



Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani
UNIVERSITY

Doctoral Educational Program

Program Name	Theology
Head of Program	Professor Vaja Vardidze
Language of Instruction	Georgian
Qualification Awarded	Doctor of Theology (Ph.D.)
Program Volume in Credits	Program Volume in Credits 59 ECTS
Program Approval Date and Protocol Number	26.04.2021 №05-21
Program Approval Date and Protocol Number	22.04.2026 №04-26

Program Objective

The Doctoral Program in Theology aims to:

- (A) Conduct in-depth scholarly analysis, result-oriented research, and the creation of new knowledge on current issues in systematic theology and the history of theology;
- (B) Prepare researchers and academic staff focused on systematic theology, the history of theology, and the challenges of the church
- (C) Contribute to the development of theology by producing high-quality scholarly works.

Learning outcomes

The graduate:

- (A) identifies problematic issues in the field of systematic theology and the history of theology based on original texts and approved by the teachings of the Church, as well as on the latest theological scientific approaches;
- (B) critically analyzes and synthetically evaluates new, complex and contradictory ideas and approaches;
- (C) participates in international conferences, engages in scientific debate in accordance with the standards of refereed publications, plans and conducts innovative academic lectures and seminars using modern teaching methods, publishes high-level scientific works;
- (D) identifies the problematics of systematic theology and the history of theology, while observing academic ethics and integrity, develops independent and original ways of solving theological scientific problems, and takes academic responsibility for the results of the research.

Prerequisite for admission to the program

A prerequisite for admission to the program is a Master's degree/equivalent to a Master's degree in theology or humanities. A person with a Master's degree/equivalent to a Master's degree in the humanities is required to pass a written exam in theology. A person is exempted from the field exam if he or she has a Bachelor's degree in theology.

A doctoral student enrolled in the program who does not have a bachelor's degree in theology must complete the following courses from the programs of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University: Pentateuch and Prophecy; Synoptic Gospels and Acts of the Apostles; Christology; Fundamental Theology; Pastoral Epistles and Pauline Corpus. After completing the courses, the doctoral student will not be awarded academic credits or grades. The course is considered successfully completed upon receiving a positive assessment as provided for in the relevant syllabus.

Admission to the doctoral program requires an interview with the field commission and knowledge of English at least at the B2 level or knowledge of one of the Western European languages (German or French) at least at the B2 level and knowledge of English at least at the B1 level. Other prerequisites for admission to the doctoral program, as well as the criteria for the assessment of applicants for enrollment in the doctoral program by the field commission, are determined by the "Doctoral Regulations" approved by the Rector of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University (hereinafter - the Doctoral Regulations).

Enrollment in the Doctoral Theology Educational Program by mobility is possible twice a year, within the deadlines and in accordance with the established procedure established by the legislation of Georgia. A candidate for mobility must satisfy all prerequisites for admission to the Doctoral Program.

Enrollment in the Doctoral Theology Educational Program, or enrollment by transfer from a recognized higher educational institution of a foreign country, is carried out within the deadlines and in accordance with the established procedure established by the legislation of Georgia.

A candidate who presents a certificate confirming knowledge of English/German/French at least at the B2 level, as well as a candidate who has completed a full or partial bachelor's or master's degree course in English/German/French, is exempt from the English/German/French language test. The recognition of the certificate and courses is provided by the Language Center of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani University.

List of certificates and scores corresponding to B2 level of English language

TOEFL PBT	Number of points: at least 513 points
TOEFL IBT	Number of points: at least 65 points
British Council and Cambridge University English Language Tests (IELTS)	Number of points: at least 5,5 points
British Council and Cambridge University English language exams (Cambridge Exam)	Proficiency level: at least FCE

List of certificates and scores corresponding to the B2 level of German language

Goethe Zertifikat B2; TestDaF B2; DSH Certificate B2; Telc Deutsch B2; TestAS B2

List of certificates and scores corresponding to the B2 level of French language

Delf B2; TCF B2; TEF B2; DLC B2; Dalf C1

Teaching-learning method

☒ Lecture ☒ Working group work ☒ Practical work ☒ Seminar ☒ Learning with electronic resources ☐ E-learning ☒ Other

