



„Approved “

By the Rector’s Council

19.03.2026

## **Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy**

### **Regulation on the Organisation and Governance of Research Activities**



**Original version of the document:**

| <b>N</b> | <b>Decision-making body</b> | <b>Number of the protocol/decree</b> | <b>Date</b> |
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**Amendments**

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## **Article 1. Scope and Objectives**

- 1.1 This Regulation defines the system for the organisation and governance of research activities at Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy (hereinafter referred to as “TMA”), including the competences and operational procedures of the Research Department, the Doctoral School, and the Scientific Council of TMA.
- 1.2 This Regulation governs the implementation of doctoral programmes, admission to doctoral studies, as well as the procedures for the submission and defence of the doctoral prospectus and the doctoral dissertation (PhD thesis), and the awarding of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.
- 1.3 This Regulation defines the procedures for the consideration of disputes related to the above-mentioned matters, the adoption of decisions, and the procedures for their appeal.

## **Article 2. Definition of Terms**

- 2.1 The Research Department is a structural unit of TMA that ensures the planning and implementation of research activities, supports processes related to doctoral education, and contributes to the development of the institutional research environment and research capacity.
- 2.2 Doctoral education / doctoral studies constitute the third cycle of higher education and encompass a combination of educational and research activities aimed at training independent researchers; they culminate in the awarding of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.
- 2.3 A doctoral programme is an educational programme of the third cycle of higher education, based on research activity, and designed to prepare doctoral candidates for independent research.
- 2.4 The Doctoral School is a structural unit of Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy (TMA) that ensures the implementation of accredited doctoral programmes.
- 2.5 The Coordinator of the Doctoral School is a person appointed by the Rector, based on the nomination of the Research Department, who coordinates the activities of the Doctoral School and the implementation of doctoral programmes.
- 2.6 Academic coordination of the Doctoral School is the process that ensures the discussion of organisational matters of the Doctoral School and the effective implementation of doctoral programmes.
- 2.7 The Scientific Council of TMA is the body responsible for awarding the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.
- 2.8 The Dissertation Defence Committee is a collegial body established by the Chair of the Scientific Council of TMA, based on the recommendation of the Coordinator of the Doctoral School, which participates in the procedures related to the conduct and evaluation of the dissertation.
- 2.9 The Commission is a collegial body established by an order of the Rector, based on the recommendation of the Research Department; in accordance with the approach and criteria defined in this Regulation, it evaluates the application of doctoral programme applicants and the interview process.
- 2.10 A research field is a scientific discipline or a combination of disciplines within which scientific and/or doctoral research and programmes are carried out.
- 2.11 A doctoral candidate is a person enrolled in a doctoral programme.

## **Article 3. Research Department**

- 3.1 The Research Department is a structural unit of TMA that ensures the development of institutional research capacity, promotes the development of research skills among students and academic staff, and supports processes related to research, grant, and innovation activities.
- 3.2 The functions and responsibilities of the Research Department are as follows:
  - a) To develop the research capacity of TMA through the implementation of relevant programmes and activities;
  - b) To develop and update criteria for the evaluation of scientific and grant programmes, including project proposals;
  - c) To organise and support the work of international scientific grant and bioethics committees for the evaluation of research projects submitted within TMA’s internal grant competition;



- d) To cooperate with local and international research organisations and other institutions of relevant competence to support research activities;
  - e) To support the implementation of doctoral programmes through cooperation with research, medical and clinical practice institutions, as well as with industry, based on agreements and memoranda of understanding concluded by TMA;
  - f) To promote the publication of results of research projects funded and implemented under TMA's internal grant programme in international peer-reviewed scientific journals;
  - g) To support the implementation of research and innovation projects through collaboration with local and international non-university centres, public and private organisations, the business sector, industry, and other partners;
  - h) To promote the commercialisation of research results of TMA and its staff and the implementation of innovative technologies;
  - i) To support the career development of TMA staff in the field of research;
  - j) To inform TMA staff about local and international grant opportunities;
  - k) To promote science through the organisation of scientific events, conferences, seminars, public lectures, seasonal schools, workshops, and other activities;
  - l) To support the establishment and development of a student scientific society at TMA;
  - m) To administer the selection process of applicants for participation in research activities in cooperation with the research supervisor;
  - n) To participate in the planning of the budget allocated for research activities and to coordinate relevant procurement processes;
  - o) To establish an enabling environment for the development of students' research skills and provide organisational support for related processes;
  - p) To provide administrative and procedural support to the Doctoral School, Scientific Grant and International Bioethics Committees, laboratory, and the "Horizon Europe" grant office;
  - q) To support procedures related to the implementation of doctoral programmes, including the administration of admission to doctoral studies based on the nomination of the Coordinator of the Doctoral School;
  - r) To coordinate the establishment of the Scientific Council of TMA, provide administrative support for its activities, and ensure proper record-keeping.
- 3.3 For developing the research component of TMA, the Research Department cooperates with other local and international research, medical, and clinical practice institutions, as well as with industry, based on agreements and memoranda concluded by TMA.

