Framework for Doctoral Education
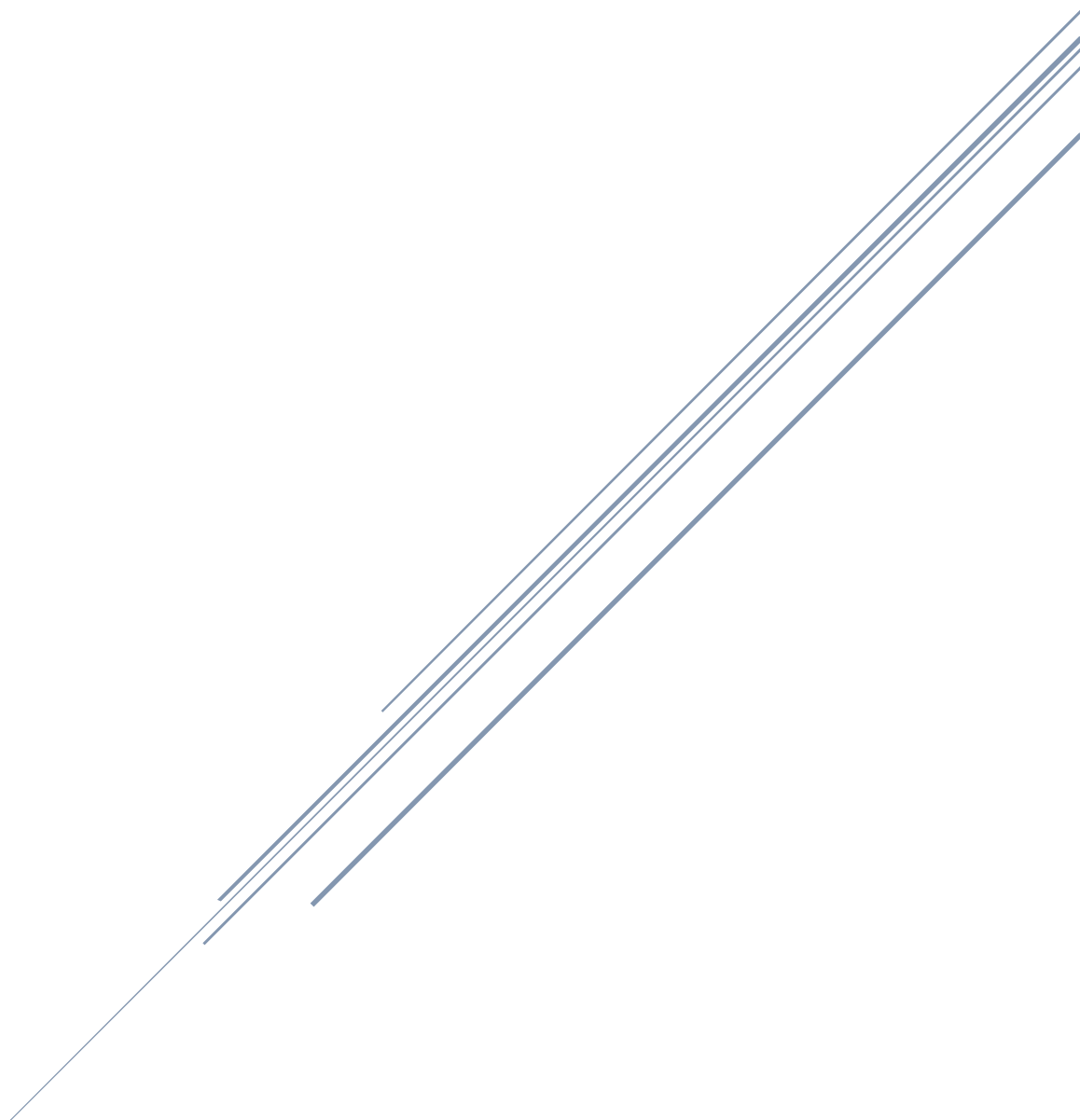
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Goal and Principles of the Framework for Doctoral Education

Goals of the Doctoral Education Framework is to promote the development of doctoral educational programmes and scientific research activities in Georgia through external mechanisms of quality assurance.

