

On the basis of Articles 38 and 117 of the Statute of the University of Primorska (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No. 51/15-UPB2, and amendments), at the 18<sup>th</sup> regular session of the University of Primorska on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021, the Senate of the University of Primorska adopted the following:

## **RULES ON THE PREPARATION AND DEFENCE OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRIMORSKA**

### **I. GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 1 (Content of the Rules)**

The Rules specify in detail the procedure for preparation and defence of doctoral dissertations at the University of Primorska (hereinafter: the University), namely:

- the procedure for registering the topic of the doctoral dissertation,
- the process of confirming the topic of the doctoral dissertation,
- the procedure for confirming the mentor and co-mentor,
- the process of preparation and submission of the doctoral dissertation,
- the procedure for assessment of the doctoral dissertation,
- the procedure for defence of the doctoral dissertation,
- the process of promotion of doctoral candidates,
- the process of withdrawal of a doctoral degree, and
- record keeping.

#### **Article 2 (The use of the term “professional organizational unit”)**

In the Rules, the term "professional organizational unit" (hereinafter referred to as the OU) of a university faculty or associated institution (hereinafter: member institution) refers to a commission, department or institute.

#### **Article 3 (Neutral grammatical form)**

In these Rules, the third person plural grammatical form is used as neutral for men and women.

#### **Article 4 (Language of procedures and documentation)**

(1) The procedures and documentation defined in these Rules for the study programmes conducted in the Slovene language shall be conducted or prepared in the Slovene language. For the study programmes conducted in Italian or another foreign language, the procedures and documentation defined in these Rules may be conducted or prepared in the language of the implementation of the study programme.

(2) The report of the member of the Commission for the assessment of the appropriateness of the topic of the doctoral dissertation, the report of the member of the Commission for the assessment of the doctoral dissertation and the minutes of the defence of the doctoral dissertation shall be prepared in Slovene in the cases defined in the first paragraph of this Article, and in Articles 25 and 33 of these Rules, in Italian or English. When needed, the report or minutes written in a foreign language should be translated into Slovene. The appropriate translations are arranged by the competent OU of the university member institution.

**Article 5**  
**(Detailed instructions from the university member institutions)**

In relation to the procedures and documentation referred to in these Rules, the university member institution may adopt more detailed instructions, which must comply with the provisions of these Rules.

**II. DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES AND DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

**Article 6**  
**(Doctoral study programmes)**

(1) The university and its member institutions implement the educational process to obtain a doctoral degree in those academic disciplines where, in accordance with the Statute of the University, they perform academic and research work.

(2) Doctoral study programmes are based on the quality and continuous research work of the member institutions, in which the member institutions actively involve students in the implementation of basic, applied and developmental projects. Doctoral study programmes are implemented in accordance with the current national standards for the implementation of doctoral study programmes set by the National Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

**Article 7**  
**(Doctoral dissertation)**

The doctoral dissertation (hereinafter referred to as the dissertation) is the final work in the doctoral study programme. The dissertation is a work of original academic research, which represents an important contribution to knowledge. Before defending the dissertation, at least one scientific research work arising from the content of the dissertation must be published or accepted for publication in a scientific journal. In this work, the candidate must be listed as the first or lead author if the work is co-authored. In the fields where leading or first authorship does not exist (e.g. where authors are listed in alphabetical order), the condition of leading or first authorship is not relevant.

### III. REGISTRATION OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION TOPIC

#### **Article 8 (Conditions for initiating the procedure)**

The student in the doctoral study programme (hereinafter referred to as the candidate) may register the topic of the dissertation when they fulfil the conditions for registration determined by the doctoral study programme in which they register the topic of the dissertation.

#### **Article 9 (Application for the doctoral dissertation)**

(1) The candidate submits the application for the dissertation topic to the competent student's office (hereinafter referred to as the student's office) of the university member institution. The application shall contain the following elements and documentation:

1. the application requesting the acceptance of the dissertation topic, stating the name and academic title of the proposed mentor and the possible co-mentor, the place and date of the submission of the application, and the handwritten signature of the student;
2. the disposition of the dissertation, which usually consists of 20,000 to 30,000 characters (including spaces) without a list of references and structured according to the following sections:
  - a) the cover page with the following information: the name of the university(ies) and the university member institution(s) – the providers of the study programme; the name of the study programme; the name and surname of the candidate; the title of the proposed topic of the dissertation, which should be short and concise and should reflect the scientific question; the name and surname and academic title of the proposed mentor and possible co-mentor; and place and year,
  - b) an indication of the academic field to which the expected original contributions of the dissertation relate (in the case of interdisciplinary research, the indication of all included academic fields),
  - c) a definition of the theoretical starting points of the research,
  - d) a definition of the problem, goals and hypotheses of the dissertation, and research questions,
  - e) the academic contribution and expected results,
  - f) the predicted research methods and sample,
  - g) the structure or index of the planned content of the dissertation,
  - h) an indication of the basic references and sources,
  - i) ethics consent for the research, if needed;
3. the curriculum vitae of the candidate with an emphasis on their academic research and professional work;
4. the bibliography of the candidate;
5. the signed consent of the proposed mentor and possible co-mentor;
6. the presentation of the proposed mentor and possible co-mentor, showing that they meet the requirements for (co-)mentoring defined in Article 18 of these Rules (their activity in the scientific field and narrower field covered by the dissertation, with a bibliography for the last 10 years);
7. if the proposed mentor or co-mentor is not employed at a university, a submission requesting the appointment of the mentor or co-mentor, with adequate justification;
8. if needed (for doctoral study programmes conducted in the Slovene language), the request for the preparation of a dissertation and/or defence in a foreign language.

