

LEPL Ilia State University
Faculty of Business, Technology, and Education
Bylaws of the Dissertation Board and Doctoral Studies

Article 1. General Provisions, Scope, and Objectives

- 1.1. These Bylaws specify the rules and procedures for admission to doctoral programs of the Faculty of Business, Technology, and Education of Ilia State University (hereinafter referred to as the Faculty), selection of supervisors/co-supervisors and reviewers, their functions and responsibilities, composition and duties of the Dissertation Board, the criteria and standards for conferring a doctoral qualification/academic degree, dissertation defense, and in the event of disputes arising related to any of the issues above, the policies and procedures for their resolution, appealing decisions made, and other important issues regarding the planning and implementation of the PhD program;
- 1.2. In conformity with the mission of the University, the main objective of the Doctoral Studies is to promote:
 - a) development of the educational and research potential of the University;
 - b) collaboration using interdisciplinary approaches, depending on the research topic;
 - c) establishment of a sectoral, scientific cooperation/professional network.
- 1.3. The PhD program graduate is conferred a doctoral qualification/academic degree if they:
 - a) have undertaken and conducted original research that expands the boundaries of knowledge, with findings and results shared in the form of a scholarly publication in scientific journals that meet the requirements outlined in the present Bylaws;
 - b) have successfully fulfilled all the other requirements specified by the program.
- 1.4. Doctoral educational programs are built upon the research capacity of the University, the prior scientific knowledge in the field, successful practices, and research outcomes. The programs are implemented on the grounds of scientific research units of the Faculty/University;
- 1.5. Research undertaken as part of the doctoral program adheres to the University's research ethics norms, which consider both local and international standards of research ethics in the relevant sector.
- 1.6. Considering the field-specific characteristics and the doctoral program peculiarities, the Faculty collaborates with local and international scientific research institutions/centers/universities, doctoral schools, as well as the public and private sector/industry and other potential employers;
- 1.7. The qualifications of any individual from academic/scientific personnel who is involved in the implementation of the doctoral educational program are validated by a scientific article published in an indexed peer-reviewed journal within the past 3 years, demonstrating their expertise and competence in a specific area of research. An exception may be granted solely with components cultivating transferable skills, where the individual's

competence can be substantiated by practical experience in the specific field. This exception does not apply to such components of the program as sectoral and methodological courses;

- 1.8. The Faculty may implement doctoral educational programs under the terms of international cooperation as well, which provides for student exchange or allows for awarding combined (joint, double) qualifications/degrees.

Article 2. Sectoral Commission

2.1 Sectoral Commissions are established by the Faculty Board in line with the policies and procedures defined by the Bylaws for individual disciplines and directions of the Faculty. They are composed of the University's professors, associate professors, professors emeriti, and assistant professors holding a doctor's academic degree;

2.2 The Sectoral Commission is involved in program admission and studies, which may include the following:

- a) reviewing and evaluating doctoral candidates' research proposals, and conducting their oral examination;
- b) approving the doctoral student's scientific supervisor(s) and co-supervisor(s); reviewing the doctoral student's request for the dismissal/substitution of the supervisor/co-supervisor, as well as the supervisor's request for withdrawal from supervising and rendering decisions regarding any of these cases.
- c) approving the dissertation prospectus;
- d) evaluating doctoral student's progress during colloquiums and providing them with feedback regarding their reports and presentations;
- e) submitting the list of members of the Dissertation Board, the candidate for the chairperson, and if the latter is not applicable, of the acting/interim chairperson, to the Faculty Board;
- f) selecting and nominating dissertation reviewers to the Faculty Board;
- g) determining the compliance of the doctoral candidate's publication to their dissertation topic and submitting the conclusion to the Dean for subsequent submission to the University's Quality Assurance Office;
- h) reviewing and deciding on the doctoral student's request to change the title of the research topic, research subject, or its focus;
- i) evaluating the relevance of the doctoral candidate's research topic, based on the recommendation of the doctoral student's supervisor, the student's research proposal, the partner organization's consent on the use of material/intellectual resources/facilities (if necessary), a defended prospectus and/or scholarly publications; this procedure applies to those doctoral students who have their status restored, after being suspended for 2 academic semesters or longer;
- j) deciding on the execution and defense of the English-language dissertation for students of Georgian-language doctoral programs;

2.3 Under a relevant international and/or partnership agreement, conditions different from those specified in the present article may also apply.

