

Established by the TTÜ Council Regulation No 8 of 20 June 2017

Date of entry into force: from the academic year 2017/2018

## **Regulations on Completion of Studies**

### **Chapter 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **§ 1. Purpose**

The Regulations on Completion of Studies set out the principles for completion of professional higher education, bachelor's, master's, integrated and doctoral studies and the terms and conditions as well as the procedure for the defence of bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees at Tallinn University of Technology ( hereinafter referred to as "the university" or "TTÜ").

#### **§ 2. Academic degrees**

(1) The academic degrees are: bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctoral degree. A doctoral degree is a research degree.

(2) TTÜ awards the following bachelor's degrees:

- 1) Bachelor of Science in Engineering; BSc;
- 2) Bachelor of Science; BSc;
- 3) Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences; BA.

(3) TTÜ awards the following master's degrees:

- 1) Master of Science in Engineering; MSc;
- 2) Master of Science in Civil Engineering; MSc;
- 3) Master of Science; MSc;
- 4) Master of Arts in Social Sciences; MA;
- 5) Master of Arts in Law; MA;
- 6) Master in Business Administration; MBA;
- 7) Master of Science in Architecture; MSc.

(4) The name of the doctoral degree awarded at TTÜ is Doctor of Philosophy; PhD.

#### **§ 3. Formation of defence committees and final examination committees**

(1) The dean shall form the defence committees and final examination committees as follows:

- 1) a defence committee of the graduation theses and a final examination committee of professional higher education shall include at least three members with higher education;
- 2) a defence committee of bachelor's or master's theses and a final examination committee of bachelor's or master's studies shall include at least three members with a master's degree or an equivalent qualification;
- 3) a defence committee of doctoral theses shall include at least five members with a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification. A defence committee may include the opponent(s), but not the supervisor(s). At least two members of the defence committee shall come from outside the university, and one of these two from outside the Republic of Estonia.

(2) The documents related to graduation shall be prepared and the students shall be notified of the deadlines for the defence of graduation theses and passing of final examinations in the study information system.

(3) If professional qualifications are granted along with the defence of a graduation thesis, the membership of the defence committee shall be approved by the professional qualifications committee.

**Chapter 2****BACHELOR'S, MASTER'S, INTEGRATED and PROFESSIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES****§ 4. Organisation of the defence of graduation theses and final examinations**

(1) Ordinary defences of the graduation theses and final examinations of bachelor's, master's, integrated and professional higher education studies shall be organised twice a year in the period specified in the academic calendar.

(2) The chairman of the defence committee shall disclose the time and place of the public meeting of the defence committee and the names of the students permitted to the defence no later than three days before the defence. The decision for a closed defence (with registered participants) shall be made by the dean. The terms and conditions of a closed defence shall be taken into consideration upon the publication of the graduation thesis and entry into contracts with the members of the defence committee.

(3) Graduation theses shall be reviewed pursuant to the procedure established by the dean.

(4) The dean may, at a reasoned request, allow participation at a defence by using a means of real-time two-way video image and sound communication (Skype, video conferencing, etc.).

**§ 5. Preconditions for eligibility to defend a graduation thesis and take a final examination**

(1) Completion of the courses included in the curriculum no later than 3 working days before the deadline for defending a graduation thesis or passing a final examination is the precondition for being eligible to defend a graduation thesis or take a final examination. A curriculum shall be deemed as completed once all the study modules have been completed. The exception is optional study modules, which may be incomplete on account of the excess completion of other modules, provided that the total volume of the curriculum has been completed. For curricula with several major fields of study, the curriculum shall be completed to the extent of at least one main field of study.

(2) Upon verification of fulfilment of the precondition for eligibility to defend a graduation thesis or take a final examination a student may apply the following:

1) with the approval of the programme director or head of the curriculum, transfer of subjects suitable for the completion of the curriculum from one module to another;

2) transfer of some of the courses from the completed optional study module or the elective subjects of other modules to extracurricular courses. The examination results of extracurricular courses shall not be taken into account in grade point average calculations, and these courses shall not be entered on the diploma supplement.

