

APPROVED
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Senate of Vytautas Magnus
University of 25 June 2020

REGULATIONS OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

IN AGRONOMY SCIENCE FIELD AT VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY AND THE LITHUANIAN RESEARCH CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY,

IN FORESTRY SCIENCE FIELD AT VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY AND THE LITHUANIAN RESEARCH CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

I. General Part

1. Regulations of Doctoral Studies in Agronomy Science Field and in Forestry Science Field at Vytautas Magnus University and the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) are prepared in accordance with the Regulations of Doctoral Studies approved by Order No. V-739 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 18 May 2020.

2. These Regulations define the procedure of doctoral studies, scientific research and dissertation preparation and defence by doctoral students as well as procedure for granting a degree of the doctor of science at Vytautas Magnus University and the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry (hereinafter referred to as Doctoral Institutions) in Agronomy science field and in Forestry science field, in which they have been jointly granted the right of doctoral studies by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania.

3. The purpose of doctoral studies is to prepare scientists who are able to independently carry out work of scientific research and experimental development and solve scientific problems. Doctoral studies shall ensure sufficient competence for a person who has completed these studies and has been awarded a degree of the doctor of science: most advanced knowledge of research activity, fields of science and their interaction; special skills and methods to solve problems of scientific research and other areas, expand knowledge or professional practice; ability to work independently, knowledge and know-how of science and profession required for the development of new ideas and processes and ability to use them in studies and other activities.

4. The Doctor of Science degree may be awarded to a person who has successfully completed full-time (up to 4 years) or part-time (up to 6 years) doctoral studies, prepared a dissertation and successfully defended it, or to a person who has successfully defended a dissertation prepared externally.

5. The following concepts shall be used in these Regulations:

A doctoral student (hereinafter referred to as a doctoral student) shall be a student and a researcher of third-cycle studies.

Work plan of the doctoral student (hereinafter referred to as the work plan of the doctoral student) shall be an individual work plan of the doctoral student which provides stages and deadlines of doctoral studies, scientific research and dissertation preparation.

Scientific supervisor of a doctoral student (hereinafter referred to as a supervisor) shall be a researcher who meets the requirements of the Regulations of Doctoral Studies and supervises studies and scientific research of a doctoral student.

The Committee of Doctoral Studies (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) shall be a group of researchers who are carrying out high-level scientific research and are responsible for the content, quality, management and implementation of doctoral studies.

A researcher carrying out high-level scientific research shall be a researcher who meets the requirements no lower than those of a chief research worker¹ and participates in the process of doctoral studies, international projects, research exchange programmes and other international scientific and expert activities.

Defence Council shall be a group of researchers composed by the Committee of Doctoral Studies which, after examining the dissertation presented for defence and evaluating its quality and compliance with the requirements for the dissertation, decides whether the candidate is to be granted the Doctor of Science degree.

Doctoral Student Institution shall be an institution in which a doctoral student is pursuing doctoral studies and scientific research and is preparing a dissertation.

Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies is a division of the Doctoral Institution which supervises activities of doctoral studies.

6. Doctoral Institutions shall ensure the exchange of individual data of doctoral students and non-resident students required for the process of doctoral studies or for the management of non-resident dissertation defence in accordance with legislation.

7. The Doctoral Committee in Agronomy science field shall consist of nine members, three of whom shall be delegated by Vytautas Magnus University and six of whom shall be delegated by the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry.

8. The Doctoral Committee in Forestry science field shall consist of ten members, five of whom shall be delegated by Vytautas Magnus University and five of whom shall be delegated by the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry.

9. The members of the Committee shall be scholars carrying out high-level research who are employed (either employed after winning a competition or with at least 0.5 FTE in the institution for the last three years) in PhD-qualifying institutions, and who shall, by consensus, be represented by all Doctoral Institutions. The members of the Committee and its Chairperson must meet the requirements of at least a chief research worker² and the other members of the Committee must meet the requirements of at least a senior research worker³. At least two thirds of individuals among the Committee members shall be from the science field in which the right of doctoral studies has been granted. A scientist can be a member of no more than two Committees.

10. After acquiring the right of doctoral studies, Doctoral Institutions shall publicly announce the composition of the Committee on the websites of Doctoral Institutions. In its first meeting, the Committee shall elect a Chairperson, who can serve for no longer than two 4-year terms. A Chairperson can be elected for one year on rotating basis from each Doctoral Institution. The Committee of Doctoral Studies can also include scientists of high international level from foreign science and research institutions with which the contract of international cooperation for participation in the doctoral study process has been signed. The contract has to establish conditions for participation in the activities of the Committee of Doctoral Studies by the researcher from a foreign research and study institution and to ensure continuity in case a foreign member is replaced. The contract shall be signed for at least 5 years.

¹ Requirements of clause 5.1 of the Description of Minimum Qualification Requirements for Positions of Researchers at State Research and Study Institutions approved by Order No. V-340 of the Research Council of Lithuania of 28 June 2018.

² Requirements of clause 8.1 of the Description of Minimum Qualification Requirements for Positions of Researchers at State Research and Study Institutions approved by Order No. V-340 of the Research Council of Lithuania of 28 June 2018.

³ Requirements of clause 8.2 of the Description of Minimum Qualification Requirements for Positions of Researchers at State Research and Study Institutions approved by Order No. V-340 of the Research Council of Lithuania of 28 June 2018.

11. The composition of the Committee shall be agreed with the Research Council of Lithuania.
12. A doctoral dissertation shall be defended, and a scientific degree shall be conferred at the Defence Council of the science field, which shall be established for defence of a specific dissertation following completion of the dissertation and its submission for defence. The Committee shall compose the Council which shall consist of at least five members.

II. Coordination of Doctoral Studies

13. Doctoral studies and scientific research shall be coordinated and controlled by the **Committee of Doctoral Studies**.

14. The process of doctoral studies shall be coordinated by the **Doctoral Institutions**.

15. The process of doctoral studies shall be administered by the university (hereinafter referred to as the Administering University) appointed by the contract signed with the Doctoral Institutions.

16. **The Committee of Doctoral Studies** shall:

16.1. approve the terms and procedure of dissertation topics and a competition of doctoral students' supervisors as well as open competition for admission to the doctoral studies;

16.2. administer selection of dissertation topics and supervisors of doctoral students;

16.3. administer admission to the doctoral studies;

16.4. consider and present for approval the candidacies of doctoral students' scientific supervisors and consultants; mediate in the appointment of consultants; consider applications for the replacement of scientific supervisors or consultants;

16.5. approve the doctoral study programme of the science field as well as its amendments, the work plans of doctoral students and examination committees;

16.6. present conclusions regarding doctoral studies and scientific research, announcement of their results, doctoral dissertation preparation plans and their implementation; postponement of deadlines in the work plan of the doctoral student;

16.7. conduct certification of doctoral students;

16.8. ensure a successful process of doctoral studies and take care of its improvement;

16.9. evaluate compliance of prepared doctoral dissertations with the established requirements;

16.10. establish a Defence Council and appoint the date and venue of doctoral dissertation defence.

17. Documents of the Committee meetings shall be managed by the meeting secretary (the meeting secretary may not be a member of the Doctoral Committee); the meeting minutes shall be signed by the Chairperson of the Committee and the meeting secretary. The Committee shall present its recommendations, proposals and the minutes of resolutions to the Doctoral School of the Administering University, which in turn shall prepare and submit material to the Heads of the Doctoral Institutions or their authorised persons and the Senates.

18. Decisions made by the Committee shall be valid if no less than two thirds of all members of the Committee of Doctoral Studies vote in favour of them. The minutes of the meeting of the Committee shall be preserved at the Doctoral School of the Administering University for 6 years, later in the archive of the Administering University.

19. A survey for a discussion on the issue considered by the Committee may be prepared using electronic means of communication. Using electronic means of communication, the Committee members shall express their opinion regarding the considered issue and vote. Issues that require secret voting shall not be included into the agenda of online meeting.

20. At the end of the meeting, the Chairperson of the Committee shall deliver the documents to the Doctoral School of the Administering University.

21. **The Doctoral Institution** shall:

21.1. announce, in accordance with the terms and procedures laid down by the Committee, a competition for topics and doctoral students' supervisors;

- 21.2. announce, in accordance with the terms and procedures laid down by the Committee, an open competition for admission to the doctoral studies;
- 21.3. manage state budget funds dedicated to the implementation of doctoral studies at the Doctoral Institution;
- 21.4. accept documents of applicants for the doctoral studies;
- 21.5. sign a contract with the Doctoral Student Institution when it is not the Doctoral Institution in the science field, which shall define commitments and conditions of studies.