(2) If the disposition of the dissertation topic is written, on the basis of the provisions of these Rules, in a foreign language, the candidate must prepare a summary of the disposition in Slovene, stating all the elements from point 2 of the first paragraph of this Article.

(3) The candidate submits the dissertation topic in electronic form (pdf).

(4) No later than seven (7) days after the receipt of the application, the student's office verifies whether the candidate fulfils all the prescribed conditions for registering the topic. At the same time, it verifies the formal completeness of the application and, if the application is incomplete, it invites the candidate to remedy the deficiencies found.

#### **Article 10**

##### **(Termination of the registration process for the dissertation topic)**

(1) After submitting the application for the dissertation topic, the candidate may, for valid reasons, terminate the initiated procedure.

(2) The proposed mentor or co-mentor may, for valid reasons, resign from (co-)mentoring.

(3) The candidate or the proposed (co-)mentor addresses a written application for terminating the procedure or a resignation from (co-)mentoring to the senate of the university member institution, and the senate decides by decision. If the topic of the dissertation has already been confirmed, the senate of the university member institution has to inform the University Senate by a decision.

### **IV. CONFIRMATION OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION TOPIC**

#### **Article 11**

##### **(Procedure for appointing the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation topic)**

(1) The student's office forwards a formal complete application within eight (8) days from the receipt of the complete application to the competent OU, which shall forward the proposal for the appointing of the Commission for the assessment of the appropriateness of the topic of the dissertation (hereinafter: the Commission) to the senate of the university member institution within fifteen (15) days.

(2) The competent OU may, before transmitting the proposal to the senate of the university member institution, invite the candidate to correct or complete the application within a specified period; in this case, the time limit referred to in the first paragraph of this Article shall be extended for a maximum period of thirty (30) days.

(3) A corrected or completed application shall be reconsidered by the competent OU. If the candidate fails to complete the application within a specified period, they shall be deemed to have withdrawn the application.

(4) The senate of the university member institution shall consider the proposal at its first meeting. If it agrees with the proposal of the competent OU, it appoints the Commission. If it does not agree with the proposal of the competent OU, the case, along with an explanation, is returned to the competent OU for further examination, but the senate of the university member institution may independently decide otherwise concerning the members of the Commission.

#### **Article 12**

##### **(Composition of the Commission for the assessment of the topic)**

(1) The Commission for the assessment of the topic shall have at least three members. The mentor and co-mentor may not be members of the commission.

(2) Higher education teachers with an academic title (assistant professor, associate professor, full professor) and scientific collaborators may be appointed to the Commission. The members of the Commission must be from the academic field in which the candidate wishes to obtain a doctoral degree.

(3) The Commission shall have at least one member who is not employed at the university.

(4) If the topic is from the fields of several academic disciplines, the Commission must be composed in such a way that an interdisciplinary approach is provided and that the Commission will be able to assess

the content of the dissertation. The scientific fields covered by the interdisciplinarity are listed in the disposition.

(5) One of the members of the Commission is the president and coordinates its work.

#### **Article 13**

##### **(Refusal to participate in the Commission for the assessment of the topic)**

(1) If a member of the Commission refuses to participate, they must notify the competent OU in writing within fifteen (15) days, and the OU shall propose a new member to the senate of the university member institution within thirty (30) days.

(2) The procedure described in the previous paragraph shall also apply to other commissions referred to in these Rules.

#### **Article 14**

##### **(Presentation of the topic)**

(1) After registering the topic with the university member institution and before the confirmation of the topic at the senate of the university member institution, the candidate has to publicly present the topic of the dissertation. The notice of the presentation on the topic of the dissertation shall be published by the university member institution on its website. The dean, members of the Commission for the assessment of the topic, the mentor and possible co-mentor, students and higher education teachers in the study programme are invited to the presentation.

(2) The student's office agrees on the date of the presentation of the topic with the candidate and the members of the Commission in order to ensure their presence.

#### **Article 15**

##### **(Commission's report on the assessment of the topic)**

(1) Within seven (7) days from the appointment of the Commission at the senate of the university member institution, the student's office forwards to the members of the Commission for assessment of the topic the documentation referred to in points 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the first paragraph of Article 9 of these Rules.

(2) No later than forty-five (45) days after receipt of the documentation referred to in the preceding paragraph, the Commission shall examine whether the proposed topic is academically relevant and whether the candidate has adequately presented, substantiated and developed the theoretical, methodological and substantive contents of their research work and the disposition of the dissertation. The Commission for the assessment of the topic prepares a joint report, and each member of the Commission may give a separate opinion.

(3) The report of the Commission for the assessment of the topic has to contain the following sections and elements:

1. an introductory section with the following information: names and academic titles of the members of the Commission for the assessment of the topic, title of the topic, name and surname of the candidate;
2. an assessment of whether the disposition is prepared in accordance with the requirements of Article 9 of these Rules and any additional instructions of the members regarding the preparation of the disposition;
3. an assessment of whether the subject matter may be the subject of academic treatment and whether it provides sufficient opportunities for a self-contained and original academic contribution to the proposed field of research;

4. an assessment of the appropriateness of the stated goals of the dissertation and the expected results;
5. an assessment of the theses and initial questions that the candidate intends to address in the dissertation;
6. an assessment of whether the proposed title and field of research correspond to the intended content of the dissertation;
7. an assessment of the appropriateness of the proposed survey methods;
8. an assessment of the appropriateness of the indicated references and sources;
9. an assessment of the suitability of the topic: the Commission for the assessment of the topic should unambiguously state whether it proposes that the topic is accepted or rejected.