(3) Additional preconditions for permitting a student or an external student to defend a graduation thesis or take a final examination are as follows:

1) absence of arrears of tuition fees;

2) positive result in case of preliminary defence.

**§ 6. Supervision and preparation of a graduation thesis**

(1) As a rule, a graduation thesis is supervised by a member of university staff (hereinafter referred to as "supervisor"). A supervisor of a bachelor's, master's or integrated study thesis shall have at least a master's degree or an equivalent qualification. A supervisor of a professional higher education study thesis shall have acquired at least higher education.

(2) A graduation thesis may have up to two supervisors, one of whom shall be a member of university staff, unless otherwise specified by contracts. If the supervisor is not from the student's School, the topic of the graduation thesis as well as the name of the supervisor shall be approved by the programme director or head of the curriculum prior to starting writing the thesis.

(3) The procedure for writing graduation theses and the requirements for the theses shall be established by the dean.

(4) A graduation thesis shall be written in Estonian or English or in the language of instruction set out in the curriculum. A thesis written in a foreign language shall include an Estonian summary, except in case of the graduation theses of degree curricula taught in English.

(5) A student admitted for defence shall submit a duly completed graduation thesis together with metadata of the graduation thesis and the non-exclusive licence. The procedure for the publication and preservation of graduation theses shall be established by the Rector.

## **§ 7. Defence of graduation theses**

- (1) A student of professional higher education studies or bachelor's studies shall submit the declaration of the thesis topic in the study information system by the deadline specified in the academic calendar; the declaration shall include the name of the topic both, in Estonian and English, and the name of the supervisor. The declaration of the thesis topic shall be approved by the supervisor.
- (2) A student of master's studies or integrated studies, who wants to defend his or her graduation thesis, shall submit a defence application by the deadline specified in the academic calendar; the application shall include the name of the topic both, in Estonian and English, and the name of the supervisor. A defence application submitted shall be approved by the supervisor.
- (3) If the preconditions for eligibility to defend a graduation thesis have been fulfilled, the dean's office shall draw up an order on eligibility to defend the graduation thesis or approve the defence application.
- (4) The procedure for the defence of graduation theses shall be established by the dean.
- (5) The chairman of the defence committee has the right not to permit a thesis to be defended if it does not comply with the requirements set out for a graduation thesis.
- (6) The main stages of the defence process are the following:
  - 1) introduction of the documents submitted for defence;
  - 2) presentation by the author of the graduation thesis;
  - 3) if the graduation thesis is subject to review, hearing the review and answering the reviewer's questions;
  - 4) answering questions of the members of the defence committee;
  - 5) a general discussion (all those present may ask questions and give their opinions);
  - 6) hearing the supervisor's opinion;
  - 7) making a decision and drawing up a defence record.
- (7) A defence committee has a quorum if at least three members specified in clauses 3 (1) 1) and 2) participate in the defence meeting.
- (8) Graduation theses and the defence thereof shall be assessed on the basis of the TTÜ grading system. Any positive grade means that the graduation thesis was defended successfully.
- (9) If a graduation thesis is defended and graded with "0", the thesis can be defended again pursuant to the terms and conditions determined by the defence committee as follows:
  - 1) to supplement the existing graduation thesis;
  - 2) to submit a new thesis.

## **§ 8. Final examination**

- (1) A final examination is declared in the individual study plan at the beginning of the semester. As an exception, the dean may allow a final examination to be declared at another time during an academic year.
- (2) The period of validity of a final examination declaration shall be the same as the period of validity of the declarations of other courses.
- (3) The final examination committee shall disclose the times and place of the examination and open registration for the examination 10 calendar days before commencement of the final examinations at the latest. Registration shall end 3 calendar days before the final examination.
- (4) An order shall be drawn up at the dean's office for students who have registered for a final examination and have fulfilled the preconditions of eligibility to take a final exam.
- (5) The procedure for conducting a final examination shall be established by the chairman of the final examination committee. A final examination committee has a quorum if at least three members specified in subsections 3 (1) and (2) are present.
- (6) A student who receives grade "0" at a final examination or who fails to attend an examination may register for the following announced final examinations during the period of validity of the declaration.