#### **Article 4. Doctoral School**

- 4.1 The Doctoral School is a structural unit of TMA that ensures the implementation of accredited doctoral programmes operating at TMA and, where necessary, initiates their revision and amendment.
- 4.2 The Doctoral School aims to promote the development of the academic competences and research skills of doctoral candidates.
- 4.3 The functions and responsibilities of the Doctoral School are as follows:
  - a) To administer doctoral programmes, including providing administrative support to the Dissertation Defence Committee and ensuring proper documentation and record-keeping;
  - b) To monitor the academic and research progress of doctoral candidates in cooperation with doctoral programme directors;
  - c) To promote the international mobility of doctoral candidates and their involvement in local and international industrial, practical, and research projects;



- d) To support the implementation of doctoral research in compliance with the principles of academic freedom, integrity, and ethics, in cooperation with relevant structural units of TMA possessing appropriate expertise.
- 4.4 The activities of the Doctoral School include the implementation of accredited doctoral programmes at TMA; academic coordination of this process is carried out by the Coordinator of the Doctoral School.
- 4.5 The Coordinator of the Doctoral School is appointed by the Rector, based on the nomination of the Research Department.
- 4.6 Academic coordination of the Doctoral School is carried out with the participation of doctoral programme heads and, where necessary, with the involvement of TMA-affiliated academic staff possessing relevant research expertise. This process does not constitute a collegial decision-making mechanism in matters related to the awarding of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree and, where appropriate, is conducted in coordination with the Research Department.
- 4.7 Within the process of academic coordination of the Doctoral School, relevant recommendations are formulated based on agreement among the participants involved in the process.

### **Article 5. Scientific Council**

- 5.1 The Scientific Council of TMA is the body responsible for awarding the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree and is established by the Rector based on the recommendation of the Research Department.
- 5.2 The Scientific Council of TMA is composed of TMA-affiliated academic staff holding a doctoral degree; the composition may also include individuals holding the title of Honorary Professor.
- 5.3 The Scientific Council of TMA may include invited members holding a doctoral degree from academic and scientific institutions in Georgia or internationally. The number of invited members shall not exceed the number of TMA-affiliated academic staff serving on the Scientific Council.
- 5.4 The Scientific Council of TMA, for a term of three years, elects a Chair from among its members by open voting and by most of its full membership. The same person may be elected as Chair for no more than two consecutive terms.
- 5.5 In the absence of the Chair at a meeting of the Scientific Council of TMA, the Council elects a presiding Chair for the meeting by a majority of its full membership.
- 5.6 The Research Department provides administrative support for the record-keeping and organisation of meetings of the Scientific Council of TMA.
- 5.7 Decisions of the Scientific Council of TMA are adopted at its meetings.
- 5.8 The Scientific Council of TMA shall have a quorum if a majority of its full membership is present at the meeting. Decisions are adopted by open voting with a two-thirds majority of the members of the Scientific Council present at the meeting.
- 5.9 Minutes shall be prepared for each decision of the Scientific Council of TMA.
- 5.10 The Scientific Council of TMA approves the Dissertation Defence Committee and, based on its conclusion, awards the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.
- 5.11 The Scientific Council of TMA reviews and approves amendments developed for the improvement of accredited doctoral programmes.

### **Article 6. Chair of Scientific Council**

- 6.1 The Chair of the Scientific Council of TMA shall be a TMA-affiliated academic staff member holding a doctoral degree or a person holding the title of Honorary Professor. The Chair leads the activities of the Scientific Council.
- 6.2 The powers and responsibilities of the Chair of the Scientific Council of TMA are as follows:
- To convene meetings of the Scientific Council of TMA and preside over them;
  - To determine the composition of the Dissertation Defence Committee and submit it to the Scientific Council for approval;
  - To coordinate, together with the Coordinator of the Doctoral School, the implementation of decisions adopted by the Scientific Council;



d) To promote the continuity of the activities of the Scientific Council and ensure the timely implementation of its decisions.

