

Doctoral Education and Dissertation Council  
Regulation

content

Article 1. Subject and scope .....	3
Article 2. Definitions of terms .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 3. Doctoral program planning, development .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 4. Structure of the doctoral program .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 5. language of instruction .....	4
Article 6. Duration of the program.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 7. Admission to the doctoral program.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 8. Grounds for exemption from the foreign language test.....	5
Article 9. Components registration .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 10. Component evaluation .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 11. Procedures related to the research component.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 12. supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral student.....	7
Article 13. Head of the program.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 14. Dissertation Board and Field Dissertation Board .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 15. Rights and duties of the Dissertation Council.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 16. Submission of thesis for defense.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 17. Dissertation experts .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 18. Pre- defense.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 19. Dissertation opponents .....	11
Article 20. Evaluation of dissertation by experts and opponents .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 21. Defence commission .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 22. Preparation for the defense and defense of the thesis .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 23. Evaluation of dissertation .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 24. Awarding of an academic degree .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 25. Document confirming the academic degree of the doctor .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 26. Cancellation of the thesis .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 26/1. Appealing the results of the evaluation of the research component .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Article 27. Transitional and Final Provisions .....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## Article 1. Subject and scope

### 1.1.

This document regulates issues related to the doctoral education and the operation of the Dissertation Council in the LLC International Black Sea University (hereinafter referred to as the University) in accordance with the Law of Georgia "On Higher Education" and the regulations of the University.

1.2. Doctoral study is the third level of higher education, which is a combination of educational and scientific components that aims to prepare scientific staff and ends with the awarding of the academic degree of doctor.

## Article 2. Definitions of terms

- 2.1. School - basic educational unit;
- 2.2. HEI - higher educational institution;
- 2.3. National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement;
- 2.4. Dissertation Council - Dissertation Council operating within the school, which is established according to the rules foreseen by this regulation;
- 2.5. Field Dissertation Council - the council, which is approved by the Schools Dissertation Council from its own staff in accordance with the rules established by this regulation;
- 2.6 Secretary - Scientific Secretary of the Dissertation Council;
- 2.7. University - a higher educational institution with the right to implement doctoral educational programs, which is authorized on the basis of the legislation of Georgia or a higher educational institution of a foreign country, which is recognized in accordance with the legislation of the same country;

## **Article 3. Planning and development of doctoral program**

3.1. Issues related to the planning and development of the doctoral program are regulated by the "Rule of Planning and Development of Educational Programs".

## **Article 4: Doctoral Program Structure**

4.1. The PhD program lasts for a minimum of three years and consists of no more than sixty credits of instruction (such as a professor's assistantship, research skills, seminars, etc.) and research (such as dissertation preparation and defense) over a minimum of two years; Furthermore, the number of credits allotted to the educational component may be changed in light of the doctorate educational program's specifics, the competencies the component seeks to develop, and the requirement that its total credit count not surpass 60.

## **Article 5: Teaching Language**

5.1 Depending on the doctorate program, Georgian or English is the language of instruction.

## **Article 6. Program duration**

6.1. The doctoral program lasts for a minimum of three years and six semesters.

6.2. A student may pursue further study or research in compliance with the "Regulating Rule of Study Process" if they have not finished the PhD program in six (six) semesters.

## **Article 7. Enrollment in the doctoral program**

7.1. A person who has obtained a master's degree or an equivalent academic degree according to the procedure established by the Georgian legislation, or the higher education received by him/her in a foreign country is recognized according to the procedure prescribed by the Georgian legislation and is equivalent to a master's academic degree, can be enrolled in the doctoral program of the university.

7.2. An agreement is signed with the applicant, who meets the prerequisites for admission to the doctoral program, and the rector's order on enrollment is issued.

7.3. The applicant must submit a research proposal (at least 5 (five) pages) in the field of his/her future research, which will be evaluated by the admissions committee established by the relevant sectoral Dissertation Council. The admission committee consists of at least 3 (three) members of the sectoral Dissertation Council, including the head of the program.

7.4. A research topic project and program-specific interview may be evaluated according to a rubric defined by the relevant doctoral program.

