

## **Regulation of Doctoral Studies of the School of Social Sciences of the Hellenic Open University**

The following Regulation of Doctoral Studies of the School of Social Sciences of the Hellenic Open University (H.O.U.) was published in the Government Gazette 7519, v. B'/31.12.2024, and applies to all PhD Students of the School.

PhD Students who enrolled in the School of Social Sciences before **30 December 2024**, are subject to the provisions of this Regulation, with the exception of the provision concerning the maximum time for the completion of the PhD dissertation.

### **1. Submission of Proposals – Application procedure for PhD Candidates**

**1.1** The right to apply for the preparation of a PhD dissertation or an Industrial PhD dissertation is granted to holders of a Postgraduate Degree from a Higher Education Institution (H.E.I.) in Greece or a diploma recognized as equivalent or academically equivalent from a foreign educational institution, or a consolidated and unremitted postgraduate-level degree from a H.E.I. of at least five years' duration, corresponding to three hundred (300) credits of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

Note: For degrees obtained from foreign institutions, academic equivalence is required in accordance with the applicable legislation.

**1.2** Applicants who are interested in pursuing a PhD Dissertation or an Industrial PhD Dissertation at the H.O.U. must submit an application to the School as specified in par. 2 of this document.

**1.3** Prospective PhD Students must first contact a faculty member of the H.O.U. whose research interests are related to the field in which they wish to write their dissertation.

When contacting the faculty member, it is advisable for the applicant to send:

**a) detailed curriculum vitae** in which the academic and professional experience of the prospective student is described,

**b) PhD Dissertation proposal**, which must describe the originality, research objective and aim, methodology, timeframe, and indicative bibliography. This outline must be **3000 words** in length (without the bibliography and appendixes).

Subsequently the H.O.U. faculty member, after considering:

- a) the applicant's qualifications,
  - b) the quality of the proposal and
  - c) the academic field to which the proposal pertains,
- encourages or discourages the applicant to submit their proposal (with the necessary supporting documentation as laid out in the present Regulation) to the School's Assembly for consideration.

**1.4** The School may, based on the existing general and specific institutional framework, announce positions for the preparation of Doctoral Studies through publication in the daily press or/and on the website of the H.O.U. or/and the School. These announcements will specify the academic fields for the dissertations, the application submission and evaluation process, and will include references and links to the provisions outlined in the Regulation of Doctoral Studies.

## **2. PhD Student selection procedure**

**2.1** The applicant wishing to undertake a PhD Dissertation or an Industrial PhD Dissertation must **submit** to the School's Secretariat a relevant standardized application, accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- **detailed curriculum vitae** in which the academic and professional experience of the prospective student is described,
- **Research proposal**, which must include: initial bibliographic overview of the proposed subject, research objective and aim, originality, proposed methodology, preparation timeframe, and indicative bibliography. The proposal must be roughly **3000 words** in length (not including bibliography and appendixes), and may be written in either Greek or English.
- **Copies** of degree or diploma or recognized undergraduate diploma from a foreign institution or academic equivalent undergraduate diploma with transcript of records, or (b) copy of consolidated and unremitted qualification from a H.E.I. of at least five years' duration, corresponding to three hundred (300) credits of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS),
- **Copy** of Post-Graduate Diploma or recognized or academically equivalent post-graduate degree from a foreign institution, excluding cases of consolidated and unremitted degrees (see above),
- **Recognition of the equivalence** of the corresponding degrees by the official state recognition body, if applicable (for graduates or holders of a Postgraduate Diploma from a foreign H.E.I.),

- **Proof of very good level of proficiency** in English or another language suitable for the implementation of the proposed research proposal,
- **Photocopy of identity card**
- Additional documents that supplement the PhD proposal. For the preparation of an Industrial PhD Dissertation, refer to Article 10.

The application **must also state** the proposed title, proposed language, which may be either Greek or another language, and the faculty member proposed as supervisor of the dissertation.

