

LEPL Ilia State University

Regulation of the Dissertation Council and Doctoral Program of the School of Law

Article 1. General Provisions, Scope of Application, and Objectives

1.1. This regulation defines the procedures for admission to the doctoral program of the Ilia State University School of Law (hereinafter “the School”), the rules and responsibilities for selecting a supervisor/co-supervisor and reviewers, the procedures for forming and operating the Dissertation Council, the criteria for awarding the doctoral qualification/academic degree, the procedure for defending a dissertation, the mechanisms for resolving disputes and appealing decisions related to these matters, as well as other important issues related to the planning and implementation of the doctoral program.

1.2. The objectives of the doctoral educational programs are aligned with the research strategy of Ilia State University.

1.3. The main objective of the doctoral program, in accordance with the university's mission, is to promote:

- a) the development of the university’s educational and research potential;
- b) collaboration through the use of interdisciplinary approaches, taking into account the research topic;
- c) the establishment of field-specific scientific cooperation and professional networks.

1.4. A graduate of the doctoral program is awarded the Doctor’s qualification/academic degree if they have:

- a) conducted original research that expands the boundaries of knowledge and whose results have been published in the form of a scholarly article in scientific periodicals that meet the requirements specified in this regulation;
- b) successfully fulfilled all other requirements defined by the program.

1.5 The development of doctoral educational programs is based on the university’s existing research potential, prior experience in scientific work in the relevant field, successful practices, and research outcomes. The programs are implemented on the basis of scientific-research units within the School and/or the University.

1.6. Research conducted within the framework of the doctoral program is carried out in accordance with the research ethics standards of the University, which take into account both local and international standards of research ethics applicable in the relevant field.

1.7. Taking into account the specifics of the field, the School of Law collaborates, within the framework of the doctoral program, with local and international scientific research institutes/centers/NGOs, doctoral schools, as well as with the public and private sectors/industry and other potential employers.

1.8. The qualification of academic/scientific staff involved in the implementation of the doctoral educational program is confirmed by a scientific publication published within the last three years in a peer-reviewed journal with an international index, which demonstrates their competence in the relevant field. Exceptions may apply only to components aimed at developing transferable skills, where staff competence may be verified through practical experience in the relevant field. This exception does not apply to components such as field-specific and methodological courses.

1.9. The School may implement a doctoral educational program within the framework of international cooperation, which may include student exchange or the awarding of a joint or double qualification/degree.

Article 2. Field-Specific Commission

2.1. Field-specific commissions are established by the School Council based on academic disciplines and areas of specialization, and are composed of professors, associate professors, and assistant professors who hold a doctoral academic degree from the university. Members of the commission must also possess English language. The chairperson and the secretary of the commission are elected from among its members by open ballot.

2.2. The field-specific commission participates in processes related to admission to the doctoral program, as well as in teaching and research activities, including:

- a) reviewing and evaluating research proposals submitted by doctoral applicants and conducting oral examinations with them;
- b) approving the doctoral student's scientific supervisor(s) or co-supervisor(s); reviewing and deciding on the doctoral student's request to change or add a supervisor/co-supervisor, or on a supervisor's declaration to withdraw from supervision;
- c) defense of the prospectus;
- d) evaluating the progress of doctoral students within the framework of colloquia and providing them with feedback based on their reports and presentations;
- e) submitting to the School Council the list of Dissertation Council members, the candidate for the chairperson, and, in the absence of the chairperson, the candidate for acting chairperson;
- f) selecting reviewers for the evaluation of the dissertation and submitting their candidacies to the School Council;
- g) determining whether the doctoral student's publication corresponds to their dissertation topic and submitting the relevant conclusion to the Dean of the School for submission to the University's Quality Assurance Department;
- h) reviewing and making decisions on the doctoral student's request to change the title, topic, or direction of their research;

i) in the case of reinstatement of a doctoral student's status, evaluating the relevance of the student's research topic based on the supervisor's submission, the student's research proposal, the consent of a partner organization for the use of material/intellectual resources (if applicable), the previously defended prospectus and/or scientific publications by the student. This procedure applies to doctoral students whose status was suspended for two or more academic semesters;

j) making decisions regarding the writing and defense of dissertations in English by students enrolled in Georgian-language doctoral programs.

