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UNIVERSITY

*Approved by:*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 01-21; 21.04.2021*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 02-22; 19.04.2022*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 04-22; 30.07.2022*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 05-22; 02.09.2022*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 01-23; 28.02.2023*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 01-24; 15.02.2024*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 02-24; 21.05.2024*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 08-24; 26.12.2024*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 03-25; 17.07.2025*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 08-25; 13.10.2025*

*Dissertation Council's Operative Decision No. 03-26; 12.06.2026*

## DOCTORAL STUDIES REGULATION

Tbilisi  
2026

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## **P R E A M B L E**

The purpose of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University's Doctoral Studies Regulation is to define the principles and rules of operation of the University's Dissertation Council and the doctoral studies, and to establish the standards necessary for the implementation of the doctoral program and the award of the academic degree of Doctor.

### **Chapter I. University Dissertation Council**

#### **Article 1. University Dissertation Council**

1. The University Dissertation Council is the body authorized to award the academic degree of Doctor. It is composed of the University's affiliated academic staff holding a Doctor's or an equivalent academic degree, elected by the Faculty Council of each faculty for a term of 4 years. The number of members to be elected from each faculty to the composition of the Dissertation Council shall be determined by the University Academic Council, in consultation with the faculties, taking into account the number of affiliated staff at the faculties. If the mandate of any member is terminated on the basis of termination of his/her employment contract, the faculty shall nominate a new member for the remaining term of the Dissertation Council.

2. The University Dissertation Council shall:

- a) develop the relevant doctoral educational program and submit it to the Academic Council for approval;
- b) award the academic degree of Doctor;
- c) upon the Rector's nomination, elect from among its own members the Chair of the Dissertation Council;
- d) upon the nomination of the Chair of the Dissertation Council, elect the Secretary of the Dissertation Council;

- e) approve, or - by agreement with the Head of the Doctoral School—amend the title of the doctoral dissertation upon the submission of the doctoral student and his/her scientific supervisor;
- f) in cases of violations of academic integrity norms and/or upon the existence of grounds determined by this Regulation, take a decision - on the basis of a submission by the Head of the Doctoral School - on termination of a doctoral student's status or revocation of the academic degree of Doctor;
- g) on the basis of a substantiated motion by the doctoral student and his/her scientific supervisor, decide on granting the possibility for the doctoral student to register for additional semester(s);
- h) upon the submission of the Head of the Doctoral School, decide on appointing reviewers for the doctoral student;
- i) upon the submission of the Head of the Doctoral School, decide on the date of the defense of the dissertation and on appointing the composition of the Doctoral Defense Commission (including the Chair of the Commission);
- j) by agreement with the Heads of the doctoral program and the Doctoral School, petition the University Rector regarding the replacement of the doctoral student's scientific supervisor;
- k) approve this Doctoral Studies Regulation by a majority of its full membership;
- l) exercise other powers defined by this Regulation.

3. The University Dissertation Council shall conduct its activities in accordance with this Regulation. Meetings of the Board shall be held as needed, but at least twice per semester. The Chair of the Board convenes meetings on his/her own initiative.

4. The Board shall adopt decisions by a majority of its full membership. In the event of a tie, the vote of the Chair shall be decisive.

5. Decisions adopted by the University Dissertation Council shall be formalized by the relevant minutes, signed by the Chair and the Secretary. In the absence of the Secretary, the Chair is authorized to assign the duties of the Secretary to one of the members of the Board.

## **Article 2. Chair of the University Dissertation Council**

1. The University Dissertation Council is led by the Chair of the Dissertation Council.

2. The Chair of the Dissertation Council is elected by the Board from among its own members.

3. The Chair of the University Dissertation Council shall:

- a) convene and chair the meetings of the Board;
- b) direct the work of the Board between meetings;
- c) sign decisions and minutes of the Dissertation Council;
- d) exercise other powers defined by this Regulation.

### **Article 3. University Doctoral School**

1. The organizational activities of the University Dissertation Council and the administration of the doctoral programs shall be ensured by the Doctoral School.

2. The Doctoral School shall:

- a) ensure the preparation of the minutes of the Board meetings in accordance with the University's unified record-keeping rules;
- b) maintain records of the doctoral student's dissertation documentation;
- c) ensure resolution of organizational issues of the doctoral programs;
- d) include the Secretariat of the Dissertation Council, which maintains the Board's archive and record-keeping;
- e) provide consultation and assistance to the doctoral student in preparing the relevant documentation prior to and following the defense of the dissertation;
- f) ensure the timely placement of information on the information website, as well as its delivery to all interested persons;
- g) verify the technical correctness of the doctoral dissertation (including through an anti-plagiarism system), as well as the documentation to be submitted by the doctoral student, and prepare the relevant opinion. In case of a negative opinion, the doctoral student shall not be able to submit the dissertation for the oral defense;
- h) perform other functions as instructed by the Dissertation Council.

3. The Head of the Doctoral School shall be appointed by the University Rector. The Head of the Doctoral School shall resolve administrative issues related to the Doctoral School and the implementation of the doctoral programs, unless such issues fall within the competence of the Dissertation Council or any other body or structure. The Head of the Doctoral School is authorized to issue orders.

4. The Doctoral School is obliged to inform the doctoral student in writing or electronically of any decision of the Dissertation Council or its Chair relating to the doctoral student.

## **Chapter II. Study in the Doctoral Program**

### **Article 4. Right to Study in the Doctoral Program**

1. The right to study in the doctoral program shall be held by a person with a Master's degree or an equivalent academic degree. Additional requirements may be established by the relevant doctoral program.

2. A person may be enrolled in the doctoral program through mobility, in accordance with applicable legislation. A mobility candidate must meet the same conditions as those established for an applicant seeking admission to the doctoral program.