This document, together with the accreditation standards of higher educational programmes, defines the requirements for doctoral educational programmes based on the best local and international practices identified in the accreditation process, as well as the "Salzburg II recommendations."

Entries in the mentioned document cannot be interpreted as contrary to the Salzburg II recommendations, Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research, and Guideline on Scientific Research in the Bologna process.

Goal of the Framework for Doctoral Level Education is to promote:

- The improvement and development of the quality of education in doctoral programmes;
- Creation of teaching and research environments focused on the needs of a doctoral student;
- In-depth and comprehensive evaluation of doctoral programmes by sharing the best local and international experience;
- Establishment of transparent, objective, fair, and consistent approaches in the evaluation process of doctoral programmes.
- Supporting academic integrity and scientific research activities and guiding the career development process with ethical principles;
- Promotion of the involvement of the HEI scientific staff in the development, implementation, and enhancement of doctoral educational programmes.

Requirements set by the Framework of Doctoral Education are used during the accreditation evaluation of the doctoral educational programme together with the accreditation standards of higher educational programmes:

1. Doctoral Educational Programme

1.1 Goal and Learning Outcomes

- The goals of the PhD educational programme are focused on the creation of new knowledge and/or development of existing one, promotion of knowledge realization and dissemination through the implementation of original, modern and innovative researches;
- The artistic-creative doctoral educational programme is a doctoral educational programme based on performing and/or creative practice, the goal of which is to create an original project of international level with a research component, which clearly shows the independent creative vision of the doctoral student, demonstrates his/her professional field competences and new knowledge obtained as a result of creative research;
- The goal of the doctoral program is to promote the preparation of doctoral students for independent research and scientific activities by enhancing research skills, as well as cooperation using interdisciplinary approaches, taking into account the research topic;
- The goals of the doctoral educational programme are in line with the implementation strategy of the scientific-research/creative research activities of the HEI/basic educational;
- The learning outcomes of the doctoral educational programme are logically related to the goals of the educational programme and correspond to the classifier of the 8th level of qualification;
- The results of the doctoral thesis, creative/performing project at the local and/or international level have scientific-research/creative-research significance, are innovative and have practical/theoretical value;

Indicators

- Doctoral Education Programme, syllabi;
- Implementation strategy/research policy document for the scientific-research/creative research activities of the HEI/basic educational unit;
- Papers, creative/performing projects, and defended dissertations published in peer-reviewed journals and received feedbacks on them;
- Interview results.

1.2 Contents of Doctoral Educational Programme

- The basis for the development of the doctoral educational programme is the research potential of the higher education institution, the existence of previous scientific-research activity experience in the relevant direction, successful practice and research results;
- The doctoral educational programme contributes to the development of scientific-research activities at the HEI and the formation of field-related, scientific collaboration and professional connections;
- The contents of the doctoral educational programme, depending on the peculiarities of the study area, ensures the intellectual, social, cultural, economic, technological, industrial and/or other types development of science/field, state and/or society;

- The teaching component of the doctoral educational programme contributes to the implementation of the scientific-research component of the doctoral student in an appropriate degree through the development of transferable skills and/or by deepening the knowledge of the doctoral student on current issues/trends in the field. It also provides methodological guidelines for the proper planning and implementation of the research component;
- The content of the doctoral educational programme leads to the formation of important innovative approaches, that will contribute to the development of cooperation between scientific fields using interdisciplinary approaches, taking into account the specifics of the research field/
- The doctoral education programme promotes the development of such competences and transferable skills for doctoral students as: planning and implementation of research-scientific activities, finding and administering grants, project management, planning and implementation of creative/performing projects, engaging into the technological transfer through implementation of the research outcomes, leadership, supervision, career development planning, critical analysis of scientific literature, data analysis, teaching (pedagogical skills), expressing opinions in popular scientific language, etc.;
- To effectively implement the research component of the doctoral education programme, the HEI has developed: the mechanism for selecting and changing the research topic and implementing/presenting the scientific-research component, which, following the research field/fields of the educational programme and taking into account the interests of the doctoral students, ensures that the scientific-research component is performed by the doctoral student at an appropriate level, taking into account the adherence of academic integrity mechanisms;
- The individual research plan of the doctoral student takes into account - research aim, the structure of the doctoral thesis and the estimated schedule/timetable of the research implementation, research methodology and so on. The research plan supports the doctoral student to conduct his/her activities in accordance with the research topic and to complete the doctoral thesis within the time limit established by the law;
- The ethical norms of scientific-research activity are adhered to in the HEI, which take into account the local and international standards of research ethics in the relevant field;