Article 3. Admission to the Doctoral Program

3.1. The right to enroll in the doctoral program is granted to individuals who hold a Master's degree in Law or an equivalent academic degree.

3.2. Admission to the doctoral program is announced by the Rector based on the submission of the School Council or the Dean. Admission may be announced for either the fall or spring semester. Information about the admission requirements, deadlines, and required documents is published on the Ilia State University website.

3.3. Required Documents

An applicant wishing to enroll in the doctoral program must submit the following documents:

a) a completed application form;

b) an identity document;

c) a copy of the document confirming possession of a Master's or equivalent academic degree (in case of a five-year higher education diploma or a diploma obtained abroad, its equivalency must be confirmed by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement);

d) a curriculum vitae (CV);

e) a digital version of a 3x4 cm photograph;

f) a research proposal completed by the candidate and signed by their potential supervisor, along with the supervisor's written consent (the forms for the proposal and consent are published on the University website at the time each admission round is announced);

g) in cases where resources of a partner organization are to be used, a consent form from the organization, signed by its representative;

h) to confirm research skills: a prior work/publication in the relevant field and/or participation in scientific-research projects and events and/or at least two years of work experience in the relevant field. Specific requirements are defined in the program's admission prerequisites.

i) an international certificate/document confirming at least B2 level proficiency in English (if available), with the specific requirements defined in the admission documentation of the respective program;

j) a document confirming military registration (required only for male applicants);

k) any other documents/conditions that may be required by the program.

3.4. Admission Procedures

3.4.1. After verifying the submitted documents, the School administration reviews the candidate's documentation confirming English language proficiency. If the submitted documents do not clearly establish at least a B2 level of English proficiency, the doctoral candidate must take an English language examination organized by the University (minimum B2 level). The minimum passing score for the test is determined individually for each program and is specified in the program's admission requirements and the School's announcement regarding the admission call.

3.4.2. Candidates who present a valid international certificate/document confirming English language proficiency are exempt from the English language examination. Candidates who submit a diploma confirming completion of an English-language bachelor's or master's program outside of Georgia are also exempt (the diploma must be accompanied by a recognition document issued by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement). Additionally, individuals who present a diploma and transcript or an official statement confirming that the bachelor's or master's program was conducted in English in Georgia are also exempt.

3.4.3. The acceptable levels and scores of valid certificates/documents confirming English language proficiency are specified in the regulatory documents of the respective program.

3.4.4. After successfully passing the English language examination or confirming proficiency, the candidate's submitted research proposal and research skills are evaluated. For this purpose, the relevant documents are sent to members of the appropriate field-specific commission. If the candidate's potential supervisor is also a member of the field-specific commission, they do not participate in the candidate's evaluation. The requirements for the research proposal, the evaluation criteria, and rubrics are defined individually for each program and are published on the University's website at the time of each admission announcement. If the candidate receives a satisfactory evaluation, they then proceed to an oral examination with the same field-specific commission.

3.4.5. The oral examination conducted by the field-specific commission is evaluated based on predefined requirements, criteria, and rubrics, which are determined individually for each program and published on the University's website at the time of the admission announcement.

3.4.6. The evaluations received by the doctoral candidate are published progressively on the University's website, ensuring the protection of personal data.

3.4.7. A doctoral candidate has the right to appeal the received evaluations within two working days of their publication. Information about the appeals procedure is outlined in the Order of the University Rector and is published on the University's website. The appeal is reviewed by the relevant appeals committee, which is pre-approved by the School Council. The results of the appeal are published on the University's website with due protection of personal data.

3.4.8 In cases of partnership-based, local, or international cooperation, a special form of consent—as defined in subparagraph (g) of Article 3.3 of this regulation—may be established.

Article 4. Supervisor(s)/Co-Supervisor of the Doctoral Student

4.1. The selection of the doctoral student's potential supervisor(s) takes place during the admission process to the doctoral program, and their willingness to supervise is confirmed by signing the candidate's research proposal.