#### **Article 7. Dissertation Defence Committee**

- 7.1 The Dissertation Defence Committee is established by the Chair of the Scientific Council of TMA, based on the recommendation of the Coordinator of the Doctoral School, for the purposes of evaluating the prospectus and the doctoral dissertation (PhD thesis), ensuring compliance with the requirement for scientific publications related to the doctoral research topic, and conducting the dissertation defence procedures.
- 7.2 Members of the Dissertation Defence Committee shall be active academic and/or research staff holding a doctoral degree.
- 7.3 The Dissertation Defence Committee shall consist of at least three members with expertise in the relevant scientific field of the doctoral research. At least one member of the Committee shall be a representative of another higher education institution and/or a research organisation.
- 7.4 If the doctoral research is conducted in a scientific field represented by a member of the Scientific Council of TMA, that individual shall be invited to serve on the Dissertation Defence Committee, provided that no conflict of interest exists.
- 7.5 The functions and responsibilities of the Dissertation Defence Committee are as follows:
- a) To evaluate the prospectus and the doctoral dissertation (PhD thesis) submitted by the doctoral candidate;
  - b) To select appropriate reviewer(s) for the defence of the doctoral dissertation (PhD thesis) and submit them to the Coordinator of the Doctoral School;
  - c) To consider requests by the doctoral candidate for a change of supervisor, as well as requests by the supervisor to withdraw from supervision, and to prepare corresponding recommendations for the Coordinator of the Doctoral School;
  - d) To prepare a conclusion on the relevance of scientific publications published or submitted for publication by the doctoral candidate to the topic of the doctoral research and to submit it to the Coordinator of the Doctoral School.
- 7.6 Members of the Dissertation Defence Committee shall review the doctoral dissertation (PhD thesis) in advance of the defence.
- 7.7 The doctoral candidate's supervisor and the reviewer(s) of the dissertation may participate in the Dissertation Defence Committee without voting rights.
- 7.8 Where duly justified grounds exist, the doctoral candidate shall have the right to request the recusal of one or more members of the Dissertation Defence Committee. In such cases, the composition of the Committee shall be revised by appointing a person or persons with equivalent expertise.

#### **Article 8. Eligibility for Doctoral Studies**

- 8.1 The right to enrol in doctoral studies is granted to holders of a Master's degree or an equivalent academic qualification.
- 8.2 In accordance with the Law of Georgia "On Higher Education", graduates of foreign higher education institutions who have been awarded a Master's degree or an equivalent academic qualification may be granted the right to enrol in doctoral studies, provided that their academic qualification is recognised in accordance with the procedures established by the legislation of Georgia.

#### **Article 9. Admission to the Doctoral Programme**

- 9.1 Admission to doctoral studies/doctoral programmes is announced by the Rector based on the nomination of the Coordinator of the Doctoral School. Admission may be announced for both the autumn and the spring semesters.
- 9.2 The admission procedure for doctoral programmes consists of two stages:
1. Evaluation of the application submitted by the applicant by the Commission;
  2. An interview with the Commission.



- 9.3 Applicants for doctoral studies shall submit the following documents:
- a) A copy of a document certifying the award of a Master's degree or an equivalent academic qualification (for qualifications obtained abroad, recognition of the diploma must be confirmed by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement of Georgia);
  - b) A copy of an identity document;
  - c) Two photographs;
  - d) Curriculum Vitae (CV);
  - e) A completed application form approved for admission to the doctoral programme (Annex No. 1), which is published on the TMA website upon the announcement of admission to the doctoral programme;
  - f) A published work/publication in the relevant scientific field and/or documentation confirming participation in research projects and activities and/or at least two years of professional experience in the relevant field;
  - g) Other additional documents that may be required by the Research Department; such documents shall be defined by an individual administrative-legal act of the Rector.
- 9.4 A mandatory criterion for admission to a doctoral programme is proficiency in the English language at the B2 level. This requirement shall be evidenced by an appropriate English language proficiency certificate, a diploma supplement, or a diploma confirming completion of a Master's or equivalent educational programme delivered in English, recognised in accordance with the Law of Georgia "On Higher Education".
- 9.5 The documents submitted by the applicant shall be forwarded for review and evaluation to the Commission established by an order of the Rector, based on the recommendation of the Research Department.
- 9.6 The Commission shall be composed of academic and/or research staff holding a doctoral degree from TMA and/or other academic institutions in Georgia and/or internationally. A potential supervisor shall not participate in the evaluation process. The composition of the Commission shall consist of at least three members.
- 9.7 The criteria for the evaluation of the application and the interview, as well as the procedure for the allocation of scores in accordance with these criteria (Annex No. 2), are defined by this Regulation.
- 9.8 The application submitted by the applicant shall be evaluated by the Commission based on five criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is 5 points, and the minimum score is 1 point. The score assigned to the application by each member of the Commission shall be calculated as the sum of the points awarded across the respective criteria. The final score of the applicant's application shall be the arithmetic mean of the total scores assigned by the members of the Commission. The maximum total score for the application submitted for admission to the doctoral programme is 25. Admission to the interview with the Commission requires a minimum application score of 15 points. Applicants whose applications are evaluated at below 15 points shall be excluded from the competition.
- 9.9 At the final, second stage of admission to the doctoral programme, the applicant shall undergo an interview with the Commission. During the interview, the applicant shall present a 10-minute presentation on the proposed doctoral research project, followed by a discussion. The interview shall be evaluated by the Commission based on two criteria. The maximum score for each criterion is 5 points, and the minimum score is 1 point. For admission to the doctoral programme, the interview score must be at least 6 points. The score assigned to the interview by each member of the Commission shall be calculated as the sum of the points awarded across the respective criteria. The final interview score of the applicant shall be the arithmetic mean of the total scores assigned by the members of the Commission.
- 9.10 The applicant's overall score shall be determined as the sum of the scores obtained from the evaluation of application and the interview. For enrolment in the doctoral programme, the applicant's overall score must be at least 21 points.
- 9.11 Based on the overall score, the Commission makes a decision on the enrolment of the applicant in doctoral studies and submits it to the Rector.