Article 3. Admission to Doctoral Studies

- 3.1 Any individual holding a master's or an equivalent academic degree is eligible to pursue Doctoral Studies.
- 3.2 Admission to Doctoral Studies is announced by the Rector based on the recommendation of the Faculty Board or the Dean. Admission can be announced for both the fall and spring semesters. Details regarding the conditions, requirements, deadlines, and necessary documentation for admission are available on the Ilia State University website;
- 3.3 Applicants for Doctoral Studies must submit the following documents:
- a) A completed application form;
 - b) A personal identification document;
 - c) A copy of the document attesting to a master's or an equivalent academic degree (the compatibility to a 5-year higher education diploma or a diploma of the education received in a foreign university must be confirmed and validated by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement);
 - d) Autobiography (CV);
 - e) A 3X4 electronic version of the photo;
 - f) A research proposal completed by the applicant and signed by a potential supervisor, as well as the supervisor's consent form are posted on the University's website, immediately after an admission to the program is announced;
 - g) If the doctoral research involves the use of a partner organization's resources, a consent letter from the organization, signed by its representative;
 - h) To demonstrate research competencies: previous work/publication in the relevant field and/or participation in scientific research projects and initiatives and/or at least 2 years of experience in the relevant field. Specific requirements are criteria are detailed in the admission standards and prerequisites for each program.
 - i) An international document verifying English language proficiency at a minimum of the B2 level, as outlined in the admission requirements for a given program (if applicable);
 - j) Documented proof of military registration (applicable to males only);
 - k) Other relevant documents/conditions that may be required by the individual program.

3.4 Admission Procedure

- 3.4.1 Upon reviewing the documents, the Faculty administration will assess the evidence confirming the candidate's English language competence. If the supplied documents fail to demonstrate English proficiency at a minimum of B2 level, the PhD candidate will be required to take an English exam organized by the University (minimum B2 level). As the minimum benchmarks for the exam may vary, they are set individually for each specific program and are indicated in the program's admission criteria and the Faculty's announcement on admissions;
- 3.4.2 Applicants who present a valid international certificate of English language proficiency or a corresponding valid certificate issued by the National Assessment and Examinations Center attesting to the candidate's

language competence at the minimum of B2 level, are exempted from the English language test. Applicants who present a diploma confirming the completion of an English-language bachelor's or master's program outside Georgia are also granted exemption from the test (a document issued by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement on the acknowledgment of the education received abroad must be submitted together with the diploma). The English language test is also waived for applicants who present a diploma confirming the completion of an English-language bachelor's or master's program in Georgia and an appendix or certificate about the language of the program implementation;

- 3.4.3 The levels and scores of respective valid certificates of English language competence are spelled out in the regulatory documents of individual programs;
- 3.4.4 Upon successful completion of the English language test or providing any relevant documented proof of language competence, the research proposal and other documents/forms submitted by program candidates are forwarded to members of the respective Sectoral Commission for review and evaluation. If a potential supervisor is also a member of the Sectoral Commission, s/he has no right to take part in the evaluation process. Research proposal requirements, evaluation criteria, and rubrics are established for each program individually and are posted on the University's website upon announcement of each admission. Having received a positive evaluation, the applicant appears for an oral examination before the Sectoral Commission;
- 3.4.5 The oral exam is evaluated by the Sectoral Commission according to predetermined requirements, criteria, and rubrics. The requirements, criteria, and rubrics for the oral exam are determined individually for each specific program and are posted on the University's website immediately after each admission is announced;
- 3.4.6 The evaluations received by the PhD students are published on the University website, ensuring the protection of personal data.
- 3.4.7 A doctoral student has the right to appeal the received grades within 2 working days from their publication. Information on the appeal procedures is specified in the Rector's Order and is published on the University website. The appeal is reviewed by the appeal committee, which is approved in advance by the Faculty Board. The results of the appeal are published on the University website, ensuring the protection of personal data.
- 3.4.8 The composite rating score of the Ph.D. program applicant is calculated according to the rules defined by the doctoral program admission document, and the evaluation results are posted on the University's website;
- 3.4.9 In cases such as partnership agreements or local and international collaboration, it is possible to set requirements different from those defined in this article.