4.2. The supervisor, or at least one of the supervisors if there are multiple, must be a member of the University's academic (professor, associate professor) and/or research staff holding a doctoral or equivalent academic degree.

4.3. Qualification requirements for the doctoral student's scientific supervisor(s):

a) holds an academic degree in the relevant field;

b) possesses up-to-date knowledge, has research experience relevant to the doctoral student's field of study, has actively participated in scientific research, and has published at least one scientific article within the past three years in a peer-reviewed international journal with a thematic international index, which corresponds to the general topic/direction of the doctoral student's dissertation.

c) has experience in supervision/co-supervision or has completed relevant training/seminars aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of scientific supervision;

d) in cases where the dissertation is written and defended in English, the scientific supervisor must also possess English language. Determining this competence falls within the authority and responsibility of the relevant field-specific commission.

4.4. Upon a candidate's admission to the doctoral program, a three-party agreement is concluded between the supervisor(s), co-supervisor (if applicable), the doctoral student, and the University, which outlines the rights and responsibilities of each party.

4.5. A second supervisor may be invited from another academic institution, including a foreign one, either within the framework of an international cooperation agreement or based on a decision of the field-specific commission. The second supervisor must meet all the qualification requirements outlined in section 4.3 for supervisors.

4.6. If the scientific supervisor or co-supervisor refuses to continue supervising the doctoral student, they must submit a reasoned, written statement to the Dean of the School. The Dean will forward the statement to the field-specific commission for consideration. If the commission approves the supervisor's/co-supervisor's request, a new supervisor/co-supervisor will be assigned to the doctoral student. The decision of the field-specific commission will be communicated to both the supervisor/co-supervisor and the doctoral student.

4.7. If a doctoral student wishes to change their scientific supervisor or co-supervisor, they must submit a reasoned, written request to the Dean of the School. The Dean will forward the request to the field-specific commission for consideration. If the commission approves the student's request, a new supervisor/co-supervisor will be assigned. The decision of the field-specific commission will be communicated to both the doctoral student and the new supervisor/co-supervisor.

4.8. The primary functions and responsibilities of the scientific supervisor are as follows:

a) providing regular consultations to the doctoral student throughout the research process on methodological, structural, conceptual, and other relevant issues, specifically regarding:

- selection of research design and appropriate methodology;
- project management;
- the process of writing the thesis/scientific research paper/dissertation;
- integration into local and international academic networks;

- participation in and presentation of results at local and international academic events (including doctoral colloquia);
- matters of research ethics;
- professional development;
- publication of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals.

b) periodically monitoring the progress of the doctoral student's consistent implementation of the research component, providing formative assessment and feedback. The frequency and regularity of consultations are determined individually, based on the specifics of the research and the needs of the doctoral student.

4.9. The scientific supervisor submits an evaluation of the completed dissertation, assessing its originality, compliance with research ethics and academic integrity standards, and its readiness for defense.

4.10. The doctoral student may have a co-supervisor whose qualifications must correspond to the topic/research field of the doctoral dissertation. The co-supervisor supports the doctoral student in the implementation of the research component, based on mutual agreement with the supervisor and the doctoral student.

Article 5. Duration of Study and Workload in the Doctoral Program

5.1. The duration of study in the doctoral program is no less than 3 and no more than 5 years, unless otherwise specified by an individual study plan. If the student fails to meet the program requirements within the 5-year period, an additional paid contract of up to one year may be concluded, based on a recommendation from the field-specific commission and subject to relevant conditions.

5.2. The educational and research components of the doctoral-level program, including their sequence and volume in credits (where applicable), are defined individually for each doctoral educational program.

5.3. The instructional component of the doctoral educational program must not exceed 60 credits.

5.4. According to the structure of the program, the doctoral student must complete at least one colloquium per year before the dissertation defense. If the doctoral student fails to complete the colloquium twice, their student status will be terminated due to academic underperformance.

5.5. The University may offer joint doctoral educational programs (e.g., joint degree, double degree), the terms of which are defined by relevant documents such as agreements, memoranda, curricula, and similar instruments.