### **Article 5. Conditions for Admission to the Doctoral Program**

1. An applicant for enrollment in the doctoral program shall submit an application addressed to the University Rector, indicating the doctoral program (Annex 1.1). The application must be accompanied by:

- a) the applicant's Curriculum Vitae (CV);
- b) a notarized copy of the diploma and supplement attesting to the Master's degree or an equivalent academic degree;
- c) in the case of education obtained abroad, a recognition document;
- d) a copy of the identity card/passport;
- e) a photograph (3x4 cm) and its electronic version;

- f) a document attesting to registration for military service (for persons subject to military registration);
- g) a certificate attesting to knowledge of the foreign language(s) provided for by the doctoral program at the appropriate level (if available);
- h) a declaration stating whether or not the person is enrolled in a doctoral program at another educational institution;
- i) a recommendation (motion) from a scientific supervisor candidate selected by the doctoral candidate from among the members of the Dissertation Council, and the candidate's own vision of the dissertation topic (research project), which must include a justification of the relevance of the research subject and the significance of the issue, as well as the tentative title of the dissertation, an approximate structure, and an indicative bibliography;
- j) two letters of recommendation, one of which must be academic and the other professional (employment-related);
- k) a certificate of place of work and work experience;
- l) copies of prior publications in the relevant field and/or documents attesting to participation in research projects and events and/or a certificate attesting to at least 2 years of work experience in the relevant field.

2. The prerequisites for admission to the doctoral educational program are public and include information about the program, admission deadlines and the documentation to be submitted, information about supervisors' research interests, and the mechanisms for supporting and encouraging doctoral students in conducting research. The doctoral program shall determine the criteria for admission. Taking into account the specifics of the program and the research topics, the Dissertation Council may, by decision, establish additional requirements for admission to the doctoral program.

3. A doctoral applicant must have knowledge of English at least at B2 level, or knowledge of German/French at least at B2 level and knowledge of English at least at B1 level, which must be confirmed by a university examination or an appropriate certificate. The rules for assessing knowledge of a foreign language and recognizing the relevant certificate are defined by the relevant program. Considering the specifics of the research topic, the doctoral admissions commission is authorized to require the candidate to confirm knowledge of an additional foreign language necessary for the research.

4. A doctoral applicant shall be exempted from the foreign language examination or the submission of the relevant certificate if his/her Master's program was undertaken in the corresponding foreign language.

5. A doctoral applicant who seeks to study in a Georgian-language program and whose native language is not Georgian shall submit a certificate confirming knowledge of Georgian at B2 level (if available), or shall take an examination in Georgian in accordance with the rules established by the University.

## **Article 6. Prerequisites for Admission to the Interview**

1. An applicant who meets the prerequisites for admission to the doctoral program shall be admitted to the interview.

2. The doctoral applicant shall undergo an interview with the admissions field commission.

3. The commission shall be formed by order of the Head of the Doctoral School, ensuring maximum representation of different areas among the members of the field Doctoral Dissertation Colleague. The composition of the commission shall be formed with the involvement of representatives corresponding to the fields announced during admissions, on the basis of consultation with the head of the relevant doctoral program.

## **Article 7. Enrollment in the Doctoral Program**

1. Based on the submitted documentation and the interview, the field commission shall evaluate the candidate on a 100-point scale (Annex 1.2). The final score shall be the arithmetic mean of the above scores, on the basis of which the field commission shall, by vote and by a majority of votes, recommend the selected candidates.

2. The selected candidates' research topics and titles may be adjusted during the interview with the admissions commission, through consultation with them. The title of the doctoral dissertation shall be approved by the admissions commission and shall be reflected in the minutes of the admissions commission.

3. Based on the final results, the Head of the Doctoral School shall petition the Rector for the candidate's enrollment in the relevant doctoral program. The deadlines and procedures for appealing the results of enrollment in the doctoral program shall be determined by the Rector's order "On Enrollment of Candidates in the Doctoral Program."

4. By the order on enrollment in the doctoral program, the doctoral student's supervisor and/or co-supervisors shall be appointed.

5. On the basis of the Rector's order, the University shall enter into an educational services agreement with the candidates receiving a positive recommendation.

### **Article 8. Suspension of Doctoral Student Status**

1. A doctoral student shall acquire the right to participate in the educational process and to carry out research work after passing the relevant administrative registration for the semester.

2. A doctoral student who does not pass administrative/academic registration shall have his/her doctoral student status suspended and shall lose the right to earn credits in the respective semester; the respective semester shall not be considered completed.

3. Other grounds for suspension of doctoral student status are defined by the relevant acts of the University and the legislation of Georgia.

### **Article 9. Termination of Doctoral Student Status by Decision of the Dissertation Council**

1. By decision of the Dissertation Council, a doctoral student's status may be terminated in the following cases:

a) confirmation of plagiarism or data falsification;

b) failure by the doctoral student to fulfill the study or research plan;

c) upon a motion by the scientific supervisor or the Head of the Doctoral School, if they consider that the doctoral student will not be able to complete the study and research process within the period established by this Regulation;

d) in the case of a second attendance of the same course without obtaining the credit.

2. The Head of the Doctoral School or the scientific supervisor shall have the right to submit a motion for termination of doctoral student status.

3. Upon submission by the Chair of the Dissertation Council, a person's doctoral student status shall be terminated by an act of the Rector if the motion is supported by at least two-thirds of the members of the Dissertation Council present.

4. Other grounds for termination of doctoral student status are defined by the relevant acts of the University and the legislation of Georgia.

## **Chapter III. Doctoral Program**

### **Article 10. Doctoral Program and Its Scope**

1. The doctoral program includes educational and scientific-research components. In the doctoral program, the educational component may amount to 45–60 credits. The scientific-research component is not calculated in credits.

2. The duration of study in the doctoral program is at least 6 and no more than 10 active semesters.

3. If, after six active semesters from enrollment, the doctoral student has not completed the study and research process, the scientific supervisor shall be entitled to submit a substantiated motion to the University Dissertation Council regarding the advisability of continuing the study/research process.

4. In the event of a positive decision by the Dissertation Council on the scientific supervisor's motion, the doctoral student shall be obliged to complete the study and research process within the number of semesters determined by the Board, but not more than four academic semesters.

5. During the additional year/semester, the doctoral student retains student status.

6. A doctoral student who completes the research component, after full completion of the credits intended for the educational component defined by the doctoral program, shall submit the dissertation to the Dissertation Council. The defense of the dissertation shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure established by this Regulation. Submission of the dissertation is possible not earlier than the 6th semester.

### **Article 11. Scientific-Research Component of the Doctoral Educational Program**

1. The purpose of the research component of the doctoral educational program is to form and develop the student's research skills.