Article 4. Doctoral supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s)

- 4.1 The selection of a doctoral student's potential supervisor(s) is made during the doctoral program admission period and their approval to supervise the candidate is confirmed by signing a respective consent form;
- 4.2 The supervisor, or at least one supervisor in the case of multiple supervisors, must be the University academic (professor, associate professor) and/or scientific staff member with a doctorate or equivalent degree;
- 4.3 The following are the qualification requirements for scientific supervisor(s):
 - a) has an academic degree in a relevant field;

- b) has scientific research experience relevant to the doctoral candidate's research direction, and is equipped with the latest subject-related knowledge and expertise; has published at least 1 scientific article in a thematic internationally indexed peer-reviewed journal within the past 3 years. For business, administration, and education the journal must be listed in recognized international databases such as Clarivate Analytics (formerly Thomson Reuters) Master Journal List, Scopus, Ulrich's Index, ERIH PLUS, EBSCOHost, Latindex Catalogue), and for mathematics - in an (international) thematic journal with an impact factor exceeding 0.5 in the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science database or an (international) thematic journal with a citation score (CiteScore) higher than 0.5 included in the Scopus list. The published work must bear relevance to the general topic/direction of the PhD student's dissertation;
- c) has experience in supervising/co-supervising a doctoral student, or has completed relevant training/seminar to enhance the effectiveness of scientific supervision;
- d) If the dissertation is written and defended in English, the scientific supervisor must also have proficiency in English. Determining this proficiency is the responsibility of the relevant sectoral commission.

4.4 Upon a candidate's admission to a PhD program, a tripartite agreement is signed among the supervisor(s), co-supervisor (if applicable), doctoral student, and the University, defining the rights and responsibilities of each party;

4.5 Under the terms of the international cooperation agreement or by the Sectoral Commission's decision, the second supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral student may be invited from another academic institution, including a foreign one. The second supervisor/co-supervisor must meet all qualification requirements defined for the supervisor in clause 4.3. If there are multiple supervisors, the requirements for a doctoral degree and academic position apply only to one of the supervisors;

4.6 The following are the main functions and duties of the scientific supervisor:

- a) The scientific supervisor must have regular consultations with the doctoral student regarding the methodological, structural, and conceptual aspects of the research, including:
 - selecting a research design and relevant methodology;
 - project management;
 - thesis/research paper/dissertation writing process;
 - assistance with integrating into local and international scientific networks;
 - participating in local and international scientific events (including doctoral colloquiums) and presenting research findings and results;
 - issues of scientific ethics;
 - professional development;
 - publication of scientific articles in a peer-reviewed journal.
- b) Regular monitoring, formative assessment, and feedback on the PhD student's consistent progress in the scientific research component. The frequency of consultations is determined on an individual basis, depending on the student's needs and the specificity of the program.

4.7 The scientific supervisor provides a conclusion/summative report on the completed dissertation, evaluating its novelty and originality, adherence to ethical norms and academic standards, and readiness for defense;