Article 6. Obligation of International Publication

6.1. Prior to the defense of the dissertation, the doctoral student must have at least two scientific articles published (or accepted for publication by a journal's editorial board) in the relevant field, including at least one article published in an internationally peer-reviewed thematic journal.

The name of Ilia State University must be indicated as the doctoral student's affiliation in the scientific publication.

6.2. The doctoral student is considered to have fulfilled the requirement to publish in an internationally peer-reviewed journal, as specified in paragraph 6.1, if they have published an article in a foreign peer-reviewed journal or in an internationally peer-reviewed journal of Ilia State University that is included in the list defined under Article 6.1.

6.3. The doctoral student must be either the first or second author of the scientific article published in an internationally peer-reviewed thematic journal listed under Article 6.1 of this regulation. The field-specific commission submits a session protocol to the School regarding the compliance of the publications with the dissertation. If compliance is confirmed, the publications are forwarded to the University's Quality Assurance Department, which prepares a conclusion on whether the publications meet the requirements defined by this regulation. If the conclusion from either the field-specific commission or the Quality Assurance Department is negative, the international publication requirement will not be considered fulfilled for the doctoral student.

Article 7. Procedure for Submitting the Dissertation

7.1. The doctoral student must submit the dissertation, which complies with the standards of scientific publication and is prepared in accordance with either Ilia State University's academic style or the academic style relevant to the field as defined by the specific doctoral program concept. The dissertation must be submitted to the School administration in two printed copies and in electronic format.

7.2. The dissertation must be written in either Georgian or English. The decision to write the dissertation in English (except in the case of an English-language doctoral program) is made by the field-specific commission.

If the dissertation is written in Georgian, an English translation must also be submitted, which will be sent for evaluation to an international reviewer selected by the field-specific commission.

A dissertation written in English must be submitted in accordance with the procedure outlined in Article 7.1 of this regulation.

7.3. The dissertation must include, as a section, a summary abstract in both Georgian and English, presenting the main scientific findings of the dissertation and substantiating their scientific novelty, value, and relevance within the corresponding academic discipline.

7.4. The School administration ensures that the following documents are attached to the dissertation:

- a) a certificate confirming that the program requirements have been fulfilled;
- b) a signed declaration stating that the dissertation is the result of the doctoral student's independent research and does not contain plagiarism;
- c) a conclusion from the doctoral student's scientific supervisor(s) confirming the dissertation's readiness for defense, including assessment of its originality, compliance with academic integrity standards and style, and adherence to research ethics norms.
- d) conclusions from Ilia State University's Quality Assurance Department and the relevant field-specific commission regarding the compliance of the doctoral student's international publication(s) with the requirements established by this regulation (Article 6);

7.5. According to the structure of the program, the doctoral student must complete at least one colloquium per year prior to the defense.

7.6. The deadlines related to the submission and defense of the dissertation are specified in the calendar/matrix developed within the framework of individual doctoral programs.

Article 8. Selection, Approval of Reviewers, and Evaluation of the Dissertation by Reviewers

8.1. After the doctoral student submits the dissertation along with the documents listed in section 7.4, the School administration contacts the relevant field-specific commission to nominate reviewers and members of the Dissertation Council. Within a reasonable timeframe (no more than two weeks), the field-specific commission submits a request to the School Council for the formation of the Dissertation Council and the nomination of at least two reviewers; among them, there must be at least one international reviewer. A conclusion from the international reviewer is not required if the doctoral student has an international supervisor.

8.2. If the dissertation is written in English, the reviewers must possess English language competence. The responsibility for determining this competence lies with the field-specific commission.

8.3. In nominating reviewers, the field-specific commission follows these requirements:

a) The local reviewer must be affiliated with a local university or scientific-research institute/center (professor, associate professor, assistant professor, professor - emeritus, or research staff member), while the international reviewer must be affiliated with a foreign university or scientific-research institute/center, or be a person with emeritus status. Both local and international reviewers must hold a doctoral academic degree, possess research experience relevant to the doctoral student's research topic, and, considering the specifics and development of the field, have up-to-date knowledge, active participation in scientific research, and at least one scientific publication within the last three years in a foreign peer-reviewed journal with an international index that aligns with the general topic/research field of the doctoral dissertation;

b) There must be no conflict of interest between the reviewers and the doctoral student (e.g., ongoing collaboration in projects or other similar engagements), which must be confirmed by the reviewer candidate through a signed declaration.

