



BPrAL - PPOHE
Kolegji AAB

Regulation on doctoral studies at AAB

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Based on article 4, paragraph 2, item 2.3 of the Law no. 04/L-037 on Higher Education in the Republic of Kosovo and article 80, paragraph 1 item (b) and article 83 of the Statute of the AAB College, Senate on its meeting held on _____ approved the following:

REGULATION

ON ORGANIZATION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

Regulation on organization of doctoral studies (hereinafter the “Regulation”) is based on AAB College Statute and the Law on Higher Education.

The purpose of adopting this Regulation is:

- a) To regulate content, structure and the manner of organizing doctoral studies according to Bologna system and European standards on Higher Education;
- b) To determine institutions in charge for organizing doctoral studies;
- c) To determine forms and duration of doctoral studies;
- d) To lay out requirements for student admission and registration;
- e) To regulate the procedure related to the dissertation topic;
- f) Other issues related to the topic;
- g) To determine other rules that deal with completion of doctoral studies and other relevant issues.

Introduction

The information presented in this document is the basis for writing and implementing doctoral studies from the start, i.e. program design, through implementation, to final promotion of the doctoral graduates, including core principles and established requirements set at university level. This document contains the requirements for development of programs and implementation procedures which are applicable for all doctoral programs at AAB. Special or specific requirements, relevant for some individual programs, are described in special regulations or in other information materials in respective faculties.

Provisions of this document are based on legal requirements for doctoral programs, in conditions set in AAB Statute, in MEST policies, in AKA's recommendations for doctoral studies for the new doctoral programs and their implementation, as well as in recommendations of the European University Association (EUA).

This document is also based on respective regulations of several European Universities, especially on doctoral studies of the University of Ljubljana.

The quality of organization of doctoral studies is one of the most important requirements for excellence at universities and it has a huge impact on its reputation on the international arena. AAB in its mission and strategy 2013-2018 has set academic excellence and scientific research as core values, and quality of doctoral studies may largely contribute to that regard. The process of quality assurance of doctoral studies may relate mainly with quality management of the research project process up to writing of the dissertation, including respective scientific findings.

Requirements for quality assurance are a responsibility of the Committee for Doctoral Studies, which in all phases monitors and assesses the entire doctoral process.

Article 1

Types of doctoral programs at AAB and their description

Doctoral programmes mainly differ with regard to the level of interaction between study fields and types of organization. The following types of doctoral programmes are organized at AAB:

- Doctoral programs with a strong inter-disciplinary approach and coordinated at the University level, called "Programi interdisiplinar i doktoraturës...(the title in Albanian follows)", or in English translation, "Interdisciplinary doctoral programme ...(the title in English follows)"
- Doctoral programmes that pertain to certain study areas/faculties/programmes, which also coordinate the programmes, called "Programi i Doktoraturës ...(the title follows in Albanian)", or in English translation, "Doctoral programme in ...(the title in English follows)"
- Joint doctoral programmes that AAB prepares together with university partners in Kosovo or abroad – with foreign partners, called "Programi i përbashkët i doktoraturës... (The title in Albanian follows)", or in English translation, "The Joint Doctoral Programme... (title in English follows)".

Article 2

Standards for establishment of new programmes

Minimum standards for third cycle studies programmes include:

- Scientific requirements: the dissertation must be an adequate scientific research
- Pedagogical requirements: there must be a sufficient number of professors, who can produce at least two core courses and several electives
- The identified need for development of the research area
- Research framework programme at the institutional level that enables completion of research studies, including those for doctoral studies
- Appropriate infrastructure for scientific research.

Article 3

Criteria for preparation of programmes

3.1 Main features of the third level study programmes:

- Duration of studies: 3 years
- Volume: the total sum of 180 ECTS credits, where at least 60 credits are accumulated from organized forms of studies; all studies and forms of work provide generic competencies – transferrable skills and respective theoretical-academic knowledge.