7.5. The research topic project and the interview are evaluated according to a rubric defined by the respective doctoral program. At the same stage, a supervisor is appointed for the purposes of the research component to be implemented after the teaching component, based on the recommendation of the head of the program and agreement with the student. The potential supervisor advises the student in the development of the research topic plan and in research activities (including participation in conferences, publication of articles, etc.).

7.6. The organization of the written exams for admission to the program is carried out by the service of educational processes monitoring unit. English language proficiency is verified by the Language Center.

7.7. The list of documents to be submitted during the registration period is defined in the "Application Form for Master's and Doctoral Programs".

7.8. Administrative issues related to enrollment in the educational program are regulated by the present provision and the "Regulating Rule of the Educational Process". In the case of enrollment in the doctoral program via the mobility, the student is assigned a potential supervisor, in accordance with the rules established by this regulation. The study/research component(s) to be taken by the student and recognized by the program are determined by the sectoral Dissertation Council, based on the submission of the program head and an interview with the student.

## **Article 8. Grounds for exemption from the foreign language exam**

8.1. An applicant who holds an international certificate of the relevant foreign language level determined as a prerequisite for admission to the educational program is exempted from passing the foreign language test. The level of the test conducted to determine the language proficiency level is determined by the "Language Competency Level".

8.2. The applicant is exempted from passing the foreign language exam if he/she has completed a foreign language educational program, having achieved the level determined by the prerequisite for admission to the program in the foreign language.

## **Article 9. Registration of program components**

9.1. The process of registration for the components of the doctoral program is determined by the present regulation and according to the "Regulating Rule of the Educational Process".

9.2. For the purposes of this provision, at least 3 (three) student applications are required to open an elective course. Exceptions to this rule may be made by decision of the school board.

9.3. At least 4 (four) students are required to open a doctoral program. According to the decision of the school board, the doctoral program can be opened to a smaller number of students.

## **Article 10. Evaluation of the component**

10.1. The evaluation is carried out on the basis of the results obtained in the educational and scientific-research components. Evaluation criteria are different for educational and scientific-research components.

10.2. The evaluation method is determined by the author of the syllabus, which is available to the student at the beginning of the semester.

10.3. The evaluation of the component is carried out according to several criteria: the mentioned forms for the educational component are midterm and final evaluation, the sum of which represents the final evaluation, and the evaluation of the scientific-research component is performed as a whole, in the form of a final evaluation. This includes the developmental evaluation stage (expert evaluation and submission to the pre-defense) and the defense evaluation.

10.4. All issues related to the evaluation of the educational component are determined according to the "Regulating Rule of the Educational Process".

10.5. Issues related to the conduct of doctoral program student examinations are defined in accordance with the "Regulating Rule of the Educational Process" and the "Rule of Conducting Examinations".

10.6. When switching to the research component, the student is required to complete the semester registration. At the end of each semester, the student must submit a presentation to the Field Dissertation Board on the work he/she has conducted during the semester. The student is obliged to take into account the recommendations issued by the council. The mentioned recommendations are taken into account during the pre-defense.

## **Article 11. Procedures related to the research component**

11.1. To approve the research topic:

11.1.1. The PhD student chooses a research topic and prepares an individual research plan together with a potential supervisor/co-supervisor and the head of the program. The individual research plan should reflect the research objectives, structure and potential schedule of the research implementation;

11.1.2. After the completion of the teaching component, the doctoral candidate will present the possible title and individual research plan to the sectoral Dissertation Council;

11.1.3. The title of the topic and the research plan are discussed and approved by the Field Dissertation Council. The student will make a short presentation to the board. If the topic title and/or individual research plan is not approved by the dissertation council, the doctoral student is given the opportunity to change the topic title/individual research plan, which he/she will submit to the dissertation council;

11.1.4. After the favorable decision of the Dissertation Board, the research topic is approved and registered by the school in accordance with the decision of the Dissertation Board and a contract is signed between the thesis supervisor(s), the student and the university.