8.3. The doctoral student's supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) do not participate in the reviewer selection process. The identity of the reviewers remains undisclosed to the doctoral student until the moment their evaluations are received.

8.4. After nomination, the reviewer candidates are approved by the School Council, after which the dissertation is sent to them for evaluation of its originality and readiness for defense.

8.5. Reviewers are given a reasonable timeframe, with a maximum of 2 months, to prepare their evaluation and feedback.

8.6. The reviewers' evaluations are sent to the doctoral student, their scientific supervisor(s), co-supervisor (if applicable), and members of the Dissertation Council.

8.7. If one or both reviewers provide a positive evaluation, a public defense of the dissertation is scheduled. In the case of two negative evaluations, the dissertation is returned to the doctoral student for revision, taking into account the feedback provided. The doctoral student must submit the revised dissertation within a maximum of one calendar year, regardless of their student status. If the deadline expires and the doctoral student either fails to resubmit the revised dissertation or the resubmitted work

is again negatively evaluated by both reviewers, the student's status will be terminated due to failure to achieve the learning outcomes.

Article 9. Dissertation Council

9.1. The Dissertation Council is the body responsible for awarding the doctoral qualification/academic degree.

9.2. A Dissertation Council is established for the review of each specific dissertation and the awarding of the doctoral academic degree/qualification. The Dissertation Council is approved by the School Council based on the nomination of the field-specific commission.

9.3. Dissertation Councils are composed of professors, associate professors, and assistant professors in the relevant field/specialty of the School, as well as senior and chief research fellows (if applicable) from independent scientific-research units in the same field/specialty. All members must hold a doctoral academic degree, and their qualifications and competencies must allow for in-depth and comprehensive evaluation of the dissertation and its research originality and outcomes. Participation of external evaluators in the Dissertation Council is ensured. The doctoral student's supervisor(s), co-supervisor, and reviewers do not participate in the work of the Dissertation Council.

9.4. Taking into account the specifics of the field, the Dissertation Council may include, when necessary, international evaluators with relevant qualifications and competencies, as well as representatives from the governmental/non-governmental sector and the labor market.

9.5. The Dissertation Council must include at least one external evaluator who holds a doctoral academic degree or an equivalent qualification in the relevant field. This person must be a researcher/academic staff member/scientific personnel who, based on the specifics of the field, has actively participated in scientific research and has published scientific work(s) corresponding to the general topic/direction of the doctoral dissertation. The invitation of such a member must follow this procedure: the field-specific commission identifies a potential member for the Dissertation Council and, upon receiving their written consent, submits their candidacy to the School Council for approval along with other proposed members of the Council.

9.6. The number of invited members must not exceed the number of members representing the University in the Dissertation Council.

9.7. The list of candidates for Dissertation Council membership is submitted to the School Council for approval by the relevant field-specific commission. Additionally, the field-specific commission presents to the School Council a candidate for the position of Chairperson of the Dissertation Council and, in their absence, a candidate for Acting Chairperson.

9.8. If the dissertation is written and defended in English, the members of the Dissertation Council must possess English language competence. The determination and responsibility for confirming this competence lie with the field-specific commission.

9.9. After the Dissertation Council is approved by the School Council, its composition is communicated to the doctoral student and their supervisor. If there is a valid reason, the doctoral student and/or the supervisor has the right to request recusal of a member or members of the Dissertation Council by submitting a reasoned written request addressed to the Dean of the School. The request is reviewed by the field-specific commission with the participation of the Dean. The decision is communicated to the doctoral student and their supervisor. The member(s) of the Dissertation Council may be replaced following the same principles by which the Council is initially formed.