22. The Administering University shall:

- 22.1. organise competition of topics and doctoral students' supervisors;
- 22.2. organise an open competition for admission to the doctoral studies;
- 22.3. present reports on the implementation of doctoral studies to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, the Research Council of Lithuania and other institutions;
- 22.4. collect information about the process of doctoral studies;
- 22.5. preserve the minutes of the Committee meetings and other documents;
- 22.6. based on the Committee's documents, prepare material for the Doctoral Institutions;
- 22.7. collect documents from the Doctoral Institutions and give them to the Committee;
- 22.8. draft joint document projects;
- 22.9. manage the production, accounting and registration of doctoral diploma templates;
- 22.10. issue diplomas of research doctor and register them.

23. A Doctoral Student Institution:

- 23.1. If the Doctoral Student Institution is the Doctoral Institution, it shall:
 - 23.1.1. manage the submitted state budget funds allocated for the implementation of the study programme and scientific research of the doctoral student, preparation and defence of the doctoral dissertation, work of the supervisor or consultant and covering related expenses;
 - 23.1.2. award scholarships for doctoral students;
 - 23.1.3. prepare resolutions regarding implementation of doctoral studies, appointment of doctoral students' supervisors and consultants, and establishment of the Defence Council;
 - 23.1.4. organise the formulation of the plan for the study programme and scientific research of the doctoral student, the publication of doctoral dissertations and their abstracts, the defences of dissertations;
 - 23.1.5. create suitable conditions for the doctoral student to prepare and implement the doctoral study programme and the individual plan for scientific research, and to prepare and successfully defend the doctoral dissertation;
 - 23.1.6. formulate and preserve the doctoral student's file;
 - 23.1.7. prepare and provide reports to the Administering University regarding the process of doctoral studies;
 - 23.1.8. submit the required documents of doctoral students to the Administering University.
- 23.2. If the Doctoral Student Institution is another Lithuanian or foreign university or scientific research institute which does not possess the right to organise doctoral studies in the science field, then the doctoral student shall only conduct scientific research and prepare the dissertation at this institution. Studies of the doctoral student shall be organised, the doctoral student's applications shall be registered, resolutions on the implementation of doctoral studies, appointment of supervisor or consultant and defence of doctoral dissertation shall be prepared, and the doctoral student's file shall be formulated by one of the Doctoral Institutions with which this Lithuanian or foreign university or scientific research institute signs a separate written contract.

24. Doctoral studies and scientific research shall be organised by the **Departments or Research Units of the Doctoral Institution** to which the doctoral students are appointed on the recommendation of the Committee and by Order of the Head of the Doctoral Institution. These units shall:

- 24.1. participate in the preparation of the study programme of the doctoral student and create conditions for the doctoral student to successfully implement the plan of studies;
- 24.2. monitor the process of the doctoral student's doctoral studies;
- 24.3. provide methodological support;
- 24.4. promote mobility of the doctoral student;
- 24.5. for each certification of the doctoral student, present their conclusion to the Committee regarding the results of the doctoral student's studies and scientific research as well as the appropriateness of continuation of doctoral studies;
- 24.6. after the doctoral student has prepared a dissertation, organise preliminary considerations of the doctoral dissertation and appoint reviewers of these considerations, submit conclusions to the Committee regarding compliance of the doctoral dissertation with appropriate requirements.

III. Admission to Doctoral Studies

25. Individuals shall be accepted to the doctoral studies in the science field on the basis of open competition. Persons who have academic qualification of a master's degree or its equivalent in higher education can participate in the open competition.

26. State-funded doctoral study places in the science field shall be distributed between the Doctoral Institutions by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.

27. No later than one month before the announcement of admission to the doctoral studies, the competition of dissertation topics and the competition of doctoral students' supervisors shall be announced. The topics shall comply with the areas of scientific research conducted by the Doctoral Institutions. The procedure and terms of the competition shall be approved by the Committee.

28. If the topic or the supervisor is suggested not by the Doctoral Institution, the Institution shall provide the official approval regarding assurance of funding for the doctoral studies.

29. The competition shall be organised by the Doctoral School of the Administering University and implemented by the Committee. Relying on the competition procedures of the Committee, a list of selected doctoral dissertation topics of the Doctoral Institutions and doctoral supervisors shall be finalised by the minutes of the Committee, signed by the Chairperson of the Committee and the meeting secretary. The Committee shall present the minutes of the meeting concerning the dissertation topics and doctoral students' supervisors to the Doctoral School of the Administering University, which shall be responsible for the announcement of the list of dissertation topics selected during the competition on the websites of the Doctoral Institutions.

30. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Doctoral Institutions shall announce an open competition for admission to the doctoral studies and terms of admission.

31. An applicant may submit a request for permission to participate in the open competition for the doctoral studies to the Doctoral School/ Unit of Doctoral Studies at every Doctoral Institution. Along with the request, which specifies the doctoral studies' science field, study form and the desired dissertation topics by order of priority (no more than two), the following documents shall be provided:

- 31.1. a diploma which confirms master's degree or its equivalent qualification as well as diploma supplement; a certificate issued by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education regarding recognition of higher education qualification acquired abroad;
- 31.2. recommendations by two scientists;
- 31.3. a curriculum vitae;
- 31.4. an approved list of references and copies of scientific articles;

- 31.5. other documents specified in the conditions of admission to the doctoral studies.
32. The competition of admission to the doctoral studies funded by the state shall occur once a year. The admission competition shall be organised by the Doctoral School of the Administering University and implemented by the Committee. The competition procedure shall be approved separately in accordance with the topics of the Doctoral Institutions of appropriate science fields. All applicants shall come to the meeting with the members of the Committee.
33. The Heads of the Doctoral Institutions or their representatives shall sign bilateral contracts of a specific format with the individuals admitted to full-time or part-time doctoral studies of the science field.
34. Selection criteria for the applicants to the doctoral studies shall be as follows:
- 34.1. publications evaluated by points in accordance with valid methodology of assessment of scientific production approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, and other scientific activities;
 - 34.2. the average of the applicant's assessments in the master's degree studies or equivalent cycle higher education studies and the assessment of the final thesis;
 - 34.3. command of foreign languages;
 - 34.4. compliance of the scientific qualification, scientific publications and scientific experience with each selected topic;
 - 34.5. motivation interview;
 - 34.6. other criteria approved by the minutes of the Committee.
35. Selection criteria, their weight coefficients and calculation of the competition score shall be approved every academic year by the minutes of the Committee.
36. Based on the selection criteria, the Committee shall evaluate applicants by grades and form the priority queues for the topics of the Doctoral Institutions in accordance with the highest competition score. These competition lists of the applicants and the Orders regarding the proposal to accept or reject applicants to the doctoral studies shall be recorded by the Committee minutes. They shall be signed by the Chairperson of the Committee and the meeting secretary. The Committee shall present the minutes of the meeting to the Doctoral School of the Administering University.
37. On the basis of the minutes of the Committee, the applicants shall be accepted to the doctoral studies by Orders of the Heads of the Doctoral Institutions, specifying the science field, the type of funding, the Doctoral Institution, the topic of the dissertation, the scientific supervisor and the form of doctoral studies.
38. If free places are available after the admission in accordance with the quotas of the Doctoral Institutions or if some of the accepted persons do not arrive to study at the beginning of the academic year, the Doctoral School of the Administering University can organise the second stage of admission, which shall be conducted following the same procedure.
39. Upon proposal by the Committee, those who were not accepted to state-funded places in the competition can choose paid doctoral studies upon paying the doctoral study fee established by the Doctoral Institution with which they will sign a contract.
40. Citizens who are applying for the doctoral studies and have the qualification of a master's degree or its equivalent higher education diploma acquired abroad (non-European Union (EU) countries) shall provide a certificate issued by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education regarding recognition of higher education qualification acquired abroad in addition to the documents specified in clause 31.
41. For state-funded doctoral studies, citizens of the EU shall participate in the competition in accordance with the general procedure; non-EU citizens shall participate in the competition in accordance with the legislation in force at the time.
42. No later than in a month's time after the beginning of the academic year, the Committee shall organise a meeting (meetings) of the Committee which (that) includes (include) participation of the newly accepted doctoral students and the supervisors who won the competition of dissertation topics. New doctoral students are assigned supervisors, dissertation topics, and the Unit of the

Doctoral Institution. The Committee's recommendation shall be recorded by the minutes of the Committee. The records of these minutes shall be provided to each Doctoral Institution separately. The minutes and the records of the minutes shall be submitted to the Doctoral School of the Administering University, which shall submit the Committee's recommendation (records of the minutes) to the Doctoral Schools/Units of Doctoral Studies.