11.2. All the procedures specified in clauses 11.1-11.4 of this article must be completed within 3 (three) weeks from the beginning of the relevant semester with the approval of the title of the dissertation topic and the research plan. In addition, the protocols related to the procedure defined in the same paragraph are kept in the academic writing center until the student defends the thesis.

11.3. After the start of the research component, at the end of each semester, the student and the supervisor must submit the report forms of their activities to the academic writing center, in particular, "Thesis evaluation form for the supervisor" and "Dissertation evaluation form for the student".

11.4. If the doctoral student applies to the sectoral Dissertation Council with a statement about changing the title of the dissertation topic, after the supervisor's positive conclusion, the sectoral Dissertation Council, depending on the nature of the change, will determine an additional term if necessary. The minimum conditions of the additional term determined by the Council are:

11.4.1. In case of technical changes - at least 1 week;

11.4.2. In case of change of content - at least 1 semester.

11.4.3. The decision on the issues mentioned in this paragraph is made by 2/3 of the members of the Field Dissertation Council.

11.5. If the doctoral student's student status has been suspended for more than two semesters, after the student's reinstatement, the Field Dissertation Board discusses the topic title and research plan and is authorized to make a decision to leave them unchanged or to re-approve them.

## **Article 12. Supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral student**

12.1. The supervisor should be an associate professor or professor of a university or other higher educational institution with a doctor's academic degree. In case of the supervisor leaving the academic position at the university/other higher educational institution in the 5th-6th semester of the program and not occupying an academic position in any higher educational institution, he/she will remain as the supervisor and will be invited as a member of the field dissertation council.

12.2. At the request of the student or the field dissertation council, it is possible to appoint a person who has been awarded the academic degree of doctor in the relevant field as the co-supervisor of the dissertation. The co-supervisor should be a specialist with local or international experience, who

is also involved in field scientific activities. A co-supervisor, if needed, may be appointed no later than the beginning of the last semester of the research component.

12.3. After the completion of the teaching component, the potential supervisor is approved by the field Dissertation Council, if he/she has the opportunity to take on the appropriate workload, taking into account the limits set by the "Stipulation on the Determination of Academic Load and Labor Remuneration". Otherwise, based on the recommendation of the head of the program and the student's consent, the Dissertation Council of the field approves another person as the supervisor who meets the requirements established by clause 12.1.

12.4. If the doctoral student applies to the academic writing center with a request to change the supervisor or the supervisor refuses his/her position, the mentioned issue will be submitted for consideration to the field Dissertation Council. In the case of a change of supervisor in the last semester of the research component, the new supervisor is given 1 (one) month to study the thesis. According to the decision of the field dissertation council, based on the opinions of the new supervisor, the student will be given a deadline for submitting the dissertation for the pre-defense. In addition, if the change of the supervisor caused the student to change the topic, the thesis defense will be carried out within the time limits specified by Article 11 of the present regulation.

12.5. After the doctoral candidate submits the final version of the thesis to the supervisor, the supervisor writes a conclusion in no later than 1 (one) month in which, in order to submit the thesis to the field dissertation council, he/she confirms:

12.5.1. relevance of publications to the thesis;

12.5.2. correspondence of the extended abstract with the thesis;

12.5.3. The fact that the student has completed the work on the thesis (which implies that the work is characterized by novelty, scientific/theoretical and practical value, includes a literature review and research part, corresponds to the format determined by the university and is written in a stylistically correct language).

### **Article 13. Head of the program**

13.1. The head of the program is a member of the Field Dissertation Council.

13.2. The head of the program is responsible for the implementation of the program. He/she is obliged to cooperate with the school in the implementation of the educational process and with the production of relevant documents determined by the present and other provisions of the university. He/she also informs the doctoral student about the indexed journals provided by the doctoral program.

### **Article 14. Dissertation Council and Branch Dissertation Council**

14.1. The Dissertation Board is composed of all professors and associate professors of the School with the doctors academic degree, who are approved by the governing board. Members of the Dissertation Board may be associate professors and/or professors of other HEIs with an academic degree of Ph.D. In such a case, the mentioned persons should submit a copy of the document confirming their academic position in another university and a list of publications.

