

# **Regulation no. 1252-2011**

## **Regulation on doctoral study and doctoral degrees at the University of Iceland School of Health Sciences, no. 1252/2011**

with subsequent amendments

### **Article 1. Scope.**

The Regulation on doctoral study and doctoral degrees at the School of Health Sciences is established in consideration of the *Criteria and requirements for the quality of doctoral studies at the University of Iceland* and the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009. The School of Health Sciences Regulation on doctoral study and doctoral degrees forms the framework for rules at the School's faculties.

### **Article 2 Objective.**

The objective of doctoral study at the School of Health Sciences is to provide doctoral students with training in and insight into research methods in the health sciences and related disciplines and for the doctoral student to attain detailed knowledge in the area of the doctoral thesis. Programmes involve training in the preparation and implementation of research, processing and interpretation of research results, presentation and debate of the student's own research in the context of knowledge in the field as well as publication in international peer-reviewed journals. The doctoral candidate is thereby well prepared for independent scientific work.

The University of Iceland Graduate School shall oversee and follow up established standards and requirements for the quality of postgraduate studies at the University of Iceland, cf. Article 66 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009. Any information or documentation requested by the University of Iceland Graduate School must be supplied.

### **Article 3 School of Health Sciences doctoral studies committee.**

The board of the School of Health Sciences shall appoint the doctoral studies committee. Each faculty as well as the Centre of Public Health Sciences shall nominate one representative. Should any new programmes be established within the School of Health Sciences, they may request a seat on the committee. The committee shall appoint its own chair. Appointment of the committee shall comply with Article 15 of the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men no. 10/2008. The doctoral studies committee represents doctoral studies under the authority of the School board. The committee is responsible for doctoral studies within the School and its role is to develop and influence their direction and objectives. The chair of the doctoral studies committee is the School of Health Sciences' contact with the Graduate School.

### **Article 4 Application deadline.**

Applications for admission to doctoral study may be accepted beyond the conventional University of Iceland application deadline.

### **Article 5 Handling of applications and research plans.**

Applications are submitted using the electronic application form provided by the University of Iceland, available on the University website or at the School Office. Faculties are responsible for registering an application and informing Student Registration that this has taken place. Applications shall generally have been processed and answered within six weeks after being received. Applications may be written in English or Icelandic and must be accompanied by abstracts in English and Icelandic, a description of the research project and a research plan in accordance with item c below, cf. the application form. Should a faculty reject a student's application, it must give grounds for doing so. The Student Registration must be notified of the outcomes of all applications.

***Application process and evaluation of research plan:***

- a. The student applies for doctoral studies using a special form available from the website, the School of Health Sciences Office or faculties within the School. The application must include copies of degree certificates as well as the applicant's CV, the prospective supervisor/tutor's CV and the names of two references.
- b. The application is recorded by the School of Health Sciences and checked to ensure that it is satisfactory with regards to item a and that the applicant meets general admission requirements, cf. Article 6 of this Regulation.
- c. The next step follows one of two processes, depending on when the research plan is submitted:
  - i. The application includes a detailed explanation of the study plan, research project and research plan. Such applications must specify wishes regarding the prospective doctoral committee. The study plan and research plan are evaluated and the applicant and supervisor are invited to an interview with a representative of the School doctoral studies committee. The application is answered with a reasoned statement.
  - ii. The application includes a brief explanation of the study plan, research project and research plan. The applicant is enrolled in the faculty having met general prerequisites and quality requirements. The applicant composes a detailed research plan in consultation with the tutor and supervisor and submits it along with a request regarding the prospective doctoral committee no later than by the end of the second semester. The study plan and research plan are evaluated and the applicant and supervisor are invited to an interview with a representative of the School doctoral studies committee. The research plan is answered with a reasoned statement.

A detailed research plan must include the following sections:

    1. Description of the research and the role/participation of the doctoral committee members in the research (1-2 pages). The committee members' CVs must be included.
    2. Report on the academic basis of the research, including a short academic overview, the status of the discipline, structure of the research, methodology, research question / hypothesis if applicable (3-5 pages).
    3. Work plan, schedule and budget (1-2 pages).The applicant may be given the chance to revise the research plan in accordance with submitted comments.
- d. The faculty standing committees shall review applications and send them to the School of Health Sciences doctoral studies committee. The School of Health Sciences doctoral studies committee shall reject an application if it does not meet quality requirements or accept the application and notify the relevant faculty of this decision.
- e. Following the doctoral studies committee's conclusion, faculties are responsible for informing applicants, Student Registration and the Graduate School whether an application has been accepted or rejected.
- f. A student who has been accepted by the School of Health Sciences into a doctoral programme must contact Student Registration to complete enrolment and payment of the registration fee for the upcoming academic year.