43. By the Committee's recommendations, the Heads of Doctoral Institutions or their authorised representatives shall approve the doctoral students' intended topics and supervisors and assign the doctoral students to the Departments/Research Units. The Order shall be prepared by the Doctoral School/Unit of doctoral studies.

44. The file of a person who is not accepted to the doctoral studies shall be preserved for a year in the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the institution to which he/she was applying; later it shall be preserved in accordance with the procedure established by the institution to which the applicant was applying.

45. A person who has submitted an application for participation in the admission to the doctoral studies and was not accepted or who disagrees with the dissertation topic assigned to him/her, within three days from the announcement of the minutes of the Committee, may:

45.1. submit a motivated request or appeal to the Committee;

45.2. after receiving a negative response by the Committee, within three days submit an appeal to the Head of the Doctoral Institution to which the doctoral student was assigned or to which he/she was applying.

IV. Scientific Supervision of Doctoral Students

46. Studies and scientific research of the doctoral student shall be supervised by the doctoral student's scientific supervisor. The supervisor may supervise not more than five doctoral students at the same time.

47. On the recommendation of the Committee, no later than one month after the admission of the doctoral student, the Head of the Doctoral Institution or his/her authorised person shall approve the Supervisors by Order.

48. If required, doctoral student's consultants may be appointed (not more than two consultants can be appointed if they are needed in the opinion of the doctoral student, the supervisor and the Committee) who can be researchers of another science field. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or his/her authorised representative shall approve the consultant by Order.

49. The supervisor and the doctoral student's consultants shall meet the requirements no lower than those of a senior research worker⁴ and participate in the process of doctoral studies and international scientific and expert activities. A researcher from a foreign institution of research and studies can be a supervisor or consultant of the doctoral student. In the cases when the doctoral student's supervisor is from a foreign research and study institution, the doctoral student's consultant shall be from the university in which the doctoral student is studying.

50. Written agreements of the supervisors and the consultants as well as the lists of their main scientific publications and other research activities shall be submitted by the Committee to the Doctoral School of the Administering University along with the recommendation to approve the supervisors and the consultants. The Doctoral School of the Administering University shall submit the Committee's recommendations and the documents of the consultants' research activities to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies.

51. The supervisor shall:

51.1. create draft plans of the doctoral study programme together with the doctoral student;

51.2. propose applicants for the positions of consultants, if they are required;

⁴ Requirements of clause 5.1 of the Description of Minimum Qualification Requirements for Positions of Researchers at State Research and Study Institutions approved by Order No V-340 of the Research Council of Lithuania of 28 June 2018.

- 51.3. provide the doctoral student with methodological support, supervise the doctoral student's research activity and continuously monitor the process of the doctoral student's doctoral studies;
- 51.4. for each certification of the doctoral student, present his/her conclusion regarding the results of the doctoral student's studies and scientific research as well as the appropriateness of continuation of doctoral studies;
- 51.5. help the doctoral student solve organisational issues of studies and the preparation of the dissertation;
- 51.6. provide an opinion on the readiness of the dissertation to the Doctoral Institution.
52. The doctoral student's consultant shall:
- 52.1. consult the doctoral student in any science field (area) of scientific research;
- 52.2. organise implementation of scientific research or experiments in other units of Doctoral Institutions or other universities and/or scientific research institutes in Lithuania or abroad.
53. If, for important reasons, the supervisor has to be replaced, such replacement shall be coordinated and approved following the same procedure as appointment of the supervisor.
54. The doctoral student shall have the right to submit a motivated request addressed to the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution to replace his/her supervisor if not less than a year till completion of the doctoral studies is left. The Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or his/her authorised representative shall direct the request to the Committee, in whose meeting it shall be considered within 1 month. If the doctoral student's request is accepted, the Committee shall announce a competition for applications for the position of the doctoral student's supervisor, taking into account the topic of the doctoral student's dissertation. If the Committee does not satisfy the doctoral student's request, the supervisor shall continue to supervise. The replacement of the supervisor when less than a year till completion of the doctoral studies is left shall be possible only for important reasons and shall be made by the decision of the Committee.

V. Work Plan of the Doctoral Student

55. No later than within one month after the approval of the supervisor, the supervisor and the doctoral student shall prepare the plan of scientific research. The plan shall include the deadlines for the completion of all tasks. Focused scientific research shall be initiated in the beginning of doctoral studies.
56. Doctoral studies shall consist of no less than 30 ECTS credits; it is recommended for the studied courses to include not just the topic of the dissertation being prepared, but also the learning of key competences (i.e., preparation of project applications, issues of ethics and procedures as well as copyright, communication abilities, etc.) whose amount shall be no less than 5 credits. The credits shall be acquired by studying at least 3 study courses/modules. The credits can also be accumulated by participating in international schools for doctoral students and while the doctoral student attends part-time studies abroad. The decision regarding the acceptance of the credits shall be made by the Committee.
57. If the academic qualification of a master's degree or its equivalent in higher education acquired by the person accepted to the doctoral studies is not in the science field to which he/she has been admitted that person may be assigned additional studies of equalising courses in accordance with the Committee's recommendations.
58. The doctoral study programme of the science field shall consist of compulsory study courses/modules assigned by the Committee and freely selected study courses/modules of the doctoral studies in the science field or branch and adjacent science fields. The doctoral study programme of the science field and its amendments shall be approved in the Committee meeting.
59. The doctoral student shall hear compulsory study courses/modules of this programme that are established by the Committee. The doctoral student can choose other study courses/modules from the list of elective study courses/modules created by the Committee of the science field after

coordination with the supervisor and taking into account the individual needs of scientific research.

60. The doctoral study programme shall consist of only the study courses/modules that were approved by the Committee. It is the Doctoral Student Institutions' responsibility that only the study courses/modules that are approved and compatible with the doctoral study programme are included in the individual study programmes of doctoral students.

61. After coordination with the supervisor and the Committee, the doctoral student shall enter the study courses he/she intends to study into the work plan of the doctoral student.

62. Only those individuals who have a science degree and meet the requirements no lower than those of a senior research worker⁵ and whose scientific research and publications of the last five years correspond with the topic of the study courses taught can teach in the doctoral studies.

63. Lectures/seminars of the doctoral studies shall be organised by the Doctoral School/Research Unit of the Doctoral Student Institution and by the Department/Unit of Doctoral Studies whose employees have been approved by the committee for teaching the study courses/modules of doctoral studies. Lectures can be organised for those study courses/modules that are included in the individual study programmes of at least three doctoral students. In all other cases, the studying process shall take place independently and consultations shall be attended periodically.

64. The doctoral student's plan of scientific research, which is another component of the work plan of the doctoral student, shall consist of the following: analysis of scientific literature, scientific research a portion of which can be conducted at high-level foreign research centres, analysis of the obtained data, writing of scientific articles, reading of scientific papers at an international scientific conference, preparation of a dissertation, etc.

65. The Department/Research Unit of the Doctoral Student Institution shall consider the work plan of the doctoral student and present its conclusions to the Committee. The work plan of the doctoral student and its amendments (if required) shall be approved by the Committee. No later than within a month after the approval of the supervisor, every doctoral student shall present this plan to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies, and it shall be stored in the doctoral student's file.

66. The doctoral student shall follow the study programme and conduct scientific research in accordance with the approved plan of scientific research. The content, quality, scope and deadlines of the conducted research shall be evaluated during the certification of the doctoral student.

67. Conditions shall be created for the doctoral students to use the equipment present at the departments/research units of the Doctoral Institutions, needed for the scientific research included into their scientific research plan. If it is impossible to carry out some of the research at the Doctoral Institutions, doctoral students may be sent to carry out the research in some other state or foreign research institution.

VI. Examination and Certification of the Doctoral Student

68. Studies of every study course/module shall be completed by taking an exam. At least two examiners shall be required. The composition of the examination commission shall be approved by the Committee along with the individual plans of the doctoral students' study programme and scientific research. Teachers who taught the study course/module, the Committee members, also other scientists, active specialists of that science field (may be from another institution of research and studies) including supervisors and consultants may be appointed members of the examination commission. Exams shall be held in writing and the exam papers shall be stored in accordance with the procedure established by the Doctoral Student Institution/Research Unit.