**2.2** The School's Assembly assigns three-member committees per subject matter, staffed by H.O.U. faculty members with relevant or related specializations, to evaluate one or more submitted PhD or Industrial PhD proposals. Each Committee evaluates the relevant proposals and supporting documents and interviews the candidates. Each committee then submits a detailed recommendation to the School's Assembly, setting out the reasons why a candidate meets or does not meet the formal requirements and recommends whether the candidacy is eligible for admittance.

**2.3** The Assembly approves or rejects the relevant applications, taking into account the recommendation of the Three-Member Committee and the availability of potential supervising faculty members. Approved PhD Students are assigned a Supervisor and the other two members of the Three-Member Advisory Committee, in accordance with the applicable regulations, as well as the language in which the PhD dissertation will be written.

It is noted that in the case of preparing an Industrial PhD Dissertation, if the Assembly decides positively, it informs the Senate of the H.O.U., submitting a draft cooperation protocol between the H.O.U., the collaborating company or industry, and the PhD student. The cooperation protocol specifies the detailed terms of cooperation for the preparation of the Industrial PhD dissertation.

Until the cooperation protocol is signed, the PhD Student may request from the Senate to suspend the process and begin the preparation of a PhD dissertation instead of an Industrial PhD Dissertation, based on the decisions of the Assembly.

### **3. Three-member Advisory Committee (AC)**

**3.1** The dissertation supervisor and the other two members of the Three-member Advisory Committee (AC) are assigned by decision of the Assembly and must have either the same or a related academic field, or the same or a related scientific work, as the

PhD dissertation to be prepared. At least one (1) faculty member of the School must participate in the AC, while the right to supervise and the participation of the members in the advisory committee is determined by the applicable legislation. If any member of the AC, including the supervisor, is unable to fulfill their duties or is

absent, a replacement may be appointed by decision of the Assembly, upon the request of the member or the PhD Student, until the completion of the PhD dissertation.

In the case of preparing an Industrial PhD Dissertation, the collaborating company or industry, following the procedure outlined in the cooperation protocol, assigns one (1) representative with experience and knowledge relevant to the subject of the PhD dissertation who has the duty to guide the PhD Student. The representative of the company or industry may participate, without voting rights, in the meetings of the Three-Member Advisory Committee and the Seven-Member Evaluation Committee, expressing their opinions.

**3.2** Each Faculty member of the School of Social Sciences may concurrently supervise a maximum of five (5) PhD Students and only by specially justified decisions, the Assembly of the School may approve exceeding this number by up to two (2) additional PhD Students, for a total of seven (7).

**3.3** After the first stage of preparation of the dissertation, the AC may, in cases it deems necessary, propose to the Assembly that the PhD Student participates (within the second stage of preparation), in up to two (2) Modules. In this case, the PhD student enrolls in the corresponding Module and is not counted among the total number of students, and has all the obligations of a post-graduate student while concurrently continues the research of their dissertation through the available research infrastructure. After successfully completing the Module, which is a precondition for continuing to prepare their dissertation, PhD Students are awarded a certificate of attendance.

**3.4** Changes to the title of the dissertation mandated by the research results of the PhD Student may be effected after documented proposal of the AC and Assembly's approval.

**3.5** During the preparation of the PhD dissertation, the PhD Student may conduct all or part of their research activities at another public or private institution, with the consent of the Three-Member Advisory Committee.

#### **4. Duration, Rights, Obligations**

**4.1** The minimum duration of studies for the acquisition of the doctoral degree is three (3) full calendar years from the date the three-member advisory committee is appointed.

**4.2** The maximum duration of studies for the completion of the PhD dissertation is six (6) calendar years from the date the three-member advisory committee is appointed.

**4.3** By a decision of the School's Assembly, the time for completing the PhD dissertation may be extended by up to two (2) additional calendar years, following a specifically justified request from the PhD candidate and with the consent of the three-member advisory committee.