## **Article 6 Admission requirements.**

[To enrol in doctoral studies at the School of Health Sciences, a student must have completed an MS/MA degree from the University of Iceland with a minimum grade of 7.25 (on a scale of 0-10), or another

qualification deemed equivalent by the doctoral studies committee. Deviations may be made from the rule on minimum grades if the applicant has, e.g., demonstrated academic ability and/or ability in independent research. Students may be enrolled in doctoral studies following completion of the fifth year of study towards a candidate's degree in medicine at the Faculty of Medicine, i.e. on completion of 300 credits, including 180 credits for a BS in medicine. Faculties may set requirements regarding prerequisites or specific preparation.]<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Amended by Article 1 of Regulation no. [163/2016](#).

## **Article 7 Student responsibilities.**

Doctoral students must comply with good academic working practices, and avoid any actions in their studies or behaviour inside and outside the university which damages the honour or prestige of the institution or may cast aspersions on their studies or the University. They are required to acquaint themselves thoroughly with those rules and conventions pertaining to academic work, and to adopt in all ways recognised academic practice in research and the handling of sources. For example, staff and students should show one another respect in their behaviour, language and writing, exchange opinions in an unbiased manner, maintain integrity in collaborative work, seek the truth and present it to the best of their knowledge, and avoid allowing personal relationships and interests to affect collaboration.

## **Article 8 Number of credits, length and progression of study.**

A doctoral programme at the School of Health Sciences following completion of a Master's degree shall be equivalent to a minimum of three years of full-time study. A doctoral programme involves conducting a research project for 180 credits. Additionally, up to 30 credits may be accounted for by postgraduate courses. Doctoral students may be registered in part-time studies from the beginning of the programme. Students who believe they will be unable to complete the programme within four years must apply to the faculty standing committee for permission to extend registration for up to one year. If further extensions are required, the application must be repeated, although the total length of study must never exceed six years unless the student has been given permission to study part time.

Assuming normal student progression, the total length of study for a candidate's degree in medicine and subsequent study for a doctorate should be nine years, although the minimum length of study shall be eight and a half years. The doctoral student must have completed a candidate's degree from the University of Iceland Faculty of Medicine before undergoing a doctoral defence.

Students shall submit a progress report at the end of each semester, which must be approved by the supervisor/tutor. Progress is evaluated and reported to Student Registration. Satisfactory progress is a prerequisite for registration the following semester. Upon graduation, it must be demonstrated that a student has been registered and has paid the registration fee for the entire period of study. Students who have not paid their registration fees must clear their debts with the University before their graduation will be approved.

<sup>1</sup>Amended by Article 1 of Regulation no. [227/2015](#).

<sup>2</sup>Amended by Article 2 of Regulation no. [163/2016](#).

## **Article 9 Composition of study.**

Doctoral studies first and foremost entail training in scientific methods and work on a single research project. Doctoral students who have not previously completed courses in statistics and scientific methodology are required to take such courses. Other credits may be earned through faculty seminars, ethics and reading courses and other courses in subjects related to the doctoral thesis.

The School of Health Sciences doctoral conference, where doctoral students present their projects, is held once a year. Doctoral students are also expected to take part in other conferences in their field. As far as possible, doctoral students should have the chance to participate in teaching.

<sup>1</sup>Amended by Article 3 of Regulation no. [163/2016](#).

## **Article 10 Changes to study plans.**

A Master's thesis may not be re-used as the basis for a doctoral thesis.

Significant changes to the study plan are subject to the approval of the standing committee of the relevant faculty and must be submitted to the School doctoral studies committee and the Graduate School for confirmation. [...]<sup>1</sup>

[...]<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Amended by Article 4 of Regulation no. [163/2016](#).

## **Article 11 Tutors and supervisors.**

Upon commencing study, each student shall be assigned a tutor from among the regular teaching or research staff at the relevant School of Health Sciences faculty, with whom to discuss the organisation of study, selection of courses and other aspects of the programme. Doctoral students may consult their tutors on the creation of the research plan, the organisation of the programme, choice of courses (if applicable), or anything else connected to their studies. The tutor is responsible for ensuring that the doctoral programme meets the requirements of the School of Health Sciences. The tutor is normally also the supervisor. As well as the tutor, a student may have one or two supervisors, who may be external to the University as long as they meet the requirements stipulated in Article 12 of this Regulation.