Student knowledge assessment system

The mastery of the educational component envisaged by the Doctoral Program in Theology assumes the active participation of students in the learning process and is based on the principle of continuous assessment of the acquired knowledge. During the implementation of the Doctoral Program in Theology, the level of achievement of the student's learning outcomes is assessed in accordance with the assessment

system approved by the Order No. 3 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia of January 5, 2007, "On the Rules for Calculating Credits for Higher Education Programs."

The assessment of the level of achievement of a student's learning outcomes in the educational component of the Doctoral Theology educational program includes assessment forms - intermediate (single or multiple) and final assessment (a specific course may be built on a different principle), the sum of which is the final assessment (100 points).

Intermediate and final evaluation (evaluation forms) includes evaluation component/components that determine the method/methods of evaluating the student's knowledge and/or skills and/or competencies (oral/written exam, oral/written survey, homework, practical/theoretical work, etc.). The assessment component combines uniform assessment methods (test, essay/essay, demonstration, presentation, discussion, performance of practical/theoretical task, work in a working group, participation in discussion, creation of a research paper, creation of components of a research paper)). The evaluation method/methods are measured by the evaluation criteria or the measurement unit of the evaluation method, thereby determining the level of achievement of the learning outcomes.

Each form and component of the assessment has a specific share of the total assessment score (100 points) in the final grade, which is reflected in the specific syllabus and communicated to the student at the beginning of the academic semester. It is not permissible to award credit using only one form of assessment (interim or final assessment). A student is awarded credit only if they receive a positive assessment.

During the implementation of the Doctoral Program in Theology, the student's share of the minimum competency threshold for the midterm and final assessment is reflected in the specific syllabus and is communicated to the student at the beginning of the academic semester. The assessment system allows for:

Five types of positive evaluation:

(A) Excellent evaluation 91-100 points;	(A) Excellent evaluation 91-100 points;
(B) Very good maximum evaluation 81-90 points;	(B) Very good maximum evaluation 81-90 points;
(C) Good maximum evaluation 71-80 points;	(C) Good maximum evaluation 71-80 points;
(D) Satisfactory maximum evaluation 61-70 points;	(D) Satisfactory maximum evaluation 61-70 points;
(E) Sufficient maximum evaluation 51-60 points.	(E) Sufficient maximum evaluation 51-60 points.

Two types of negative evaluation:

(FX) Failed	Maximum grade of 41-50 points, which means that the student needs more work to pass and is allowed to take the exam once with additional independent work;
(F) Failed	40 points of the maximum assessment and less, which means that the work done by the student is not enough and he has to study the subject anew.

In the educational component of the educational program, in case of receiving FX, an additional exam will be scheduled no later than 5 calendar days after the announcement of the final exam results. The number of points received in the final assessment is not added to the grade received by the student in the additional exam. The grade received in the additional exam is the final grade and is reflected in the final assessment of the educational component of the educational program. In case of receiving 0-50 points in the final assessment of the educational component, taking into account the grade received in the additional exam, the student will be given an F-0 score.

Doctoral thesis (dissertation) evaluation

Five positive and two negative grades are used to evaluate the dissertation.

A positive evaluation of the dissertation is made according to the following system:

- A. Summa cum laude – excellent work – 91 points and above (max. 100 points);
- B. Magna cum laude – a result that exceeds the requirements in all respects – 81-90 points;
- C. Cum laude – a result that exceeds the requirements in all respects – 71-80 points;
- D. Bene – a result that meets the requirements in all respects – 61-70 points;

E. Rite – a result that, despite shortcomings, still meets the requirements in all respects – 51-60 points;

The negative assessment of the dissertation is carried out according to the following system:

- a. Unsatisfactory (insufficienter) – a result that does not meet the requirements due to significant shortcomings – 41-50 points;
- b. Completely unsatisfactory (sub omni canone) – a result that does not meet the requirements at all – 40 points and less.