9.12 A contract shall be concluded between TMA, the doctoral candidate, and the supervisor no later than two months after enrolment. This document defines the rights and obligations of the parties. An integral part of the contract is the individual study and research plan of the doctoral candidate.

### **Article 10. Mobility in Doctoral Studies**

10.1 The right to enrol in TMA doctoral studies through mobility is granted to a doctoral candidate enrolled in an accredited doctoral programme in the relevant field at an authorised higher education institution in Georgia and/or abroad.

10.2 Admission to TMA doctoral programmes through mobility shall not be considered if the applicant has received funding for the implementation of doctoral research during their studies in the relevant accredited doctoral programme at the higher education institution from which they seek to transfer, and the obligations defined by such funding have not been fully fulfilled, including where the funded project has not been completed and remains ongoing.

10.3 Mobility at the doctoral level may be implemented subject to the availability of TMA's intellectual resources. The supervisor of a doctoral candidate admitted through mobility shall be a TMA-affiliated academic staff member holding a doctoral or an equivalent academic degree.

10.4 Mobility at the doctoral level shall be implemented within the timeframes announced for admission to TMA doctoral programmes.

10.5 An applicant seeking admission through mobility shall apply to the Doctoral School of TMA. The application shall include the following information:

a) Information on the higher education institution, faculty/school, doctoral programme, and field from which the applicant seeks to transfer;

b) Information on the TMA doctoral programme to which the applicant seeks admission.

In the case of mobility from an authorised foreign higher education institution, the applicant shall be required to undergo prior consultation with the Coordinator of the Doctoral School regarding the possibility of recognition of previously completed study components. In addition to the documents listed in Paragraph 10.6 of this Article, the applicant shall submit documents issued by the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement confirming the recognition of the completion of the Master's programme, the award of the Master's degree, and the authenticity of the courses completed within the doctoral programme.

10.6 The application shall be accompanied by the following documents:

- A certificate confirming enrolment in the relevant accredited doctoral programme; the document must also indicate that the doctoral candidate has not received grant funding for the implementation of doctoral research through affiliation with another institution;
- A prospectus: representing the concept of the doctoral research; if the applicant has already had a prospectus approved within the relevant accredited doctoral programme, documentation confirming this fact shall be submitted, along with its modified version;
- A bioethics committee opinion on the doctoral research topic (where applicable);
- The student's academic transcript;
- A document confirming English language proficiency at the B2 level (Article 9, Paragraph 9.4);
- A document confirming military registration (for male applicants only);
- A copy of an identity document;
- A copy of a document confirming a Level 7 qualification of higher education;
- An electronic version of a biometric photograph.

10.7 For reviewing the documents submitted by the applicant, the Research Department, based on the recommendation of the Doctoral School, establishes a Commission by an order of the Rector. This collegial body shall review the documents submitted by the applicant and evaluate the prospectus within a period of one month.



- 10.8 The evaluation of the prospectus shall include a 30-minute presentation by the applicant to the Commission, reflecting the following:
- The research topic/problem and its relevance;
  - A literature review and bibliography;
  - The aim, objectives, and/or hypothesis;
  - The methodology;
  - The plan, as well as expected and achieved results;
  - Publications reflecting the obtained results (where applicable).
- 10.9 In evaluating the prospectus, the Commission shall apply a binary assessment principle (yes/no) in accordance with the following criteria:
- Relevance of the research topic and adequacy of its formulation;
  - Research objectives and thesis/scientific hypothesis;
  - Research methodology and its alignment with the objectives;
  - Results and their consistency with the research objectives;
  - Practical significance of the results;
  - Substantive value of the submitted work;
  - Presentation skills;
  - Argumentation, analysis, and reasoning;
  - Ability to respond to questions;
  - Technical aspects and ability to comply with procedural requirements.
- 10.10 Within five working days following the completion of the review of documents and the evaluation of the prospectus, the Commission shall formulate and submit to the Rector its decision regarding the applicant's enrolment in the doctoral programme and the recognition of activities defined within the study component.
- 10.11 Within three working days of being informed of the mobility results, the applicant shall have the right to appeal the decision by submitting a reasoned written application addressed to the Legal Office of TMA.
- 10.12 Based on the decision of the Commission, and by an order of the Rector, a doctoral candidate admitted to a TMA doctoral programme through mobility shall, in agreement with the supervisor and the doctoral programme director, develop an individual plan defining the implementation of the study and research components. This shall mandatorily include:
- Within the research component of the doctoral programme: the implementation of activities such as a research seminar and scientific publications, including at least two articles related to the dissertation topic, authored by the doctoral candidate as first author and affiliated with TMA, published or accepted for publication in scientific journals indexed in international scientific databases; as well as the completion and defence of the doctoral dissertation;
  - Within the study component of the doctoral programme: the implementation of activities such as teaching assistance;
  - The implementation of other activities defined within the study component of the doctoral programme, considering the recognition of previously completed study components.
- 10.13 Regarding mobility at the doctoral level, the participation of doctoral candidates in international research mobility schemes and traineeships (e.g., Horizon Europe, COST, Erasmus+, and others) is encouraged.
- 10.14 Due to differing admission requirements across TMA doctoral programmes, internal mobility (i.e., transfer from one doctoral programme to another within the Academy) is not permitted.

