

ADOPTED by the Senate of the University of Tartu
Regulation no. 23 of 20 December 2013
(effective as of 01.01.2014)

AMENDED by the Senate of the University of
Tartu Regulation no. 12 of 29 May 2015
(effective as of 01.01.2016)

PROCEDURE FOR AWARDING DOCTORATES

Adopted based on clause 14 (3) 5) of the Universities Act, clause 2³ (4) 6) of the University of Tartu Act and clause 12 (2) 7) of the Statutes of the University of Tartu, adopted by the senate regulation no. 11 of 21 July 2014 and approved by the council resolution no. 18 of 29 July 2014. [effective as of 01.01.2016]

I. Scope of application

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

II. Right to award doctoral degrees

3. A doctoral degree 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 doctoral degrees ('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 at least six members who hold a doctoral degree or a corresponding qualification. The right to award doctoral degree may be granted to:
 - 4.1. the faculty council; [effective as of 01.01.2016]
 - 4.2. the institute council;
 - 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. [effective as of 01.01.2016]
5. The composition of the joint council specified in clause 4.3 is approved by the rector. The joint council specified in clause 4.4 is established in accordance with the procedure specified in the joint curriculum cooperation agreement.
6. For the purpose of defence of each individual dissertation, the council may expand its composition by adding one or more members who hold a doctoral degree or a corresponding qualification.
7. In its procedure rules, the council establishes the requirements for the submission of documents, including the number of copies of the dissertation to be submitted to the council and the procedure for defence and voting at the defence. In its procedure rules, the council may specify the prerequisites for allowing a dissertation to be defended. The rules of procedure for allowing joint-curriculum dissertations for defence and the defence procedure under a joint curriculum cooperation agreement are agreed upon in the agreement.

8. The rector establishes the procedure for the publication of dissertations. The procedure for the publication of dissertations defended under a joint curriculum cooperation agreement is agreed upon in the agreement.

9. Only the members of the council who hold a doctoral degree or a corresponding qualification participate in deciding issues regarding a dissertation. The supervisor(s) of a dissertation do not have the right to vote or chair the meeting when deciding issues regarding the dissertation. The members of the council who do not hold a doctoral degree or a corresponding qualification have the right to speak on issues regarding the dissertation, but they cannot participate in voting on the issues.

10. At the defence, the council has a quorum if, inclusive of additional members, at least six members with decision-making powers are present. In other dissertation-related issues, the council has a quorum if over half of the members of the council with decision-making powers 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 powers participating in the meeting voted in its favour.

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 doctoral degrees and appoint a new council awarding doctoral degrees.

III. Requirements to doctoral candidates

13. A doctoral candidate (a person applying for a doctoral degree) must hold a master's degree or a corresponding qualification and must have completed the respective doctoral curriculum to the extent required in the Study Regulations.

IV. Requirements to dissertation

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

14.2. the formulation of the research task;

14.3. the statements presented for defence;

14.4. a description of 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 review article that complies with the requirements set out in clause 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 clauses 16.1–16.2. Up to two publications may be replaced by inventions or patent applications meeting the requirements of

clauses 17.1–17.2. If a publication or invention has several authors, the specific contribution of the doctoral candidate in the completion of the publication/invention must be indicated;

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

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

15.4. in art specialisations, as a summarising review article that complies with the requirements set out in clause 14, along with the creative project the results of which 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 peer-reviewed by at least two independent specialists or researchers of the respective specialisation.

16. The following research publications are considered as a publication of the results of research included in a dissertation:

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

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

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

17. The following are considered equal to the publication of the results of research included in a dissertation:

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

17.2. pending patent applications if, in the case of an international patent application, a positive written opinion on the patentability of the invention has been given by the patent office that 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 has been given by the national patent office.

18. The requirements applicable to dissertations defended under joint curriculum cooperation agreements or joint supervision agreements and the conditions of publication of such dissertations are agreed upon in the respective agreements.