In case of receiving a positive assessment, the dissertation is considered defended.

In case of receiving an unsatisfactory (insufficienter) assessment, the doctoral student is granted the right to submit a revised dissertation within one year. For this purpose, he has the right to submit an application to the Dissertation Council Secretariat within one month from the announcement of the result with a request to revise the work and re-defend the dissertation.

In the event of receiving a completely unsatisfactory (sub omni canone) assessment, the doctoral student loses the right to submit the same dissertation and the doctoral student status is terminated.

Employment field

The employment field for a Doctor of Theology is not very diverse. In addition to church institutions and those institutions and agencies where employment is possible with one of the qualifications in theology, a Doctor of Theology also has opportunities in higher educational institutions (to the academic positions of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor), research organizations, and international academic associations.

Opportunity to continue studies

A Doctor of Theology can actively participate in post-doctoral programs, obtain post-doctoral research and teaching grants both nationally and internationally, and benefit from grants and scholarships established exclusively for post-doctoral researchers and young researchers by universities and scientific foundations.

Material resources necessary for the implementation of the program

To achieve the learning outcomes envisaged by the Doctoral Program in Theology, the infrastructure and material and technical resources of the educational university, which are available to students without restrictions, are used, namely:

- Study auditoriums and conference rooms equipped with appropriate inventory;
- A library equipped with computer equipment and information and communication technologies;
- Computer classes, computer equipment connected to the Internet and the internal network, and adequate computer programs for the learning/teaching process;
- Various technical devices, etc.

The educational program is provided with appropriate textbooks and methodological literature. The university library provides students with appropriate printed and electronic textbooks, educational and methodological and scientific literature, as well as the library's book fund database and the electronic catalog posted on the university's website.

The material resources owned and held by the university ensure the realization of the goals of the Doctoral Program in Theology and the achievement of the planned learning outcomes:

Buildings - The doctoral educational program is implemented in buildings and structures owned and operated by the university, where sanitary-hygienic and safety standards are observed (the buildings have an alarm system, there are fire extinguishers, video surveillance is carried out on the perimeter, order is maintained by a university security guard). The building fully meets the technical requirements set for higher educational institutions, there are auditoriums for lectures and practical classes equipped with appropriate equipment and inventory (projector, chairs, desks, boards, etc.).

Library - The university library stores the relevant printed and electronic collection of the doctoral educational program, which is available to students, invited guests and academic staff. The library has a reading room equipped with appropriate equipment (chairs, tables, computers). There is a photocopy machine in the library, which students can use with the help of a library employee. In the reading room, students have the opportunity to use the Internet and national and international electronic resources (Legislative Herald, EBSCO, HeinOnline, Elsevier). The university library has an electronic catalog. In addition to the central reading room, doctoral program students can also use the reading rooms of David Batonishvili and the Zubalashvili brothers.

Academic Staff Workspace - A working environment equipped with appropriate equipment and technology (chairs, tables, cabinets, a computer connected to the Internet, a multifunctional copier) has been created for academic staff.

Information and Communication Technologies - In order to facilitate the implementation and administration of the Doctoral Program in Theology, the University uses information and communication technologies. There is appropriate software for the Doctoral Program in Theology, the existing computer equipment meets modern requirements, is connected to the Internet and is available to students, academic, guest and administrative staff. An electronic system for assessing students' knowledge and organizing teaching is used to ensure access to assessments for students, control of students' academic performance by the administration, and facilitate the learning process. Through the university website, which contains a catalog of educational programs, information related to the implementation of educational programs and the conduct of the educational process, and other information, the university ensures the publicity and accessibility of information.

Program structure

The doctoral program in theology consists of educational and scientific-research components. The volume of the educational component is 59 ECTS credits, which consists of mandatory and elective courses. The total volume of credits for mandatory courses is 49 ECTS, and for elective courses - 10 ECTS. The courses are divided into 3 semesters, the doctoral student must accumulate 22 ECTS credits in the first semester, 24 in the second semester, 10 ECTS credits in the third semester, and 3 ECTS credits in the fourth semester.