## **Article 11. Academic Structure of Doctoral Studies**

- 11.1 In accordance with the mission, institutional, and research priorities of TMA, the Research Department ensures the development, updating, and advancement of doctoral programmes, while the Doctoral School is responsible for their implementation.



- 11.2 The duration of doctoral studies shall be not less than three and not more than five years, unless otherwise specified by the doctoral programme under special conditions. If a doctoral candidate is unable to fulfil the programme requirements within five years, an additional one-year contract may be concluded, subject to relevant academic and administrative conditions.
- 11.3 In accordance with the applicable legislation of Georgia, a doctoral candidate may accumulate a maximum of 60 credits during doctoral studies.
- 11.4 The maximum number of credits within the study component of the doctoral programme, as well as the courses and their sequence, shall be defined by the doctoral programme.
- 11.5 The Doctoral School of TMA may implement joint programmes, the conditions of which shall be defined by the relevant documentation (agreements, memoranda, curricula, etc.).

## **Article 12. Research Supervisor**

- 12.1 Supervision of doctoral candidates constitutes a core process of doctoral education. It aims to support the development of competences and skills necessary for independent research.
- 12.2 Supervision of doctoral candidates is carried out in accordance with the principles of academic freedom and integrity, ethics and collegiality, bioethics, institutional culture, responsible mentorship, and professional development, ensuring adherence to research and academic processes structured on these principles.
- 12.3 During the period of doctoral studies, the doctoral candidate is mentored by a supervisor who, together with the doctoral candidate, is responsible for the implementation of the individual study and research plan and coordinates the doctoral candidate in the execution of the research component.
- 12.4 The supervisor shall be a TMA-affiliated academic staff member holding a doctoral degree and possessing expertise in the field of the planned doctoral research.
- 12.5 Within the last three years, the supervisor shall have published at least one scientific paper in journals indexed in international scientific databases; experience of successful participation in national and/or international grant competitions is desirable.
- 12.6 A supervisor may supervise a maximum of three doctoral candidates with active status (ratio 1:3). This approach is aligned with and considers the conditions defined in the document “Affiliation Rules and Conditions for Academic Staff of Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy, Workload of Academic and Invited Personnel.” Compliance with this ratio is mandatory, including in exceptional cases (e.g., upon the reactivation of a doctoral candidate with suspended status). A different ratio is permitted only within the framework of an international research project, considering the objectives and tasks of the project and provided that appropriate justification is presented in the project proposal and the grant agreement.
- 12.7 The supervisor confirms their consent to supervise the doctoral candidate by signing the doctoral application. In the event of the applicant’s enrolment in the doctoral programme, the supervisor shall actively participate in the doctoral candidate’s study and research activities.
- 12.8 The functions and responsibilities of the supervisor are as follows:
  - To hold regular academic meetings with the doctoral candidate (at least two meetings per month during the semester);
  - To provide mentorship and guidance to the doctoral candidate on research design, methodology, academic writing, effective scientific communication, analysis of results, preparation of scientific publications, and other matters related to the doctoral research;
  - To facilitate the integration of the doctoral candidate into TMA activities;
  - To carry out detailed and timely evaluation of the activities defined in the doctoral candidate’s individual plan and of the progress of the doctoral research.
- 12.9 The supervisor shall carry out interim evaluations of the doctoral candidate’s progress on a semester basis and shall submit a formal report to the doctoral programme director once a year.
- 12.10 TMA provides for the possibility of team-based supervision. This approach involves additional academic support for the doctoral candidate on specific research issues by a consultative group possessing relevant research expertise, alongside the supervisor.