- 4.8 The PhD student may have a co-supervisor, whose qualifications must bear relevance to the subject/research topic of the PhD student's doctoral thesis. The co-supervisor (if any) provides support to the doctoral student in the process of implementing the scientific research component, based on an agreement with the supervisor and the doctoral student.
- 4.9 If the scientific supervisor/co-supervisor refuses to supervise/co-supervise the doctoral student, they should submit a well-reasoned written statement to the Dean of the Faculty, which the Dean presents to the Sectoral Commission for consideration. If the Sectoral Commission approves the supervisor/co-supervisor's request for withdrawal, the doctoral candidate is appointed a new supervisor/co-supervisor. The supervisor/co-supervisor is notified about the decision of the Sectoral Commission;
- 4.10 If the doctoral candidate considers dismissing and substituting their scientific supervisor/co-supervisor, they must apply in writing to the Dean of the Faculty with a well-reasoned request, which the Dean presents to the Sectoral Commission for consideration. If the Sectoral Commission approves the doctoral student's request, the doctoral student is appointed a new supervisor/co-supervisor. The doctoral student is notified about the decision of the Sectoral Commission;
- 4.11 Under the international agreement, it is possible to arrange an alternative agreement (e.g. cotutelle, joint supervision agreement) that allows for the formulation of supervision terms and conditions different from the ones specified in the present article.

Article 5. Duration and Volume of Doctoral Studies

- 5.1 The duration of Doctoral Studies is at least 3 and no more than 5 years unless otherwise provided by the individual plan. If the student fails to fulfill the requirements of the program after the completion of 5 years, they may be offered an additional, maximum one-year paid contract, based on the Sectoral Commission's recommendation and following all the relevant conditions;
- 5.2 The study and research components of the doctoral educational program, their sequence, and volume in credits (where relevant) are determined individually for each doctoral program;
- 5.3 The study component of the doctoral program must not exceed 60 credits;
- 5.4 Depending on the program structure, the doctoral student must have completed at least one colloquium per year before the defense. If a doctoral student fails to complete a colloquium twice, his/her student status will be terminated due to academic backwardness.
- 5.5 The University may have integrated/combined degree (e.g. joint degree, double degree) doctoral educational programs, whereby the conditions are determined by respective regulatory documents (agreements, memoranda, curricula, etc.).

Article 6. Obligation for International Publication

- 6.1 Before the dissertation is submitted for defense, the doctoral student of the Business and Administration, and Education Programs must have at least one scientific article published (or accepted for publication by the

- journal editors) in an international (foreign) peer-reviewed thematic journal/journals included in internationally recognized databases (Clarivate Analytics (formerly Thomson Reuters) Master Journal List, Scopus, Ulrich's Index, ERIH PLUS, EBSCOHost, Latindex Catalogue). The name of Ilia State University must be cited in the scholarly publication;
- 6.2 Before the dissertation is submitted for defense, a doctoral student of the Mathematics program must have at least 2 scientific articles published in the relevant field (or accepted by the editors of the journal for publication) in a (foreign) thematic journal with an impact factor higher than 0.5 included in the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science database, or a (foreign) thematic journal with a citation score (CiteScore) higher than 0.5 included in the Scopus list. The scientific publication must cite the name of Ilia State University as the doctoral student's affiliation.
- 6.3 The Ph.D. student of Business and Administration and Mathematics Programs must be either the first or second author of both published works while the Education Program student must be the first author of at least one scientific article (in an international (foreign) peer-reviewed thematic journal) and the first or second author of the second article (in a local or international thematic journal). The Sectoral Commission reviews publications for their relevance to the doctoral thesis topic and submits the conclusion to the Faculty Administration in the meeting minutes format. If such compliance is confirmed, the publications are sent to the Quality Assurance Office, which prepares a conclusion on the compliance of the publications with the requirements defined by these Bylaws. If the Sectoral Commission or the Quality Assurance Office of the University issues a negative conclusion, the doctorate student's requirement for international publication will be considered unfulfilled.

Article 7. Doctoral Thesis Submission Procedure

- 7.1 The doctoral student is required to submit to the Faculty administration two hard copies and an electronic copy of a dissertation paper that adheres to the standards of scientific publications, is executed in compliance with the academic style of Ilia State University, and in a manner that is relevant to the precise field and the dissertation paper concept defined by the specific program.
- 7.2 The dissertation paper must be written in Georgian or English. The decision to complete the thesis in English (except in the case of an English-language doctoral program) is made by the Sectoral Commission during the defense of the prospectus.
- 7.3 The dissertation paper must include a summary abstract in Georgian and English, which debriefs the primary findings and results covered in the dissertation and substantiates their scientific novelty, value, and relevance in the respective scientific discipline.
- 7.4 The Faculty Administration ensures that the dissertation is accompanied by:
- a) Certificate of fulfillment of program requirements;
 - b) Statement signed by the PhD student that the dissertation is the product of their independent research and does not contain plagiarism;
 - c) The conclusion of the doctoral student's scientific supervisor, approving that the dissertation is ready (in terms of its adherence to the norms of novelty, academic integrity and style, and research ethics) to be submitted for defense;