(4) When assessing the appropriateness of the topic of the dissertation, the Commission may communicate to the candidate any comments on supplementing the disposition, which must be precisely defined. It can only do this once. The candidate has to reply to the comments within thirty (30) days. In this event, the deadline for preparing the report is extended by a maximum of thirty (30) days. Even if the candidate does not respond to the given comments, the Commission prepares a report.

(5) The Commission forwards the report to the competent OU, which considers it along with the entire submitted application for the topic. The competent OU may invite the candidate to complete the application within a specified time limit. If the candidate fails to submit a corrected or completed application within a specified time limit, they shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the registered topic. The responsible OU transmits the proposed topic to the senate of the university member institution.

#### **Article 16**

##### **(Consideration of the topic at the senate of the university member institution)**

(1) The senate of the university member institution considers the report of the Commission for the assessment of the topic at its first meeting and, on the basis of the report and documentation referred to in Article 9 of these Rules, adopts a positive or negative assessment of the suitability of the topic of the dissertation. In the case of a positive assessment, the positive decision is forwarded to the Commission for Scientific Research and Development of the UP (hereinafter referred to as KZRD UP) for further consideration. In the case of a negative assessment of the suitability of the topic, the candidate cannot re-register the same topic.

(2) Before approving the assessment of the appropriateness of the topic, the senate of the university member institution may request the candidate to correct or supplement the application. The senate of the university member institution sets the candidate an appropriate time limit for the supplements, which shall not be longer than ninety (90) days.

(3) If the candidate fails to submit a corrected or completed application within the time limit referred to in the second paragraph of this Article, they shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the registered topic. The candidate cannot re-register the same topic. If, due to reasonable circumstances, the candidate cannot correct or supplement the application within the set time limit, they may request an extension of the time limit from the senate of the university member institution.

#### **Article 17**

##### **(Discussion and confirmation of the topic at the University Senate)**

(1) The university member institution forwards the documentation to the KZRD UP to consider the suitability of the proposed topic. The KZRD UP discusses the application at its first session.

(2) The documentation submitted by the member institution shall include:

1. the decision of the senate of the university member institution on the assessment of the suitability of the dissertation topic,

2. the application of the dissertation topic containing the sections, elements and documentation referred to in Article 9 of these Rules,
3. the decision of the senate of the university member institution on the appointment of the Commission for the assessment of the topic and the report of the Commission for the assessment of the topic,
4. the decision of the senate of the university member institution to appoint a mentor and a co-mentor or the proposal of the senate of the university member institution for the appointment of a mentor or co-mentor who is not employed at the university,
5. if the candidate is enrolled in a study programme conducted in the Slovene language and has submitted a proposal for the preparation of the dissertation and/or defence in a foreign language, the university member institution also transmits the proposal of the senate of the university member institution for the preparation of the dissertation and/or defence in a foreign language.

(3) All decisions and documentation shall be submitted by the member institution to the KZRD UP in electronic form.

(4) The KZRD UP reviews the received documentation and invites the mentor or co-mentor to discuss the topic. The KZRD UP may, if it finds deficiencies, request the candidate to supplement the proposed topic. The doctoral topic needs to be completed within ninety (90) days. After the expiration of this deadline, the candidate shall be deemed to have resigned from the submitted topic. The candidate cannot re-register the same topic. If the candidate cannot correct or supplement the application due to valid reasons, they can request the KZRD UP to extend the deadline. In the event of major changes, the KZRD UP may decide that the senate of the university member institution should reconsider the topic proposal.

(5) KZRD UP provides the University Senate with an opinion on the proposed topic. If the opinion is negative, the KZRD UP should specifically explain it.

(6) On the basis of the received documentation, the University Senate decides at its first session on the appropriateness of the dissertation topic: the topic is confirmed or rejected. In the case of rejection, the candidate cannot re-register the same topic.

(7) At the same time, the University Senate also decides on consent to the application for the preparation and defence of the dissertation in a foreign language (in the case of a study programme conducted in the Slovene language) and approves a mentor or potential co-mentor who is not employed at the university.

(8) The approved doctoral topic is final and the candidate cannot change it.

## **V. APPROVAL OF MENTOR AND CO-MENTOR**

### **Article 18 (Conditions for mentoring)**

(1) The mentor in the preparation of a dissertation may be a person with a valid academic title (assistant professor, associate professor or full professor) or a researcher (research fellow, senior research fellow, or research counsellor) and who demonstrates, in the past 5 years, research activities and research results in the academic field of the dissertation topic. Upon appointment, the mentor must meet the quantitative conditions for the first election to the title of assistant professor or research associate. Those quantitative conditions have to have been fulfilled 5 years prior to the appointment. In addition, for a 5-year period prior to the appointment, the mentor must demonstrate SICRIS quantitative assessment of A1 of at least 1, and meet at least one of the following conditions:

- they evidence at least one scientific publication (A'') in the field of the dissertation as first or lead author in the 5 years prior to the appointment;
- they evidence at least two scientific publications (A') in the field of the dissertation as first or lead author in the 5 years prior to the appointment;
- they evidence at least two scientific publications as first or lead author in the field of the dissertation, published in scientific journals indexed by SCI, SSCI and AHCI and ranked in the top half of journals.