- Programmes are designed according to ECTS.

3.2 Contents of proposals of the programme for the approval needs of the Senate and accreditation include:

- General information on the programme,
- Main programme objective and generic or course-specific competencies (expressed in learning outcomes),
- Information on international comparability of the programme,
- Information on international cooperation of the higher education institution,
- Curriculum with calculation of the ECTS for study requirements,
- Admission and selection requirements (in case of limited number of admitted students),
- Criteria for recognition of knowledge and skills obtained prior to the enrolment in the programme,
- Requirements and conditions for student's progress in the programme,
- Requirements for the transfer from other programmes,
- Requirements that must be met for completion of the programme,
- Determination of academic titles, drafted in line with the law.

Article 4

Credit evaluation and elements of teaching and learning arrangements

4.1 Credit evaluation according to ECTS criteria

The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) will be used for evaluation of credit aspects of the study programmes, which enables students to accumulate and transfer credits.

According to ECTS criteria, the following calculations have been done:

- Doctoral programmes consist of 180 ECTS and last for three years,
- 1 credit consists of 25 to 30 hours of student workload, while annual student workload is 1500-1800 hours,
- Study programmes must be organized so that each year 60 credits are offered/obtained, with 30 credits per semester,
- Individual courses must contain at least three credits, and the recommended number of credits for each module must be five or a multiple of this number.

4. 2. Study formats

Studies are organized in two parts: organized study formats (60 credits) and dissertation topic (120 credits). Organized study comprises about a third of student workload, while research work comprises two thirds of all student requirements.

4.2.1 Organized study formats (60 credits):

Theoretical and scientific methodological wholeness in this context includes courses of the doctoral programme with various forms of teaching and learning, including:

- Theoretical courses – in organized forms of study and examination,
- Methodological courses, in which the candidate selects the content of individual research methods and/or research techniques,
- Possibility of doctoral exams (theoretical basis for the doctoral dissertation), which may be included in requirements of student progress in studies.

4.2.2 Studies for the doctoral dissertation (about 120 credits):

In principle, the research part of studies expressed in ECTS is not evaluated according to the same norms as the organized studies. The research part is structured as follows: two years of studies in research part for preparation of the dissertation are evaluated with 120 ECTS. This includes at least one scientific paper (article) published in internationally recognized journals for specific scientific disciplines. Alternatively, publication or acceptance for publication of at least three papers in quality journals in the region is required.¹

Preparation of the doctoral thesis: The preparation of the doctoral dissertation includes:

- presentation of the doctoral dissertation project,
- preparation of the final doctoral seminar,
- writing of doctoral dissertation, and
- Defence of the doctoral thesis.

In study formats, the following may be recognized:

- experiences, studies from engagements in other universities (if they are expressed in ECTS or, whenever possible, converted into credit points);
- engagement in the work with research relevance completed in economic and social organizations and institutions.
- In line with the drafted programme all these requirements are considered as organized forms of study expressed in credits (up to 15 credits).

¹List of acceptable journals will be announced and updated annually by AAB Doctoral Committee

Article 5

Admission of students

General requirements for registration to doctoral programmes are defined by law. Anyone who has completed the following may get admission to the doctoral programme:

1. A programme of second cycle studies in the respective field,
2. A study programme for the regulated professions (according to the EU directives), if it is evaluated with 300 ECTS,
3. Study programmes that end with a university diploma (respective committee formed by the programme coordinator will assess additional requirements – possible difference to the ECTS credits),
4. A study programme that leads to a master diploma (with 120 ECTS credits) or a specialization after completion of the university level (four year) study programme and that specialization may be recognized for academic requirements with up to 60 credits in the doctoral programme,
5. Study programmes that lead to specialization, in order that a higher education programme has been completed, in which case additional requirements may be set to the extent between 30 and 60 credits,
6. Completion of education in foreign universities in line with the requirements described for RKS students.