**4.4** Eight (8) years after the appointment of the advisory committee, PhD Students, after being informed and given the opportunity to submit a written response/objection within a reasonable time frame, lose their status as PhD Students by decision of the Assembly.

**4.5** PhD Students have the same rights as post-graduate students for the duration laid down in the general and special institutional framework, beginning from the date of appointment of the three-member advisory committee.

**4.6** Doctors maintain rights of access, lending and use of the digital resources of the university libraries for the duration stated in the general and special institutional framework, beginning from the date of their proclamation as doctors.

**4.7** After the first stage of preparation, the PhD Student must submit at the end of every academic term an annual written progress report on their dissertation to the AC. The report, once approved by the supervisor and the three-member advisory committee, is submitted by the supervisor, after the PhD Student and the other members of the AC have been informed, every October of each academic year, to the Assembly for approval and continuation of the preparation procedure, and is included in the personal file of the PhD student. PhD Students may present their research progress regularly, no more than once per year, after a relevant decision by the Assembly of the School.

**4.8** The PhD Student is entitled to request suspension of their studies, for serious reasons. Up to two (2) calendar years of suspension may be given. Suspensions of studies are approved by the Assembly of the School of Social Sciences after a positive proposal by the three-member AC. During the period of suspension, all benefits from H.O.U. to the PhD Student are suspended and the obligations of the PhD Student towards HOU are also suspended.

The period of suspension is not counted towards the total duration of preparation of the dissertation.

**4.9** There is no financial contribution required from doctoral candidates.

**4.10** PhD Students may engage exclusively in supporting teaching duties (e.g., conducting workshops, delivering lectures, and supervising examinations) on a compensatory basis at the School of Social Sciences, under the supervision of the School's faculty members. The maximum workload for PhD Students cannot exceed an average of five (5) hours per week. At the beginning and end of the academic year, the supervisors to the Assembly submit a detailed plan and report, respectively, on the PhD Students' workload. If the average workload exceeds five (5) hours per week, an hourly compensation for the PhD Students will be paid, which is determined at the beginning of the academic year, following a recommendation from the Assembly and a decision by the Senate. The hourly compensation is covered exclusively by private, own, and international funds of the H.O.U.

## **5. Doctoral Research and Evaluation Procedure**

**5.1** The Doctoral Dissertation is prepared in the following stages:

**Stage 1.** Within 10 months from initiation, the PhD Student submits a report to the AC, which includes the following:

- i) Overview of the relevant literature, which demonstrates the need for further research in the suggested field.
- ii) The field to which the dissertation aims to contribute, as well as its topic.
- iii) Sound and adequate analysis and research methodology.
- iv) Preparation timeline.

Based on the aforementioned report, the AC proposes either the continuation or the termination of the Doctoral Dissertation to the School's Assembly.

**Stage 2.** During this stage, which may not have a duration shorter than 20 months, the PhD Student carries out research. The AC regularly oversees the progress of the dissertation. During this stage, the PhD Student must submit at the end of every academic term an annual written progress report on their dissertation to the AC. The progress report, once approved by the supervisor and the three-member advisory committee, is submitted by the supervisor, every October of each academic term, to the Assembly for approval and continuation of the PhD Dissertation, and is included in the personal file of the PhD student.

**Stage 3.** The duration of this stage may not be shorter than 6 months. During this stage the AC may judge whether or not the dissertation has been completed. After preparations have been concluded, PhD Students propose the public defense of their dissertation to the AC. If the AC accepts the PhD Student's proposal, it drafts a detailed report and submits it to the Assembly, requesting the appointment of a seven-member evaluation committee to evaluate the dissertation. If the recommendation of the AC is not submitted to the Assembly or if it is negative, the process may continue upon request of the PhD Student to the Assembly. The seven-member evaluation committee includes, unless otherwise specified by law, the members of the AC and four (4) additional members who have the same or related specializations to the doctoral dissertation under examination and fulfil all the legal criteria. At least four (4) of the seven (7) members of the evaluation committee must be Teaching and Research faculty members of the H.O.U. If the number of faculty members who have similar or related specializations within the institution is insufficient, the evaluation committee may be supplemented with faculty members from other H.E.I.s with the same or related specializations. The dissertation is defended by the PhD Student publicly before the seven-member Evaluation Committee.