V. Procedure for allowing a dissertation for defence

19. A doctoral candidate 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 doctoral candidate to defend their dissertation, specifying the exact title of the doctoral degree applied for;

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

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

19.4. (a) written opinion(s) of the supervisor(s) on the originality of the dissertation, the contribution of the doctoral candidate and compliance with the requirements of content 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. Within three working days of receiving the documents specified in clause 19, the council sends them to the academic secretary, who assesses the formal compliance of the submitted

materials with the requirements of the procedure, involving experts, if necessary. The academic secretary submits their written opinion to the council within five working days.

21. Within six weeks of receiving the documents submitted by the doctoral candidate, the council makes one of the following decisions, which is included in the minutes:

21.1. allow the dissertation to be defended;

21.2. not to allow the dissertation to be defended;

21.3. submit the dissertation for a review;

21.4. in case of deficiencies, demand that the doctoral candidate reformulate and correct the dissertation and, after the corrections have been made, makes a new decision to allow or not to allow the dissertation to be defended.

22. Once the reviews are received, the council makes one of the following decisions, which is included in the minutes:

22.1. allow the dissertation to be defended;

22.2. in case of deficiencies, demand that the doctoral candidate reformulates and corrects the dissertation and, after corrections have been made, makes a new decision to allow or not to allow the dissertation to be defended;

22.3. not to allow the dissertation to be defended.

23. By a decision to allow a dissertation to be defended, the council confirms that the dissertation complies with the requirements provided for in clauses 14–16 and that the doctoral candidate deserves a doctoral degree in the event of a successful defence.

24. The decision specified in clauses 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, it also 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 doctoral degree or a corresponding qualification and does not have a conflict of interests upon performing the task can be appointed as an opponent and 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 reviewer of a dissertation can also be an opponent of the dissertation.

27. The minutes of the 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 powers as well as their research degrees, the voting results, the name of the doctoral candidate, 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 doctoral candidate has been allowed to defend their dissertation, the doctoral candidate submits the manuscript of the dissertation to the council electronically and, if provided for in the procedure 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 closed and/or restrictions have been established on the publication of the dissertation. Information on the defence is published in the university magazine *Universitas Tartuensis* and on the university website.

30. The provisions of this chapter also apply doctoral candidates applying for a degree under a joint curriculum, unless otherwise provided in the joint curriculum cooperation agreement.

VI. Defence of the dissertation

31. The defence of the dissertation takes place at a meeting of the council as a public academic discussion ('defence'). If the dissertation contains a state secret, trade secret or other classified information, the rector may, on the proposal of the council, declare the meeting closed and/or establish restrictions on the publication of the dissertation. A defence can only take place if the doctoral candidate, at least one of the opponents and, along with additional members, at least six members of the council with decision-making powers 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 the closed discussion specified in clause 34) is recorded as an audio or video file and preserved in accordance with the procedure established at the university. In case of a closed defence, access restrictions to the files are established.

33. The defence consists of the following parts:

33.1. introduction;

33.2. presentation by the doctoral candidate (*lectio praecursoria*);

33.3. remarks by the opponent(s);

33.4. academic discussion between the doctoral candidate and the opponents;

33.5. academic discussion with the participation of the members of the council and the audience;

33.6. adoption of the decision of the council;

33.7. declaration of the decision of the council;

33.8. final remarks of the doctoral candidate.

34. In a closed discussion (involving the members of the council, the opponents and supervisors who do not have the right to vote), the council discusses the doctoral candidate's presentation and ability to defend the main statements of the dissertation in the discussion. Taking into account the assessments of the opponent(s) to the dissertation and the discussion, the council makes one of the following decisions in a public vote, which is included in the minutes:

34.1. The dissertation was defended successfully (grade 'defended'). Doctoral degree is awarded to the doctoral candidate;

34.2. The dissertation was not defended successfully (grade 'not defended'). Doctoral degree is not awarded to the doctoral candidate;

34.3. The decision is not made due to suspicion of plagiarism or academic fraud. The dissertation is sent to experts for assessment.

35. The decision of the council must state the reasons. If the council decides not to award a doctoral degree to the doctoral candidate, the substantive deficiencies found in the dissertation and/or defence which did not allow for the awarding of the degree must be presented.