- d) The conclusions of the Quality Assurance Office of Ilia State University and the respective Sectoral Commission on the compliance of the doctoral student's international publication(s) with the requirements defined by Article 6 of the present Bylaws;
- 7.5 Depending on the structure of the program, a doctoral student must have completed at least one colloquium per year before the defense.
- 7.6 The deadlines related to the submission and defense of the dissertation paper are reflected in the calendar/matrix developed by individual doctoral programs;
- 7.7 In the case of international and/or other partnership agreements, it is possible to establish conditions different from those specified in Clauses 7.1 and 7.4 of this article.

Article 8. Appointment of Reviewers and Evaluation of the Dissertation

- 8.1 After the PhD student submits the dissertation and the documents listed in 7.4., the Faculty administration applies to the Sectoral Commission of the respective field to nominate reviewers and members of the Dissertation Board. Within a reasonable period (maximum 2 weeks) the Sectoral Commission applies the Faculty Board with the request to form a Dissertation Board and nominate reviewers (at least 2); among the reviewers at least one must be an international reviewer. The conclusion of an international reviewer is not mandatory if the PhD student has an international supervisor.
- 8.2 If the dissertation is written in English, reviewers must have relevant English language competence. It is among the Sectoral Commission's functions to evaluate a reviewer's English competence;
- 8.3 When nominating reviewers, the Sectoral Commission is guided by the following requirements:
 - a) A local reviewer must be a professor/ associate professor/ assistant professor/ professor emeritus/research fellow from a local university, or science-research institute/center academic staff, while an international reviewer must be from a foreign university science-research institute/center academic staff or a professor emeritus who have the academic degree of a doctor, scientific-research experience relevant to the PhD student's research topic, and depending on the specificity and development level of the field, are equipped with the latest knowledge, have actively engaged in scientific research and during the past three years and published at least 1 scholarly article relevant to the doctoral student's dissertation topic/field of research in an indexed international peer-reviewed journal.
 - b) There should be no conflict of interest between reviewers and the doctoral student (e.g. collaboration within current projects, etc.), which the reviewer candidate must confirm with a signed statement;
- 8.4 The supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) of the doctoral student is/are not involved in the reviewer selection process. The identity of the reviewers is unknown to the doctoral student until they receive their evaluation;
- 8.5 Following the nomination, the Faculty Board approves reviewer candidates, after which they are delivered the doctoral thesis to be assessed for their novelty and readiness for defense;
- 8.6 Reviewers are given a reasonable time, a maximum of 1 month, to prepare their conclusions and feedback;
- 8.7 The reviewers' conclusions are sent to the doctoral student, their scientific supervisor(s), co-supervisor, and members of the Dissertation Board;

- 8.8 If one or both of the conclusions are positive, a public defense of the thesis is scheduled, and in the event of two negative conclusions, the thesis is returned to the doctoral student for additional editing and revision based on the feedback received. The doctoral student must submit the revised thesis within a maximum of one calendar year, regardless of the student's status. When the specified deadline expires, if the doctoral student does not submit a revised thesis or the re-submitted thesis receives two negative conclusions from reviewers, their student status is terminated due to academic backwardness.