14.2. The Dissertation Council from its own composition approves the relevant sectoral Dissertation Council, the chairman and deputy of the council for each doctoral program separately. The Dissertation Board is authorized to invite a specialist in the relevant field who has an academic degree in the field, publications and/or at least one year of practical experience in the field in the last five years as a member of the Field Dissertation Council.

14.3. There should be at least 5 (five) representatives of the relevant program in the sectoral dissertation council. Academic staff of the university should constitute more than half of the members. A professor/associate professor can be a member of two field dissertation councils at the same time (regardless of whether they belong to the same school's dissertation council or not).

14.3.1. In order to determine the experts and make a decision about the date of defense/pre-defense, a reduced composition of the field dissertation council is formed from the composition of the field dissertation council, which includes the chairman of the field dissertation council, the head of the relevant program, the supervisor and the secretary of the council.

14.4. The chairman of the Dissertation Council of the school is elected by the members of the council, by the majority of votes. The chairman of the field dissertation council is automatically the head of the relevant program, and the secretary of the school's dissertation/field dissertation council represents an administrative position and is appointed by the rector. The secretary of the Dissertation Council of the school can be the secretary of the field Dissertation Council at the same time.

14.5. The Dissertation Council of the School/Field Dissertation Council has decision-making power if the majority of its members are present. In order to make a decision, the vote of the majority of the present members is required, except for the present provision 11.4. of the case provided for in clause.

14.6. The Council's decisions are made in the form of a protocol, which is signed by the Chairman of the Dissertation Council, the Secretary and all present members.

14.7. The chairman of the board is authorized to call the meeting. The meeting of the Council can also be called based on the request of the majority of the members. In this case, the chairman should schedule a meeting.

14.8. In the absence of the chairman, the meeting is chaired by the deputy chairman.

#### Article 15. Rights and duties of the Dissertation Council

15.1. The Dissertation Council of the School awards the academic degree of Doctor based on the decision of the Defense Commission.

15.2. The Dissertation Council of the field, and in its absence, the Dissertation Council:

15.2.1. In order to enroll a doctoral student in the program, he/she creates an admissions committee, considers the importance of the submitted dissertation topic, participates in determining the title of the dissertation, approves the title of the dissertation;

15.2.1.1. On the recommendation of the head of the doctoral program, considers the candidacy of the head, as well as decides the issue of termination of the supervising;

15.2.1.2. examines the individual research plan of the doctoral student;

15.2.1.3. Approves the opponents;

15.2.1.4. approves the members of the dissertation committee;

15.2.1.5. Raises before the rector the issue of reviewing the criteria for evaluating the thesis.

15.2.2. Reduced composition of the sectoral Dissertation Council:

15.2.3. approve the experts;

15.2.4. Specifies the pre-defense/defense date.

15.3. The chairman of the Dissertation Council, and in his/her absence, the deputy chairman:

15.3.2. ensures the conduct of the activities of the Council in accordance with this provision;

15.3.3. convenes and presides over the meetings of the Council;

15.3.4. Leads the defense procedure.

15.4. Secretary of Dissertation Board:

15.4.2. prepares and keeps the minutes of the Dissertation Council;



- 15.4.3. receives and archives the documents necessary for the defense in accordance with the present provision. If the documents are incomplete, the secretary has the right to refuse them;
- 15.4.4. advises the doctoral student regarding the documentation to be submitted, both before and after the defense of the thesis;
- 15.4.5. Based on request, in electronic and/or physical form, provides copies of the thesis, abstract and publications to experts and opponents;
- 15.4.6. Informs doctoral students in advance about evaluation criteria and provides recommendations regarding the technical format of the thesis.
- 15.4.7. Informs doctoral program students and experts about pre-defense procedures.

## **Article 16. Submission of thesis for defense**

16.1. Dissertation is a scientific work defended by a doctoral candidate for obtaining the academic degree of a doctor. It is the result of independent scientific research of a doctoral student, which is based on newly acquired knowledge and serves the development of the relevant field. If the doctoral student is a member of the research group, his/her contribution to the research should be highlighted in the thesis.

