequisite for the approval of a joint supervision agreement by the Council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu and, in the event specified in section 48, by the Senate is the specification of at least the following terms and conditions in the agreement:

50.1. the terms and conditions of registration of the doctoral candidate for studies at the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution and the planned period of study;

50.2. the research subject and the curriculum completed at the University of Tartu;

50.3. the supervisors of the dissertation at the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution and their obligations upon supervising the doctoral candidate;

50.4. the study plan, incl. compulsory subjects and the estimated timetable;

50.5. the conditions of taking into account previous studies and work experience;

50.6. the conditions of financing the studies and research, incl. of participation in conferences, secondments etc.;

50.7. the requirements for mutual notification and reporting (documents to be submitted for attestation etc.);

50.8. procedure for application for the degree;

50.9. the conditions of and procedure for formalisation and publication of the dissertation, incl. the language of the dissertation;

50.10. the intellectual property rights of the dissertation;

50.11. the conditions of and procedure for defending the dissertation, incl. the language and place of dissertation;

50.12. the procedure for formation of a joint council, making decisions and contesting decisions;

50.13. the graduation documents and academic degrees issued upon graduation;

50.14. the conditions of and procedure for termination of the agreement.

51. A person who has entered into a joint supervision agreement with the University of Tartu and a foreign higher educational institution which is in force at the time of applying for a degree can apply for the defence of their dissertation on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement: if the person applies for a doctorate in the curriculum of the University of Tartu specified in the joint supervision agreement;

51.1. if the person has fulfilled the conditions specified in section 13, thereby at least 30 credit points' worth of courses required under the curriculum of the University of Tartu must be completed at the University of Tartu.

52. If a person wishes to defend their dissertation on the basis of a joint supervision agreement, the application for a doctorate, the formalisation, publication and defence of the dissertation and the decision on awarding the degree will take place on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement.

53. A joint council of at least six members which has been established by the Council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu and the representatives of the foreign higher educational institution has the right to award a doctorate of the University of Tartu on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement. The joint council of the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution will be established with the participation of at least three members of the Council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu who hold a doctorate or equivalent qualifications on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement. If the supervisors of a dissertation have been appointed members of the joint council, they have the right to vote in deciding on the awarding of a doctorate, unless agreed otherwise in the joint supervision agreement. The meetings of the joint council can also be held via a real-time two-way audio-visual communications channel (e.g. Skype or video conference).

54. The minutes of the joint council of the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution serve as the basis for awarding a diploma of the University of Tartu to a person who has defended their dissertation on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement. In addition to the required standard formal elements, the minutes must contain the name of the applicant, the original and Estonian titles of the dissertation (as well as in English if the original language of the dissertation is not English) or, if the dissertation is in Estonian, the Estonian and English titles of the dissertation, the names of the supervisor(s), opponent(s) and members of the Council with decision-making authority attending the defence and their research degrees and institutions, the name of the chairperson, the voting results and the decision on awarding a doctorate.

55. If a dissertation is not printed in the Tartu University Press, the author of the dissertation will enter into an agreement with the University at least one month before the defence. The agreement must stipulate that the University Library will publish and preserve at least one printed copy of the dissertation or the manuscript of the dissertation, if the dissertation is printed following the defence, and the electronic summary specified in section 19.5, which must contain a reference to the source of publication of the dissertation. After the entry into force of the agreement, the dissertation will be made available in the University Library on paper and the summary will be made available electronically on the website of the University Library, unless the dissertation contains a state secret, trade secret or other classified information or if other restrictions have been established on the publication of the dissertation. Information on defence will be published in the University magazine *Universitatis Tartuensis* and on the University website.

56. In the event of violation of the conditions of and procedure for defence of dissertations set out in the joint supervision agreement, the applicant can file an appeal against the decision of the joint council regarding the awarding of a doctorate of the University of Tartu in accordance with the procedure set out in sections 58-59.

57. The Council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu can, in the event specified in section 59, overturn the decision of the joint council on awarding the degree in accordance with the procedure established in section 61.

IX. Contestation and overturning of decisions of Council

58. In the event of a violation of the rules of application for and awarding of doctorates set out in this Procedure and other legal instruments, the applicant for a doctorate may file an appeal against a decision of the Council with the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs within one week of the day following the announcement of the decision of the Council. The Vice Rector for Academic Affairs will form a three-member Appeal Committee to hear the appeal. The Vice Rector for Academic

Affairs is the chair of the Appeal Committee. The members of the Appeal Committee must hold a doctorate or equivalent qualifications.

59. The Appeal Committee will decide, within 30 days of the submission of the appeal, whether the contested decision remains in force or whether to overturn it and send it back to the Council that made the decision so that the Council can make a new decision. This decision of the Appeal Committee is not subject to appeal in the University.

60. In the event of reasonable doubt of plagiarism or academic fraud, the Council has the right to overturn a decision to allow a person to defend their dissertation or a decision on the awarding of a doctorate.

61. In the event of plagiarism or academic fraud, the Council will ask for at least two expert assessments and letters of explanation from the applicant and the supervisor(s) and will, according to the results, within one month of receipt of the suspicion, make one of the following decisions, which will be made in the form of a minuted decision:

61.1. the suspicion of plagiarism or academic fraud was not confirmed, and

61.1.1. the decision to allow the person to defend their dissertation remains in force;

61.1.2. the decision to award a doctorate remains in force;

61.2. the suspicion of plagiarism or academic fraud was confirmed, and

61.2.1. to overturn the decision to allow the person to defend their dissertation and to propose to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs to delete the applicant from the matriculation register due to academic fraud on the grounds provided for in the Study Regulations;

61.2.2. to overturn the decision to award a doctorate. The respective decision of the Council will be published in the University magazine and on the University website.

62. In the event of decisions specified in sections 37.2, 41, 44, 61.2.1 and 61.2.2, the applicant must submit a new dissertation in accordance with section 19 in order to receive a doctorate from the University of Tartu.

X. Preservation of dissertations

63. Dissertations are preserved in the University Library in printed form and electronically. If, according to section 61.2.1, a decision to allow a person to defend their dissertation is overturned, the defence was not successful (sections 34.2, 37.2 and 44) or if the awarding of a doctorate is overturned in accordance with section 61.2.2 following the defence, access to the electronic dissertation will be closed on the basis of a motion from the Council.

XI. Implementing provisions

64. The Statutes of Research Degrees approved by Regulation no. 36 of the Council of the University of Tartu of 30 November 2007 and amended by Tartu University Council Regulations no. 12 of 20 June 2008, no. 1 of 29 January 2010 and no. 17 of 16 December 2011 are hereby repealed.

65. In sections 2.2, 43, 116.2, 124, 124.4 and 134 of the Study Regulations adopted by Regulation no. 5 of the Senate of the University of Tartu of 26 April 2013 the words 'Statutes of Research Degrees' will be replaced with 'Procedure for Awarding Doctorates.'

66. Rules of the Council complying with the requirements set out in section 7 of the Procedure must be established by no later than 1 July 2014.

67. Section 32 of the Procedure will enter into force on 1 January 2015.

68. The Procedure will enter into force on 1 January 2014.