2. The mandatory scientific-research component of the doctoral program is the dissertation. Completion of the mandatory scientific-research component of the doctoral program is attested by the submission and defense of the dissertation (presentation, scholarly discussion).

3. The research component of the doctoral educational program, in addition to the preparation and defense of the dissertation, shall mandatorily include:

a) publication of at least three scholarly articles in a journal with an impact factor or in a refereed/peer-reviewed academic journal (as confirmed by the relevant international classifier or other international document), or in an international scholarly journal published abroad in the relevant field, or in the proceedings of an international conference published abroad, of which at least one must be indexed in Scopus or Web of Science, and at least one other in the ERIH PLUS databases. At least two of the three articles must be published in a foreign-language journal/publication in a foreign language. In the case of a Georgian-language article, it must be published in a scholarly journal indexed in ERIH PLUS;

b) participation in at least one international scholarly conference (personally presenting an individual paper in a foreign language).

4. While working on the dissertation, the doctoral student shall prepare a part of the dissertation— a colloquium—three times (taking into account the standard of the doctoral dissertation, within 30–35 pages), which shall be publicly reviewed by a commission established by the Dissertation Council, which must necessarily include the doctoral student’s scientific supervisor and the head of the doctoral program. In order to be admitted to the dissertation defense, a positive recommendation must be received at all three colloquia from the field doctoral panel. Each colloquium is prepared within one semester. Preparing and reviewing more than one colloquium within a single semester is not permitted. As a result of reviewing each colloquium, the relevant doctoral commission shall evaluate the colloquium and take one of the following decisions: 1) positive recommendation — the research related to the doctoral dissertation is deemed completed, the information presented in the colloquium corresponds to the research objectives and methodology and the research topic; the doctoral student has processed the sources related to the part of the dissertation, analyzed them and reflected them in writing. A positive recommendation may be issued together with advice and suggestions related to the colloquium; or 2) negative recommendation — the research related to the doctoral dissertation is not deemed completed; the doctoral student did not present a part of the dissertation, or presented it in violation of the standard, with a superficial review of sources; the content of the work largely does not correspond to the research objectives and methodology and has significant substantive problems. The doctoral colloquium shall be submitted to the commission once per semester, not later than the 13th week.

5. The list of refereed/peer-reviewed journals published in Georgia, or refereed/peer-reviewed electronic and/or print journals, shall be determined by the Dissertation Council.
6. A scholarly article shall be deemed published for the doctoral student if:
  - a) the relevant volume of the journal has been printed or transferred/launched for printing and a corresponding certificate is provided;
  - b) the work is posted on the official website of the journal.
7. The dissertation shall be assessed in the same or the following semester in which the doctoral student completes work on it. The dissertation is assessed once, with a final grade.
8. The methods and criteria for evaluating the dissertation shall be additionally determined by the relevant doctoral program and syllabus.

## **Chapter IV. Heads of the Doctoral Program and the Doctoral Student's Supervision**

### **Article 12. Head of the Doctoral Program**

1. The Head of the Doctoral Program shall establish the doctoral program and coordinate its implementation.
2. The Head of the Doctoral Program may be the University's affiliated academic staff member holding a Doctor's academic degree. The Head of the Doctoral Program shall be approved by the Dissertation Council upon the submission of the Head of the Doctoral School.

### **Article 13. Scientific Supervisor of the Doctoral Student**

1. The scientific supervisor of the doctoral student may only be a member of the field Doctoral Dissertation College approved by the University Dissertation Council.
2. A supervisor/co-supervisor may only be a person holding a Doctor's or an equivalent scientific degree who is equipped with the most up-to-date knowledge in the field, has research experience and relevant publications in issues related to the topic of the doctoral

student's dissertation, has experience/qualifications in supervision/co-supervision, and has professional ties with the local and international scholarly community (joint research/grants/projects, scholarly associations/networks, educational/research institutions).

3. Depending on the specifics of the field, the doctoral student's supervisor must, during the last three years, have published at least one scholarly work in a foreign journal indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, ERIH PLUS, which corresponds to the general topic/research area of the doctoral student's dissertation, as determined by the Dissertation Council.

4. The scientific supervisor shall consult the doctoral student during the research process on the following issues: research design and project management; research methodology; professional development; the process of writing the thesis/scholarly research paper/dissertation; integration into local and international scholarly/creative networks; participation in local and international scholarly/creative events and presentation of results; publication of scholarly articles in journals indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, ERIH PLUS, and other related matters.

5. The scientific supervisor shall create conditions for the doctoral student to conduct research-oriented work, shall provide instructions and recommendations to the doctoral student, and shall monitor the implementation of the doctoral student's individual study and research plan. The doctoral student shall submit periodic reports to the supervisor.

6. If the supervisor refuses to continue supervision, at any stage of the doctoral student's study, he/she shall submit a substantiated application to the Head of the Doctoral School. The supervisor's application shall be satisfied upon appointment of a new supervisor for the doctoral student.

7. One scientific supervisor may have no more than three doctoral students with active status registered. If a doctoral student with suspended status requests restoration of status for the purpose of submitting a dissertation for the award of the academic degree, the supervisor may have up to five doctoral students with active status. This ratio may be determined differently depending on the conditions of a research grant/project.

8. For the purpose of quality assurance, the University shall offer relevant trainings and retraining programs to doctoral supervisors.

9. Supervision of a doctoral student shall be remunerated. The amount and procedure of remuneration shall be determined by the Rector's order.

## **Article 14. Replacement of the Scientific Supervisor and Dissertation Topic at the Doctoral Student's Request**

1. Upon a substantiated request of the doctoral student, the scientific supervisor may be replaced before the start of the semester; similarly, at the supervisor's request, his/her duties may be terminated.
2. In the case of replacement of the scientific supervisor, where the new supervisor agrees, the dissertation topic may remain unchanged.
3. Upon a joint substantiated request of the doctoral student and the scientific supervisor, prior to the start of the semester the dissertation topic may be specified within the framework of the doctoral program. Upon a joint substantiated request of the doctoral student and the scientific supervisor, prior to the start of the semester the dissertation topic may be changed within the doctoral program, on the condition of defending three colloquia and receiving positive recommendations on the changed topic. In these cases, when changing the dissertation topic within the same doctoral program, the decision shall be taken by the Dissertation Council.