- 9.10. The Dissertation Council is considered quorate if more than half of its members are present.
- 9.11. The Dissertation Council, approved by the School Council, elects a secretary from among its members by open vote; this decision is recorded in the minutes of the Dissertation Council.
- 9.12. The session of the Dissertation Council is documented in official minutes, which are signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary of the Council. The minutes must also include the signatures of all members of the Dissertation Council who were present at the session.

Article 10. Evaluation and Defense of the Dissertation

- 10.1. The dissertation defense is public and takes place before the Dissertation Council. Information about the defense (location, time, date) is published on the University's official website at least one week prior to the defense.
- 10.2. The language of the dissertation defense is Georgian, unless otherwise determined by the decision of the field-specific commission, an international agreement, and/or another partnership agreement.
- 10.3. The duration and regulations of the dissertation defense process are established by the Dissertation Council.
- 10.4. The dissertation defense process includes the presentation of the dissertation by the doctoral student, the reading of the reviews, a scientific discussion, and the decision of the Dissertation Council.
- 10.5. The supervisor has the right to attend the dissertation defense but does not participate in the defense process. They may express their opinion regarding the dissertation and the doctoral student only if addressed by the Dissertation Council with a question.
- 10.6. The dissertation is evaluated in accordance with Ilia State University's regulations on the assessment of students/professional students, credit allocation, grading, and the determination of fees for additional/repeated courses/components.
- 10.7. The Dissertation Council evaluates the dissertation based on specific criteria defined in the documents of individual doctoral programs.
- 10.8. The dissertation is evaluated using the following system:
- a) Excellent (summa cum laude) – an outstanding dissertation;
 - b) Very Good (magna cum laude) – a result that significantly exceeds the established requirements;
 - c) Good (cum laude) – a result that exceeds the established requirements;
 - d) Satisfactory (bene) – an average-level dissertation that meets the basic requirements;
 - e) Sufficient (rite) – a result that, despite flaws, still meets the established requirements;
 - f) Insufficient (insufficient) – an unsatisfactory dissertation that does not meet the established requirements.
 - f) Insufficient – a dissertation of unsatisfactory quality that does not meet the established requirements;
 - g) Completely Unsatisfactory (sub omni canone) – a result that entirely fails to meet the established requirements.

10.9. The members of the Dissertation Council evaluate the dissertation through discussion and consensus, taking into account the reviewers' evaluations.

10.10. No external individuals, including representatives of the School administration, may be present during the Council's deliberation and agreement on the final evaluation.

10.11. The final evaluation is publicly announced by the Chairperson of the Dissertation Council.

10.12. If the doctoral student receives a negative evaluation – “f) Insufficient – a dissertation of unsatisfactory quality that does not meet the established requirements,” they must submit a revised dissertation within one calendar year, regardless of their student status. If the student fails to do so within this timeframe, their student status will be terminated due to academic failure. If the doctoral student receives the evaluation – “g) Completely Unsatisfactory (sub omni canone) – a result that entirely fails to meet the established requirements,” they must submit a new dissertation within the timeframe determined by the Dissertation Council. Failure to do so will result in termination of student status due to failure to achieve learning outcomes.

10.13. If, after exercising the right provided under Article 10.12, the doctoral student receives once again an “Insufficient” or “Completely Unsatisfactory” evaluation from the Dissertation Council, their student status will be terminated due to failure to achieve learning outcomes.

10.14. In the case of partnership-based, local, or international collaboration, the organization of the dissertation defense (if necessary) shall be regulated by the respective international, local, or partnership agreement.

Article 11. Administrative Support

11.1. The administrative support for the Dissertation Council and field-specific commissions, as well as all types of record-keeping and documentation, is provided by the School administration.

Article 12. Mobility in Doctoral Studies

12.1. A person may be enrolled in a doctoral program through mobility in accordance with the legislation in force in Georgia and the University regulations, while complying with the program's prerequisites.

12.2. The decision on enrollment and credit recognition is made by the School and submitted to the Rector.

12.3. In the case of international mobility, if it is carried out within the framework of the educational component, a corresponding agreement (learning agreement) must be signed. The credits defined by the agreement will be considered after recognition by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. If the international mobility is carried out within the framework of the research component, the doctoral student must submit a research agenda signed by their supervisor and co-supervisor (if applicable) to the School.