⁵ Requirements of clause 5.1 of the Description of Minimum Qualification Requirements for Positions of Researchers at State Research and Study Institutions approved by Order No V-340 of the Research Council of Lithuania of 28 June 2018.

69. After having passed the exam, an exam sheet shall be filled in and signed by all examiners. The examination sheets shall be stored in the doctoral student's file at the Doctoral School/ Unit of Doctoral Studies of the Doctoral Student Institution.

70. If the exam is failed, it can be re-taken once, but no sooner than after a month. If the exam is failed the second time, extraordinary certification shall be initiated for the doctoral student.

71. Full-time doctoral students shall pass all exams within the first two years of doctoral studies; part-time doctoral students shall pass them within the first three years of doctoral studies. Examinations may be postponed to the following year at the discretion of the Committee.

72. Taking into consideration the doctoral student's request and with the approval of the supervisor, the Committee may accept previously passed exams of courses studied as part of doctoral study programmes.

73. In accordance with the terms set by the Committee, the doctoral student shall report to the Department/Research Unit of the Doctoral Student Institution twice a year. After evaluating the doctoral student's performance of the study programme and the plan of scientific research, the Department/Research Unit, with participation of the doctoral student and his/her supervisor shall submit its conclusion to the Committee. The doctoral student's supervisor shall present the written evaluation of the doctoral student's performance to the Department/Research Unit. The Doctoral School/Research Unit at the Doctoral Student Institution shall submit the documents of the doctoral student's certification that were considered in the Department or Research Unit to the Committee, which shall certify the doctoral student positively (thus agreeing with continuation of doctoral studies and correcting the programme for the next academic year) or negatively (thus proposing for the doctoral studies to be terminated) or propose postponement of certification for the period no longer than 3 months until the drawbacks in the implementation of the working plan are removed. The doctoral student and his/her supervisor may be invited to the meeting of the Committee.

74. If the doctoral student obviously fails to carry out the tasks in the work plan, on recommendation of the doctoral student's supervisor or the Head of the unit as well as the Committee, an extraordinary certification may be initiated.

75. A negatively certified doctoral student shall be removed from the doctoral studies by Order of the Head of the Doctoral Institution.

76. The Committee minutes regarding certification of doctoral students and the documents presented for the doctoral student's certification shall be submitted to the Doctoral School of the Administering University, which shall submit these documents to be stored in the doctoral student's file at the Doctoral School Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution.

77. Upon receiving the doctoral student's request and the supervisor's agreement, the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or his/her authorised representative can grant academic leave of up to one year by his/her Order. During the academic leave, scholarship shall not be paid.

78. The Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or his/her authorised representative, after having received a doctoral student's request, the supervisor's approval and the department/research unit's approval, for important reasons (illness, maternity leave, etc.) by Order may:

78.1. extend the unpaid academic leave;

78.2. postpone the deadline for the passing of exams and certification specified in the work plan of the doctoral student for the period no longer than 3 months.

79. The doctoral students' requests shall be registered, and Orders shall be drafted by the Doctoral School/ Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution.

VII. Trips, Scholarships, Appeals, Other Conditions

80. Persons, who are accepted to full-time state-funded doctoral study positions, during the period of their studies shall be paid a scholarship fixed by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The scholarship shall be paid by the Doctoral Student Institution.

81. If, on the recommendation of the Committee, the certification of the doctoral student of full-time state-funded studies is postponed, the scholarship shall not be paid during the period of the postponement of certification.

82. When studies are temporarily suspended and the return to continue the doctoral studies occurs not on the last or first day of the month, the calendar days of incomplete months shall be also included in the duration of doctoral studies; for them, the respective amount of the scholarship shall be paid to the doctoral student.

83. In the event of illness, the doctoral student or his/her relatives shall notify the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies of the Doctoral Student Institution within three days. On returning from sickness or maternity and parental leave, the doctoral student must provide a certificate or other document relating to this period. The certificate shall be the basis for authorising, by Order of the Head of the Doctoral Institution or his/her authorised person, a postponement of the examination deadlines. The duration of doctoral studies shall not be altered as a result of sickness or maternity and parental leave. In the event of prolonged illness, the doctoral student may apply for permission to temporarily terminate his/her studies and to take an academic leave.

84. The doctoral student can conduct scientific research or spend a period of time studying at other institutions in the country or abroad. This time period shall be included in the overall duration of the doctoral studies and full scholarship shall be paid for it. Such trips shall be made following Orders of the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or his/her authorised person, in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Government for trips, on the basis of a request in the prescribed form agreed with the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution and the Head of the unit. The costs of the trip may be covered by projects or programmes administered by the Research Council of Lithuania, by the Doctoral Student Institution, by the host institution and by other sources. The allowance to cover the costs of the trip, or part of it, may be paid before departure.

85. After receiving the supervisor's approval and agreement from the Department/Research Unit, doctoral students can be employed in full-time or part-time positions at the units of the Doctoral Student Institution. Doctoral students can be assigned no longer than 150 hours of pedagogical practice, the duration of which shall be determined by the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or by Order of his/her authorised representative.

86. A motivated appeal or complaint related to the science degree that has not been awarded, rejection of an non-resident student's or doctoral student's request to defend the dissertation and other issues related to the implementation of doctoral studies shall be submitted to the office of the Doctoral Student Institution on behalf of the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution within 14 working days. The Head of the Doctoral Student Institution shall forward the appeal or complaint to be considered by the Committee, the respective units of Doctoral Institutions, or the structures established for that purpose. The appeal or complaint shall be considered, and decision shall be made in two months from its receipt. The decision of the Doctoral Student Institution shall be sent to the appellant in 5 working days after it has been made.

VIII. Dissertation Preparation and Examination

87. The dissertation of the Doctor of Science, as an integral publication, shall consist (except for the case specified in clause 85) of the following parts: text and abstract of the dissertation. The copies of or references to scientific publications on the dissertation topic by the person submitting the dissertation for defence (hereinafter referred to as the dissertation candidate) shall be added separately.

88. A scientific monograph written by the dissertation candidate without co-authors may also be submitted to be defended as a dissertation of the Doctor of Science. An abstract of the monograph shall be also provided. In this case, other scientific publications shall be provided if they are required to develop the dissertation topic.

89. A dissertation based on a collection of scientific articles may also be submitted to be defended as a dissertation of the Doctor of Science. In this case, the dissertation shall consist of a survey no shorter than 1 author's sheet, an abstract in Lithuanian or foreign language (not in the language in which the survey was prepared) and copies of the dissertation candidate's scientific publications on the dissertation topic. The dissertation candidate must have announced the results of the most important research in at least four articles that have been published or accepted for publication (possessing the digital object identifier, hereinafter referred to as DOI) in international scientific publications that have an impact factor in the database of *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)*. After defending the dissertation on the basis of a collection of scientific articles, these articles cannot be used in the defence of other dissertations.

90. The research dissertation (hereinafter referred to as the dissertation) shall include a defined goal of the work, formulated tasks to be solved, identified scientific novelty of the work, survey of research conducted in the world on the subject of the dissertation, presentation of the applied research methods, discussion of the research results, justification of their reliability and relationship to other researchers' data, formulated conclusions and other aspects that are important in the view of the dissertation candidate. The dissertation shall also be accompanied by a list of scientific conferences in which the results of the dissertation research have been published, and a *curriculum vitae* – a description of the dissertation candidate's life, scientific and creative activities.

91. The text of the dissertation shall be written in Lithuanian or English, or, if approved by the Committee of Doctoral Studies, in a language other than Lithuanian or English. The dissertation abstract (the recommended length is no shorter than 0.5 and no longer than 1 author's sheet) shall be prepared in Lithuanian or English (not in the language in which the dissertation's text is written). If the dissertation is written neither in Lithuanian nor English, then two abstracts shall be prepared (in Lithuanian and English). The dissertation and the abstract have to be written in correct language.

92. The dissertation shall specify the supervisor, consultants and the composition of the Defence Council. If the doctoral student's supervisor has been replaced, the previous supervisor and the time period of his/her work shall be also specified. The specific requirements for the dissertation and the samples of the first and second page of the dissertation in Lithuanian and English are provided in *Annex I*.