- 12.11 TMA provides for the possibility of team-based supervision. This approach involves additional academic support for the doctoral candidate on specific research issues by a consultative group possessing relevant research expertise, alongside the supervisor.
- 12.12 Members of the consultative group may be individuals holding a doctoral or an equivalent academic degree who, within the last three years, have published at least one scientific paper in journals indexed in international scientific databases and are members of TMA staff and/or academic or research staff of local or international universities or research institutions.
- 12.13 The functions of the consultative group are as follows:
- To review issues submitted by the doctoral candidate and their supervisor and to develop appropriate methodological and/or practical recommendations;
  - To evaluate and analyse the application of the developed methodological and/or practical recommendations, refine them where necessary, and participate in the analysis of the obtained results;
  - Where necessary, to review prepared thematic scientific papers and provide developmental feedback.
- 12.14 The consultative group shall be established for a period of one semester and/or for a longer duration, based on communication with the doctoral candidate and their supervisor.
- 12.15 The activities of the consultative group shall be coordinated by the Coordinator of the Doctoral School.
- 12.16 Participation as a supervisor at the doctoral level requires the completion of the training “Core Principles of Effective Supervision.”
- 12.17 The Faculty Development Department of TMA, in cooperation with the Research Department, ensures the provision of regular training, the completion of which is mandatory for supervisors.
- 12.18 The evaluation of supervisors shall be carried out by doctoral candidates, postdoctoral researchers, the Research Department, and the Faculty Development Department, in accordance with the approaches set out in the document “Principles for the Evaluation of Supervisors.”
- 12.19 Supervision constitutes part of the academic workload and is reflected in the TMA staff workload scheme.
- 12.20 If a supervisor withdraws from supervision, they shall submit a written request to the Coordinator of the Doctoral School.
- 12.21 If a doctoral candidate wishes to change their supervisor, they shall submit a written request to the Coordinator of the Doctoral School.

### **Article 13. Dissertation Plan (Prospectus)**

- 13.1 Within the timeframe established by the educational programme, the doctoral candidate shall submit to the Dissertation Defence Committee a draft of the doctoral dissertation, the prospectus, which includes the following:
- a) The relevance of the research;
  - b) A review of the scientific literature;
  - c) The aim, objectives, and/or hypothesis;
  - d) The methodology;
  - e) The plan;
  - f) Expected results;
  - g) The bibliography.
- 13.2 In evaluating the prospectus, the Dissertation Defence Committee shall apply a binary assessment principle (yes/no) in accordance with the following criteria:
- Relevance of the defined research topic and adequacy of its formulation;
  - Definition and clear formulation of the objective(s);
  - Thesis/research hypothesis;
  - Alignment of the objectives with the research topic and the thesis/research hypothesis;
  - Research methodology;
  - Alignment of the research methodology with the objectives;



- Expected results;
- Alignment of the expected results with the thesis/research hypothesis;
- Bioethical aspects;
- Practical significance of the expected results;
- Substantive value of the work carried out;
- Presentation skills;
- Independent argumentation and analysis;
- Originality of conclusions and novelty of reasoning;
- Ability to respond to questions;
- Technical aspects and ability to comply with procedural requirements.

13.3 The Dissertation Defence Committee shall have a quorum if a majority of its full membership is present at the meeting. Decisions shall be adopted by open voting, by a majority of the members of the Committee present at the meeting.

#### **Article 14. Submission of the Dissertation**

14.1 The doctoral candidate shall submit the doctoral dissertation, prepared in accordance with the standards of scientific publication and the requirements defined in the “Academic Writing Standards of Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy,” in electronic form to the Coordinator of the Doctoral School.

14.2 The dissertation shall be prepared in the English language.

14.3 The doctoral dissertation may also take the form of a compilation of published papers, provided that:

- a) The doctoral candidate has published at least four scientific articles on the dissertation topic in journals indexed in international scientific databases (e.g., Scopus, ScienceDirect, PubMed, MEDLINE, EBSCO, ERIH Plus, Web of Science, and others);
- b) In at least two of the above-mentioned articles, the doctoral candidate is the first author.

14.4 In the case described in Paragraph 3 of this Article, the doctoral candidate shall prepare:

- a) A title page, including the title of the dissertation, the author, the supervisor, and a list of the attached publications;
- b) An abstract of the dissertation (recommended length: 5,000–7,000 words, including illustrations where appropriate), presenting the unified research theme, methodological approach, and results of the attached scientific publications;
- c) Copies of published scientific publications or those accepted for publication.

If the doctoral research topic is not fully covered in the four published articles, the doctoral candidate may, in addition to the published articles, submit up to two additional unpublished and/or accepted-for-publication articles. In the case of publications accepted for publication, the doctoral candidate shall submit documentation confirming their acceptance. A doctoral dissertation submitted in this format shall be subject to peer review.

14.5 The doctoral dissertation shall also include a concluding summary reflecting the results of the doctoral research and their scientific significance.

14.6 Together with the dissertation, the doctoral candidate shall submit:

- a) A signed declaration confirming that the dissertation is the result of the doctoral candidate’s independent research and does not contain plagiarism;
- b) Interim evaluations of the work carried out by the reviewers;
- c) Conclusions of the Dissertation Defence Committee regarding the compliance of the doctoral candidate’s publications with the requirements defined in this Regulation.