Any additional requirements for recognition of prior learning and criteria for selection of candidates with limited registration are set by individual doctoral study programmes in line with the legal provisions and applicable regulations. Respective decisions are always based on a detailed written explanation by the respective body.

Article 6

Main mechanisms, conditions for course leaders and advisers

1. AAB Senate approves policies for doctoral studies, new programmes and amendment / updating of existing ones upon proposal of the Rectorate or teaching-scientific councils of the respective faculties.
2. Doctoral studies at AAB level are coordinated and implemented by the School of Doctoral Studies (SDS). SDS is run by the Coordinator of the DSS. Composition, tasks and functioning of the school and study coordinator is regulated by the respective regulation approved by the AAB Senate.
3. The Senate Committee on Doctoral Studies is simultaneously the Scientific Council for the SDS. The Doctoral Studies Committee is composed of seven members, including: vice-rector for academic issues, vice-rector for scientific research, coordinator of SDS,

two AAB professors (Senate members), an external member (from scientific institutes in Kosovo) and a foreign professor (from a higher education institution outside Kosovo).

4. At faculty level, the persons coordinating doctoral programmes in faculties / study programmes are automatically ex-officio members of the Senate Committee on research work, when it operates as a scientific council for the DSS.
5. Doctoral study programmes at the level of faculties/programmes are coordinated by the Doctoral Programme Coordinator. Main academic decisions for implementation of the doctoral programmes are made by the scientific/teaching councils of the faculties in close cooperation with the SDS.
6. Doctoral studies at AAB are closely coordinated with the Institute (at institutional level) and Centres of Scientific Research at the AAB. Institute coordinator is a member according to his official task of the Senate Committee, while those in charge of study centres coordinate their activities with coordinators of doctoral studies at the faculty/programme level.
7. Course leaders may be individuals who hold a valid title of teaching (assistant professor, associated professor and regular professor) and who may demonstrate scientifically their preparation for the respective field of study covered by the doctoral programme with adequate references (3 to 5).
8. Adviser (mentor) or co-adviser (co-mentor) of the doctoral dissertation is the person that holds the title of professor of higher education or scientific person (scientific associate, senior scientific associate and scientific consultant) and who has demonstrated a research activity and adequate scientific bibliography in the field of the doctoral dissertation topic.
9. In line with the decision of the Committee, co-mentorship may be proposed in cases of inter-disciplinary doctoral dissertation and when this poses an advantage for the study programme. In cases of proposal of co-mentorship, the Committee will assess the appropriateness of the topic and will justify its proposal with substantial reasons.
10. The student selects a (co)mentor before registration to the doctoral programme.
11. A mentor may be a person from other scientific/educational institutions that are involved in implementation of the study programme or who are hired at a local or international institution with whom AAB has an agreement for institutional cooperation. In these cases, AAB appoints a co-mentor from among the ranks of AAB professors.
12. A mentor may supervise up to five doctoral students, who are registered in a doctoral programme, after they have met all necessary conditions and requirements. This number means duration of up to four years since admission of students to the first year of studies. There is no limitation in the number of doctoral students advised by the co-mentor.

Article 7

Generic knowledge and skills

New doctoral programmes, according to the EUA recommendations include the possibility for offering and development of general and transferable skills that will be offered to doctoral students for better employability opportunities. The contents of these courses are regulated in following fields: 1) communication, 2) planning of research 3) inter-personal relations and team work, 4) Organization, administration and management, 5) market adjustment and 6) groups of skills of specific departments.

A list of offered courses from individual doctoral programmes is updated every year and it is published on AAB website.