## **Article 12 Requirements of tutors, supervisors and other persons assessing studies and the doctoral thesis.**

The tutor must be a permanent member of teaching staff in the relevant subject or a research specialist at the School of Health Sciences who has undergone an appropriate qualifications assessment. Supervisors of doctoral students must have completed a doctorate and/or attained the level of senior lecturer. Care must be taken to ensure that students' projects fall under the specialisations of their supervisors. Supervisors of doctoral students, whether or not they are permanent teaching staff at the University of Iceland, must be recognised experts in the field in question and have published works connected to the student's project in an outlet that makes rigorous academic demands.

## **Article 13 Relations between faculties and schools and with other universities.**

Doctoral studies may span more than one faculty within the School of Health Sciences and may also be conducted in connection with faculties in other schools. Doctoral studies may be conducted in connection with a foreign university, e.g. such that the student takes part of the programme at the foreign university or that a representative of the university is a member of the doctoral committee. Faculties at the School of Health Sciences are authorised to confer joint doctoral degrees within the School or in connection with faculties in other University of Iceland schools. A doctoral degree may be awarded jointly with another university. Such matters shall be referred to the School of Health Sciences doctoral studies committee. The Graduate School and Division of Academic Affairs must be consulted on contracts regarding joint doctoral programmes and degrees.

## **Article 14 Doctoral committees.**

The student and supervisor shall nominate three to five experts to the doctoral committee, to be approved by the doctoral studies committee and appointed by the faculty. The committee shall comprise: the tutor, the supervisor(s) and two/four others, at least one of whom must be external to the institute / research institute / department / school at which the project is conducted. The tutor shall convene the doctoral committee within 6 months from the approval of the research plan. The tutor shall convene the committee at least once a year and is responsible for overseeing the writing and submission of the doctoral committee's verdict once the doctoral thesis is complete. The doctoral committee shall meet with the doctoral candidate at least once a year for the duration of the programme and monitor student progression. The doctoral committee is responsible for ensuring that the doctoral programme meets University of Iceland criteria and requirements for the quality of doctoral studies. The doctoral candidate may decide to convene the doctoral committee.

At the end of the first year of study, the doctoral committee shall determine whether there is sufficient basis for continuing study. Around halfway through the doctoral programme (no later than one year before the intended date of completion) the status of the project shall be evaluated in detail (interim examination). The doctoral student shall write a short summary of the project and primary conclusions. The student shall submit this to the doctoral committee and invite committee members to a public presentation of the project. On the basis of this presentation and discussions, the doctoral student's general knowledge and the status of the project shall be evaluated, with a view to whether the content is suited to a doctoral thesis. Such an evaluation is a necessary prerequisite for the doctoral defence.

Finally, the doctoral committee shall evaluate the thesis before it is submitted for defence. The committee shall submit a carefully reasoned verdict to the faculty standing committee and the School doctoral studies committee stating whether the doctoral thesis and candidate are ready for the doctoral defence or not. The verdict must detail previous study and university degrees, the title of the project/thesis, the doctoral committee, project collaborators, where the work took place, a list and short description of scientific articles on which the project is based, as well as an overview describing the student's professional work during the doctoral studies (e.g. teaching, lectures, posters, reports). The verdict must be signed by all doctoral committee members. A confirmed academic record for the student shall be submitted as the same time as the thesis is submitted to the faculty standing committee and the School doctoral studies committee.

## **Article 15 Opponents, evaluation committee and doctoral defence.**

The School of Health Sciences doctoral studies committee shall evaluate whether or not the submitted doctoral thesis satisfies general requirements. The School of Health Sciences doctoral studies committee shall discuss

the verdict of the doctoral committee and faculty standing committee on the conclusion of studies and the proposal of two opponents for the doctoral defence. Opponents must be impartial and may not be members of the doctoral committee. Opponents must be recognised experts in the subject of the doctoral thesis. Opponents must not have professional or personal connections to the doctoral student, supervisor or doctoral committee of such a nature that they could call the opponent's eligibility into question. Proposals regarding opponents shall be sent to the Graduate School for approval. One of the opponents must come from another university, but the other may be internal to the University of Iceland or even the faculty in exceptional circumstances, when there is no other option. An evaluation committee is appointed, comprising both opponents and one representative of the faculty. The faculty representative shall chair the committee. The evaluation committee shall deliver its verdict three weeks before the doctoral defence. Opponents shall receive a copy of the final version of the doctoral thesis at least six weeks in advance of the doctoral defence. Implementation of the doctoral defence shall comply with the provisions of Article 70 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009. The doctoral defence should generally take place around four months after the thesis is submitted.