Indicators
- Doctoral Educational Programme, syllabi;
- In the case of an ongoing programme, the indicator of career development of graduates/information at the local and/or international level;
- Current and/or planned scientific-research activities/creative/performing activity projects related to the doctoral programme;
- Analysis on the implementation of further activities of the doctoral programme graduates;
- Doctoral student's individual scientific research/creative research plan;
- Methodology on planning, implementation and presentation of the research component;
- Ethical norms and mechanisms of scientific-research activity;

- Administrative procedure of the research ethics committee, or other relevant responsible structural unit;
- Doctoral thesis defense procedure;
- Interview results.

1.3 Admission Requirements of the Programme

- The admission requirements of the doctoral programme are public, they include information on the programme, admission deadlines and documentation to be submitted, as well as information on the research interests of supervisors and support/encouragement mechanisms for studies conducted by doctoral students and other information;
- Admission requirements of the doctoral programme takes into consideration an assessment of the applicants' experience and capabilities, required for successful completion of the doctoral programme.
- When enrolling in the doctoral education programme, the strategy of the scientific research/creative research activity of the HEI/basic educational unit is also taken into account;
- Admission of doctoral students to the doctoral educational programme is ensured on a commission basis;
- The HEI defines the rules for determining the composition, activities, and decision-making of the committee involved in the admission process of the doctoral education programme, which ensures the evaluation of the people wishing to be enrolled in the programme - in compliance with the principles of objectivity, fairness, and transparency;
- A candidate wishing to enroll in a doctoral educational programme shall submit a research/creative research thesis/project to the Commission in accordance with the rules established by the HEI. A candidate is also required to have a previous paper/publication in the relevant field and/or to participate in scientific-research projects and events and/or to have at least 2 years of work experience in the relevant field. The established requirements should provide an opportunity to evaluate the candidate's research skills;
- At the time of admission to the doctoral educational programme, the level of foreign language proficiency is determined. Taking into account the specifics of the field, the person in the programme must have knowledge of the English language at least B2 level or knowledge of one of the other Western European foreign languages at least B2 level and English language knowledge at least B1 level;
- Admission to the doctoral education programme takes into account the human, financial, and research resources available at the HEI, including the ratio of doctoral supervisors to doctoral students. Also, the results of the analysis on the timely completion of the programme by the doctoral students enrolled will be taken into account by the HEI.

Indicators

- Admission procedures for the doctoral educational programme;
- Mechanisms for confirming foreign language competence established as a prerequisite for enrollment in the educational programme of doctoral students;
- Information on the research/creative research interests of scientific supervisors;
- The rule on determining the composition of the committee involved in the admission process of the doctoral education programme, its activities and decision-making;
- Composition of the committee involved in the admission process of the doctoral educational programme;
- Number of applications received for the doctoral programme and enrollment rate; supervisors' workload scheme, ratio of doctoral students to supervisors;
- The results of the analysis on the timely completion of the doctoral educational programme by the doctoral students;
- Research thesis/draft of the person wishing to be admitted to the doctoral education programme;
- Website of the HEI;
- Interview results.