93. The doctoral student can submit the dissertation for defence after he/she:

93.1. has passed all exams specified in the work plan of the doctoral student and completed other tasks included in the work plan of the doctoral student;

93.2. publish the main results of his/her research in at least two articles that were published or possess the DOI (digital object identifier) in international scientific publications that have a citation index in the databases of *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* (in accordance with point 87), or publish the main results of his/her research in at least four articles that were published or possess the DOI (digital object identifier) in international scientific publications that have a citation index in the databases of *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* (in accordance with point 89)

93.3. has presented the research results in at least two international scientific events;

93.4. has done an internship at a foreign institution (institutions) of research and studies for at least three months (recommended). In accordance with the institution's procedure, the doctoral student can do an internship at a company, institution or organisation in Lithuania or abroad.

93.5. has prepared the dissertation in accordance with the requirements of *Annex I*;

94. The doctoral student shall present the prepared dissertation at the meeting of the Department/Research Unit of the Doctoral Student Institution, with participation by the supervisor and the consultants. The Department/Research Unit shall evaluate the dissertation, as well as the doctoral student's published scientific articles and achieved scientific qualification and submit its conclusion to the Committee. The Doctoral School/ Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral

Student Institution shall submit the documents on the consideration of the doctoral dissertation in the Department/Research Unit to the Committee.

95. The doctoral student of the Doctoral Institution or another research institution in Lithuania or abroad shall prepare a request to be permitted to defend the doctoral dissertation on behalf of the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or the Doctoral Institution and submit it to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution or at the Doctoral Institution with the following documents:

95.1. copies of the diploma of master's qualification degree (or its equivalent higher education) and its supplements (doctoral students of Doctoral Institutions do not have to submit them, they shall be prepared by the Doctoral School/Research Unit of the Doctoral Student Institution based on the documents presented during the admission);

95.2. *a curriculum vitae* of the dissertation candidate, i.e., a description of the doctoral student's life and scientific and creative activities;

95.3. approved copies of the pages of exams passed in accordance with the doctoral study programme (doctoral students of the Doctoral Institutions do not have to submit them, they are prepared by the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution based on the documents accumulated in the doctoral student's file and database records);

95.4. the prepared dissertation (2 copies);

95.5. the record from the minutes of the evaluation of the dissertation by the Department/Research Unit in which the dissertation has been prepared (if the minutes' record has been submitted to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies during the period of doctoral studies, its copy does not have to be submitted, it shall be prepared by the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution); when the dissertation is submitted not by the doctoral students of Doctoral Institutions – the record of the minutes of the dissertation's assessment by the Institution at which the dissertation has been prepared and the recommendation to defend the dissertation signed by its Head;

95.6. comments by the supervisor and the consultants (if any) (if comments have already been submitted to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies, their copies do not have to be provided, they shall be prepared by the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution);

95.7. agreement to publish the dissertation in the Lithuanian Database of Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) within 2 weeks after the public meeting of the dissertation defence.

96. After determining that the provided documents meet the established formal requirements and correspond to the request and other documents specified in clause 95, the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution/the Doctoral Institution shall submit them to the Committee.

97. No later than within two weeks after receiving the documents, the Chairperson of the Committee shall summon a meeting in which two reviewers shall be appointed. Members of the Committee and researchers from the Doctoral Institutions, other research institutions and social partners can be reviewers.

98. No later than a month after receiving the documents for the defence of the dissertation, the Chairperson of the Committee shall summon an open meeting of the Committee, which shall be attended by the doctoral student (dissertation candidate) and his/her supervisor. The Committee shall listen to the doctoral student's presentation about the dissertation, which shall reveal the scientific work's goal, tasks, novelty, relevance and originality, present the main results, statements and conclusions of the work; the comments of the appointed reviewers (the reviewers' comments have to be presented in writing to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution/the Doctoral Institution) about the presented dissertation and the doctoral student's (dissertation candidate's) responses to the comments of reviewers; the supervisor's review of the dissertation.

99. The Committee shall evaluate, which objective justification, the dissertation goals and tasks, the scientific novelty, relevance and originality; the survey of research conducted in the science field of the dissertation in Lithuania and abroad, the described methodology of the research; reliability and validity of the achieved results; validity of the defended conclusions and their conformity with the essence of the scientific research; conformity of the abstract draft with the content of the dissertation; conformity of the published scientific articles and the scientific research results presented in them with the main statements of the defended dissertation.

100. The Committee can make the following decisions:

100.1. The dissertation needs to be corrected. The dissertation is returned to the doctoral student. The consideration of the corrected dissertation shall be initiated in accordance with the requirements of clause 84 and/or further clauses;

100.2. The dissertation has been prepared properly; it corresponds with clauses 30–34 of the Regulations of Doctoral Studies⁶, the doctoral student has fulfilled the requirements of clause 36 of the Regulations of Doctoral Studies and the dissertation can be submitted for defence without any changes or with small changes;

100.3. The dissertation does not meet the requirements.

101. After having decided that it is possible to submit the dissertation for defence, the Committee shall:

101.1. decide whether the meeting of the dissertation defence at the Defence Council will be public or closed;

101.2. draft the composition of the Defence Council;

101.3. together with the Department/Research Unit, the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution/Doctoral Institution organise the reception of documents on the agreement of the planned Defence Council members and on the substantiation of their compliance with the qualification requirements for participants in the doctoral study process (lists, certificates, etc.);

101.4. arrange and fix the date and place of the dissertation defence;

101.5. draft the recommendation for the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution/Doctoral Institution and submit it to the Doctoral School of the Administering University;

101.6. the Doctoral School of the Administering University shall submit the documents of the doctoral dissertation's consideration in the Committee meeting and the Committee's recommendation to defend the doctoral dissertation to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution/Doctoral Institution.

102. The Committee shall form the Defence Council from at least five members. The Defence Council members shall meet the requirements that are no lower than those of a senior research worker⁷ and participate in the process of doctoral studies and in international scientific and expert activities. A conflict of interests cannot emerge between the Defence Council members and the dissertation or between his/her supervisor and consultants. Members of the Defence Council cannot have co-authored publications with the dissertation candidate. More than half of the Defence Council's members cannot have had co-authored publications with the dissertation candidate's supervisor or the consultant over the last five years. The doctoral student's supervisor and the consultant cannot be a member of the Defence Council. At least one Defence Council member shall be from a foreign institution of research and studies. At least two Defence Council members shall be researchers from other than the Doctoral Student Institution. If the work has been done at the intersection of multiple science fields or if it is required for the defended work to be evaluated comprehensively, two Defence Council members can be researchers of other science fields. On the recommendation of the Committee, the composition and the Chairperson of the

⁶ Provisions of Doctoral Studies approved by Order No V-739 of Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of 18 May 2020

⁷ Requirements of clause 8.2 of the Description of Minimum Qualification Requirements for Positions of Researchers at State Research and Study Institutions approved by Order No V-340 of the Research Council of Lithuania of 28 June 2018.

Defence Council shall be approved by Order of the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or his/her authorised representative.

103. Members of the Defence Council shall submit written comments on the dissertation to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution no later than five working days before the defence of the doctoral dissertation. The person defending the dissertation shall have the right to get acquainted with the submitted comments.

104. The Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Institution shall, after examining the documents and assessing whether the thesis is not plagiarised, draft the Order of the Head of the Doctoral Institution or his/her authorised person approving the Defence Council, the date and the venue of the defence of the dissertation.

105. After the Head of the Doctoral Student Institution or his/her authorised representative signs the Order:

105.1. the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution shall organise publication of the dissertation in the required number of copies;

105.2. no later than a month before the defence of the dissertation, the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution together with the doctoral student shall submit one copy of the dissertation to each member of the Defence Council;

105.3. the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Institution shall announce the defence of the dissertation in the special sections of the online websites of the Doctoral Institutions and the Research Council of Lithuania. The announcement of the dissertation defence can also additionally be announced in the press. The announcement shall specify the dissertation candidate's name and surname, the date and place of defence, the supervisor, members of the Defence Council, science fields and institutions they represent, the address of online website on which the dissertation is published;

105.4. the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution together with the doctoral student shall submit the dissertation which is being prepared for defence to the libraries of the Doctoral Institutions.

106. Expenses for printing and sending of the dissertations submitted by the doctoral students of the Doctoral Institutions shall be covered from the funds of the Doctoral Student Institution that have been received for the implementation of doctoral studies.

107. The dissertation shall be defended in a public meeting of the Defence Council in accordance with the Regulations of the Defence Council on the Defence of Doctoral Dissertations in the Science Field (*Annex 2*).

108. A dissertation which may contain information constituting a state, professional or commercial secret may be defended in closed meeting.