In the fields where leading or first authorship does not exist (e.g. where authors are listed in alphabetical order), the condition of leading or first authorship is not relevant. The university member institution may further define the conditions by internal rules, which must comply with the provisions of these Rules.

(2) If the university cannot provide an appropriate mentor, the mentor may also be a higher education teacher with a valid academic title or a researcher who is not employed at the university in the case of a joint postgraduate study programme. In those cases, the co-mentor has to be from the university.

(3) The mentor may have up to five (5) doctoral candidates with a doctoral topic approved by the University Senate at the same time.

#### **Article 19 (Appointing the co-mentor)**

(1) In addition to the mentor, a co-mentor may also be appointed and has to have the appropriate title of a higher education teacher (assistant professor, associate professor or full professor) or a researcher (research fellow, senior research fellow or research counsellor) and demonstrate an active research career in the academic field of the dissertation.

(2) Except in the case of joint doctoral study programmes with other universities, a maximum of one co-mentor may be appointed.

(3) The co-mentor may be from another higher education institution or from another organization.

#### **Article 20 (Procedure for appointing a mentor and co-mentor)**

(1) The competent OU, together with the proposal of the Commission for the assessment of the topic, forwards to the senate of the university member institution the proposal for the mentor and the possible co-mentor and its consent for (co-)mentoring. If the proposal of the competent OU differs from the proposal submitted by the candidate, the competent OU shall further explain its proposal.

(2) The senate of the university member institution verifies the scientific activity of the mentor. If the senate of the university member institution agrees with the proposal, it appoints the mentor and the possible co-mentor. If the senate of the university member institution does not agree with the proposal of the competent OU, it can decide independently in relation to the mentor and the possible co-mentor, or returns the matter with an explanation to the competent OU for further examination.

(3) If the mentor or co-mentor is not employed at the university, the senate of the university member institution forwards the proposal for the mentor or co-mentor to the University Senate for approval.

#### **Article 21**

**(Appointment of a new mentor)**

In the event of unforeseen circumstances, due to which the mentor can no longer supervise the candidate, or if the mentor resigns due to a valid reason, a new mentor is appointed to the candidate, and has to go through the same approval process as the first mentor.

**Article 22**

**(Tasks and responsibilities of the mentor)**

(1) Through regular contact with the candidate, the mentor is obliged to ensure the appropriate academic level of the dissertation, and to draw the attention of the candidate to possible deficiencies or inadequate standards in their work.

(2) The mentor has to monitor the work of the candidate and be accessible to the student for consultations. The mentor has to cooperate with the student in the exchange of information and opinions related to the topic of the dissertation.

(3) The mentor may request periodic oral or written reports from the candidate on the progress and results of work on the dissertation.

(4) The mentor is obliged to report the progress of the dissertation to the competent bodies, the commissions of the university member institution and the commissions of the university, if they express such a request.

(5) The tasks and responsibilities of the mentor from this Article shall apply mutatis mutandis to the co-mentor.

**VI. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

**Article 23**

**(Rules for the preparation of the dissertation)**

(1) The dissertation must be written in A4 format and hard-bound.

(2) The form of the dissertation, which should not exceed 400 pages (excluding supplements), is prescribed as follows:

1. Cover:

a) above (centre): University of Primorska and the name of the member institution or institutions where studies were implemented; in the case of a joint study programme, in addition to the university's title, the names of the other universities – implementers of the study programme,

b) in the middle (centre): Doctoral dissertation, title of the dissertation, author's name and surname. If the dissertation is written in accordance with Article 25 of these Rules, the title shall be written in Slovene and the foreign language(s),

c) below (centre): place, year,

d) back (bottom-up): name and surname, indication of type of final work (doctoral dissertation), year;

2. First page:

a) above (centre): University of Primorska and the name of the member institution or institutions where studies were implemented; in the case of a joint study programme, in addition to the university's title, the names of the other universities – implementers of the study programme,

- b) in the middle (centre): doctoral dissertation, title of the dissertation, name and surname of the author,
- c) left below: place, year,
- d) right below: name and surname of the mentor and possible co-mentor;

3. Index;

4. Abstract: the title of the dissertation and the abstract in Slovene, as well as the translation of the title of the dissertation and the abstract in English. If the dissertation is prepared in accordance with the second and third paragraphs of Article 25, the title and abstract shall also be prepared in the language of the dissertation;

5. An introduction in which the purpose, goals, hypotheses, research questions and methodology of the dissertation are clearly presented;

6. The core part of the dissertation in accordance with the accepted disposition;

7. Conclusion;

8. A list of sources and references and a possible list of illustrations;

9. Any attachments/ annexes.

(3) The candidate is responsible for the stylistic and grammatical integrity of the dissertation.

(4) If so required by the nature of the research, the candidate may, in agreement with the mentor, partially change the working disposition of the dissertation.

(5) The University and the university member institution have the right to publish the summary. The candidate's permission for publication is obtained by the member institution.

#### **Article 24**

##### **(Preparation of doctoral dissertation based on scientific publications)**

(1) The core part of the doctoral dissertation may consist of the candidate's scientific works in the field of the dissertation topic, which have been accepted for publication (with proof that the paper has been accepted for publication) or have already been published. The scientific papers included must be accepted for publication or published in journals indexed by SCI, SSCI or AHCI and having an impact factor (according to ISI) as scientific articles from category 1.01 or 1.02 in the COBISS database. Of the three articles, at least two original scientific articles from category 1.01 must be in the COBISS database. At least two of the scientific papers included must be published in journals ranked in the first three quartiles of the field.