1.4 Evaluation of a Doctoral Student

- Doctoral students are evaluated according to the procedures established in the HEI, that are transparent, reliable and comply with the current legislation;
- The teaching component of the doctoral programme curriculum is assessed with the methods appropriate to the content of the teaching component and the requirements of the doctoral degree, which provides assessment of the student's knowledge and skills, including analytical and critical thinking, selection and independent application of research methodology, substantiated expression of an opinion, and other skills;
- The doctoral education programme provides the requirements for admission of a doctoral student to the defense of a dissertation/creative/performing work, or other research project/paper. This envisages periodic formative assessments of the student's progress;
- Before submitting the dissertation/creative/performative work for the academic degree, the doctoral student is required to publish at least two scientific articles from the relevant research field, one of which must be published in a peer-reviewed journal with a foreign international index.
- The supervisor periodically monitors the progress of consistent performance of a research component by the doctoral student, provides formative assessment, and feedback.
- Requirements of the academic style of the doctoral thesis, methods and criteria for evaluating the doctoral thesis, which take into account the specifics of the field, are known in advance to the doctoral students and are taken into account during the evaluation of the doctoral theses.
- While evaluating the scientific-research component, HEI uses the mechanisms of academic and research ethics, academic integrity, plagiarism prevention, detection and response mechanisms;

- The defense of doctoral theses is performed in accordance with the HEI procedures of evaluation and defense of a doctoral thesis which is in compliance of the current legislation.
- The evaluation of the doctoral thesis is carried out in a commission manner - by the commission/commissions;
- The procedures for the evaluation and/or defense of the doctoral thesis provide for the conclusions of the competent institution (local and/or foreign university, scientific-research institute), local and international reviewer (the conclusion of the international reviewer is not mandatory for the following fields of study: Georgian philology, Abkhazian philology, also, if the doctoral candidate has an international supervisor), who evaluates the novelty of the scientific research/creative work of the dissertation and readiness for the defense of the dissertation;
- A local reviewer is a staff member of a local university, scientific-research institute/center, or a person with emeritus status, who is equipped with the latest knowledge in the field, has actively participated in scientific research, and has published at least 1 scientific work (in artistic directions - creative/performance project) in a peer-reviewed journal with a foreign international index within the last 3 years. This work corresponds to the general topic/field of research of the doctoral student's doctoral work;
- An international reviewer is a staff member of a foreign university, scientific-research institute/center, or a person with emeritus status, who is equipped with the latest knowledge in the field, has actively participated in scientific research, and has published at least 1 scientific work (in artistic directions - creative/performance project) in a peer-reviewed journal with a foreign international index within the last 3 years. This work corresponds to the general topic/field of research of the doctoral student's doctoral work;
- Mechanisms and processes for the selection and appointment of doctoral thesis reviewers by the university should be transparent, impartial, and objective. When selecting reviewers, their anonymity[1] should be ensured, which contributes to the preparation of an unbiased, fair and objective conclusion;
- The defense commission(s) consists of representatives of academic/scientific staff from the relevant field, whose competence allows for in-depth and thorough evaluation of the paper and the originality of the research/creative research and its results;
- Participation of external evaluators is ensured in the composition of the defense commission(s); The supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral student does not participate in the work of the defense commission(s);
- Considering the specifics of the field, the defense commission(s) includes (if necessary) an international evaluator(s) with relevant qualification and competence, and a representative(s) of the governmental/non-governmental sector and the labor market;

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[1] Anonymity refers to the confidentiality of the reviewer's identity for the doctoral student and/or his/her supervisor/co-supervisor until the review is made known.