The scientific-research component involves the completion of a doctoral dissertation. While working on the scientific-research component, the doctoral student completes three colloquia, which involves the development of a part of the dissertation in advance with the scientific supervisor, writing it and discussing it before a field commission. The doctoral colloquium can be completed from the third semester if the doctoral student has a positive assessment in the "Academic Writing and Dissertation Architecture" course. Upon defense of each colloquium, the doctoral student must receive a positive recommendation, which implies a positive assessment of the colloquium by the majority of the field commission. When completing the colloquium, the doctoral student is not awarded credit and is not evaluated with any points.

The doctoral thesis can be defended in the 6th semester. Issues related to the defense of the doctoral thesis, as well as its prerequisites and the implementation of the program, are determined by the "Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani Doctoral Program Regulations" approved by the Rector of Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani.

A student enrolled in the doctoral program through mobility may also be recognized, within the framework of 10 credits, in elective courses not provided for in this study program, the goals and results of which correspond to the level of doctoral studies. The qualification requirements for those wishing to enroll in the doctoral program in theology apply to those who wish to participate in mobility.

Educational program curriculum

№	Prerequisite	Module/Subject	ECTS Credit						Student's study load	
			Year I						Contact hours	Independent hours
			Year II							
			Year III							
			Semester							
I	II	III	IV	V	VI					
Educational component										
Compulsory educational courses										
1.	None	Theological Hermeneutics		7/175					28	147
2.	None	Academic Writing and Dissertation Architecture	6/150						42	108
3.	None	Modern Teaching Methods	6/150						30	120
4.	None	Qualitative Research Methods		7/175					39	136
5.	None	Professorship				3/75			11	64
6.	Modern Teaching Methods	Research Seminar in the History of Theology		10/250					8	242
7.	Academic Writing and Dissertation Architecture	Research Seminar in Systematic Theology			10/250				8	242

Elective courses										
1.	Doesn't have	Philosophy of Higher Education	10/250						29	221
2.	Doesn't have	Principles of University Curriculum Development	10/250						33	217
Per semester Per year Total			22	24	10	3				
Per semester Per year Total			46		13					
Per semester Per year Total			59							

Map of program objectives and learning outcomes

Program objectives	Program results			
	A	B	C	D
In-depth scientific analysis, result-oriented research and creation of new knowledge on current issues in systematic theology and the history of theology	✓	✓		
Preparation of researchers and academic staff focused on the challenges of systematic theology, the history of theology and the church	✓	✓		✓
Contribution to the development of theology by creating high-quality scientific works.			✓	✓

Map of the program's mandatory courses and program learning outcomes

№	Module/Subject	Module /Subject		Module/Subject			
				A	B	C	D
1.	Theological Hermeneutics	D	M	+	+		+
2.	Specific Research Methods	D	M	+			+
3.	Academic Writing and Dissertation Architecture	M		+	+		+
4.	Modern Teaching Methods	D	M			+	
5.	Assistant Professorship	D	M			+	
6.	Research Seminar in the History of Theology	M		+	+	+	+
7.	Research Seminar in Systematic Theology	M		+	+	+	+

Course status

I – Introduction	D – Developing	P – Practical	M – Master

Map of learning outcomes for the program's mandatory and elective courses

N	Subject	Subject Learning Outcomes		
		Knowledge and awareness	Skill	Responsibility and autonomy
	Mandatory courses			
1.	Theological Hermeneutics	+	+	
2.	Specific Research Methods	+	+	+
3.	Academic Writing and Dissertation Architecture	+	+	+
4.	Modern Teaching Methods	+	+	+
5.	Assistant Professorship	+	+	+
6.	Research Seminar in the History of Theology	+	+	+
7.	Research Seminar in Systematic Theology	+	+	+
	Elective courses			
8.	Principles of University Curriculum Development	+	+	
9.	Philosophy of Higher Education	+	+	