(2) The core part of the doctoral dissertation must consist of at least three scientific papers written by the candidate during their doctoral studies. If relevant, the candidate may add, for the integrity of the work and substantive link between published papers/articles, unpublished results or articles sent for publication. For at least three works that make up the core part of the dissertation, the candidate must be listed as the first or lead author if the works are co-authored. In areas where first or leading authorship does not exist (e.g. where the authors are arranged in alphabetical order), the condition of first or leading authorship is not relevant. For the purpose of fulfilling the conditions for defence of the doctoral dissertation, one article may be used by only one author with the consent of the co-authors.

(3) The author of a dissertation that is based on articles must obtain from the publishers to whom they have previously exclusively transferred material copyrights the consent to include the articles in the printed and electronic version of the dissertation. The consents of the publishers must enable the University to store the dissertation in electronic form free of charge, non-exclusively, spatially and indefinitely, and to reproduce and make the dissertation available to the public on the World Wide Web

through the University Repository. Publishers' certificates should be included in the dissertation in the Annex section.

(4) A doctoral dissertation based on articles has to represent the completed whole and cover the entire topic of the dissertation which was written in the disposition (hypotheses, methods used) and confirmed by the University Senate. If the scientific works do not cover the entire disposition, the candidate must include the missing part described in the disposition as an additional text in the dissertation (e.g. as an additional chapter).

(5) If the core part of dissertation is based on articles and the author has not been approved to write the dissertation in a foreign language, the candidate must write all additional text in the Slovene language (except the articles).

(6) For the field of Humanities these provisions are not relevant.

#### **Article 25 (Language of the dissertation)**

(1) Doctoral dissertation in the study programmes that are conducted in the Slovene language is written in Slovene. The dissertation in the field of Italian studies or foreign languages is written in the appropriate foreign language. The dissertation in study programmes that are conducted in English may be written in English.

(2) The University Senate may, upon the proposal of a university member institution's senate for study programmes conducted in the Slovene language, approve the preparation of a dissertation in a foreign language in the following cases:

1. if the candidate is a student from a foreign country studying at the university,
2. if the mentor or co-mentor is from abroad,
3. for other valid reasons.

(3) A candidate who is a Slovenian citizen and a member of the Italian national community may prepare a dissertation in the Italian language.

(4) If the dissertation is not written in Slovene, the candidate also has to prepare a title, index, index of names and an extended summary of 20,000 to 30,000 characters (including spaces), which must contain the key elements of the introduction, research and conclusion in the Slovene language. The Slovene abstract and elements listed in this paragraph have to be positioned after the list of sources and references and a possible list of illustrations.

#### **Article 26**

##### **(Deadline for submitting the dissertation)**

(1) The dissertation must be submitted by the candidate no later than three (3) years from the date the dissertation topic was approved by the University Senate.

(2) The candidate who, due to valid reasons, cannot submit the dissertation within that time limit, may apply to the senate of the university member institution to extend the deadline for submitting the dissertation up to a maximum of one (1) year.

(3) If the candidate fails to submit a dissertation within the time limit referred to in the first paragraph of this Article and does not request an extension of the deadline before the expiry of the deadline, they shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the registered topic. The candidate cannot re-register the same topic.

**Article 27**  
**(Submission of the dissertation)**

(1) The candidate submits the dissertation in three (3) soft-bound copies and in electronic form (PDF format) to the student's office. The dissertation shall be accompanied by the declaration of authorship (Appendix 1) and the information on the identical version of the printed and electronic versions. The candidate must fill in the data on the similarity index of the dissertation in Appendix 1 and inform the mentor of this.

(2) Except in the case of justified reasons, the candidate agrees with the publishing of the dissertation in the Dissertations and Thesis (Proquest) and dLib.si (NUK) repository. If the candidate does not agree with the publication of the dissertation in the repository, they may request in Appendix 1 a postponement of the public announcement, which may not be longer than three (3) years from the defence of the dissertation.

(3) Appendix 1 is an integral part of these Rules.

**VII. ASSESSMENT OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

**Article 28**  
**(Appointment of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation)**

The student's office transmits copies of the dissertation to the competent OU within seven (7) days. The competent OU shall forward within fifteen (15) days the proposal of the appointment of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation to the senate of the university member institution.

**Article 29**  
**(Composition of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation)**

When appointing the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation, the provisions of Articles 11 and 12 of these Rules shall apply.

**Article 30**  
**(Reports from members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation)**

(1) Within seven (7) days after the appointment of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation, the student's office sends one electronic copy of the dissertation to the members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation.

(2) The members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation, at the latest within forty-five (45) days after receiving the electronic copy of the dissertation, prepare separate assessment reports regarding the dissertation and forward them to the president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation, who prepares a joint report within fifteen (15) days and forwards it to the competent OU.