- Defense of doctoral thesis is public and open; The abstract/summary of the doctoral thesis in Georgian, English and the languages of the programme implementation is public and available to everyone;
- The doctoral educational programme provides the appeal of evaluation results of the doctoral students' enrollment to the programme as well as procedures of dissertation defense. The rules of appeal are publicly available in advance and ensure that an objective and fair decision is made;
- Mechanisms for searching, and appointing reviewer and determining his/her activities are ensured by HEI;
- Information about the topics of current theses and defended theses are published by the HEI on a unified electronic portal.[2]

Indicators
- Doctoral Educational Programme, syllabi;
- Regulatory document of evaluation system;
- Mechanism on plagiarism prevention, detection and response;
- Procedures of dissertation defense and evaluation;
- Documents reflecting the progress of the doctoral student's scientific-research component;
- The rule on determining the composition of the defense commission(s);
- Composition of the defense commission(s);
- Sheets/protocols of dissertation defenses;
- Website of the HEI;
- Interview results

2. Support Mechanisms and Supervision of Doctoral Students

2.1 Support Services of Doctoral Students

- Taking into account the specifics of the field, within the framework of the doctoral programme, the HEI cooperates with local and international scientific research institutes/centers/HEIs, doctoral schools, public and private sector/industry and other potential employers to implement a scientific-research component, to integrate graduates into the labour market and promote their career advancement;
- The higher education institution creates appropriate conditions and environment for the doctoral educational programme to encourage international mobility and/or participation in international conferences, seminars and other scientific/creative activities, which aims to develop a strong and

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[2] The mentioned obligation for the HEI will come into function after the implementation of the unified national electronic portal.

inclusive research environment and promotes the formation of best research practices, internationalization of the research, and implementation of joint research projects.

- HEI provides doctoral students with additional support mechanisms in the form of extra-curricular events and activities aimed at the doctoral student's personal, professional and career development;
- Within the framework of the doctoral educational programme, the higher education institution has developed supporting measures for doctoral students, which allows the doctoral student to complete the doctoral thesis within the timeframe established by the law;
- HEI provides indicative information to the doctoral student about scientific publications/databases with an international index corresponding to the specificity of the field for the publication of an international scientific publication; in the artistic field it provides information about artistic and creative events (concert, festival, competition, master class, exhibition, biennial and others);
- HEI periodically analyzes the indicators of career development of the graduates of the doctoral educational programme, the results of which are aimed at the development of the programme, resources and supporting mechanisms for doctoral students;
- HEI provides doctoral students with information about support services.

Indicators

- Internationalization policy of the HEI/basic educational unit and/or its structural unit/programme;
- Research/projects conducted in cooperation with scientific-research institutes, centers, HEIs, and relevant agreements/documents;
- Information about the involvement in international projects/performing/creative activities, as well as participation in international mobility and/or international conferences, seminars and other scientific activities;
- Extra-curricular activities offered to doctoral students;
- Employment and career development index and analysis document for doctoral programme graduates;
- Website of the HEI;
- Interview results.

2.2 Supervision of a Doctoral Student's Scientific-Research Work

- The supervisor coordinates the performance of the scientific-research component of the doctoral student;
- The HEI has developed the documents regulating the appointment and change of supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral student and implementation of supervision/co-supervision;
- The HEI has developed a sample of agreement/contract to be signed between the doctoral student, his/her supervisor/co-supervisor and the HEI, which defines the rights and responsibilities of all

parties; The supervision of the doctoral student is included in the overall university workload of the relevant academic/scientific staff;

- The terms of the agreement/contract facilitate the effective implementation of the activities by the supervisor/co-supervisor and the completion of the thesis by the doctoral student within the timeframes;

- During the research process the supervisor has regular consultations with doctoral students on methodological, structural, conceptual and other issues related to the research/creative research. The frequency of the consultations corresponds to the specifics of the research topic and the individual needs of the doctoral student. A supervisor provides consultations over the following topics during the research: research design and project management, research methodology, professional development, the process of writing a thesis/scientific-research work/dissertation, integration process within the local and international scientific/creative network, the processes of participation in local and international scientific/creative events and presentation of the results; publication of scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals, etc.;

- Co-supervisor (if any) supports the doctoral student in the implementation of the scientific-research component through the mutual agreement with the supervisor and the doctoral student;

- Taking into account the specifics and needs of the research, the university promotes the involvement of the staff of a foreign university, scientific-research institute/center, or a person with emeritus status including a compatriot person living abroad, as a supervisor/co-supervisor in the research/creative research process of the doctoral candidate;