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 case specified in clause 34.3, the council asks for at least two expert assessments and letters of explanation from the doctoral candidate and supervisor(s). Within one month of the defence, it makes one of the following decisions, which is included in the minutes:

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

37.1.1. the dissertation was defended successfully (grade 'defended'). Doctoral degree is awarded to the doctoral candidate;

37.1.2. the dissertation was not defended successfully (grade 'not defended'). Doctoral degree is not awarded to the doctoral candidate;

37.2. the suspicion of plagiarism or academic fraud was confirmed. The council makes a proposal to the vice rector for academic affairs to delete the doctoral candidate from the

matriculation register due to academic fraud 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 doctoral candidate, 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 powers attending the defence along with their research degrees, the voting results, the name of the chair of the council and the decision on awarding the doctoral degree.

39. If the council decides not to award the doctoral degree to the doctoral candidate, the doctoral candidate is 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 also apply to the defence of a dissertation under a joint curriculum, unless otherwise provided in the joint curriculum cooperation agreement.

VII. Repeat defence

41. To be allowed to a repeat defence, the doctoral candidate must submit an application to the council.

42. Within one month of receiving the application, the council makes a decision to allow or not to allow the doctoral candidate to the repeat defence. The decision must comply with the requirements provided for in clauses 25–27. A decision not to allow a doctoral candidate to the repeat defence must state the reasons. If the doctoral candidate is not allowed to a repeat defence, the doctoral candidate must submit a new dissertation in accordance with clause 19 to get a doctoral degree from the University of Tartu.

43. On the basis of a decision to allow a doctoral candidate to a repeat defence, access to the electronic dissertation is granted on the university library website one month before the repeat defence, unless the defence of the dissertation has been declared closed and/or restrictions have been established on the publication of the dissertation. Information on the repeat defence is published in the university magazine *Universitas Tartuensis* and on the university website.

44. A repeat defence takes place in accordance with clauses 31–38.

45. If, in a repeat defence, the council decides not to award a doctoral degree based on clause 34.2, the council makes a proposal to the vice rector for academic affairs to delete the doctoral candidate from the matriculation register due to a lack of progress on the grounds provided for in the Study Regulations.

VIII. Applying for a doctoral degree and defence of dissertation on conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in a joint supervision agreement

46. An agreement for joint supervision of a doctoral student is made between a doctoral student of the University of Tartu, the University of Tartu and a foreign higher 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 awarding to the doctoral candidate, based on a decision of the joint council, the graduation documents and academic degrees of the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution.

47. The joint supervision agreement is 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 clause 48, that of the senate is required. Before signing, the

supervisor of the dissertation sends the joint supervision agreement electronically to the council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu, which submits the agreement to the Office of Academic Affairs to verify 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 must be approved by the council that awards the degrees of the respective curriculum of the University of Tartu and the senate.

49. If the conditions of and procedure for defending the dissertation agreed upon in the joint supervision agreement meet the conditions of defence of dissertations established in this procedure, the agreement must 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 clause 48, by the senate, is that the agreement specifies at least the following terms and conditions:

- 50.1. terms and conditions of registration of the doctoral student for studies at the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution and the planned period of study;
- 50.2. research topic and the curriculum followed at the University of Tartu;
- 50.3. supervisors of the dissertation at the University of Tartu and the foreign higher educational institution and their obligations upon supervising the doctoral student;
- 50.4. study plan, incl. compulsory subjects and the estimated timetable;
- 50.5. conditions of the recognition of prior learning and professional experience;
- 50.6. conditions of financing the studies and research, incl. of participation in conferences, trips, etc.;
- 50.7. requirements for mutual notification and reporting (documents to be submitted for progress review, etc.);
- 50.8. procedure for applying for the degree;
- 50.9. conditions of and procedure for formalising and publishing the dissertation, incl. the language of the dissertation;
- 50.10. intellectual property rights of the dissertation;
- 50.11. conditions of and procedure for defending the dissertation, incl. the language and place of defence;
- 50.12. procedure for the formation of a joint council, making decisions and contesting decisions;
- 50.13. graduation documents and academic degrees issued upon graduation;
- 50.14. conditions of and procedure for the termination of the agreement.