Article 9. Faculty Dissertation Board

- 9.1 The Faculty Dissertation Board (hereinafter referred to as the Dissertation Board) is the body awarding the qualification/academic degree of the Doctor;
- 9.2 The Dissertation Board is formed to review each specific dissertation and award the academic degree/qualification of the Doctor. The Dissertation Board is approved by the Faculty Board upon the recommendation of the Sectoral Commission;
- 9.3 The Dissertation Board is composed of the professors and associate professors of the relevant field/specialization of the Faculty, as well as senior and chief researchers of the relevant field/specialization of independent scientific-research units of the Faculty (if applicable), who have a doctorate or an equivalent academic degree/qualification and whose qualifications and competence allow for an in-depth and comprehensive assessment of the thesis and the evaluation of the originality of the research and its results. The composition of the Dissertation Board ensures the participation of external evaluators. Scientific supervisor(s), co-supervisor(s), and reviewer(s) are not members of the Dissertation Board;
- 9.4 Depending on the specificity of the field, the Dissertation Board may, if required, include foreign evaluators with relevant qualifications and competencies, as well as representatives of the governmental/non-governmental sectors, and the labor market;
- 9.5 The Dissertation Board includes at least one external evaluator who must be a researcher/academic staff/science personnel of the relevant field with a doctorate or equivalent academic degree, and who, depending on the field specifics, has actively participated in scientific research and has published scientific paper/s that correspond to the general topic/direction of the doctoral student's dissertation. The external evaluator is invited according to the following rule: the Sectoral Commission chooses a potential member of the Dissertation Board, and having obtained their written consent, submits their candidacy, along with other membership candidacies, to the Faculty Board for approval;
- 9.6 The number of external members in the Dissertation Board should not exceed the number of members representing the University;
- 9.7 The list of the Dissertation Board membership candidates is submitted to the Faculty Board for approval by the relevant Sectoral Commission. The Commission nominates the candidate for the Dissertation Board chairperson, and in the absence of one, interim chairperson to the Faculty Board for approval.
- 9.8 If the dissertation is written and defended in English, the Dissertation Board members must have appropriate English language competence. The sectoral commission is the one entrusted with the responsibility of determining the members' language competence.

- 9.9 If there is a well-reasoned ground, the doctoral student has the right to request the dismissal of the member/members of the Dissertation Board, in which case the candidate addresses the Dean of the Faculty with a well-substantiated request. The Dean and the Sectoral Commission review the request and the decision is communicated to the PhD students and their supervisor. The member/members of the Dissertation Board may be replaced according to the same criteria as those applied for the formation of the Dissertation Board;
- 9.10 The Dissertation Board has decision-making power only if more than half of the members are present;
- 9.11 The Dissertation Board, approved by the Faculty Board, elects the Secretary of the Board from among its members by open vote which appears as an approved decision in the Minutes of the Dissertation Board;
- 9.12 The Dissertation Board meeting proceedings are documented in the Minutes, which are signed by the chairperson and secretary of the Board. The Minutes are also accompanied by the signatures of all the Dissertation Board members present at the meeting.

Article 10. Evaluation and Defense of the Dissertation

- 10.1 The defense of the dissertation is public and conducted before the Dissertation Board. Information about the defense of the dissertation paper (place, time, date) is published on the official website of the University one week before the defense day;
- 10.2 The language of defense is Georgian unless otherwise established by the decision of the Sectoral Commission, international agreement, and/or other partnership agreement.
- 10.3 The duration and regulations of the defense process are established by the Dissertation Board;
- 10.4 The defense procedure involves the doctorate student presenting the paper, hearing reviews, a scientific discussion, and the Dissertation Board judgment;
- 10.5 Although not directly participating in the defense procedure, the supervisor is entitled to attend the defense. The supervisor can express their opinion about the thesis and the doctoral student if they are inquired by the Dissertation Board;
- 10.6 The dissertation paper is evaluated in terms of its compliance with the Ilia State University regulatory documents of the Policy on Student/Vocational Student Assessment, Credit Allocation, Ratings, and Payment for Additional or Retaken Courses/Components.
- 10.7 The dissertation paper is evaluated using the relevant standards and criteria defined in the documents of individual doctoral programs;
- 10.8 The dissertation is assessed according to the following system:
- a) Excellent (summa cum laude) – excellent work;
 - b) Very good (magna cum laude) – a result that exceeds the set requirements in every way;
 - c) Good (cum laude) – a result that exceeds the requirements;
 - d) Average (bene) – an average-level paper that meets the basic requirements;
 - e) Satisfactory (rite) - the result, which, despite the shortcomings, still meets the requirements;
 - f) Unsatisfactory (insufficient) – work of an unsatisfactory level, which cannot meet the set requirements due to significant gaps in it;
 - g) Below any standard (sub omni canone) – a result that falls short of meeting minimum requirements;