Article 8

The process of approval, update and re-accreditation of doctoral programmes

1. Proposals for doctoral studies must be initially approved by the respective faculty's scientific and research council and then they are submitted to the AAB Senate in written and electronic formats. Information materials for prospective students (brochures with information) are an integral part of the programme.
2. The Senate decides for all new programmes and changes to the curricula, in line with the requirements for accreditation and external evaluation of higher education institutions and study programmes. Updates and minor insubstantial changes are approved by School of Doctoral Studies (DSS) coordinator.
3. For minor changes made to the doctoral programme, the SDS coordinator, through the Rectorate, only informs the AKA, while in cases of major changes, the re-accreditation procedure is initiated. Such move is evaluated by the Senate and appropriate decision is made.

Article 9

Announcement for admission of students

The announcement for admission of students in the doctoral study programme includes the following information:

- Name of the faculty
- Name of the study programme
- Duration of studies
- Admission requirements
- Manner of study implementation
- Timelines and actions for registration

Article 10

Determination of basic requirements and equivalence for registration to doctoral studies

Announcement for admission of students must specify requirements and procedure for selection of candidates in cases of limited number of candidates. Foreigners (candidates who are not citizens of Kosovo) have the right to apply with same conditions as for domestic candidates. Equivalence of education obtained abroad will be determined in the process of recognition of foreign qualification for life-long learning in the Republic of Kosovo, in line with the AAB Statute and applicable legal provisions.

Article 11

Application and selection of candidates

Applications are submitted to AAB Rectorate mailing address. Selection of candidates is completed in line with the criteria defined in the study programme. Registration on doctoral studies is based on timelines defined in the announcement, but not later than September 30 of the respective year, in order that departments are able to make decisions on admitted students not later than October 30. Selection of foreign candidates will be done following same conditions and timelines as those for domestic students.

Article 12

Contract of studies

The contract for doctoral studies includes:

- The programme and field of study,
- Obligations of both parties envisioned by the contract,
- The total sum and timelines for tuition fees.

The conditions of the contract must envision the circumstances for completion of the research work and distribution of respective costs. The adviser is decided prior to registration of the candidate for doctoral studies. In addition, the contract also includes the studies and procedures for writing the doctoral dissertation.

Selection of courses

Studies are organized so that the student may receive at least 60 ECTS credits per year.

The adviser together with the student decides on the number and type of courses and research programme that the student will attend during the study period. A number of inter-disciplinary courses will be decided in cooperation with and approval of DSS programme bearer/coordinator. Other doctoral level courses can be taken if they were identified by the candidate at the moment

of registration and if they are approved by the programme bearer / scientific and research council of the respective faculty.

Studies and writing of the doctoral dissertation

Article 13

Dissertation topics

The student submits his/her study topic during the first or second year of doctoral studies in line with the curriculum. The topic is proposed to the Faculty council (FC) or in cases of the inter-disciplinary programmes, to the AAB Senate, in line with programme rules.

Student's application with the dissertation topic/proposal is a 3 to 5-page written document (excluding references) that contains:

- The proposal for the title of the topic and the dissertation proposal with references to the respective literature,
- Biographic data – a suitable form of biography,
- A list of scientific papers and other achievements
- The date of first registration for doctoral studies.

Dissertation topic presentation can also be done publicly. Doctoral dissertation proposal proposed by the FC is approved by the Senate, including appointment of an adviser, and in cases of inter-disciplinary studies, a co-adviser. The proposal for approval of the dissertation topic, in addition to the request of the candidate and respective annexes and committee report on compatibility of the doctoral dissertation, also contains the title of the topic, the proposed adviser (and in certain cases the co-adviser) and the name of the doctoral programme.

Co-advising must be explained in detail.

Validity of the topic that was approved lasts for four years. After this period of time, the student may ask for an extension of the same topic or change of the topic if the old one is outdated. If the student withdraws from the topic through a written statement, then the topic is deemed as cancelled.

Article 14

Appointment and work of the committee for assessment of dissertation

- Not later than 30 days after registering for the doctoral dissertation, Faculty TC appoints a three-member committee that assesses whether the candidate meets the requirements for obtaining doctoral degree and to assess the compatibility of the proposed topic. The committee includes experts in the field of the doctoral dissertation with valid titles in teaching or scientific research who have a doctoral degree and publications in the field of

dissertation.