### Chapter 3 DOCTORAL STUDIES

#### § 9. Supervision of a doctoral thesis

- (1) A doctoral thesis shall be supervised by a person with a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification.
- (2) If necessary, a doctoral thesis can have up to three supervisors. At least one of the supervisors shall be a TTÜ employee, unless otherwise specified in the contracts entered into. No more than two supervisors can be appointed from TTÜ.
- (3) The requirements for a doctoral theses and the procedure for publishing doctoral theses shall be established by the Rector.

#### § 10. Eligibility for defence

- (1) A doctoral candidate shall submit to the dean a defence application approved by the supervisor and the doctoral thesis ready for publication.
- (2) Within two months as of the submission of the doctoral thesis at the latest, the dean shall decide if:
  - 1) the doctoral thesis is eligible for defence;
  - 2) a thesis that fails to meet the requirements should be returned;
  - 3) the student should be required to supplement or rewrite the doctoral thesis

#### § 11. Acting as an opponent

- (1) The dean shall appoint at least two opponents with a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification from outside TTÜ for a doctoral thesis; one of the opponents shall come from outside the Republic of Estonia.

#### § 12. Defence of a doctoral thesis

- (1) The following shall be submitted to the defence committee in order to carry out the defence:
  - 1) the doctoral thesis;
  - 2) the defence application approved by the dean;
  - 3) the opponent's written opinion, if the opponent is not participating in the defence committee meeting;
  - 4) the supervisor's opinion on the doctoral candidate and his/her doctoral thesis, if the supervisor is not participating in the defence committee meeting.
- (2) A doctoral thesis shall be defended at a public meeting of the defence committee. In justified cases, the chairman of the defence committee announces, pursuant to the dean's decision, a closed meeting (with registered participants). The terms and conditions of a closed defence shall be taken into consideration upon the publication of the doctoral thesis and entry into contracts with the members of the defence committee.
- (3) A doctoral thesis defence is carried out if the following are present at the defence:
  - 1) the doctoral candidate;
  - 2) five members of the defence committee, including the chairman of the defence committee;
  - 3) at least one opponent.
- (4) The defence process consists of the following main stages:
  - 1) introduction of the documents submitted for defence;
  - 2) presentation by the doctoral candidate;
  - 3) an academic discussion between the doctoral candidate and the opponents;
  - 4) answering questions of the members of the defence committee;
  - 5) a general discussion;
  - 6) hearing the supervisor's opinion;
  - 7) making a decision and drawing up a defence record, whereto the the opponents' written opinions must be annexed.
- (5) The defence committee shall decide on awarding a doctoral degree in a closed meeting by a secret ballot.

**Chapter 4****DOCUMENTING THE DEFENCE RESULTS, PREPARATION OF THE GRADUATION DOCUMENTS AND DISPUTING OF THE RESULTS****§ 13. Documenting the graduation thesis defence results and final examination results**

(1) The result of a graduation thesis defence shall be entered in the study information system no later than on the working day following the defence and the result of a final examination shall be entered in the study information system no later than 5 working days after the final examination.

**§ 14. Drawing up and handing over graduation documents**

(1) A person who has completed a curriculum in full receives a diploma with a diploma supplement and, in cases provided for in the Universities Act, a diploma supplement in English.

(2) A diploma is issued based on the dean's office order. The dean's office shall prepare an order on the completion of studies and, in case of graduating from bachelor's, master's or doctoral studies, an order on the award of a degree. The name of the curriculum or the main field of study in the nominative case may be added to the name of the master's or doctoral degree in brackets.

(3) A *cum laude* diploma is awarded to a student of professional higher education, bachelor's, master's or integrated studies:

- 1) who has completed the curriculum in full;
- 2) who defended a graduation thesis or took a final examination and received grade "5"; and
- 3) whose grade point average is 4.600 or higher, whereas all the grades to be entered on the diploma supplement shall be taken into account

(4) The date of issue of a diploma of bachelor's, master's, integrated or professional higher education studies shall be the date of the order on exmatriculation of the student in connection with the completion of a curriculum in full. The date of issue of a diploma of doctoral studies shall be the date of defending the doctoral thesis.