- 10.9 Members of the Dissertation Board evaluate the dissertation work through deliberation and consensus of the members;
- 10.10 No external/invited members, among them the representative of the Faculty Administration, are present at the Dissertation Board deliberations and final assessment;
- 10.11 The assessment is announced publicly by the Chairperson of the Dissertation Board.
- 10.12 If the doctoral student receives a negative assessment - "insufficient", indicating a work of an unsatisfactory level that cannot meet the requirements due to significant gaps, they must submit a revised work within one calendar year, regardless of their student status. After the expiration of the mentioned term, if the student fails to present a revised thesis, it shall result in the student's expulsion on the grounds of academic underachievement. If the doctoral candidate receives an evaluation - "completely unsatisfactory" (sub omni canone) indicating a result that does not to the least degree meet the requirements, the candidate must submit a new paper within the deadlines set by the Dissertation Board. If the doctoral candidate does not submit a new paper within the set time frame, they shall have their status terminated on the grounds of academic underachievement.
- 10.13 Upon exercising the right provided for in Clause 10.12, if the Dissertation Board still renders a negative decision on the revised/amended thesis/new thesis, the candidate's student status shall be terminated due to their failure to achieve learning outcomes;
- 10.14 In the case of partnership, local, or international cooperation, thesis defense procedures are regulated by an international, local, or partnership agreement.

Article 11. Administrative Support

- 11.1 Administrative support of the Dissertation Board and Sectoral Commissions, as well as all kinds of proceedings, are provided by the Faculty's administration.

Article 12. Mobility in Doctoral Studies

- 12.1 An individual can be enrolled in a doctoral program through mobility, following the prerequisites of the program, as defined by the University regulations and current legislation of Georgia;
- 12.2 The Faculty decides on enrollment and credit recognition and submits the decision to the Rector;
- 12.3 If the student is engaged in international mobility as part of the study component, s/he enters a special learning agreement with the University. The credits obtained therein are validated by the components of the doctoral program after they have been recognized by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement; If the doctoral student is carrying out international mobility as part of the research component, s/he must submit to the Faculty a research agenda signed by their supervisor and co-supervisor;
- 12.4 In the case of partnership, local, or international cooperation, it is possible to establish conditions different from those specified in this article.

Article 13. Awarding Academic Degree and Thesis Publication

- 13.1 The doctoral student is conferred an academic degree/qualification by the Dissertation Board;
- 13.2 The doctoral student may appeal the received grade within 10 working days from the announcement of the decision made by the Dissertation Boards by submitting a written complaint to the Dean of the Faculty, justifying the reason for the appeal and specifying the procedural violations that should be the basis for reviewing the grade;
- 13.3 The Dean of the Faculty will review the complaint with the respective Sectoral Commission. The latter decides whether there are reasons for the re-examination of the thesis and, if so, sends it to the Dissertation Board with a substantiated reason for further review;
- 13.4 The Faculty Administration is obliged to upload the thesis to the University/Faculty's website within one month after the thesis defense and conferral of the qualification;
- 13.5 The diploma confirming the doctoral academic degree/qualification is issued after the thesis is uploaded to the University's website.
- 13.6 Information on the topics of current dissertations and defended dissertations will be posted on the electronic portal once it is launched.

Article 14. Disputes

14.1 Appeal Procedure

Any problem arising in the process of doctoral studies is considered by the Sectoral Commission, based on a formal complaint submitted to the Dean.