**5.2** The process of public defense of the dissertation may also be conducted via teleconference if the physical presence of all members of the evaluation committee is not possible.

**5.3** The supervisor of the PhD dissertation is responsible for the timely notification of the location and time of defense of the dissertation.

Before the defense of the dissertation, the PhD Student must send one (1) electronic copy of it to every member of the seven-member Evaluation Committee. The PhD Student publicly presents the content of their dissertation before the seven-member Evaluation Committee and responds to the questions and observations of its members. The Committee may permit the audience to pose questions to the PhD Student. Subsequently, the candidate and the audience leave. The Committee then deliberates without the presence of third parties and decides on the quality, completeness, originality, and contribution to research of the dissertation, and based on these criteria approves it with the majority of at least five (5) of its members. The approval is confirmed in the minutes of the meeting, which includes the justification of the votes of the members of the Evaluation Committee and is submitted to the Assembly.

**5.4** After approval of the dissertation, the PhD Student submits one (1) copy of the dissertation in its final form to the School's Assembly, and one (1) copy to the Library. All copies are submitted in printed form. Furthermore, PhD Students must – after successfully defending their dissertation – and after incorporating any corrections or inclusions, appendixes, footnotes, articles, supplementary material etc., - upload their dissertation to the H.O.U. digital repository. The Dean is responsible for informing the PhD registry regarding the approval of the dissertation (minutes of the Seven-Member Evaluation Committee) and the Registry of Doctoral Candidates, upon receiving confirmation from the National Documentation Centre that the PhD Student has completed the requirements, informs the Assembly.

Each dissertation must be appended by the following text, in addition to the Student's signature: "I declare that, in accordance with the provisions of article 8 of Law 1599/1986, the present dissertation is exclusively a product of my own, personal work, and does not violate any form of intellectual property rights, personality and personal data of third parties, does not contain works/contributions of third parties for which permission of the authors/owners is required and has not been copied either in part or in full, and the sources used are limited to bibliographical references only, and meet the standards of scientific citation".

The dissertation is the intellectual property of the PhD Student who in accordance with the H.O.U. open access policy, grants the H.O.U. a non-exclusive license to reproduce, adapt, lend publicly, present to the public and disseminate their dissertation internationally through digital means, in electronic form as well as any other medium, for educational and research purposes, free of charge and for the

entire duration of the intellectual property rights. Open study and reading access to the full dissertation in no way implies the granting of intellectual property rights of the author/creator, nor does it allow reproduction, republication, copying, storage, sale, commercial use, transmission, distribution, publication, editing, performance, downloading, uploading, translation, partial or total modification in any way, of the work without the express prior written consent of the author/creator. Creators retain all their moral and property rights.

## **6. PhD Student Proclamation**

**6.1** PhD Students who have fulfilled all the requirements for the acquisition of their Doctorate Diploma are proclaimed Doctors by the Assembly. Before the proclamation, the Dean presents to the Assembly the Minutes certifying the successful completion of the oral presentation and evaluation process of the Doctoral Dissertation and the fulfillment of the candidate's other obligations based on the provisions of paragraph 5.4 of the present document and once the Assembly confirms that all conditions for the proclamation have been fulfilled, the candidate is then proclaimed the title of Doctor of the School of Social Sciences of the H.O.U.

The proclamation date is considered to be the date on which the Assembly convened at which the relevant validation is decided, regardless of the date on which the related title is awarded. The date of receiving the Doctoral Degree is considered to be the date on which the Seven-Member Evaluation Committee convened.