(5) The graduation documents of bachelor's, master's, integrated and professional higher education studies shall be handed over at the festive graduation ceremony. Graduation ceremonies are held once a year at the time specified in the TTÜ academic calendar. The graduation documents of doctoral studies are handed over once a year at the university's anniversary ceremony.

**§ 15. Disputing**

(1) A grade received for a graduation thesis or final examination can be disputed pursuant to the general procedure set out in the Academic Policies of the university.

(2) A person, including a student, may dispute defence results if the data presented in the graduation thesis do not correspond to reality or if another person's graduation thesis or a part thereof or another person's work protected by a copyright or a part thereof has been submitted as the graduate's graduation thesis.

(3) In order to dispute the results on the grounds referred to in subsection (2), a person shall file a written or oral appeal to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, and in case of doctoral students to the Vice Rector for Research, within 30 calendar days as of the day the person became aware of a violation set out in subsection (2) of this section. An oral appeal shall be recorded and confirmed by the signature of the person filing the appeal.

(4) The Vice Rector of the area of responsibility shall form an independent committee to review the appeal and the committee shall present a reasoned opinion within 20 days from the date of filing of the appeal.

(5) On the basis of the committee's opinion, the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs or the Vice Rector for Research shall make one of the following decisions:

- 1) makes a suggestion to the defence committee to revoke the decision on awarding the academic degree and/or diploma;
- 2) rejects the appeal.

(6) The decision on rejecting the appeal shall be sent to the person filing the appeal by mail, and to the student via the study information system.

(7) Upon the revocation of an academic degree and a diploma, the defence committee shall decide on the following:

- 1) whether to allow the student to defend the thesis again;
- 2) whether to allow the student to submit a new thesis;
- 3) makes a suggestion to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs or the Vice Rector for Research to exmatriculate the student due to dishonourable behaviour.

(8) If the student had been exmatriculated in connection with the completion of the curriculum and the awarding of a diploma prior to the defence committee's decision set out in clause (7)3) of this section, the Vice Rector of the area of responsibility shall revoke the student's exmatriculation in connection with the completion of the curriculum and awarding of a diploma and the student shall be exmatriculated due to dishonourable behaviour.

(9) The defence committee shall make the decision within 10 calendar days as of the day of making the decision to revoke the academic degree and diploma and send it to the person who filed the appeal.

(8) The decision to revoke an academic degree and a diploma shall be made public.

## **Chapter 5 FINAL PROVISIONS**

### **§ 16. Graduation as an external student**

(1) A person who has fulfilled the conditions for commencing the respective studies and has completed all the courses pursuant to the curriculum up to defending a graduation thesis or taking a final exam and has written a graduation thesis or wants to take a final examination may apply graduation from the respective academic level as an external student. Within two weeks as of the submission of an application, it shall be determined whether the applicant has fulfilled the preconditions of eligibility to defend a graduation thesis or take a final examination.

(2) A person applying for graduation as an external student shall submit to the dean's office of the School managing the curriculum a declaration of the thesis topic or a defence application signed by the supervisor or an application for taking a final examination along with the documents proving the fulfilment of the terms and conditions for commencement of studies and the completion of studies, and his or her personal data.

(3) If the preconditions of eligibility to defend a graduation thesis or take a final examination have been fulfilled, a contract shall be entered into with the person applying for graduation as an external student. The provisions of these Regulations shall be applied to the person graduating as an external student according to the academic level of the external student.

### **§ 17. Awarding double degrees**

In case of awarding international double degrees, the procedure for and the terms and conditions of the defence of graduation theses shall be agreed upon in a contract, taking into account the provisions of these Regulations.

### **§ 18. Repeal of Regulation**

TTÜ Council Regulation No 6 of 18 June 2013 "Regulations on Completion of Studies" (amended by Regulation No 6 of 17 June 2014 and Regulation No 6 of 21 March 2017) is repealed.

### **§ 19. Entry into force of Regulation**

This Regulation shall enter into force as of the academic year 2017/2018.