- To ensure the doctoral programme sustainability, the HEI, when planning the number of the doctoral thesis supervisors, considers the workload of the supervisors, the amount of existing and future doctoral students, specifics of the programme and best international practices;

- HEI has developed a methodology for the ratio of the doctoral thesis supervisors to doctoral students in the doctoral educational programme, thus ensuring the effective implementation of the supervision;

- The ratio determined by the HEI between the supervisor and his/her active doctoral students does not exceed - 1:3, within the framework of one higher education institution; A ratio of 1:5 between the supervisor and his doctoral students with active status is allowed if a suspended doctoral student requires reinstatement of status to submit a thesis/creative/performance work to be awarded an academic degree. The mentioned ratio can be determined differently depending on the conditions of the scientific grant/project;

- The HEI has developed mechanisms for evaluating the activities of the supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral thesis, which ensures the effective implementation of the supervision/co-supervision;

Indicators

- A sample of labor agreement/contract of supervisors and co-supervisors;
- Document defining the appointment, change and rights/responsibilities of the supervisor/co-supervisor;

- Sample of the trilateral agreement/contract between HEI, supervisor/co-supervisor and doctoral student;
- Methodology for determining the ratio between the supervisors and doctoral students in a doctoral education programme;
- Ratio of supervisors to doctoral students with active status;
- Doctoral thesis defense rate for the last 5 years in the doctoral education programme;
- Rate of the studies completion by doctoral students; the results of the evaluation carried out;
- Public information about the research interests and publications/participation in performing-creative projects of the supervisors;
- Supervisor performance evaluation document/documents;
- Interview results.

3. Resources

3.1 Staff of Doctoral Educational Programme

- The doctoral education programme involves at least 5 affiliated academic staff of the relevant field, including at least 3 professors/associate professors. If available, the institution should involve scientific staff in the programme implementation;
- The qualification of the academic/research staff of the doctoral educational programme is confirmed by a scientific paper published in the peer-reviewed journals with the international index during the last 3 years and/or a practical/creative/performing project, which confirms his/her competence in the relevant field;
- HEI promotes the participation of foreign university, scientific-research institute/center staff, or a person with emeritus status in the process of implementing the doctoral educational programme;
- The director of the doctoral programme has the necessary knowledge and experience for the design and development of the programme, as well as the appropriate competence in the field of study of the programme. He/she is directly involved in the implementation of the programme and is the affiliated academic and/or scientific staff of the institution;

Indicators

- Personal files of the staff, publications; documents proving involvement in practical/creative/performing projects; competition materials;
- Functions of the programme director;
- Interview results.

3.2 Qualification of Scientific Supervisors

- HEI has developed qualification requirements for scientific supervisor/co-supervisor, which respond to the specifics of the programme and international best practice;
- Due to the specifics and development of the field, the scientific supervisor of each doctoral student is equipped with the latest knowledge, has the academic degree in the relevant field, has experience

of supervision/co-supervision, or has completed a relevant activity (training, seminar, professional development course, etc.), as well as actively participated in scientific research and/or has published a scientific work (in the field of art - creative/performing project) which corresponds to the general topic/research field of the doctoral thesis;

- Due to the specifics and development of the field, the doctoral student's supervisor has published at least 1 scientific paper (in the field of arts - creative/performing project) in the foreign peer-reviewed journal with the international index defined by the HEI during the last 3 years, and this paper corresponds to the general topic/research field of the doctoral student's doctoral thesis;

- The supervisor of the doctoral student, as well as in the case of several supervisors, one of the supervisors, is an academic (professor, associate professor) and/or scientific staff of the HEI with doctoral degree or equivalent to the doctoral degree. The requirement in the section on holding an academic position does not apply to an international supervisor/co-supervisor;

- The doctoral student's supervisor has professional connection with the local and international scientific/artistic community (joint researches/grants/projects, scientific associations/unions/educational/scientific institutions);

- The qualification requirements of the co-supervisor correspond to the topic/research field of the doctoral student's doctoral thesis;