16.2. The thesis is written in the language of instruction of the program. The doctoral student must also submit a shortened version of the thesis - an abstract (15-20 pages) in Georgian and English.

16.3. The volume, format and style of the thesis must meet the following requirements:

16.3.1. The number of pages of the dissertation should be at least 110 and not more than 200 (+/- 10%);

16.3.2. font size – 12, heading – 14;

16.3.3. font for English texts – Times New Roman, for Georgian text – Sylfaen;

16.3.4. Interval between lines – 1.5 cm;

16.3.5. left field – 3 cm;

16.3.6. right field – 1.5 cm;

16.3.7. Top and bottom margins – 2.5 cm.

16.3.8. The volume of the dissertation may differ from the volume established by this article depending on the field specificities. The parameters of the abstract are similar to the parameters of the thesis. The thesis must be written in APA style, unless otherwise specified by the relevant doctoral program. The requirements for the completion of the thesis are detailed in the "Master's Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Guide".

16.4. In order to check for plagiarism and text similarity, the Academic Writing Center, with the involvement of the thesis supervisor and field expert, checks the thesis of the doctoral student by using special software; If the similarity coefficient exceeds the established indicator, the doctoral student is given the opportunity to correct the text; For the same paper, text similarity could be checked no more than twice after the similarity is detected;

16.4.1. If plagiarism is detected, the doctoral candidate will not be admitted to the defense (These issues are regulated in accordance with the document "Academic Honesty Policy.")

16.4.2. If the plagiarism is detected, the doctoral student will not be admitted to the defense. If, as a result of the involvement of a field specialist, the coincidence ratio exceeds the established limit, the doctoral candidate is given the opportunity to correct the paper. For the same paper, the text match indicator is checked no more than twice after the text match is detected.

16.1. In order to be admitted to the predefense, the doctoral student shall submit the following documents to the secretary of the field dissertation council:

16.1.1. statement on the completion of the thesis;

16.1.2. a sheet of marks confirming the completion of the relevant educational components of the doctoral program and the granting of the corresponding credit;

16.1.3. Publications determined by the relevant doctoral program;

16.1.4. Scientific supervisor's confirmation on the correspondence of the publications with the thesis, as well as the completion of the work by the doctoral candidate and submission of the thesis for final evaluation;

16.1.5. electronic version of the thesis;

16.1.6. Confirmation of the active status of the doctoral student.

16.1.7. At the stage of the predefense, the doctoral candidate must have made three presentations, in accordance with clause 10.6 of the regulation.

16.2. Publications defined by paragraph 16.5 of this article must be presented in the form of a copy (journal title page, table of contents and article). In addition, publications accepted for printing are taken into account only during pre-defense (the text of the publication and a letter of confirmation of acceptance for printing must be submitted). The decision on the appointment of the defense day will not be made until the papers are published.

16.3. After submitting the thesis and other documentation, within no more than 5 (five) working days, the Field Dissertation Council appoints at least 2 (two) experts.

#### **Article 17. Dissertation experts**

17.1. After the doctoral student submits the thesis, before the pre defense, the thesis is evaluated by the reduced composition of the Field Dissertation Council, in accordance with the procedure specified in clause 16.7 of the present regulation, appointed by no less than two experts.

17.2. Experts should be members of the Dissertation Council of the relevant field. A co-author of a doctoral student's publication cannot be an expert of the field.

17.3. If the topic of the dissertation is interdisciplinary, one of the experts may be appointed from another field dissertation council of the university.

17.4. At the request of the expert, the secretary of the Dissertation Council of the school shall present the copy of the thesis and publications in electronic and/or printed form to the expert within one week after the submission of the thesis.

17.5. Experts must submit a report to the Secretariat of the Dissertation Council within 1 (one) month of their appointment as an expert. In the conclusion, attention should be paid to the format and style of the dissertation, their compliance with this provision; The doctoral candidate is entitled to take into account the expert's recommendations and remarks.