(3) The report of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation must contain:

1. the title of the report in the form: "Report on the assessment of the doctoral dissertation of the candidate (*name and surname of the candidate*) with the title (*title of the dissertation*)";
2. the academic title, name and surname of the mentor and possible co-mentor;
3. the academic title, name and surname of the rapporteur - member of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation;

4. the date of appointment of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation;
5. the analysis and assessment of the submitted work, comprising:
  - a) an indication of the academic field to which the original contributions of the dissertation relate and a short content of the dissertation, with an emphasis on the working hypothesis,
  - b) a brief analysis of the methods used,
  - c) value of new findings, originality of conclusions, comparison with known facts,
  - d) relevance of the results in relation to the hypotheses,
  - e) distinctive features of the dissertation,
  - f) expressive and design characteristics of the dissertation (language, style, scope, technical equipment, etc.),
  - g.) separate assessments of all members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation;
6. a concluding assessment in which the commission explicitly states or proposes one of the following three options:
  - a) the dissertation is accepted (a positive assessment),
  - b) the dissertation is rejected (negative assessment),
  - c) the dissertation has to be corrected or completed (positive assessment under conditions).

(4) The Commission for the assessment of the dissertation accepts the final assessment report on the basis of majority positive opinions of its members. In the case that the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation proposes corrections to the dissertation, the required modifications must be specified.

(5) If the candidate fails to submit a corrected or completed application within the time limit, they shall be deemed to have withdrawn from the dissertation. If, due to reasonable circumstances, the candidate cannot correct or supplement the dissertation within the set time limit, they may request an extension of the time limit from the senate of the university member institution.

(6) The candidate can complete or correct the dissertation only once.

### **Article 31**

#### **(Consideration of the report of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation)**

(1) The report of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation is handled by the competent OU, who forwards the proposal for the continuation of the procedure to the senate of the university member institution within thirty (30) days.

(2) The senate of the university member institution shall consider the proposal for the continuation of the procedure of the competent OU and the final assessment report of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation at its first session.

(3) The senate of the university member institution shall adopt by decision one of the following three options:

- a) the dissertation is accepted and is suitable for defence;
- b) the dissertation is rejected (the assessment of the dissertation is negative);
- c) the dissertation is returned to the candidate for modifications, for which it determines a suitable deadline not longer than six (6) months.

(4) The senate of the university member institution, may, in cases of reasonable doubt that violations of these Rules have occurred in the preparation procedure of the dissertation, or in the case of establishing new facts or circumstances due to which the dissertation procedure cannot be completed in accordance with these Rules, dissolve the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation and appoint a new commission. Members of the original commission may also be appointed to the new commission.

(5) If the opinion of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation is positive, the senate of the university member institution may not refuse the dissertation, except in the cases from Article 44 of these Rules.

(6) If the opinion of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation is negative, the senate of the university member institution may, by decision, reject the proposal of the negative grade of the

dissertation and decide that the procedure regarding the dissertation continues. The senate may also decide to take a decision on this issue at an extraordinary session, which shall take place within fifteen (15) days. The Commission for the assessment of the dissertation and the candidate are invited to the session. The decision of the senate regarding the assessment of the dissertation is final.

(7) A dissertation which has been graded negatively cannot be re-submitted by the candidate.

## **VIII. DEFENCE OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

### **Article 32 (Submission of copies of the dissertation)**

(1) Upon acceptance of the dissertation at the senate of the university member institution, the student's office invites the candidate to send a prescribed number of hard-bound copies of the dissertation within fifteen (15) days at the latest; the number of copies is determined by the university member institution. At the same time, the dissertation is also submitted electronically (PDF format).

(2) Subject to the publishing regulations, the candidate must provide a sufficient number of hard-bound copies of the doctoral dissertation. One (1) copy of the dissertation must be kept by the reading room in the member institution's library, one (1) copy of the hard-bound dissertation and the electronic format (PDF format) must be submitted to the University Library.

### **Article 33 (Language of the dissertation defence)**

(1) The defence of a dissertation in the study programmes that are conducted in the Slovene language is in Slovene; however, the defence of a dissertation from the field of Italian studies or foreign languages is conducted in the appropriate foreign language. The defence in study programmes that are conducted in English may be conducted in English.

(2) The University Senate may, upon the proposal of the senate of the university member institution, for study programmes conducted in the Slovene language, approve the defence of the dissertation in a foreign language in the following cases:

- if a candidate is a student from a foreign country studying at the university,
- if the mentor or co-mentor is from abroad,
- in other valid cases.

(3) A candidate who is a Slovene citizen and a member of the Italian national community may defend the dissertation in Italian.

### **Article 34 (Defining the date and time of the defence of the dissertation)**

(1) When the student's office receives the prescribed number of hard-bound copies of the dissertation, it informs the dean of the university member institution, who issues a decision on the defence of the dissertation within fifteen (15) days. The day, hour and place of the defence shall be determined by the dean of the university member institution on the proposal of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation and in agreement with the candidate.

(2) As a rule, the period from the acceptance of the doctoral dissertation at the senate of the university member institution to the defence may not exceed more than forty-five (45) days.

### **Article 35**

**(Public defence of the dissertation)**

- (1) The defence of the doctoral dissertation is public. The public defence is ensured by the public announcement of the defence and by allowing public access to the dissertation before the defence.
- (2) Public access to the dissertation is made available in the university member institution at least seven (7) days before the defence of the dissertation. The notice states in what way the public can see the dissertation and is published by the university member institution on its website.
- (3) The public announcement of the defence is published by the member institution on its website at least five (5) days before the defence. The public notice shall indicate the name and surname of the candidate; the title of the dissertation; the name of the study programme and the university(ies) and the member institution(s) under which studies were conducted; the name, surname and academic title of the mentor and the co-mentor; and the date, time and place of the defence. The notice also indicates how public access to the dissertation is ensured. The public announcement of the defence is also published on the university's website.