Article 15. Termination/Suspension of PhD Student Status

- 15.1 Termination of the PhD student status is governed by the student/vocational student status regulation policy and procedures of Ilia State University
- 15.2 Suspension of the PhD student status is governed by the student/vocational student status regulation policy and procedures of Ilia State University and in the following cases:
 - a) Due to academic underachievement, which means:
 - a.a. The student's failure to defend the prospectus twice in a row;
 - a.b. The student's failure to complete the colloquium twice;
 - a.c. If the appeal is not upheld by the Dissertation Board, the dissertation defense is evaluated as unsatisfactory twice, and the revised work is not submitted within the deadlines outlined in clause 10.12.
 - a.d. In the event of two negative conclusions from reviewers, within a maximum of one calendar year, failure to submit a revised thesis, or receiving two negative conclusions from reviewers on a re-submitted thesis.
 - b) if the doctoral student has violated the Code of Ethics and other rules operating at the University;
 - c) a case of plagiarism or data falsification has been detected.

- d) if the doctoral student fails to fulfill the requirements of the program after the completion of the additional one-year contract.

Article 16. Revocation of the Doctor's Academic Degree

- 16.1. The Sectoral Commission reviews cases in which a doctorate graduate violates norms of academic and research ethics;
- 16.2. Should it be required, the Sectoral Commission addresses the Faculty Board to assemble a Dissertation Board to deliberate the revocation of the academic degree/qualification of the Ph.D.

Article 17. Tuition Fees for Doctoral Studies

- 17.1. If the requirements of the doctoral program are met by the deadlines specified in clause 17.3 of this article, the studies in the doctoral program are free for 5 years. Foreign citizens have to pay tuition unless there are exceptional circumstances. Additionally, it is possible to announce admission to paid slots of the Doctoral Studies;
- 17.2. If the doctoral student fails to fulfill any of the requirements of the doctoral program within the deadline specified in Clause 17.3 of this Article or from the sixth year of study, the doctoral student must pay the tuition fee established by that time;
- 17.3. If the doctoral student has not defended a prospectus within one year after enrollment, or by the end of the 8th semester, has not published at least one scientific paper according to the requirements, s/he has to pay tuition fees for each subsequent semester in the amount and manner established by the University. If after 5 years, the student signs an additional one-year contract to fulfill the program requirements, s/he is liable for tuition fees in the amount determined at the time the contract is signed. If the student fails to fulfill the requirements of the program after the completion of the additional contract, their student status is terminated.

Article 18. Transitional Provisions

- 18.1. The students that may be exempted from the requirements (first or second authorship of a scientific publication, compliance with a dissertation) specified in Clause 6.3 of these Bylaws are:
 - a) doctoral students of all disciplines enrolled from March 20, 2008, to 2015, who have 2 (two) scientific articles published in the journals specified in Clause 6.1;
 - b) doctoral students of all disciplines enrolled before March 20, 2008, who have 1 (one) scientific article published in the journals specified in Clause 6.1.

- 18.2. When the program-defined study period expires, the requirements outlined in Article 6 of the present Bylaws are applied upon implementing a new agreement with doctoral students who registered before 2015.
- 18.3. Doctoral students of the Business and Administration and Education programs who were enrolled in doctoral programs before August 1, 2024, and had active student status as of January 1, 2025, or who file for reinstatement of the student status until the end of the 2025-2026 academic year are not subject to the publication obligation specified in Clauses 6.1 and 6.2. Before defending the dissertation, a doctoral student of the Business and Administration and Education program must have at least one scientific article published (or accepted for publication by the journal editors) in an international (foreign) peer-reviewed thematic journal/journals that are included in recognized international lists (Clarivate Analytics (formerly Thomson Reuters) Master Journal List, Scopus, Ulrich's Index, ERIH PLUS, EBSCOHost, Latindex Catalogue). The name of Ilia State University must be cited in the scientific publication;
- 18.4 The supervisor's qualification requirements, the colloquium obligation, and the obligation to provide an international reviewer's conclusion as specified in Clauses 4.3., 5.4. and 8.1 of these Bylaws do not apply to doctoral students who were enrolled in the Faculty's postgraduate programs before August 1, 2024, and had active student status as of January 1, 2025, or who file for reinstatement of student status before the end of the 2025-2026 academic year.