

## R U L E S

### **pertaining to doctoral studies at higher education institutions, issued pursuant to Article 7 of the Higher Education Act, No 63/2006**

#### Article 1

##### *Objective*

The purpose of doctoral programmes offered by higher education institutions is to provide those pursuing such studies with the knowledge and skills required to enable them to engage in academic research, seek new knowledge, and enter professions which require training and skill in applying scientific or scholarly approaches.

Authorisations issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture (“the Minister”) to a higher education institution to offer study programmes leading to a doctoral degree amount to a recognition that the relevant institution meets all requirements and conditions laid down in the present rules. In addition, doctoral programmes must fulfil the criteria laid down in the *National Qualification Framework* issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.

#### Article 2

##### *Doctoral studies*

Doctoral studies are based on a project description and a study and research proposal. With reference to the study and research proposal, a contract shall be drawn up between the relevant faculty and the student relating to the organisation of the studies, the rights and obligations of the student and of the supervisor(s) and, where appropriate, the involvement of any other person(s) in the doctoral studies. The contract shall specify any services available to the doctoral student during the studies, and the measures to be taken to ensure the continuity of the studies.

Doctoral students may have more than one supervisor, in which case the role of each supervisor shall be clearly defined in the abovementioned contract. One of the supervisors shall act as the doctoral student’s supervisory teacher. The supervisory teacher must be permanently employed at the higher education institution in question.

Those appointed as supervisors of doctoral studies must have completed either a doctorate or equivalent academic studies in the relevant academic discipline, or a related one, and be recognised as specialists in that discipline.

Supervisors must have published papers or works on subjects bearing relation to the student’s project in a forum that maintains high academic standards. Supervisors must have an active publication record and a strong research background in their academic disciplines.

At least one of a doctoral student’s supervisors must have prior experience of supervising doctoral students or extensive experience of supervising students at the Master’s level.

Supervisors must have participated in international collaborative research projects and have experience of raising independent funding from recognised research funds.

Doctoral students must participate actively in the academic community to which their doctoral projects belong.

Doctoral theses shall be defended in public and shall be published.

Each higher education institution shall issue and make public regulations for its doctoral programme(s).

## Article 3

*Applications for authorisation to establish doctoral programmes*

A higher education institution applying to the Minister for authorisation to offer a doctoral programme in a particular academic discipline shall accompany its application with supporting documents providing information about the following:

- a. The intended role of the doctoral programme and the aims pursued by the higher education institution.
- b. The definition of the doctoral programme with reference to *the National Qualification Framework* issued by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture.
- c. The title of the doctoral degree to be awarded and the duration of the studies leading to the degree.
- d. A description of the admission criteria and the requirements for adequate preparation.
- e. A description of the application process.
- f. Information about the administrative aspects of the doctoral programme, including doctoral study committees, doctoral defences and eligibility criteria for opponents.
- g. The Ministry's accreditation of the relevant academic discipline.
- h. The academic status of staff attached to the academic programme in question, their research records and publications.
- i. Information about the organisation of research within the relevant academic programme and plans for its future development.
- í. Information about available facilities and working conditions with regard to academic activities, the number of teachers attached to the relevant academic programme and their education and experience.
- j. Information about the links between undergraduate and graduate studies and the number of students graduating with a Master's degree in recent years.
- k. The higher education institution's position in the relevant discipline, or its subfields, in an international context. Collaboration with research institutions, higher education institutions or businesses, within and outside Iceland.
- l. A description of the funding mechanism of the doctoral programme.

## Article 4

*Authorisation to offer a doctoral programme*

The Minister shall appoint an evaluation committee of three independent experts to assess the fitness of higher education institutions to award doctoral degrees. Where it considers this necessary, the committee may call for documents or information in addition to those accompanying the application of the higher education institution.

The evaluation committee shall base its assessment on the substantive aspects of Article 3 of the present rules. Referring to the information provided by each higher education institution, the evaluation committee shall document the conclusions of the assessment and accompany them with a detailed and objective justification.

While authorisations to offer doctoral programmes are granted for an indefinite period of time, the Minister may revoke an authorisation where external quality control reveals that the higher education institution concerned no longer meets general requirements or where any of the factors relating to its strengths and capabilities in the academic discipline to which the doctoral programme is attached have changed significantly.

The Minister shall decide whether to reject or grant applications by higher education institutions for an authorisation to offer a doctoral programme after receiving the opinion of the evaluation committee. Authorisations granted to higher education institutions to offer doctoral programmes shall be in writing and shall take the form of a special certificate.

Article 5

*Validity*

The present rules are issued on the basis of Article 7, fourth paragraph, of the Higher Education Act, No 63/2006, and shall enter into force forthwith.

*Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 17 January 2007.*

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