#### **Article 15. Commitment of International Publishing**

15.1 Prior to the defence of the dissertation, the doctoral candidate shall have published, or have accepted for publication, at least two scientific papers in the relevant field of the doctoral research, affiliated with TMA, in



scientific journals indexed in international scientific databases (e.g., Scopus, ScienceDirect, PubMed, MEDLINE, EBSCO, ERIH Plus, Web of Science, and others).

- 15.2 The doctoral candidate shall be the first author of the scientific publications defined in Paragraph 1 of this Article.
- 15.3 The Dissertation Defence Committee shall submit to the Coordinator of the Doctoral School its conclusions regarding the compliance of the publications with the doctoral dissertation and with the requirements set out in this Regulation.

#### **Article 16. Convening of the Dissertation Defence Committee Meeting and Evaluation of the Doctoral Dissertation**

- 16.1 In the event of a positive conclusion by the Dissertation Defence Committee regarding the doctoral candidate's scientific publications, the Coordinator of the Doctoral School shall submit a request to the Rector to convene a public meeting of the Dissertation Defence Committee.
- 16.2 The Dissertation Defence Committee nominates the candidate reviewer(s) and reviews the reviewers' reports on the doctoral dissertation.
- 16.3 The Coordinator of the Doctoral School shall attend meetings of the Dissertation Defence Committee without voting rights.
- 16.4 The evaluation of the doctoral dissertation shall be carried out according to the following grading system
- Summa cum laude (Excellent, 91–100 points) – an outstanding dissertation;
  - Magna cum laude (Very good, 81–90 points) – a dissertation that fully complies with the requirements defined by the evaluation criteria;
  - Cum laude (Good, 71–80 points) – a dissertation that complies with the requirements defined by the evaluation criteria;
  - Bene (Satisfactory, 61–70 points) – a dissertation that largely complies with the core requirements defined by the evaluation criteria;
  - Rite (Adequate, 51–60 points) – a dissertation that, despite certain shortcomings, complies with the requirements defined by the evaluation criteria;
  - Insufficenter (Unsatisfactory, 41–50 points) – a dissertation that does not meet the requirements defined by the evaluation criteria and contains significant shortcomings;
  - Sub omni canone (Completely unsatisfactory, 40 points or less) – a completely unsatisfactory dissertation.
- 16.5 The decision on the final evaluation shall be taken by the Dissertation Defence Committee in accordance with the procedures and criteria defined by the doctoral programme.
- 16.6 In the case of a negative evaluation (Insufficenter – Unsatisfactory), the doctoral candidate shall, within one year, submit a revised dissertation to the Dissertation Defence Committee. In the case of a Sub omni canone – Completely unsatisfactory evaluation, the doctoral candidate shall submit a new dissertation to the Committee within the timeframe specified by it.
- 16.7 If, following the exercise of the right provided for in Paragraph 6 of this Article, the Dissertation Defence Committee adopts a repeated negative decision, the doctoral candidate shall have their student status terminated due to failure to achieve the learning outcomes.

#### **Article 17. Defence of Dissertation**

- 17.1 The defence of the dissertation shall take place before the Dissertation Defence Committee. The defence shall be public and conducted in an open session.
- 17.2 The language of the defence shall be English.
- 17.3 The duration of the defence shall be determined by the Dissertation Defence Committee.
- 17.4 The defence procedure shall include the presentation of the dissertation by the doctoral candidate, a scientific discussion, and the announcement of the decision of the Dissertation Defence Committee.
- 17.5 The supervisor shall have the right to attend the defence. The supervisor may express an opinion on the dissertation and the doctoral candidate if invited to do so by the Dissertation Defence Committee.



17.6 The evaluation of the defence shall be carried out in accordance with the approach defined in Article 16, Paragraph 4 of this Regulation.

### **Article 18. Award of the Degree and Publication Requirement**

- 18.1 Based on the decision of the Dissertation Defence Committee, the Scientific Council of TMA awards the doctoral candidate an academic degree. Following the issuance of the diploma confirming the award of the doctoral degree, the individual shall be entitled to use the title of Doctor, indicating the relevant field and/or discipline/specialisation.
- 18.2 The decision of the Scientific Council of TMA shall be final.
- 18.3 The diploma shall include the title of the dissertation, the date of the defence, and the overall evaluation. The diploma shall be signed by the Chair of the Scientific Council of TMA and the Rector, and shall be certified with the official seal of TMA
- 18.4 The Doctoral School shall be obliged to publish the dissertation within one month of the defence.

### **Article 19. Appeals Procedure**

- 19.1 Written applications submitted on issues related to academic or research activities arising during doctoral studies shall be considered, prior to the commencement of the dissertation defence process, by the academic coordinator of the Doctoral School, and thereafter by the Dissertation Defence Committee.
- 19.2 The doctoral candidate shall be informed of the evaluation results within five working days following the completion of the evaluation process.
- 19.3 Within three working days of being informed of the evaluation results, the doctoral candidate shall have the right to appeal the evaluation by submitting a reasoned written application addressed to the Coordinator of the Doctoral School or to the Dissertation Defence Committee, as appropriate.
- 19.4 Within the appeals procedure, a decision shall be taken within five working days of the submission of a reasoned written application, based on its review.