51. A person who has signed 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

- 51.1. the person applies for a doctoral degree in the curriculum of the University of Tartu specified in the joint supervision agreement;
- 51.2. the person has fulfilled the conditions specified in clause 13 and completed at least 30 credit points' worth of courses required under the curriculum of the University of Tartu 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 doctoral degree, the formalisation, publication and defence of the dissertation and the decision on awarding the degree takes place on the conditions of and in accordance with the procedure set out in the joint supervision agreement.

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 doctoral degree 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 is 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 doctoral degree or a corresponding qualification 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 doctoral degree, 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 doctoral candidate, the original and Estonian titles of the dissertation, the title 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 powers attending the defence and their research degrees and institutions, the name of the chair of the council, the voting results and the decision on awarding a doctoral degree.

55. If a dissertation is not printed by the University of Tartu Press, the author of the dissertation enters into an agreement with the university at least one month before the defence. The agreement must stipulate that the university library publishes and preserves at least one printed copy of the dissertation or the manuscript of the dissertation, if the dissertation is printed after the defence, and the electronic summary specified in clause 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 is made available in the university library on paper and the summary is 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 is published in the university magazine *Universitas Tartuensis* and on the university website.

56. In case of violation of the conditions of and procedure for defence of dissertations set out in the joint supervision agreement, the doctoral candidate can file an appeal against the decision of the joint council regarding the awarding of a doctoral degree of the University of Tartu in accordance with the procedure set out in clauses 58–59.

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

IX. Contesting and overruling the decisions of the council

58. In case of a violation of the rules of applying for and awarding of doctoral degrees set out in this procedure and other legal instruments, the doctoral candidate may file an appeal against a decision of the council with the vice rector for academic affairs within one week of the day the decision of the council was announced. The vice rector for academic affairs forms 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 doctoral degree or a corresponding qualification.

59. The appeal committee must decide, within 30 days of the submission of the appeal, whether the contested decision remains in force or is overruled and sent back to the council that made the decision so that the council can make a new decision. This decision of the appeal committee is not subject to appeal in the university.

60. The council has the right to overrule a decision to allow a person to defend their dissertation or a decision on the awarding of a doctoral degree if the council has a reason to suspect plagiarism or academic fraud.

61. In case of plagiarism or academic fraud, the council asks for at least two expert assessments and letters of explanation from the doctoral candidate and the supervisor(s) and makes, according to the results, within one month of receiving the suspicion, one of the following decisions, which is included in the minutes:

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 doctoral degree remains in force;

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

61.2.1. the decision to allow the doctoral candidate to defend their dissertation is overruled and the council proposes to the vice rector for academic affairs to delete the doctoral candidate from the matriculation register due to academic fraud on the grounds provided for in the Study Regulations;

61.2.2. the decision to award a doctoral degree is overruled. The corresponding decision of the council is published in the university magazine and on the university website.

62. In case of decisions specified in clauses 37.2, 41, 44, 61.2.1 and 61.2.2, the doctoral candidate must submit a new dissertation in accordance with clause 19 to receive a doctoral degree 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 clause 61.2.1, a decision to allow a person to defend their dissertation is overruled, the defence was not successful (clauses 34.2, 37.2 and 44) or if the awarding of a doctoral degree is overruled in accordance with clause 61.2.2 after the defence, access to the electronic dissertation is closed on the basis of a motion from the council.

XI. Implementing provisions

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

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

66. Rules of procedure of the council complying with the requirements set out in clause 7 of the procedure must be established by 1 July 2014.

66¹. The councils awarding doctorates as of 1 January 2016 shall establish the procedure rules in accordance with clause 7 of this procedure by 1 March 2016 the latest. Until the those procedure rules are adopted, the requirements for submitting documents established by the council that awarded doctorates before on the same curriculum are applied, incl. the requirements for the number of copies of the dissertation to be submitted to the council and the procedure for defence and voting at the defence and the prerequisites for allowing a dissertation to be defended. [effective as of 01.01.2016]

67. Clause 32 of the procedure enters into force on 1 January 2015.

68. The procedure enters into force on 1 January 2014.