## **Chapter V. Dissertation Proceedings**

### **Article 15. Doctoral Student's Individual Study Plan**

1. Based on the doctoral student's needs, and upon his/her application, an individual study plan shall be drawn up by agreement between the Head of the doctoral program and the Head of the Doctoral School (Annex 1.3).
2. Based on the doctoral student's needs, the individual study plan may be modified and adapted to changed circumstances.

### **Article 16. Doctoral Student's Individual Research Plan**

1. The doctoral student, in agreement with his/her scientific supervisor and the head of the relevant doctoral program, shall draw up an individual research plan (Annex 1.4) and submit it together with the first doctoral colloquium.

2. The doctoral student's individual research plan shall be developed for the implementation of the dissertation. The individual research plan shall specify the research objective, the structure of the dissertation, the tentative schedule for the research, and the research methodology.

### **Article 17. Supervisor's Report on the Doctoral Student's Implementation of the Individual Research Plan**

1. During the doctoral student's work on the dissertation, and during performance of the relevant scientific-research component, the scientific supervisor shall, within no later than two weeks from the end of each active semester, submit a report on the doctoral student's implementation of the individual research plan (Annex 1.5).

2. The report shall be submitted to the Head of the Doctoral School and brought to the attention of the Chair of the Dissertation Council and the Head of the program.

## **Chapter VI. Preparation and Defense of the Dissertation**

### **Article 18. Dissertation**

1. The dissertation shall be the result of the doctoral student's independent scholarly-research work. The dissertation shall reflect substantiated results of theoretical and/or experimental research, be characterized by scientific novelty, and contribute to the development of the scientific field.

2. The dissertation shall be prepared in Georgian. The issue of preparing the dissertation in another language shall be decided by the Dissertation Council.

3. In the case of a dissertation prepared in a foreign language, the main results of the doctoral research shall be presented in Georgian.

4. As a rule, the volume of the dissertation shall be not less than 120 and not more than 200 pages. All bound pages shall be counted in the total number of pages.

5. The technical parameters of the dissertation shall be: format – A4; margins – 2 cm on all sides, and 2.5 cm on the left; first-line indent – 0.5 cm; spacing between paragraphs – 0; line

spacing – 1.15; font – Sylfaen (UTF-8) for both Georgian and foreign-language text; size – 11 (for footnotes – same font, size 9, line spacing 1.0).

6. Structurally, the dissertation shall consist of parts, numbered with Roman numerals (I, II, etc.). The introduction and conclusion shall also be numbered. Within the parts, sub-chapters shall be numbered with Arabic numerals, in a continuous sequence. Upon the start of each new part, the numbering of sub-chapters shall start anew. Each new part shall begin on a new page. No space shall be left between parts and sub-chapters. A sub-chapter shall be separated from the main text by one line space.

7. The dissertation shall be paginated with continuous numbering. Leaving free space or blank pages is not permitted. Repetition of page numbers is also not permitted. The minimum font size for page numbers is 9. Introductory pages, except the title page, shall be numbered in the lower right corner with lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.). The page number shall be placed in the lower right corner of the sheet.

8. The title page of the dissertation shall be in a standard form. It shall necessarily include the title of the dissertation; the surname and name of the doctoral student and his/her scientific supervisor; the academic position/degree; and the text: “Submitted for the award of the academic degree of Doctor of [relevant field],” “Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University,” “Tbilisi, 0186, Georgia.” It shall also indicate the academic position, name and surname of the scientific supervisor, as well as the month and year when the dissertation was submitted to the Doctoral School. The page number of this page is (i), though it is not displayed.

9. The signatures page (page ii) of the dissertation shall be in a standard form. The original of the standard version must bear original signatures. This page must be included in all copies of the standard version of the dissertation. The page shall contain the text: “Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University,” the text: “We, the undersigned, hereby confirm that we have reviewed the dissertation prepared by [name, surname] entitled: [title] and recommend its consideration by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University’s Dissertation Council for the award of the academic degree of Doctor of [field],” and the date. It must be certified by the signatures of the supervisor and all reviewers.

10. The copyright page (page iii) of the dissertation shall be in a standard form. The original of the standard version must bear the author’s original signature. This page shall contain the text: “Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University,” the year of submission to the Dissertation Council, the author’s surname and name, the dissertation title, the name of the field, the academic degree sought, and the date of the session. It shall also contain the standard texts: “Upon request for the purpose of familiarization by individual persons or institutions, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University is granted the right to reproduce and distribute this dissertation, identified above, for non-commercial purposes,” and “The author retains all remaining

publishing rights, and neither the entire work nor any of its individual components may be reprinted or reproduced by any other method without the author's written permission. The author attests that the necessary permissions have been obtained for copyrighted material used in the work (except for short quotations that require only specific referencing in the literature citation, as customary in scholarly works and confirmed by an appropriate source) and assumes responsibility for all such materials.”

11. The abstract of the dissertation shall follow the copyright page and shall provide a concise overview of the dissertation. It shall clearly convey a brief summary of the work performed and the main achievements. As a rule, the abstract shall not contain footnotes, tables, drawings, diagrams, etc. The volume of the abstract shall be between 500 and 800 words. The abstract shall be prepared in Georgian and English. If the dissertation is prepared in another language, an abstract in that language shall be attached as well.

12. The table of contents shall follow the abstract and comply with the technical parameters of the main text of the dissertation. It shall be prepared using electronic software, with automatic referencing and updating.

13. The main text of the dissertation shall be followed by the references. The sources indicated in the references shall be arranged thematically (scholarly literature, legislation, court decisions, electronic sources, etc.). Within each thematic section, sources shall be arranged by the language of publication and then alphabetically. In the case of acts and decisions, they shall be arranged in order of their legal force.

14. Tables, drawings, and images may be attached to the dissertation. They shall be placed as appendices after the bibliography and indicated in the table of contents.