109. The defence meeting can be organised both in Lithuanian and in another language. In the cases when another language is used in the meeting, the need for translation in the Lithuanian language shall be established by the Committee. The meeting shall be headed by the Chairperson of the Defence Council. The meeting shall be valid if it is attended by more than half of the Defence Council members (including those participating by videoconferencing). Comments on the dissertation received from non-participating Defence Council members and others shall be also read during the meeting. If a decision is made that the degree of the Doctor of Science is not granted, then the arguments for such a decision shall be specified in the minutes of the voting. The Chairperson of the Defence Council shall read the decision of the Defence Council to the participants of the meeting and declare the end of the meeting.

110. After the dissertation defence, the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution shall be given all documents of the defence, including the minutes of the meeting and the decision of the Defence Council on whether the dissertation candidate is to be awarded the degree of the Doctor of Science. On its basis, the Doctoral School shall issue the doctor's diploma.

111. If the Defence Council rules that the degree of the Doctor of Science is not to be awarded, the corrected and/or amended dissertation may be submitted for defence no sooner than one year

later. In such a case, the doctor's degree is obtained externally in accordance with the requirements of Chapter IX of these Regulations. If the fact of scientific dishonesty (plagiarism, etc.) is determined, the dissertation cannot be defended.

112. No later than within 2 weeks after the meeting of the dissertation's public defence, in accordance with the procedure established by the Regulations of Doctoral Studies, the Doctoral Student Institution shall submit one copy of the defended dissertation (except for dissertations defended in a closed meeting) to the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania and the dissertation shall be published on the Lithuanian Database of Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD).

113. No later than within 20 working days after the meeting of the dissertation defence, the Doctoral Student Institution shall notify the Research Council of Lithuania about the results of the doctoral dissertation defence. The notification to the Research Council of Lithuania shall also include information on the reasons why the dissertation was not successfully defended or was not defended at all.

114. The registered doctor's diploma shall be awarded to the scientist in accordance with the procedure established by each Doctoral Student Institution, after the dissertation has been published in the Lithuanian Database of Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD).

115. The file of the person who has defended the doctoral dissertation shall be stored for one year in the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution; later it shall be submitted to the archive of the Doctoral Student Institution. The file shall contain:

115.1. a request for permission to defend the dissertation along with the attached documents and the Committee's recommendation to defend the doctoral dissertation;

115.2. an agreement to publish the dissertation in the Lithuanian Database of Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD) within two weeks after the meeting of the dissertation defence;

115.3. documents on the composition of the Defence Council;

115.4. documents that confirm that the dissertation has been submitted or sent to the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania;

115.5. the electronic file of the audio recording of the meeting of the dissertation defence;

115.6. the Defence Council's decision on the awarding of the degree of the Doctor of Science;

115.7. a copy of the diploma of the Doctor of Science.

116. If the doctoral student submits the dissertation before the end of the doctoral studies but does not defend it on time, the dissertation can be defended in accordance with standard procedure within 12 months after the end of doctoral studies. A dissertation which was not defended within this period shall be defended externally in accordance with the requirements of Chapter IX of these Regulations. A dissertation defended on time is a dissertation which has been defended no later than within one year after the end of doctoral studies.

IX. Acquisition of a Degree of the Doctor of Science Obtained Externally

117. A person who has a master's qualification degree or its equivalent higher education can seek to obtain a degree of the Doctor of Science externally. A person who studies externally must have published a scientific monograph or must have published the main results of the dissertation in at least two articles published in international scientific publications specified in clause 93.2 of these Regulations.

118. The request addressed to the Head of the Doctoral Institution for the permission to defend the doctoral dissertation externally shall be submitted to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at that Doctoral Institution. The following shall be enclosed to the request:

118.1. a dissertation manuscript or a published scientific monograph;

118.2. a list of scientific publications and electronic copies of publications;

118.3. copies of a diploma confirming the master's degree or its equivalent qualification, its supplement or annex; a certificate issued by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education regarding recognition of higher education qualification acquired abroad;

118.4. copies of the minutes of doctoral study exams (if any) or their extracts;

118.5. *a curriculum vitae* – a description of life and scientific and creative activities;

118.6. a copy of identity document.

119. The Head of the Doctoral Institution or his/her authorised representative shall direct the request with the supplements to the Committee, which shall appoint at least two experts and the corresponding Department/Research Unit at the Doctoral Institution for the assessment of the preparedness of the dissertation. Experts may include researchers from the Doctoral Institutions, other research institutions and social partners whose research and publications in the last five years are relevant to the topic of the dissertation. The Department/Research Unit of the Doctoral Institution shall organise a meeting and determine whether the presented material meets the requirements of clauses 30–34 of the Regulations of Doctoral Studies⁸. An expert shall present his/her conclusion within one month after the submission of the dissertation/scientific monograph.

120. After receiving the conclusions, no later than within three months from the submission of the request, the Committee shall hold a meeting in which the person who studies externally shall participate as well. After listening to the experts and the person who studies externally, in accordance with the requirements of the Regulations of Doctoral Studies, the Committee shall rule whether the dissertation of the person who studies externally meets the requirements of a doctoral dissertation. If a positive decision is made, in accordance with the procedure of this Regulation, the Committee shall:

120.1. assign the person who studies externally to the Department/Research Unit at the Doctoral Institution;

120.2. present the recommendation for the Head of the Doctoral Institution to which the request of the person who studies externally was addressed or his/her authorised representative to approve the consultant of the person who studies externally who shall perform the functions of the supervisor of the person who studies externally; if the acquisition of the doctoral degree is sought by the person who studies externally who had already studied in the doctoral studies but did not present a dissertation, the Committee can appoint the doctoral student's former supervisor or another individual as his/her consultant;

120.3. decide on the issue of the accepting of the doctoral study exams that have already been passed by the person who studies externally; determine which other doctoral study exams the person who studies externally must pass and until when;

120.4. schedule the date of the dissertation defence, which shall be no later than one year after the day the decision was made.

121. The exams for the person who studies externally shall be organised in accordance with the requirements of Chapter VI, whereas the dissertation shall be examined and defended in accordance with the requirements of Chapter VIII of these Regulations.

122. If the Committee decides that the dissertation cannot be prepared for defence in one year from the submission of the request, the person who studies externally can submit an appeal, which shall be examined in accordance with the procedure established in clause 86 of these Regulations. If the negative decision of the Committee is approved, the person who studies externally may re-submit the request to defend the dissertation no earlier than after one year.

123. The person who studies externally shall cover only those expenses of the Doctoral Institution that are directly related to the acquisition of a degree of the Doctor of Science.

⁸ Provisions of Doctoral Studies approved by Order No. V-739 of Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of 18 May 2020.

X. Awarding of a Degree of the Doctor of Science

124. A degree of the Doctor of Science shall be awarded to a person who has successfully defended the dissertation and the diploma issued by the university which shall be signed by the Rector and the Chairperson of the Defence Council.

125. The form of the diploma of a degree of the Doctor of Science and the procedure of the production, accounting, registration and issuing of the diploma forms shall be established by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport.

126. Appeals regarding a degree of science that has not been awarded shall be examined in accordance with the procedure set forth in clause 86 of these Regulations.

127. The Doctoral Student Institution can revoke the decision to award a degree of science (including the degrees of science awarded until the entry into force of these Provisions) when:

127.1. the fact of scientific dishonesty is determined;

127.2. a degree of the Doctor of Science is awarded after violating these Regulations.

128. The university which has awarded a degree of science can revoke the decision to award a degree of science when the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures makes the decision which obligates it to do so. The Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures can also obligate the university to revoke the decision to award a degree of science made before the entry into force of these Regulations.

129. If the institution which has awarded a degree of science has been liquidated, the decision regarding the recognition of the awarded a degree of science shall be made by the Defence Council.

XI. Funding of Doctoral Studies

130. Doctoral studies shall be funded from the appropriations allocated from the state budget, funds of state investment programmes and state investment projects, income received as the fees of studies, also income from economy and research-related activities and provided services, funds of programme and competition-based funding of scientific research, funds allocated by international and foreign foundations and organisations as well as other legally obtained funds.

131. Funds for the payment of doctoral students' scholarships and payment for work and social security of the Defence Council members, doctoral students (except for those who study externally), scientific supervisors and consultants, for the scientific research of doctoral students (if possible, for the publishing of scientific articles of doctoral students in international publications), for copying of the dissertation and its abstract, also other expenses related to the awarding of a degree of the doctor of science, shall be allocated in the estimates of the budgetary programmes implemented in the Doctoral Institutions.