12.4. In the case of partnership-based, local, or international collaboration, conditions different from those defined in this Article may be established.

Article 13. Awarding of the Degree and Publication Requirement

13.1. The academic degree/qualification is awarded to the doctoral student by the Dissertation Council.

13.2. The doctoral student has the right to appeal the decision made by the Dissertation Council within 10 working days from its announcement by submitting a written complaint to the School Dean, specifying the grounds for appeal and identifying the procedural violations that justify the request for review.

13.3. The School Dean reviews the complaint together with the relevant field-specific commission. The commission determines whether there are grounds for reconsidering the dissertation. If such grounds exist, it submits a reasoned request to the Dissertation Council for re-evaluation. The Dissertation Council makes its decision in accordance with the procedure defined in Article 10 of this Regulation.

13.4. The School administration is obligated to upload the dissertation to the University/School website within one month after the defense and awarding of the qualification.

13.5. The diploma certifying the academic degree/qualification of Doctor is issued after the dissertation is uploaded to the University's website.

13.6. Information about ongoing dissertation topics and defended dissertations will be published on a unified electronic portal once it becomes operational.

Article 14. Disputes

14.1. Appeals Procedure

Any issue arising during the course of doctoral studies is reviewed by the relevant field-specific commission based on a written request submitted to the Dean.

Article 15. Termination/Suspension of Doctoral Student Status

15.1. The status of a doctoral student is suspended in accordance with the Ilia State University regulations governing student/professional student status.

15.2. The status of a doctoral student is terminated in accordance with the regulations governing student/professional student status at Ilia State University, this Regulation, and in the following cases:

a) A doctoral student's status is terminated due to failure to achieve academic outcomes, which includes:

a.a) Failure to defend the prospectus twice in a row;

a.b) Failure to meet the colloquium requirement twice;

a.c) Failure to submit a revised version of a dissertation—previously rejected by two reviewers—within one year, or its re-evaluation as unsatisfactory by both reviewers again (in accordance with Article 8.7 of this Regulation);

a.d) Failure to submit a revised/new dissertation in accordance with the requirements of Articles 8.7 and 10.12 of this Regulation.

a.e) If, after exercising the right defined in Article 10.12, the Dissertation Committee issues another negative decision;

a.f) If, after appealing the Dissertation Committee's assessment, the Committee upholds its negative decision;

a.g) If the doctoral student fails to fulfil the program requirements even after the expiration of an additional one-year agreement.

- b) If the doctoral student violates the University's Code of Ethics or other university regulations;
- c) If a case of plagiarism or data falsification is confirmed.

Article 16. Annulment of the Academic Degree of Doctor

16.1. Cases of violations of academic and research ethics by a doctoral program graduate are reviewed by the field-specific commission.

16.2. If necessary, the field-specific commission submits a motion to the School Council to establish a Dissertation Board, which will consider the annulment of the doctoral academic degree/qualification.

Article 17. Tuition Fee for Doctoral Studies

17.1. In accordance with the timeframes defined in Article 5.1 of this Regulation, doctoral studies are free of charge for Georgian citizens for a period of five years. For foreign nationals, tuition fees apply, except in exceptional cases. Admission to doctoral programs may also be announced for tuition-based positions.

17.2. If the doctoral student fails to meet the program requirements within the designated timeframe starting from the relevant semester, or from the sixth year of study, they must pay the tuition fee determined at that time, in accordance with Article 17.3 of this Regulation.

17.3. If, one year after enrollment and the start of studies, the doctoral student has not defended the prospectus, or fails to defend it before the commission (even after a resubmission), and has not published at least one publication in accordance with the requirements by the end of the 8th semester, they must pay tuition for each subsequent semester in the amount and according to the procedures established by the university. If, in order to fulfill the program requirements, the student signs an additional one-year contract after the initial five-year period, they are obligated to pay the tuition fee set at the time of the contract. If the student fails to meet the program requirements after the expiration of the additional contract, their student status will be terminated.