15. Sources in the dissertation shall be cited using footnotes outside the main text, at the bottom of the same page. The following rule shall be used for citation and reference of sources:

a) Article: surname, initial of the name, full title of the article, full name of the journal, number (volume), year, page (the year and page are indicated only with numerals, without “yr.” and “p.”). (e.g.: 1. Machavariani S., The Issue of Departmental Subordination and Jurisdiction under Georgia's Procedural Legislation, Journal “Justice,” No. 2, 2017, 186.)

b) Book:

b.a) surname, initial of the name, full title of the book, place of publication (if the place cannot be identified – the publisher), year, page (the year and page are indicated only with numerals, without “yr.” and “p.”). (e.g., Melkadze O., Dvali B., The Judiciary in Foreign Countries, Tbilisi, 2000, 68.)

b.b) in the case of a collection of articles – surname, initial of the name, title of the article, full title of the book, editor, place of publication (if the place cannot be identified – the publisher), year, page (the year and page are indicated only with numerals, without “yr.” and “p.”). (e.g., Javakhishvili P., The Anatomy of the Normative Regulation of the President of Georgia’s Veto, in: 800 Years of Constitutionalism, edited by D. Gegenava and P. Javakhishvili, Tbilisi, 2017, 214.)

b.c) when citing from the books of the Holy Scriptures, at the end of the quotation parentheses shall be opened, indicating the abbreviated name of the book separated by a period, followed by the chapter and verse numbers separated by a comma. For example: (Mt. 3, 15) or (Gal. 4, 5).

c) Global information network: the name of the website in angle brackets, and the last date of verification – day, month, year – indicated in numerals within square brackets (e.g., <washingtonpost.com/news> [12.10.2020].)

## **Article 19. Submission of the Dissertation**

1. The doctoral student shall submit to the Doctoral School five bound printed copies of the dissertation and its electronic version (in PDF format) for placement on the University website.

2. Together with the dissertation, the doctoral student shall submit to the Doctoral School:

a) an application addressed to the Chair of the Dissertation Council on accepting the dissertation for consideration;

b) a certificate on completion of the educational component provided for by the doctoral program;

c) printed copies of scholarly works authored or co-authored by the doctoral student and published in accordance with this Regulation;

d) materials of scholarly seminars, fora and conferences;

e) the main findings prepared in English (within 20–25 pages, prepared in accordance with the formal requirements established for the dissertation, unifying information about the main objectives of the work, the research subject, relevance, research methodology, sources used, main theses and conclusions) and the structure, with the attached bibliography.

3. The submission shall be accompanied by a written opinion of the doctoral student’s scientific supervisor(s) regarding the dissertation, which shall include, inter alia, confirmation

that he/she has reviewed the dissertation and that the work is ready to be presented for public consideration.

4. The dissertation shall be accompanied by the doctoral student's declaration that the work has been prepared by him/her and that all sources used in the work are duly cited.

5. The doctoral student shall be exempted from semester registration and tuition fees from the semester following the submission of the dissertation to the Dissertation Council.

6. The dissertation shall be submitted to the Dissertation Council for consideration before the end of the semester.

7. Following the submission of the dissertation, the Doctoral School shall, within three working days, verify the documentation and run the dissertation through a special electronic anti-plagiarism program. If the documents are in order and the results of the anti-plagiarism program are satisfactory, the Head of the Doctoral School shall submit the dissertation to the Dissertation Council for a decision on the appointment of reviewers.

## **Article 20. Preliminary Review of the Dissertation**

1. Following submission of the dissertation, the Dissertation Council shall appoint two local reviewers (at least one of whom must not be a member of the field Doctoral Dissertation College) and one international reviewer to evaluate the dissertation (a local reviewer is staff of a local university or a research institute/center, or a person with emeritus status, while an international reviewer is staff of a foreign university or a research institute/center, or a person with emeritus status). An international reviewer's opinion is not mandatory if the doctoral student has an international supervisor.

2. A reviewer of the dissertation may only be a person holding a Doctor's or an equivalent scientific degree, who is equipped with the most up-to-date knowledge in the field, has actively participated in scholarly research, and during the last three years has published at least one scholarly work in a foreign journal indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, ERIH PLUS, which corresponds to the general topic/research area of the doctoral student's dissertation.

3. A reviewer may not be: a) the Chair or the Secretary of the Dissertation Council; b) a co-author of any article prepared by the doctoral candidate; c) a person hierarchically subordinates to the candidate; d) a relative, partner, or otherwise dependent or interested person with respect to the candidate.

4. Within five working days from the appointment of the reviewers, the Doctoral School shall ensure the transfer of the dissertation copies to the reviewers (the international reviewer shall

be provided with the main findings of the dissertation in English). Prior to familiarization with the review, the identity of the reviewer shall be confidential for the doctoral student and/or his/her supervisor/co-supervisor.

5. A reviewer shall submit to the Dissertation Council an opinion within two months from the date of delivery of the dissertation.

6. If it is impossible for any reviewer to submit an opinion due to objective circumstances (accident, illness, etc.), the Dissertation Council shall appoint a third reviewer.

7. The reviewer's opinion shall reflect: a) the relevance of the doctoral topic; b) the scientific level of the research; c) the methods (methodology) used; d) the reliability of the results obtained; e) the quality of the dissertation's formatting, etc.

8. Based on appropriate reasoning, the reviewer shall, in his/her opinion, take one of the following decisions: a) to admit the dissertation to the defense; b) to refuse admission of the dissertation to the defense.

9. If one of the two reviewers decides to refuse admission of the dissertation to the defense, the Chair of the Dissertation Council shall appoint a third reviewer.

10. If more than half of the reviewers decide to refuse admission of the dissertation to the defense, the dissertation shall not be admitted to the defense.

11. In the case of non-admission to the defense, by decision of the Dissertation Council the doctoral student shall be granted the right to perform additional work on the dissertation for the number of semesters determined by the Board, but not more than two academic semesters.

12. If the dissertation is not submitted within the time limit set by the Dissertation Council, the doctoral student's status shall be terminated by decision of the Board.

13. The revised dissertation resubmitted by the doctoral student shall be delivered to the same reviewers; if this is impossible due to objective circumstances (accident, illness, etc.), the Chair of the Dissertation Council shall appoint new reviewers for the dissertation.

14. If more than half of the reviewers decide to refuse admission of the revised dissertation to the defense, the dissertation shall not be admitted to the defense.