17.6. The expert's report should include an assessment of the following issues:

17.6.1. On the necessity, novelty, scientific and practical importance of the dissertation topic'

17.6.2. on structure (includes introduction, literature review, discussion and research parts, statistical data processing and conclusion);

17.6.3. the expert's recommendation (on technical improvement, small content improvement, essential improvement or approval/rejection);

17.6.4. The requirements established by Article 20 of this regulation must be taken into account in the assessment.

#### **Article 18. Pre defense**

18.1. The pre defense is assigned by the Field Dissertation Council after receiving an evaluation by experts.

18.2. The pre defense is attended by the doctoral student, his/her supervisor, experts, the chairperson/acting member of the sectoral dissertation council and at least 1 (one) member of the field dissertation council.

18.3. For each thesis, the pre-defense is conducted only once. The student is entitled to take into account the recommendations made by experts and members of the pre defense council (developmental assessment) before submitting the thesis.

## **Article 19. Dissertation opponents**

19.1. After the submission of the final version of the thesis by the student, based on the decision of the field dissertation council, the thesis is evaluated by at least 2 (two) opponents. Opponents must have a PhD academic degree and their scientific work and publications must be relevant to the thesis topic. An associate professor or a professor and/or a researcher of a scientific-research center of another higher educational institution of a foreign country should be invited as an opponent, who should not be an employee of the university. Opponents are appointed after the pre defense.

19.2. Opponents must submit a report within one month of appointment. The conclusion should reflect an assessment of the topic's actuality, novelty, scientific and practical value. The opponent must express his/her opinion on the granting of an academic degree to the doctoral student. The conclusion must include the requirements established by Article 20 of this regulation.

19.3. A co-author of the doctoral student's publications or a member of the scientific group in which the research was conducted cannot be his/her opponent.

19.4. A person who is officially dependent on a doctoral student in terms of a professional hierarchy, cannot be his/her opponent.

19.5. Opponents must not work in the same organization.

19.6. According to the request of the opponent, the secretary of the dissertation council ensures the distribution of copies of the thesis, summary and publications in electronic and/or printed form to the opponents.

19.7. The secretary of the Dissertation Board provides copies of the opponents' conclusions to the doctoral student.

19.8. The opponent who made a negative conclusion must attend the defense.

19.9. If the opponent, whose conclusion is negative, fails to attend the defense, the defense will be postponed for a period of no more than 1 (one) month. In case of repeated absence of the opponent, 30% of the compensation will be returned to him/her and a new opponent will be appointed, according to the procedures defined in this regulation.

19.10. If all conclusions are positive, at least one opponent must be present for the defense.

## **Article 20. Evaluation of a dissertation by experts and opponents**

20.1. In order to receive a positive evaluation, the doctoral dissertation must be characterized by originality and constitute the result of an independent work. It should include a literature review, past and current interpretation of the issue studied, a part of reasoning and research (survey, case analysis, experiment, etc. carried out by a researcher or doctoral student or software developed by a doctoral student) with relevant statistical data. Definitions of all important concepts (especially new ones) should be presented. The dissertation must meet the following standards: novelty, relevance, scientific/theoretical and practical value, etc. Hypotheses, questions and problems raised during the research should be properly justified. Recommendations and proposed conclusions should be derived from the analysis in the thesis.

20.2. The thesis must be written logically, in clear language, following the norms of professional ethics. Citation, referencing techniques and printing format should be followed.

20.3. Publications should reflect the main material of the thesis.

### **Article 21. Defense Commission**

21.1. Candidates for the members of the defense commission will be submitted to the departmental dissertation council for approval by the head of the program.

21.2. The field dissertation council approves the members of the defense committee.

21.3. The defense commission consists of at least 7 (seven) members. All experts and opponents are members of the defense commission. Academic staff of the university should make up more than half of the members.

21.4. The defense commission elects the chairman from among its members by a majority of votes before the defense process starts.

21.5. The Secretary of the Dissertation Board is at the same time the Secretary of the Defense Commission, without the right to vote, unless his/her qualifications correspond to those of the Defense Commission.