The thesis shall be assessed and defended in accordance with the University regulations on doctoral studies. The doctoral candidate shall publicly defend the thesis at the University of Iceland. The head of faculty shall chair the defence. Further provisions for the implementation of doctoral defences may be found in the University Council rules of procedure. Following the oral defence, the head of faculty, together with the opponents and chair of the evaluation committee, shall decide whether the title of Doctor shall be awarded. If there is disagreement thereupon, the matter shall be referred to the board of the School of Health Sciences. Student representatives at School meetings do not have the right to vote on matters concerning the awarding of the title of Doctor. Grades are not awarded for doctoral degrees.

## **Article 16 Submission and format of doctoral thesis.**

Doctoral theses may be submitted to the University of Iceland in one of two formats: either a thesis based on published articles (a) or a detailed thesis (monograph) without published articles (b), as explained in further detail below. Doctoral theses shall be written in English. A doctoral thesis must include a detailed introduction examining the status of knowledge in the field, a description of the methodology used, an explanation of the results and a detailed discussion focusing on the project as a whole. The thesis must state the contribution of the doctoral student, whether others were involved in the project and, if so, what their roles were. The institute(s) or companies where the research was conducted must be named in the thesis, as well as the supervisors. It must be clearly indicated that the project was completed at the University of Iceland and any parties that financed the project shall be identified. Regarding the formatting of the thesis, refer to the School of Health Sciences guidelines. Twelve copies of the doctoral thesis shall be submitted to the School of Health Sciences Office and an electronic copy to the National and University Library. Every doctoral thesis shall include abstracts in Icelandic and English, which must be submitted separately in digital form for publication on the School of Health Sciences website.

Format of the doctoral thesis:

- a) A thesis based on published material or material accepted for publication. Such theses shall generally be based on at least three scientific articles which have been published, accepted or submitted for publication in recognised peer-reviewed journals. No fewer than two of the articles must have been accepted for publication by the editorial teams of peer-reviewed journals, but the third article may be still under discussion. 'Scientific article' in this context generally means an article based on the student's own data/results and own processing and interpretation of them. It must also comply with recognised conventions in the relevant academic field. The doctoral candidate must be the first author of at least two such articles, although generally of all three. The role of the doctoral student in the project in question must always be clear. The doctoral studies committee shall be responsible for verifying with the doctoral

committee that the doctoral student's role is satisfactory in accordance with the aforementioned provisions.

- b) A detailed thesis (*monograph*), with no requirement for the thesis or any part of its content to have been published or accepted for publication. Such a thesis shall be subject to a more stringent evaluation process than a thesis based on published material. The doctoral committee and doctoral studies committee are jointly responsible for ensuring that the scope of the project, the doctoral student's role, and the scope and formal presentation of the thesis are of the same quality as otherwise required. In such cases, a three-member evaluation committee shall be appointed, comprising external and impartial parties. The evaluation committee is, however, authorised to seek advice from the doctoral committee. The evaluation committee shall deliver a highly detailed verdict containing a precise and critical review.

## **Article 17 Academic title.**

On completion of a doctoral programme, the student shall have earned the academic title of *Philosophiae Doctor* (Ph.D.).

## **Article 18 Doctoral degrees without a prior programme of organised study.**

Doctoral theses submitted to the School of Health Sciences for defence within a prior programme of organised study, in accordance with Article 70 of Regulation no. 569/2009, shall be referred by the relevant faculty council to the doctoral studies committee for comment. Such theses shall generally have been written without supervision from University of Iceland staff or staff at institutions affiliated or formally linked to the University. The doctoral studies committee shall submit a proposal to the relevant faculty council regarding the three-member evaluation committee and opponents, cf. paragraph 2, Article 70 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland.

## **Article 19 Confirmation of Regulation**

This Regulation is established in accordance with Chapter VI of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009, and the authority of the Act on Public Higher Education Institutions no. 85/2008. This Regulation has been approved by the faculties and governing board of the School of Health Sciences and by the Graduate School, cf. Articles 66 and 69 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009. This Regulation shall enter into force xxx. Reviewed May 2016

University of Iceland, 21 December 2011.