15. The Secretariat of the Doctoral School shall inform the doctoral student in writing of the reviewers' decisions. The doctoral student shall have the right to familiarize himself/herself with the reviewers' opinions.

16. In the case of refusal to admit the dissertation to the defense, one copy of the rejected dissertation and the reviewers' written opinions shall be transferred for storage to the archive of the Doctoral School.

### **Article 21. Approval of the Date of the Defense and of the Composition of the Commission**

1. The decision regarding the date of the defense of the dissertation and the composition of the Doctoral Defense Commission (including the Chair of the Commission) shall be made by the Dissertation Council on the basis of the submission by the Head of the Doctoral School.

2. The defense of the dissertation may be scheduled not earlier than 30 calendar days after the decision on the defense date. This period may be shortened only with the prior consent of the doctoral student.

3. Within five working days from the approval of the composition of the Defense Commission, the Doctoral School shall ensure the transfer of the dissertation copies to the members of the Commission.

4. The Doctoral School shall notify the doctoral student of the decisions adopted by the Board. The notice of the appointment of the defense shall indicate the composition of the Defense Commission, the date, time and place of the defense, the possibility for external persons to attend and their allowable number, at least 30 calendar days prior to the defense.

5. The Secretariat of the Doctoral School shall disseminate information in writing or electronically on the date of the defense of the dissertation and ensure posting of the notice on the University information board(s).

### **Article 22. Doctoral Defense Commission**

1. The Doctoral Defense Commission shall be created as a one-time body solely for the defense of a specific dissertation.

2. The Doctoral Defense Commission shall consist of at least five members of the scientific field corresponding to the dissertation topic, to be appointed by the Dissertation Council from the field Dissertation Council. The composition of the Defense Commission must include at least one specialist with a Doctor's degree in the field who is not a member of the field Doctoral Dissertation Commission. As a rule, reviewers shall also be included in the composition of the Commission. The doctoral student's scientific supervisor shall not be included in the composition of the Defense Commission.

3. A member of the Doctoral Defense Commission may be either a member of the Dissertation Council or another person holding a Doctor's or an equivalent scientific degree.
4. A member of the Defense Commission may not be: a) a co-author of any article prepared by the doctoral candidate; b) a person hierarchically subordinate to the candidate; c) a relative, partner, or otherwise dependent or interested person with respect to the candidate.
5. The Defense Commission shall be chaired by a Chair selected from among its members and approved by the Dissertation Council. The Chair may not be a reviewer of the doctoral student.
6. The Defense Commission shall be authorized to review written feedback received concerning the dissertation.

### **Article 23. Meeting of the Doctoral Defense Commission**

1. The defense of the dissertation shall be conducted publicly at a meeting of the Defense Commission. Information about the meeting of the Commission shall be posted on the University website not later than two weeks before the defense of the dissertation.
2. The language of the defense shall be Georgian, unless otherwise permitted by decision of the Dissertation Council.
3. A meeting of the Defense Commission shall be quorate if at least three-quarters of its members are present.
4. If one of the reviewers does not attend the defense for a valid reason, the review must be read in full during the defense.
5. The scientific supervisor must be present at the defense. If he/she is absent for a valid reason, he/she shall send to the Commission an appropriate report card and the doctoral student's personal reference.
6. If the doctoral student, for a documented valid reason, cannot attend the defense of the dissertation, or if a quorum of the Defense Commission is not met, or if the defense did not take place due to other reasons beyond the doctoral student's control, the Chair of the Dissertation Council shall schedule a new date for the defense in the same semester.
7. Only one dissertation defense may be held at a single meeting of the Defense Commission.

8. The meeting of the Defense Commission and the procedure for the defense of the dissertation shall be reflected in the relevant minutes, signed by the Chair of the Commission and the Secretary.

## **Article 24. Defense of the Dissertation**

1. At the meeting, the Chair of the Defense Commission shall announce the identity of the doctoral candidate and the dissertation topic, the identities of the reviewers, present to the Commission the documents submitted by the doctoral student, the procedure for the defense of the dissertation, and a brief biographical note of the doctoral student.

2. The defense process shall include the doctoral student's presentation of the work, a scholarly debate, and the conclusion of the Defense Commission. As a rule, the duration of the defense process shall not exceed 120 minutes.

3. The doctoral student's presentation shall comprise the candidate's report—presentation of the topic—the duration of which, as a rule, shall not exceed 30 minutes. At the suggestion of the Chair of the Commission, the doctoral student shall present to the Commission the main theses of his/her work and the results obtained, clearly formulating the scientific novelty.

4. During the presentation, the doctoral candidate shall use visual materials, e.g., slides, posters, video/film materials, etc.

5. After the presentation, a scholarly debate shall be held, the duration of which, as a rule, shall not exceed 60 minutes. The doctoral student shall answer questions asked by those present, after which the Chair of the Commission shall present to the Commission the results of the preliminary review of the dissertation. A debate between reviewers and the doctoral student shall be held, after which the floor shall be given to the scientific supervisor(s) for the doctoral student's personal reference. A discussion shall be held in which both members of the Commission and members of the audience may participate.

6. Upon completion of the scholarly debate, at the suggestion of the Chair of the Commission, the doctoral student shall be given a concluding speech, the duration of which, as a rule, shall not exceed 10 minutes.

7. After the doctoral student's concluding speech, in order to evaluate the dissertation, the Defense Commission shall take its decision at a closed concluding meeting.

8. A protocol of the defense of the dissertation, its course, and the final result shall be drawn up and signed by all members of the panel present. The Defense Commission shall ensure preparation of the minutes.