21.6. The field dissertation council decides the defense date and informs the student about it. Information about the defense must be posted on the university's website after the opponents submit their conclusion on the thesis, but no later than 10 (ten) working days before the defense.

21.7. The supervisor(s) of is not a member of the defense committee, but he/she is present at the defense.

21.8. At least ten working days before the defense, the members of the defense committee will be provided with an electronic version of the thesis and the abstract.

21.9. The defense commission is capable of making decisions if 2/3 of the members are present, but not less than 5 (five) members.

### **Article 22. Preparation for the defense and defense of the thesis**

22.1. The defense date is set by the field Dissertation Council in the manner determined by clause 21.6 of this regulation.

22.1.1. The thesis must be evaluated no later than the end of the next semester after its submission for defense.

22.2. The secretary of the council is obliged to notify the doctoral candidate regarding the date of his/her defense and provide with the reports of the opponents at least 10 (ten) working days before the defense.

22.3. The prerequisite for awarding the academic degree of doctor is to pass the developmental assessment stage and obtain the average of the points assigned by the Defense Commission, not less than 51 points.

22.4. If the student is evaluated with 41-50 points, the student is given the opportunity to improve the thesis and submit it for final evaluation within one year (at least, after one semester). The improved paper should be on the same topic.

22.5. If the commission evaluates the student with less than 41 points, the student loses the right to submit the same thesis.

22.6. For the purposes of evaluation of the paper by the commission:

excellent 91-100 points, very good – 81-90 points, good – 71-80 points, average – 61-70 points, satisfactory – 51-60 points, unsatisfactory – 41 -50 points, not recommended for defense - 40 points and less.

22.7. The documentation related to the doctoral student is kept in the archives of the Dissertation Council. The doctoral candidate has the right to see any documentation related to him/her.

22.8. The defense is public and conducted in the language of instruction of the program. Information about the defense is published on the university website at least 10 (ten) working days before the defense. The information should also include the abstract of the thesis submitted for the defense.

22.9. The defense procedure includes:

22.9.1. The presentation of the doctoral student (30-50 minutes, which also includes information and argumentation about the consideration/non-consideration of the recommendations of the formative assessment;

22.9.2. public disclosure of the evaluations received at the formative evaluation stage and the conclusions of the opponents;

22.9.3. the doctoral student's answers to the questions specified in the conclusion;

22.9.4. scientific discussion;

22.9.5. the head's speech;

22.9.6. the opinions of the attendees;

22.9.7. the closed session of the thesis assessment;

22.9.8. public announcement of the results of the thesis evaluation;

22.9.9. The concluding speech of the doctoral student.

22.10. Each session includes the defense of only one thesis.

22.11. If the defense cannot be held at the scheduled time due to an objective reason, at the request of the student and/or members of the defense commission, based on the decision of the dissertation council, it may be postponed for at least two weeks, but not more than one month. A corresponding announcement will be published on the university's website.

### **Article 23. Dissertation assessment**

23.1. The dissertation is evaluated based on the criteria defined in this regulation.

23.2. The defense is evaluated by the commission in a closed session. Based on the thesis and its evaluations (including the evaluation received at the formative evaluation stage), the assessment is carried out anonymously by the members of the council using the "doctoral dissertation evaluation criteria". Based on the arithmetic mean of the assessment of the members of the Council, the commission will decide on the final assessment with the "Public Defense Protocol"

23.3. There are two types of assessment: "passed" or "failed".

23.4. The following system is used for the evaluation of the thesis:

- 23.4.1. If a student receives a grade:
- 23.4.1.1. *summa cum laude* - excellent work;
  - 23.4.1.2. Very good (*magna cum laude*) - a result that exceeds the requirements in every way;
  - 23.4.1.3. good (*cum laude*) - a result that exceeds the requirements;
  - 23.4.1.4. average (*bene*) - an average-level paper that meets the basic requirements;
  - 23.4.1.5. Satisfactory (*rite*) – a result that, despite the shortcomings, still meets the requirements - it will be awarded the academic degree of doctor;
- 23.4.2. If a student receives a grade of “insufficient” - an unsatisfactory level that does not meet the requirements – he/she has the right to improve the work and submit the paper for additional defense within one year.
- 23.4.3. If the student receives a grade - fail (*sub omni canone*), a result that does not meet the requirements at all – he/she does not have the right to defend the same thesis again.
- 23.5. The chairman of the commission announces the results.