XII. Quality Assurance of Doctoral Studies

132. Quality assurance of doctoral studies shall be governed by external documents: Provisions of Doctoral Studies approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the rulings of the Research Council of Lithuania and the internal documents of doctoral studies, i.e., Regulations of Doctoral Studies in Agronomy Science Field and Forestry Science Field, Regulations of the Work of the Doctoral Study Committee as well as other internal documents and agreements of doctoral studies.

133. For the internal assurance of the quality of doctoral studies in the science field, the Committee shall conduct assessment of the quality of doctoral studies in the science field no less frequently than three times a year, taking into account the following indicators:

133.1. *efficiency and effectiveness*. Assessment shall include the proportion between the doctoral students and the prepared doctors of science in the science field; the scientific works published by the doctoral students over the period of doctoral studies; the doctoral students' participation in

scientific internships and conferences; the doctoral students' participation in scientific research projects that correspond to the topic of their dissertation; employment and further career of doctoral students who have successfully defended the dissertation;

133.2. *scientific resources*. The qualification of scientists participating in the preparation of doctoral students in the science field shall meet the established qualification requirements;

133.3. *organisational indicator*. The preparation of doctoral students in the science field shall be organised as an orderly process, providing reasoned justification for all stages of this process;

133.4. *infrastructure*. The appropriate organisational and material prerequisites must be provided for high-quality studies of doctoral students in the science field and for the promotion of their scientific achievements.

134. The Committee shall carry out the evaluation in accordance with the following procedure:

134.1. gets acquainted with the self-analysis material in the science field provided by the Doctoral Institutions, analyse the surveys of doctoral students;

134.2. while visiting each Doctoral Institution:

- holds a discussion with the employees and scientists responsible for the doctoral study process (the discussion steps: process of admission to the doctoral studies, process of studies, procedures of completion of the doctoral studies, typical problems and areas for improvement);

- on the basis of the received qualitative and quantitative information, evaluates the *efficiency and effectiveness*; the *scientific resources*; the *organisation of studies and infrastructure* of the doctoral studies in the science field of the Doctoral Institutions.

- presents summarised conclusions and recommendations on how the quality of the doctoral studies could be improved to the Senate Research Commissions, the Senates and the Heads of the Doctoral Institutions.

For the period of doctoral studies and for one year after the completion of doctoral studies, the personal file of the doctoral student of the Doctoral Institutions (or a person wishing to obtain a doctoral degree externally) shall be stored in the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the **Doctoral Student Institution**, later it shall be submitted to the archive of the **Doctoral Student Institution**. The file shall contain:

- a request to be admitted to the doctoral studies with the supplements specified in the announcement of the admission to the doctoral studies;
- the contract of studies;
- the doctoral student's declaration of honesty;
- documents on the appointment of the doctoral student's supervisor and consultants;
- the doctoral student's programme (work plan) for the studies, scientific research, publication of its results and doctoral dissertation preparation;
- documents of the doctoral student's annual certifications;
- the Rector's orders (on scholarship payment, postponement of deadlines of doctoral student's programme, etc.);
- pages of study exams of the doctoral student;
- a decision to terminate the doctoral studies – if the doctoral student has been removed from the doctoral studies because of the conclusions of certification or for other reasons, or if he/she has not submitted his/her thesis for defence by the end of the doctoral studies;
- the doctoral student's request for permission to defend the dissertation and related documents (minutes from initial considerations, the doctoral student's supervisor's and the Committee's recommendations to permit the defence of the dissertation, the minutes of the final assessment of the dissertation, etc.);

- the Rector's order on the approval of the Defence Council and the setting of the date and venue of the defence;
- defence documents: audio recording of the dissertation defence meeting on electronic media, the minutes of the Council's vote on the award of the doctoral degree, and the comments received from the members of the Defence Council and other reviews of the dissertation;
- documents confirming that the dissertation has been submitted (sent) to the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania and the libraries of the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry and Vytautas Magnus University ;
- a copy of the diploma of the Doctor of Science.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DISSERTATION OF THE DOCTOR OF SCIENCE

1. The dissertation of the doctor of science (hereinafter referred to as the dissertation) as an integral publication (except for the case specified in clause 89 of these Regulations) shall consist of the following parts: the dissertation text and abstract; the lists of publications in which the main research results are published and the scientific conferences in which the dissertation's research results were announced; *a curriculum vitae* of the dissertation candidate, i.e. a description of life and scientific and creative activities. The copies of or references to scientific publications on the dissertation topic by the person presenting the dissertation for defence (hereinafter referred to as the dissertation candidate) shall be added separately.
2. A scientific monograph written by the dissertation candidate without co-authors may also be presented for defence as a dissertation of the Doctor of Science. An abstract of the monograph shall be provided as well. In this case, other scientific publications shall be provided if they are required in order to develop the dissertation topic.
3. A dissertation based on a collection of scientific articles may also be submitted to be defended as a dissertation of the Doctor of Science. In this case, the dissertation shall consist of a survey no shorter than 1 author's sheet, an abstract in Lithuanian or foreign language (not in the language in which the survey was prepared) and copies of the dissertation candidate's scientific publications on the dissertation topic. The dissertation candidate must have announced the results of the most important research in at least four articles that have been published or accepted for publication (possessing the digital object identifier, hereinafter referred to as DOI) in international scientific publications that have a citation index in the database of *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)*. After defending the dissertation on the basis of a collection of scientific articles, these articles cannot be used in the defence of other dissertations.
4. The text of the dissertation shall be written in Lithuanian or English, or, if approved by the Committee of Doctoral Studies, in a language other than Lithuanian or English. The dissertation abstract (the recommended length is no shorter than 0.5 and no longer than 1 author's sheet) shall be prepared in Lithuanian or English (not in the language in which the dissertation text is written). If the dissertation is written neither in Lithuanian nor English, then two abstracts shall be prepared (in Lithuanian and English). The dissertation and the abstract shall be written in correct language.
5. The length of the dissertation's text is 6–15 author's sheets (one author's sheet is 40 000 characters).
6. The dissertation (based on the case specified in clause 1 of this Annex) shall contain the following main parts:
 - 6.1. The dissertation text:
 - 6.1.1. Introduction. It shall justify the research problem, define the relevance, goal and tasks of the work, novelty and significance of the work, and provide the defence statements of the dissertation. The recommended length of the introduction is up to 3 pages.
 - 6.1.2. Survey of research. It shall describe the research on the topic of the dissertation conducted in Lithuania and abroad and present the dissertation candidate's contribution into the examined issues.
 - 6.1.3. Methodology of the work. The methodology and/or methods of the work shall be presented; the reliability and application limits of the employed methods shall be evaluated.
 - 6.1.4. Research results. The obtained research results shall be presented, they shall be summarised, and their reliability and relationship with the results of other researchers shall be evaluated.

- 6.1.5. Conclusions. They shall reflect the dissertation defence statements and provide solutions to the tasks or problems formulated in the introduction of the dissertation.
- 6.1.6. A list of used (cited) literature.
- 6.2. A list of scientific publications on the dissertation topic by the person presenting the dissertation for defence and the scientific conferences in which the research results have been published;
- 6.3. Abstract of the dissertation, which shall include the defined research problem examined in the dissertation, specify the goals and tasks of the work, scientific novelty, research methodology, the key results and the doctoral student's defended conclusions that are based on them;
- 6.4. Description of the doctoral student's life and scientific and creative activities;
- 6.5. Supplements (if needed);
- 6.6. Acknowledgements may be anticipated during the preparation of the scientific work.
7. The dissertation (in the case of clause 3 of this Annex) shall contain the following main parts:
 - 7.1. survey (at least 1 author's sheet);
 - 7.2. abstract in Lithuanian or foreign language (not in the language in which the survey is written);
 - 7.3. copies of scientific publications on the topic of the dissertation.
8. The template of the dissertation's title page is presented in Sample 1 of Annex 1. The first page shall specify:
 - 8.1. the institution in which the doctoral dissertation is defended;
 - 8.2. the dissertation candidate's name and surname;
 - 8.3. the dissertation title;
 - 8.4. the text "Dissertation of the doctor of science";
 - 8.5. the area and field of science, the code of science field;
 - 8.6. location (city) and year.
9. The template of the second page of the dissertation is presented in Sample 2 of Annex 1. The second page shall include:
 - 9.1. the duration and location of the dissertation preparation and the legal basis of the implementation of the right of doctoral studies;
 - 9.2. if the dissertation is defended externally, the phrase "The dissertation is defended externally" shall be included;
 - 9.3. the dissertation candidate's scientific supervisor and consultant(s) (if any). The information about the supervisor and consultant(s) shall be presented in the following order: pedagogical/scientific position currently held, scientific degree, name, surname, the place of employment (full title), area of science, field of science and its code. If the dissertation candidate's supervisor has been replaced, the previous supervisor and his/her working period shall also be specified. If the scientific supervisor or consultant of the dissertation candidate is a foreign scientist, the country shall be specified alongside his/her place of employment;
 - 9.4. The title of the dissertation's Defence Council;
 - 9.5. The Chairperson and members of the dissertation's Defence Council. The information about the Council members shall be presented in the following order: pedagogical/scientific position currently held, scientific degree, name, surname, the place of employment (full title), area of science, field of science and its code. If the member of the Defence Council is a foreign scientist, the country shall be specified alongside his/her place of employment;
 - 9.6. The date and venue (including address) of the dissertation defence.
10. The third and fourth pages of the dissertation shall be the information of the dissertation's first and second page in the English language (Samples 3 and 4 of Annex 1).