## **Article 25. Evaluation of the Dissertation**

1. Members of the Defense Commission shall evaluate the dissertation once, confidentially, on a 100-point scale.
2. Each member of the Defense Commission shall evaluate the dissertation in accordance with the established methods and criteria for assessing achievement of results.
3. For the final evaluation of the dissertation, the Secretary elected by the Defense Commission shall calculate the arithmetic mean of the points (the sum of the points received divided by the number of members of the Commission), which shall correspond to a Latin assessment.
4. Five positive and two negative assessments shall be used for the evaluation of the dissertation.
5. The following system shall be used for a positive evaluation of the dissertation: a) excellent (*summa cum laude*) – an outstanding work – 91 points and above; b) very good (*magna cum laude*) – a result that exceeds the set requirements in all respects – 81–90 points; c) good (*cum laude*) – a result that exceeds the set requirements – 71–80 points; d) average (*bene*) – a result that fully meets the set requirements – 61–70 points; e) satisfactory (*rite*) – a result that, despite shortcomings, still meets the set requirements – 51–60 points.
6. The following system shall be used for a negative evaluation of the dissertation: a) unsatisfactory (*insufficenter*) – a result that fails to meet the set requirements due to significant shortcomings – 41–50 points; b) entirely unsatisfactory (*sub omni canone*) – a result that completely fails to meet the set requirements – 40 points and below.
7. In the case of a positive evaluation, the dissertation shall be deemed defended.
8. In the case of an unsatisfactory (*insufficenter*) evaluation, the doctoral student shall be granted the right to submit the revised dissertation within one year. For this purpose, within one month from the announcement of the result, the student shall have the right to submit to the Secretariat of the Dissertation Council an application requesting revision of the work and repeated defense of the dissertation.
9. In the case of an entirely unsatisfactory (*sub omni canone*) evaluation, the doctoral student shall lose the right to submit the same dissertation and his/her doctoral student status shall be terminated.

10. Immediately upon completion of the meeting, the Chair of the Defense Commission shall publicly announce the Commission's reasoned final decision. The doctoral student shall have the right to familiarize himself/herself with the Defense Commission's final written decision and to appeal it to the Dissertation Council. The appeal shall be reviewed by a special field commission composed of expert members from all fields of the Dissertation Council. The commission shall take its decision by a majority of votes of those present. On the basis of the commission's conclusion, the Dissertation Council shall take one of the following decisions: a) to grant the request and, accordingly, to appoint a new Defense Commission and new reviewers; b) to refuse the request. In case the appeal is granted, the defense of the dissertation shall be scheduled anew in accordance with the procedure provided by this Regulation.

11. Within ten calendar days from the defense of the dissertation, the Secretariat of the Doctoral School shall deliver one copy of the dissertation to the National Library and one copy to the University Library.

## **Article 26. Award of the Academic Degree of Doctor**

1. In the case of a positive evaluation, the person shall be awarded the academic degree of Doctor by the Dissertation Council, which shall be confirmed by issuance of a Doctor's diploma.

2. The diploma attesting to the academic degree of Doctor shall be issued by the University. The design and issuance of the diploma and its supplement shall be carried out in accordance with the rules established at the University. The diploma shall be signed by the Head of the Doctoral School and the University Rector.

## **Article 27. Nullity of the Academic Degree of Doctor**

1. By decision of the Dissertation Council, the academic degree of Doctor shall be revoked if, in the course of the dissertation proceedings, incorrect data are submitted, data are falsified, plagiarism is committed, or other norms of academic integrity are violated.

2. If plagiarism or falsification of the dissertation documentation is established at any time after the defense of the dissertation, the Dissertation Council shall be obliged to declare the academic degree awarded as null and void and to cancel the relevant diploma.

## **Article 28. Archive of the Dissertation File**

1. Following the defense of the dissertation, the dissertation file shall remain in the archive of the Doctoral School and shall include:

- a) the doctoral student's application, endorsed by the visa (approval) of the Chair of the Dissertation Council, on accepting the dissertation for consideration;
- b) the written opinion of the scientific supervisor (co-supervisors) regarding the dissertation;
- c) the electronic version of the dissertation (in PDF format);
- d) scholarly works authored and/or co-authored by the doctoral student that have been published, as well as their list;
- e) materials and a register of scholarly seminars, fora, and conferences reflecting the principal results of the dissertation;
- f) the grade sheet reflecting the evaluation(s) of completion of the educational component;
- g) the reviewers' opinions;
- h) the minutes of the meeting of the Doctoral Defense Commission;
- i) a document confirming publication of the successfully defended dissertation in printed or electronic form;
- j) a copy of the University Rector's order on the issuance of the Doctor's diploma.

2. The bound documentation shall be kept by the Board for four years, after which it shall be transferred to the University archive.

## **Chapter VII. Conferment of the Title of Honorary Doctor**

### **Article 29. Honorary Doctor**

1. A person with outstanding scholarly merit in a defined field may be conferred the academic title of Honorary Doctor.
2. The decision to confer the title of Honorary Doctor shall be taken by the Dissertation Council on the basis of a joint submission by the University Rector and the Faculty Dean.

## **Chapter VIII. Transitional and Final Provisions**

### **Article 30. Operation of the Doctoral Studies Regulation**

In matters not provided for or otherwise unregulated by the Doctoral Studies Regulation, the University's Regulation on the Educational Process and other legal acts shall apply.

**Annex 1.1**

To the Rector of Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani University

3 K. Kutateladze St., Tbilisi

Applicant's Name and Surname \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel. \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Doctoral Program \_\_\_\_\_  
Dissertation Topic (proposed title) \_\_\_\_\_

**Application for Enrollment in the Doctoral Program**

\_\_\_\_\_,

Please enroll me in the Doctoral School of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University, in the \_\_\_\_\_ doctoral program.

The dissertation topic I have selected is: \_\_\_\_\_ (title).

The following member of the Doctoral Dissertation Board, Professor/Associate Professor/Assistant Professor/Invited Lecturer \_\_\_\_\_, has agreed to act as scientific supervisor for the topic.

I hereby confirm that I meet the prerequisites for admission as provided by the Doctoral Studies Regulation.

Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date  
\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Annexes (to be attached):**

- Curriculum Vitae (CV) – education and employment history.

- Notarized copy of the diploma and supplement for a Master's/equivalent degree, or recognition document for education obtained abroad.
- Copy of identity document (passport).
- Photograph (3x4 cm) and its electronic version.
- Document on military registration (for those subject to registration).
- Certificate of foreign-language knowledge at B2 level (if available).
- Declaration whether enrolled in another institution's doctoral program.
- Recommendation (motion) from a proposed scientific supervisor (member of the Doctoral Dissertation Board) and the applicant's research project (relevance and significance, tentative title, approximate structure, indicative bibliography).
- Two recommendation letters (one academic, one professional).
- Certificate of place of work and work experience.