**Article 36**

**(Minutes of the dissertation defence)**

- (1) Minutes shall be kept of the defence. The president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation shall be responsible for preparing the minutes.
- (2) The written questions of individual members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation shall be attached to the minutes, as well as any additional questions asked by the members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation and questions asked by others present at the defence.
- (3) The minutes of the defence are signed by all the members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation.

**Article 37**

**(Course of the dissertation defence)**

- (1) During the defence the university member institution is obliged to provide an appropriate protocol.
- (2) The candidate defends the dissertation in front of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation and others present, including the public. If it is not possible to ensure the presence of one member of the commission, the presence of that member through information and communication technologies is also acceptable.
- (3) The defence is led by the president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation, who first presents the candidate (biographical and bibliographical data), the title and the field of the dissertation, the procedure of registering the topic, the process of preparation and submission and the report of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation. The president then explains to the candidate the procedure of the defence and invites them to present the dissertation.
- (4) The candidate presents the dissertation, with an emphasis on the key findings of the dissertation.
- (5) After the presentation of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate answers the questions of the members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation.

(6) The candidate has the right of a break, in order to prepare the answers.

(7) When the candidate answers all questions of the members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation, the president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation also invites other participants to ask the candidate questions.

**Article 38**  
**(Final grade of the doctoral dissertation)**

(1) After the defence of the dissertation, the president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation invites members to a separate session, where they determine the performance of the defence and decide on a grade.

(2) Two grades concerning the grade of the defence of the dissertation are possible:

- the defence of the dissertation was successful, the final grade of the dissertation is positive;
- the defence of the dissertation was not successful, the final grade of the dissertation is negative.

The defence of the dissertation is assessed as successful if more than half of the members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation express their positive opinion. Otherwise, the defence of the dissertation is considered unsuccessful.

(3) The president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation prepares the minutes of the defence of the dissertation that are signed by all members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation.

(4) After the decision on the grade of the defence, the president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation informs the candidate of the grade. They then read the decision of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation to the audience.

(5) If the candidate has successfully defended the dissertation, the university member institution issues a certificate of successful defence to the candidate no later than seven (7) days after the defence. With the successful defence, the candidate has successfully completed their studies and obtained the title of doctor of science, which they can use immediately.

**Article 39**  
**(Procedure in the case of a negative grade of the dissertation)**

(1) If the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation determines that the defence was not successful, it must give a written report to the senate of the university member institution on the reasons for such a decision. Members of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation can prepare separate reports.

(2) The senate of the university member institution, at its first meeting, where the president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation and the candidate are invited, discusses the joint report of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation or the separate reports of the members. The senate of the university member institution assesses and decides whether there are valid reasons for revoking the Commission's decision that the dissertation defence was not successful.

(3) If the senate of the university member institution identifies valid grounds for the commission's decision that the dissertation defence was not successful, it accepts an appropriate decision and confirms the negative grade of the dissertation.

(4) If the senate of the university member institution identifies that there are no valid grounds for the commission's decision that the dissertation defence was not successful, it decides to repeat the dissertation defence within a period of two (2) months. The procedure for re-defending the doctoral dissertation is the same as in the first defence of the dissertation.

(5) A doctoral dissertation which is assessed negatively cannot be re-defended by the candidate.

**Article 40**  
**(Information concerning the defence of dissertations)**

Within fifteen (15) days after the completion of the defence, the university member institution shall forward the minutes of the defence to the competent OU of the Rectorate, which notifies the KZRD UP.

**Article 41**  
**(Absence of the candidate at the defence of the dissertation)**

(1) If the candidate is unable to attend the defence on the day determined for the defence due to valid reasons, they must inform the dean of the university member institution and the president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation in advance. In such cases, the dean, in cooperation with the president of the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation, sets a new date, which is also publicly announced.

(2) If the reasons for the absence of the candidate are received on the day of the defence, this shall be stated in the minutes of the defence.

(3) If the candidate does not attend the defence of the dissertation and does not have valid reasons for this, they shall be deemed to have resigned from the defence.

(4) The possible continuation of the procedure shall be decided by the senate of the university member institution upon the proposal of the competent OU.

**Article 42**  
**(Candidate's complaint in the case of rejection of the dissertation)**

(1) A candidate who has received a decision that the defence of the dissertation was not successful may file a complaint to the University Senate within fifteen (15) days of receiving the decision.

(2) The University Senate decides on the candidate's appeal within thirty (30) days of receiving the appeal, at its regular or extraordinary session to which the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation, the mentor, possible co-mentor and the candidate are invited. The University Senate decides on the validity of the complaint by a majority vote of the members present. The University Senate may, by a reasoned decision, discard or reject the complaint. If the appeal is granted, the decision annuls the decision on the negative grade of the dissertation, and the procedure regarding the dissertation proceeds as in the case of a positive grade of the dissertation.

(3) In exceptional circumstances and for valid reasons, in the case referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article, the University Senate may decide that an extraordinary session of the University Senate shall be held on this issue, to which the Commission for the assessment of the dissertation and the candidate are invited.

## **IX. PROMOTION**

### **Article 43 (Promotion procedure)**

(1) The Rector proclaims the Doctors of Science at a formal promotion organized by the university, at least twice a year - in the university week and in the autumn period. If necessary, the Rector may decide on a greater number of promotion events. Dates of promotions appear in the study calendar of the university for each academic year.

(2) The promotion of Doctors of Science is public.

(3) The promotion is organized by the University Rectorate, which publicly announces it at least one month in advance.