The adviser has the right to participate for the purposes of explanation and assistance (but without decision-making rights) in the work of all committees that review the respective dissertation advised by him/her.

- After approval of the topic by the committee, Faculty TC appoints a three-member committee for reading the topic.
- After positive reading, TC appoints a committee for dissertation defence. Even in cases when the adviser is not a member of the committees, he/she has the right and obligation to participate in the work of the committee in all phases of the doctoral dissertation, without voting right.
- At least one member of the dissertation committee must be an external member (maybe from other universities or other research institutions). If faculty council appoints only internal members to the committee, then such a decision must be particularly justified.

Article 15

Dissertation thesis and defence

- The doctoral dissertation represents an independent and original contribution in the respective field of science, the dissertation topic. The doctoral dissertation is written in Albanian and with an extended summary in English.
- The doctoral dissertation must be prepared based on the papers of the applicant in the field of dissertation, accepted for publication, or which have already been published in internationally recognized journals, in line with approved rules at the faculty that runs the procedure.
- The candidate must propose a dissertation topic for defence within four years from the date of approval of the doctoral dissertation from the unit that has run the process. Compatibility committee, not later than three months from submission of the doctoral dissertation, must draft a written report. Based on the submitted positive reports, the respective faculty council sets the date for the dissertation thesis defence.
- The student, before the thesis defence, must have published or accepted for publication an original paper with first authorship in the respective form and manner for the given scientific discipline.
- In cases when first authorship is not possible (for example, in the international collaborative research, or for other reasonable causes) the adviser with a special statement guarantees that the original scientific publication has not been used as a contribution for the doctoral studies of another doctoral candidate.
- The defence is public. The defence announcement will be published at least eight days prior to the defence date. The defence will be taken note of and it will be signed by all members. With the defence of the student of the academic doctoral dissertation, he/she obtains the title of doctor of sciences for the respective field.

Article 16

Writing dissertation in foreign language

- Writing of the dissertation in English may be approved if the candidate is a foreigner and if the adviser and/or co-adviser are foreigners. In cases when studies are delivered in a foreign language, the Senate may approve the writing of the dissertation in the respective foreign language.
- In cases when the dissertation is in English or in another foreign language, then the introduction, conclusions and a full summary will be provided in Albanian. All necessary documents submitted for the doctoral dissertation must be written in Albanian.
- In line with the decision of the AAB Senate, the title of the topic must be translated into Albanian.
- The dissertation defence is public and it is organized by the Rectorate at the University premises.

Promotion

Article 17

Preparation of materials for promotion

- The Faculty that has completed the procedure, immediately passes the data of defence and any other documentation on doctoral studies along to the AAB – Announcement of promotion of doctor of sciences. The form contains information related to the candidate, writing of the dissertation, adviser and publication of any scientific article or a series of articles.
- Department of Doctoral Studies keeps a record of promoted doctors with the relevant information.
- Awarding the diploma: AAB awards the diploma that contains main data: name, title, date, name of the adviser and co-adviser.
- In addition to the doctoral diploma awarded by the University, all faculties also issue the diploma supplement in Albanian and English. The format of the diploma supplement follows the format described by the Ministry of Education (MEST).

Article 18

Formal promotion of new doctoral degrees / doctors of sciences

- Based on the information provided by the respective department – the secretariat, the Rector organized a solemn promotion of new doctoral graduates.

- Solemn promotion of the new doctoral graduates and award of university diplomas takes place in the AAB solemn hall. In the ceremony of doctoral promotion, respective deans, senators, advisors and invited guests will attend.
- AAB will maintain a special record of promoted doctors and defended dissertations.

Prof.dr. Lulzim Tafa, Rector