## Evaluation Form and Criteria for Doctoral Applicant

## Doctoral Applicant Evaluation Form

Evaluation criteria		Doctoral candidate
Documentation submitted by applicant (10 points)		
Candidate's academic experience (10 points)		
Research Project (50 points)	Research project – Relevance & dissertation-worthiness (15)	
	Research project – Problem statement (15)	
	Research project – Structure (10)	
	Research project – Diversity of sources (10)	
Ability to articulate own position (10)		
Motivation (10)		
Persuasiveness of reasoning (10)		
Total score		

Commission Member (Name, Surname)

Signature

Date

## Doctoral Applicant – Evaluation Criteria

Documentation submitted by applicant (10 points)	
Score	Criteria for assessing the documentation presented by the doctoral candidate
10	Complete, fully compliant with the Regulation; technically and substantively sound.
7–9	Complete and compliant; mostly technically sound, though substantively not fully clear.
4–6	Submitted but superficial; exhaustive information not provided; compliance cannot be determined.
1–3	Scant information; essential content cannot be determined; competent identification not possible.
0	Incomplete; research project not attached.

Candidate’s academic experience (10 points)	
Score	Criteria for assessing the candidate's academic experience
10	Excellent; participation in local and international research/development events confirmed; several research papers published.
7–9	Good; participation in local and international research or development events confirmed; at least one research paper published.
4–6	Satisfactory; participation in local research or development events confirmed; no papers published.
1–3	Limited; participation confined to several development events.
0	No academic experience.

Research project - 50 points	
Research project – Relevance and dissertation-worthiness (15 points), Research project – Problem statement (15 points), Research project – Structure (10 points), Research project – Diversity of sources (10 points)	
Research project – Relevance and dissertation-worthiness	
Score	Criteria for assessing the relevance and dissertation-worthiness of the research project
15	Relevant in Georgian, comparative, and international parameters; dissertation-worthy; feasible within timeframe.
12–14	Relevant; dissertation-worthy with minor adjustments.
8–11	Somewhat relevant; scope broad—requires narrowing.
4–7	Relevant but not dissertation-worthy; requires specification and narrowing.
1–3	Low relevance; overly generalized.
0	Not relevant nor dissertation-worthy.
Score	Criteria for assessing the research topic problem
15	Correctly defined; problem properly identified and specific; enables analysis and

	concrete, measurable, achievable solutions.
12-14	Mostly correctly defined and specific; solutions feasible.
8-11	Partly correctly defined; problem identified but not specific; needs clarification.
4-7	Defined but overly abstract; narrowing needed.
1-3	Not defined; overly abstract; needs specification.
0	Incorrectly selected problem.
<b>Score</b>	<b>Criteria for assessing the research project structure</b>
10	Realistic, proportionate; rational distribution of issues; full coverage; no overlaps.
7-9	Largely realistic; several overlaps.
4-6	Partially proportionate; irrational distribution; many overlaps.
1-3	Overly superficial; insufficient for analysis.
0	No structure presented.
<b>Score</b>	<b>Criteria for verifying the diversity of research topic sources</b>
10	Georgian and foreign-language materials fully presented; diverse case law; legal acts, electronic and other sources aligned to topic.
7-9	Materials mostly presented; case law insufficient; few legal acts; sources with shortcomings.
4-6	Small number of works, case law, and legal acts; other materials mostly absent.
1-3	Only several sources; technical parameters partly unmet.
0	Only a few sources; technical parameters unmet.

<b>Ability to articulate own position (10 points)</b>	
<b>Score</b>	<b>Criteria for assessing the candidate's ability to present their own position</b>
10	Fully articulated personal positions and ideas; reasoned convincingly with logical grouping.
7-9	Largely articulated and defended positions; mostly personal views with some general ideas.
4-6	Partially articulated; conveyed general content rather than personal assessments.
1-3	Superficial and unconvincing positions.
0	Could not articulate/defend a position.

<b>Candidate Motivation (10 points)</b>	
<b>Score</b>	<b>Criteria for assessing Candidate Motivation</b>
10	Highly motivated; understands program significance and dissertation specifics; goal-oriented and fully aware of responsibility.
7-9	Motivated; largely understands significance and specifics; mostly aware of responsibility.
4-6	Sufficiently motivated; partially understands; attempts to assume responsibility.
1-3	Low motivation; does not fully understand significance/specifics.

0	Not motivated.
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The persuasiveness of the candidate's reasoning (10 points)	
Score	Criteria for assessing the persuasiveness of the candidate's reasoning
10	Positions presented convincingly; arguments logically sequenced; in-depth analysis; precisely justified answers.
7-9	Positions largely convincing; most arguments logical; issues analyzed; answers justified.
4-6	Partially convincing; analysis shallow; answers not fully convincing.
2-3	Only a small part convincing; reasoning lacks substantiation and logic; most answers unsubstantiated.
1	Defended superficially and unconvincingly; reasoning inconsistent and illogical.
0	Could not present a position; did not argue.

Doctoral Student's Individual Study Plan

Doctoral Student (Name, Surname)	_____
Title of Doctoral Program	_____
Head of Doctoral Program	_____
Scientific Supervisor	_____
Date of Enrollment in Doctoral Studies	___/___/_____

Course / Component	ECTS Credits	Grade
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	
	___ ECTS	

Head of Doctoral Program – Signature

Head of Doctoral School – Signature

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

**Doctoral Student's Individual Research Plan**

Doctoral Student (Name, Surname)	
Scientific Supervisor	
Title of Dissertation	
Research Objective	
Tentative Structure of the Dissertation	
Tentative Schedule for Research/Completion	
Research Methodology	

Doctoral Student – Signature

Scientific Supervisor – Signature

Head of Doctoral Program – Signature

Head of Doctoral School – Signature

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

## Annex 1.5

### Supervisor's Report on the Doctoral Student's Implementation of the Individual Research Plan

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University

Doctoral Program	
Doctoral Student (Name, Surname)	
Scientific Supervisor (Name, Surname)	
Period Evaluated	
Date of Evaluation	

I assess the doctoral student's semester work as follows:

- Excellent
- Fully satisfactory
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Entirely unsatisfactory

Comments:

Scientific Supervisor – Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Head of Doctoral School – Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_