(DOCTORAL INSTITUTIONS)

Name Surname

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION TITLE

Doctoral dissertation
xxxxxx Area of Science, xxxxxx Field of Science (code)

This doctoral dissertation was prepared in 2016–2020 at (name of the doctoral institution) in accordance with the doctoral study right granted to (names of doctoral institutions) on (date of issue) by Order No.____ (document No.).

(In case dissertation is defended externally)

This dissertation was prepared in 2016–2020 at Xxxx Yyyy institution (name of the doctoral institution) and in 2019–2020 at _____ (name of the doctoral institution) in accordance with the doctoral study right granted to (names of doctoral institutions) on (date of issue) by Order No. _____ (document No.).

The dissertation is defended externally.

Scientific supervisor:

Prof. Name Surname (Name of the Institution, Area of Science, Field of Science, Code of Science Field) *(if there were two scientific supervisors of the doctoral student, the duration of the supervision shall be specified)*

Scientific consultant:

Prof. Name Surname (Name of the Institution, Area of Science, Field of Science, code of Science Field)

The doctoral dissertation will be defended at the Defence Council of xxxx science field of Vytautas Magnus University and the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry:

Chairperson:

Prof. Name Surname (Name of the Institution, Area of Science, Field of Science, code of Science Field)

Members:

Prof. Name Surname (Name of the Institution, Area of Science, Field of Science, code of Science Field)

Prof. Name Surname (Name of the Institution, Area of Science, Field of Science, code of Science Field)

Dr. Name Surname (Name of the Institution, Area of Science, Field of Science, code of Science Field)

Assoc. Prof. Name Surname (Name of the Institution, Area of Science, Field of Science, code of Science Field)

The doctoral dissertation will be defended in the public/closed meeting at the Defence Council of xxx Field of Science at ____ am/pm on xx (day) of _____ (month) 20__ at ____ (name of the institution and the venue).

Address: _____

REGULATIONS OF THE DEFENCE COUNCIL ON THE DEFENCE OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION IN THE SCIENCE FIELD

1. These Regulations define the procedure of defence of doctoral dissertations in the field of science established by the Defence Council composed in accordance with the Regulations of Doctoral Studies approved by Order No. V-739 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 18 May 2020.
2. The doctoral dissertation shall be defended, and the scientific degree shall be awarded in the Defence Council of the specific field of science, which shall be composed for defence of the specific dissertation after the dissertation has been completed and presented for defence. The Committee shall establish the Defence Council which shall consist of at least five members and appoint one of its members as a Chairperson.
3. The Defence Council members shall present written comments on the dissertation to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution⁹ no later than 5 working days before the defence of the dissertation.
4. Members of the Defence Council shall meet the requirements no lower than those of a senior research worker¹⁰ and participate in the process of doctoral studies and international scientific and expert activities. A conflict of interests cannot emerge between the Defence Council members and the dissertation candidate or between his/her supervisor and consultant. The Defence Council members cannot have co-authored publications with the dissertation candidate. More than half of the members of the Defence Council cannot have had co-authored publications with the dissertation candidate's supervisor or consultant over the last five years. The supervisor and consultant of the doctoral student cannot be a member of the Defence Council. At least one Defence Council member may be from a foreign institution of research and studies. At least two Defence Council members shall be researchers from other than the Doctoral Student Institution. If the work has been done at the intersection of multiple science fields or if it is required for the defended work to be evaluated comprehensively, two Defence Council members can be researchers of other fields of science. On the recommendation of the Committee, the composition and the Chairperson of the Defence Council shall be approved by the head of the Doctoral Student Institution or his/her authorised representative.
5. Documents of the Defence Council shall be managed and the meeting for the dissertation defence shall be organised by the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution⁷.
6. Work of the Defence Council shall be organised by the Chairperson of the Defence Council. He/she shall:
 - 6.1. examine the file of the person who will defend the dissertation (hereinafter referred to as the dissertation candidate) in advance and make sure that the file and all documents of the meeting (voting ballots, voting minutes' template, etc.) are prepared;

⁹ If the Doctoral Student Institution is not the Doctoral Institution, the Defence Council's documents shall be managed and the meeting for defence of the dissertation shall be organised by the Doctoral Institution with which the Doctoral Student Institution has signed a contract of doctoral studies.

¹⁰ Requirements of clause 8.2 of the Description of Minimum Qualification Requirements for Positions of Researchers at State Research and Study Institutions approved by Order No. V-340 of the Research Council of Lithuania of 29 June 2018.

6.2. examine the received comments which shall be presented during the Defence Council meeting or delegate this task to the Defence Council member;

6.3. make sure whether the appropriate preparations have been made for the meeting (for the meeting's audio recording or transcribing, demonstration of video material and, if required, translation of the meeting);

6.4. chair the Defence Council's meeting;

6.5. sign the documents of the Defence Council's meeting.

7. The Defence Council member shall:

7.1. examine the dissertation presented for defence in advance and evaluate whether it is an original scientific work, which summarises the scientific research conducted by the doctoral student that explores the issue of the science field, whether its content corresponds with other requirements of a doctoral dissertation;

7.2. evaluate whether the dissertation candidate's scientific publications have been published in accordance with the requirements specified in these Regulations and whether they include presentation of the most significant research results;

7.3. evaluate whether the research results have been presented in at least two international scientific events.

8. The meeting shall proceed in Lithuanian or another language. In the cases when some other language is used in the meeting, the need for translation into Lithuanian shall be determined by the Committee.

9. The meeting shall be valid if it is attended by more than half of the Defence Council members (including those participating by videoconferencing).

10. The Defence Council meeting shall be public. A dissertation which may contain information constituting a state, professional or commercial secret can be defended in a closed meeting.

11. The proceedings of the meeting shall be as follows:

11.1. After making sure that more than half of the Defence Council members attend the meeting (including those participating by teleconferencing) and that the non-participating members have presented their comments about the dissertation in writing, inform participants of the meeting about the quorum and present the dissertation candidate's file;

11.2. The dissertation candidate shall present the dissertation's problem, goals, tasks, the obtained research data and conclusions, respond to the questions of the participants of the meeting; specify his/her contribution to the publications presented in the dissertation;

11.3. The opportunity shall be granted for the dissertation candidate's scientific supervisor and his/her consultants to speak;

11.4. The Chairperson of the Defence Council shall announce a scientific discussion;

11.5. The Chairperson or the Defence Council member delegated by him/her shall read publicly the comments about the dissertation received from the non-participating Defence Council members and others; present the remarks and conclusions formulated in the comments, and the dissertation candidate may express his/her remarks;

11.6. The opportunity shall be granted for the Defence Council members and guests to speak; after each speech, the dissertation candidate may request a word, which shall be granted to him/her;

11.7. At the end of the scientific discussion, the dissertation candidate shall speak;

11.8. After discussions with the dissertation candidate, the Defence Council members shall decide by voting whether he/she is to be awarded a degree of the Doctor of Science. The Defence

Council members participating by teleconferencing shall vote as well. A decision shall be made if more than half of all Defence Council members vote in favour of it. The minutes of the voting shall be signed by all members of the Defence Council who participated directly in the meeting;

11.9. The Chairperson of the Council shall read the Defence Council decision to the participants of the meeting and declare the end of the meeting.

12. After the meeting, the Chairperson of the Defence Council shall return the dissertation defence documents to the Doctoral School/Unit of Doctoral Studies at the Doctoral Student Institution.