- HEI periodically provides the doctoral thesis supervisor with such activities (training, seminar, workshop, etc.) that facilitate the effective implementation of supervision;

- HEI has developed mechanisms to encourage doctoral students' supervisors in the doctoral education programme;

Indicators

- Document reflecting the qualification requirements of the supervisors/co-supervisors;
- Supervisors workload scheme and individual load rate;
- Supervisors-doctoral students ratio;
- Personal files of supervisors and co-supervisors and documents on conducted scientific researches/performing-creative projects;
- Documents reflecting the professional development activities of doctoral thesis supervisors (training, colloquium, workshop, etc.);
- Mechanisms of encouraging supervisors;
- Interview results.

3.3 Financing of Doctoral Educational Programme

- The budget of the HEI/faculty/school/programme provides support and funding mechanisms to the doctoral students for implementation of the teaching and research components of the doctoral education programme.
- The budget of the HEI/faculty/school/programme provides sources/mechanisms of financial support to facilitate the implementation of research by academic and/or research staff, including funding for

publishing scientific articles in peer-reviewed journals with international index, for participation in scientific conferences, research trips and research/creative projects, for publication monographs and other research, creative/performing activities;

- The budget of the HEI/faculty/school/programme for the effective implementation of the doctoral education programme envisages the development of scientific-research/artistic infrastructure;
- The HEI facilitates the search for external funding sources for targeted research within the doctoral education programme.

Indicators

- Funding sources for the doctoral educational programme;
- Funding for the implementation of scientific researches and/or creative/performing projects;
- The dynamic of funding allocated in the budget for research, development and creative/performing activities in the doctoral education programme during the last 5 years;
- Sources of external funding attracted for the doctoral education programme and conducted researches/activities/projects;
- Interview results.

3.4 Material Resources

- The doctoral education programme is equipped with the necessary research and artistic-creative infrastructure and technical equipment (scientific laboratory, computer resource, information resource, digital resource, individual working spaces for doctoral students, etc.), which are necessary for the implementation of the educational and scientific-research components of the educational programme and for the achievement of the learning outcomes;
- Library book fund, latest scientific periodicals, international electronic library bases both from the university territory and from any other location are available for doctoral students, which allow them to have access and get to know the scientific resources of the relevant research field to achieve the learning outcomes of the programme;
- In order to implement the scientific-research component, the HEI promotes the sharing of scientific-research infrastructure both within the institution and among other higher educational and scientific institutions outside it;
- HEI constantly takes care of the renewal and development of scientific-research/creative research infrastructure.

Indicators:

- Scientific-research infrastructure, material, information and digital resources;
- Library resources;
- Access to international electronic library databases and rate of their use;
- Practice of sharing research resources;
- Material resource renewal rates;

- Interview results.

4. Quality Assurance

4.1 Internal and External Quality Assurance

- Internal quality assurance mechanisms of the doctoral educational programme include the evaluation of the scientific-research component, resources, and support mechanisms of the doctoral student. Evaluation results are applied for the improvement of the HEI's activities and the doctoral programme.
- The activities of the staff implementing the teaching and scientific components of the programme, including the supervisor/co-supervisor of the doctoral thesis are evaluated within the framework of the monitoring of the doctoral educational programme and the evaluation results are used to improve the staff performance;
- The doctoral education programme regularly uses formative peer review to improve the doctoral programme and the research environment;
- In order to develop a doctoral programme, all the interested parties (doctoral student, graduate, staff, doctoral student's supervisor, co-supervisor, employer, etc.) are involved in the evaluation of the doctoral programme implementation.

Indicators

- Tools for assessment and development of scientific research activities, resources, and research environment at the doctoral programme and the use of these tools to improve the programme, measures taken as a result of the analysis;
- Indicators of completion/non-completion of the programme within the timeframe established by legislation and their analysis;
- Assessment results of supervision/co-supervision, reports;
- Formative peer review and measures taken as a result of the evaluation;
- Interview results.