(4) The procedure and content of the public announcement shall take into account the provisions of the third paragraph of Article 35 of these Rules.

## **X. WITHDRAWAL OF THE DOCTORAL DEGREE**

### **Article 44 (Proposal for withdrawal of a doctoral degree)**

(1) A doctorate of science may be withdrawn if it is established that the dissertation is not the result of the candidate's own creativity and own achievements.

(2) The proposal for the withdrawal of a doctoral degree may be submitted by a natural or legal person (i.e. an individual or organization). The written proposal, with an explanation, is sent to the senate of the university member institution who shall examine it and forward its opinion and the documentation to the University Senate.

(3) The proposal to withdraw a doctoral degree may also be submitted if the candidate who successfully defended the dissertation has not yet been promoted. In this case, the promotion of the candidate is postponed until the end of the procedure which establishes the validity of the proposal for the withdrawal of the doctorate of science.

### **Article 45 (Procedure for withdrawal of a doctoral degree)**

(1) At its first session, the University Senate appoints a three-member commission to determine the merits of the proposal for the withdrawal of a doctorate of science (hereinafter referred to as a Commission for the withdrawal of a doctoral degree). The provisions of the second paragraph of Article 12 of these Rules shall apply in the composition of the Commission for the withdrawal of a doctoral degree. The members of the Commission for the withdrawal of a doctoral degree cannot be members of the commissions that have already checked the candidate's qualifications, from the application of the topic to the defence of the dissertation.

(2) The members of the Commission for the withdrawal of a doctoral degree shall prepare separate reports at the latest within ninety (90) days. While studying the available documentation, they must enable the candidate and mentor (and possible co-mentor) to comment on the facts and to provide them with access to the documentation.

(3) The reports of the members of the Commission for the withdrawal of the doctoral degree shall be discussed by the University Senate at an extraordinary session. The senate invites the candidate, mentor and possible co-mentor to the session and, together with the invitation, sends them a copy of the reports of the members of the Commission for the withdrawal of the doctoral degree. The University Senate must allow the candidate, mentor and possible co-mentor to clarify the facts presented. If the candidate does not attend the session, the University Senate discusses the proposal in their absence.

(4) If the University Senate finds that the proposal for withdrawal of the doctoral degree is justified, it takes a decision on the withdrawal of the doctoral degree, and the university revokes the validity of the diploma for the doctoral degree with a written notice issued in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia.

(5) If the University Senate finds that the proposal for withdrawal of the doctoral degree is justified, it instructs the senate of the university member institution where the mentor is employed not to allow them to take on new mentorships for two (2) years and initiates appropriate quality control procedures regarding their other mentorships.

(6) If the University Senate finds that the proposal for withdrawal of a doctoral degree is unjustified, it adopts a decision to reject the request for the withdrawal of a doctoral degree.

## **XI. RECORD**

### **Article 46 (Record at the university member institution)**

(1) The university member institution shall keep records of all initiated procedures for obtaining a doctoral degree.

(2) The records of approved and rejected doctoral topics shall contain the information specified in the university's regulations, which define the keeping of records of issued official documents.

(3) In addition to the data referred to in the previous paragraph, the records shall also contain information on the composition, membership and appointments of commissions in the procedures defined in these Rules.

### **Article 47 (Record at the rectorate of the university)**

(1) The University Rectorate keeps records of the accepted and rejected topics of dissertations and of withdrawn doctoral degrees.

(2) The record of accepted and rejected topics of dissertations shall contain the first and last name and enrolment number of the candidate; academic title, name and surname of the mentor and possible co-mentors; the title of the dissertation topic; an indication of the member institution(s) and university(ies) – implementers of the study programme; and the date of hearing at the KZRD UP and the University Senate.

(3) The records of the awarded and withdrawn doctoral degrees shall contain the data set out in the University Regulation which defines the keeping of records of issued public documents. Records of withdrawn doctoral degrees also contain information on the procedure and dates for examining applications at university bodies and commissions.

## **XII. PRELIMINARY AND FINAL PROVISIONS**

### **Article 48 (Deadlines for procedures)**

The time limits specified in these Rules do not count the period from 1 July to 31 August.

### **Article 49 (Interpretation of the provisions of these Rules)**

If there is a doubt about the content of an individual provision of these Rules, the University Senate shall adopt an interpretation with the same majority as is necessary for the adoption of these Rules.

### **Article 50 (Modifications and amendments to these Rules)**

Modifications and amendments to these Rules shall be adopted in accordance with the same procedure as these Rules.

### **Article 51 (Validity of the Rules)**

(1) On the day these Rules enter into force, the provisions of the Rules on the Preparation and Defence of the Doctoral Dissertation at the University of Primorska (No. 002-15 /14 of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014, No.002-24/18 of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and No.002-29/20 of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020) are no longer valid. The university member institutions shall align their internal acts that regulate the preparation and defence of the doctoral dissertation and are inconsistent concerning these Rules, no later than six months (6) after the adoption of these Rules.

(2) The procedures initiated before the entry into force of these Rules shall be completed in accordance with the Rules on the preparation and defence of the doctoral dissertation at the University of Primorska (No. 002-15 /14 of 15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 and amendments).

(3) These Rules enter into force on the day following publication on the university's website and shall apply from the academic year 2021/2022.

Number: 002– 11/21

prof. Klavdija Kutnar, PhD,  
Rector of the University of Primorska

List of enclosures: Appendix 1: Authorship statement