#### **Article 24. Granting of an academic degree**

- 24.1. The awarding of the academic degree of doctor is carried out by the dissertation council of the school, based on the decision of the defense commission.
- 24.2. After the defense, the autoabstract of the thesis is uploaded to the university's website. Printed and electronic versions of the thesis are also available in the university library. The secretary of the school's dissertation council is responsible for the timely publication of the abstract, no later than two weeks after the defense.
- 24.3. Two copies of the thesis and the abstract are returned to the student, two copies remain in the university library, and the electronic version is kept in the university archive.

#### **Article 25. Document confirming the academic degree of doctor**

- 25.1. After the rector issues the order on the recognition of the doctoral candidate as a graduate student, before the diploma is printed, upon the request of the doctoral candidate, a notification on the awarding of the academic degree of the doctor is issued by the educational process monitoring service.

#### **Article 26. Revocation of the work**

- 26.1. A diploma certifying the academic degree of a doctor may not be issued or an already issued diploma may be revoked if the fact of submitting falsified research data or academic dishonesty (plagiarism) is detected. The decision regarding the revocation is made by the Dissertation Council of the school.

#### **Article 27. Appealing the results of the evaluation of the research component**

- 27.1. The student has the right to appeal the evaluation of the research component within 4 (four) calendar days from the notification of the result by submitting an application to the relevant school in the form of "examination results appeal form".
- 27.2. The student must indicate a specific argument in the application and present the appropriate argumentation.
- 27.3. With the statement, the student is entitled to request:
- 27.3.1. Revision of defense regulations without re-evaluation;
  - 27.3.2. Re-evaluation of the research component.

27.4. The procedure for reviewing the complaint in case of a request to revise the defense regulations:

27.4.1. In the event of a request to review the defense regulations, the school council in the case of a master's defense and the dissertation council in the case of a dissertation defense are authorized, depending on the circumstances indicated in the student's complaint, to make a decision to revise the defense regulations by the evaluator or the appeal commission created according to clause 27.4.

27.4.2. In case of finding a defect by the appeal committee, the component is returned together with the decision of the school board/dissertation board.

27.4.3. The school board/dissertation board, based on the conclusion of the appeal commission, is authorized to discuss re-evaluation of the research component, leaving the evaluation unchanged, or re-conducting the defense.

27.5. In the event of a request for re-evaluation of a component, the School Board/Dissertation Board shall form an appeals committee consisting of at least 3 (three) members. The Appeals Commission makes its decision by majority vote. The committee member should not be the thesis supervisor, reviewer, opponent, or member of the original defense committee.

27.6. General rules for considering a complaint:

27.6.1. The commission is given 15 (fifteen) working days to carry out the assessment.

27.6.2. During the evaluation process, the commission is obliged to get acquainted with the justification of the initial evaluation, as well as, if necessary, consider the argumentation of the defense commission. The Commission has the right to leave the assessment in force or to request to revise the assessment.

27.6.3. If revision of the grade is necessary, the school board/dissertation board will review the committee's petition and, if it is accepted, a re-defense will be set. On defense, the assessment may remain the same, decrease or increase. The decision is final and not subject to appeal. In case of refusal, the school board/dissertation board presents the argumentation.

27.6.4. The school board/dissertation board will notify the interested parties on the decision within 2 (two) working days.

## **Article 28. Transitional and final provisions**

28.1. The financial obligations related to the doctoral educational program are determined by the "Educational Service Fee Payment Procedure".

28.2. Issues that are not mentioned in this provision are regulated by the Law of Georgia "On Higher Education", "Regulating Rules of the Educational Process" and other normative documents of the University.

28.3. Amendments to this provision can be made in the manner prescribed for its adoption.

28.4. This provision shall enter into force by order of the rector.

28.5. The vice-rector for research supervises the implementation of this provision.