**6.2** Until the formal proclamation of the doctoral candidates, they may be issued, upon request, a certificate of successful completion of the entire examination process by the relevant administrative department.

**6.3** The proclamation of PhD Students takes place at the School's Assembly, in the presence of the Rector or his/her representative, the Dean of the School or the Deputy Dean, members of the University Community, and any invited third parties.

The text of the Doctor's oath is the following (read by the proclaimed doctors):

*"Since the Illustrious School of Social Sciences with the confirmation of the Rector, deemed me worthy, after examination, of inclusion among its Doctors, I solemnly swear to it and the Rector's Office that: "I will, to the best of my ability, always attempt to serve science and research, and lead it to new heights and distinctions, with no thought for my personal interest, but in service of advancing knowledge and the common good. I shall willingly pursue modesty and fair use of ethics. I shall not foolishly belittle the work of others in an attempt to undermine it, and shall always teach on the subject of my knowledge and the results of my research. I shall neither distort science, nor will I bring shame on the office of servant to the Muses through moral impropriety. With this solemn oath, may Science be my guide in life".*

**6.4** Proclaimed Doctors are awarded with a diploma, signed by the Rector, the Dean, and the head of the H.O.U. Administrative services and sealed with the official

seal of the University. Doctoral diplomas do not have grades or other characterizations.

## **7. Disqualification of the PhD Student**

The School's Assembly may decide to disqualify the PhD Student, in any one of the following cases:

- the student exceeds the maximum duration for the preparation of their Doctoral Dissertation, as foreseen in article 4 of the present Regulation,
- the student has violated the provisions in force with regard to the treatment of disciplinary misconduct by competent disciplinary bodies,
- at the Student's own request,
- the progress of the PhD Student is considered insufficient or stagnant, by documented proposal of the AC, after the student has been informed and given the opportunity to answer in writing within a reasonable timeframe.

## **8. Awarding of Honorary Doctorates**

The School's Assembly may propose to the Senate of the University the awarding of the title of Honorary Doctor of the School, after proposals by at least two of the School's faculty members, to esteemed individuals who are connected academically with the research fields of the School. The aforementioned proposal of the faculty members must be submitted to the Assembly of the School for approval.

## **9. Preparation of Doctoral Dissertations under co-supervision**

PhD dissertations under co-supervision may be prepared in collaboration with H.E.I.s or recognized research centers/entities, as defined by law, in both Greece and abroad. In this case, all matters related to the dissertation process, from the selection of the PhD student to the awarding of the doctoral degree, are stipulated in the Special Collaboration Protocol, which is drawn up by the collaborating academic units or/and research centers/entities and approved by the relevant Senate or/and the collective governing bodies of the research centers/entities.

## **10. Industrial Doctorates**

**10.1** The applicant may submit an application to conduct a PhD Dissertation in collaboration with a company or industry based or with a branch operating in Greece, which involves conducting industrial or applied research with the aim of producing research results for the development of innovative products or services.

**10.2** A collaboration protocol between the H.O.U., the collaborating company or industry, and the PhD Student, approved by the Senate, following a recommendation from the School's Assembly, sets the specific terms of cooperation for conducting an Industrial PhD dissertation within the company or industry and the production of research results, the use of H.O.U.'s facilities and equipment if the

research is conducted within the university, the obligations and rights of each party involved, including the determination of intellectual property and industrial property rights concerning the work conducted during the Industrial PhD dissertation process.

## **11. Validity of the Doctoral Studies Regulations - Transitional Provisions**

The implementation of the present Doctoral Studies Regulation of the School of Social Sciences will be in effect after its publication in the Government Gazette.

Enrolled PhD Students are subject to the provisions of this Regulation, with the exception of the provision regarding the maximum time for completing the dissertation. The maximum time for completion of the dissertation follows the regulation that was in effect at the time of the PhD Student's enrollment.

For matters not regulated by this Regulation, the competent bodies will make decisions in accordance with the applicable provisions.