### **Article 20. Suspension and Termination of Doctoral Candidate Status**

The suspension or termination of a doctoral candidate's status shall be carried out in accordance with the procedures established by TMA.

### **Article 21. Revocation of the Doctoral Degree**

- 21.1 The doctoral degree shall be revoked by a decision of the Scientific Council of TMA in cases of violation of the principles of academic integrity and research ethics.
- 21.2 The academic degree shall be declared invalid if a violation of academic integrity standards is established in relation to the doctoral candidate's scientific work.
- 21.3 This decision shall be taken by the Scientific Council of TMA or by a commission established by it.

### **Article 22. Funding**

Funding of doctoral candidates shall be provided through state funding, targeted and research grants, funding from TMA, scholarships, and self-financing.

### **Article 23. Final Provisions**

- 23.1 This Regulation shall be approved by the Rector's Council.
- 23.2 This Regulation shall enter into force upon its approval, and any amendments or additions shall be adopted in accordance with the same procedure.
- 23.3 Upon the approval of this Regulation, the regulatory document "Regulation of the Scientific-Research and PhD Department and the Scientific Council of Petre Shotadze Tbilisi Medical Academy" (approved by the Rector, Order No. 14, dated 29 January 2024) shall be repealed.



**Applicant's proposal template for the admission to the doctoral programme**

Applicant (first name, last name):

Potential research supervisor (first name, last name):

Title of proposed doctoral study:

Research topic (determine the research topic and provide a justification for its relevance; recommended number of words - 200)

Research goal and objectives, hypothesis (recommended number of words - 200)

Research methodology (recommended number of words - 200)

Expected results and their practical relevance (recommended number of words - 200)

Applicant's signature :

Potential scientific supervisor's signature:

Date:



**Evaluation of the doctoral programme applicant’s proposal and interview**

**Evaluation of the doctoral programme applicant’s proposal**

Commission’s member’s first name, last name:

Applicant’s first name, last name:

Title of doctoral study:

| <b>Criteria</b>  |
|--|
| <b>Research topic</b> - how clearly the research topic/problem is defined and how accurately, consistently, and sufficiently is justified its relevance.   |
| <b>Research goal and objectives, hypothesis</b> - how correctly and clearly the goal and objectives of the research are formulated; how well the research hypothesis corresponds to the purpose of the research; how correctly and clearly is it formulated.   |
| <b>Research methodology</b> - how correctly the methodology is selected for the research; how fully and clearly the methodology is described in the application.   |
| <b>Expected results and their practical relevance</b> - how clearly the applicant establishes the essence of the research results and demonstrated the practical significance of the research findings   |
| <b>Proposal language and style</b> - how well the applicant presents a logical and coherent argument throughout their application; how effectively the applicant uses appropriate academic language, adheres to the standards of scholarly writing, and maintains a consistent and professional writing style. |
| <b>Total score</b>   |
| <b>Comment</b>   |

|  |
|--|
| <b>5 points</b> – the applicant’s proposal strictly complies with the requirements defined by the criterium  |
| <b>4 points</b> - the applicant’s proposal complies with the requirements defined by the criterium with minor, mostly of technical nature shortcomings     |
| <b>3 points</b> - the applicant’s proposal for the most part complies with the requirements defined by the criterium, minor content shortcomings are noted |
| <b>2 points</b> - the proposal contains significant factual and content inaccuracies   |
| <b>1 point</b> - the proposal does not meet the requirements defined by the criterium, it is incompletely presented  |

Signature of the commission member:

Date:



## Evaluation of the doctoral programme applicant's interview

Commission's member's first name, last name:

Applicant's first name, last name:

Title of doctoral study:

| Criteria  |
|---|
| <b>Presentation</b> - ability to present research project effectively, demonstrating coherence and clarity in presentation, and engagement in effective communication with the listeners or committee members |
| <b>Discussion</b> - the ability to understand the question asked; ability to answer the question in a competent, argumentative and consistent manner  |
| <b>Total score</b>  |
| <b>Comment</b>  |

|  |
|--|
| <b>5 points</b> – the applicant's proposal strictly complies with the requirements defined by the criterium  |
| <b>4 points</b> - the applicant's proposal complies with the requirements defined by the criterium with minor, mostly of technical nature shortcomings     |
| <b>3 points</b> - the applicant's proposal for the most part complies with the requirements defined by the criterium, minor content shortcomings are noted |
| <b>2 points</b> - the proposal contains significant factual and content inaccuracies   |
| <b>1 point</b> - the proposal does not meet the requirements defined by the criterium; it is incompletely presented  |

Signature of the commission member:

Date: