



Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  
Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Environment  
School of Forestry and Natural Environment

## **Regulation of Doctoral Studies**

### **Article 1. General Principles**

The Ph.D. studies of the School of Forestry and Natural Environment of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki aim to promote knowledge and original scientific research and lead to the acquisition of a doctoral diploma (Ph.D). The doctoral diploma is an academic title that certifies the preparation of original scientific research and the substantial contribution of its holder to the development of science and knowledge in the relevant scientific field.

This specific regulation includes the structure and rules of operation of the Doctoral Studies Programme of the School of Forestry and Natural Environment of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, as this was established by Decision of the School's Assembly (Assembly no. 8/15-12-2017), approved by the Senate of the University of Thessaloniki and published in the Government Gazette (B/1567/08.05.2018).

### **Article 2. Legal and Institutional Framework**

The Ph.D. Program of the School of Forestry and Natural Environment is organized and operates in accordance with the provisions of Law 4485/2017 and the relevant provisions and decisions in force.

### **Article 3. Eligibility for admission**

Eligible for applying for a Doctoral degree at the School of Forestry and Natural Environment are those who meet the following requirements:

- hold a BA degree (University or Technical Educational Institution) from a Greek or a foreign University recognized as equivalent. Right to apply have those who graduated from Forestry Schools of five years of study and graduates of Greek Higher Education Departments of related subjects, as well as graduates of related subjects of recognized foreign institutions
- hold a master's degree from a Greek or a foreign University recognized as equivalent or hold an Integrated Master's Degree according to the Article 46 of L. 4485/2017.

Candidates who are graduates of recognized institutions abroad must provide a certificate of submission of the supporting documents required for the recognition of the equivalence of their degree from the Hellenic National Academic Recognition and Information Center (DOATAP) and must submit the

equivalence certificate within one (1) year from the date of their acceptance as a doctoral candidate. If the above certificate is not submitted, they will be deleted from the Doctoral Studies Program.

A doctoral thesis may be prepared by any scholarship holders of the State Scholarship Foundation (IKY), who have succeeded in the relevant competition for doctoral studies of an internal declared academic subject, as well as any scholarship holders of the Greek State.

Necessary conditions for submitting an application for doctoral studies are:

1. Sufficient and documented knowledge of a foreign language of at least B2 level (English or another European). Foreign language competence should be proven by the following ways: a) State Language Certificate of L. 2740/1999 as amended by the paragraph 19 of the Article 13 of L. 3149/2003, b) equivalent certificates from other institutions (universities or not) regardless of their legal form, as long as they are certified or recognized by the competent authority of the country to conduct exams and grant the language certificates at the corresponding level, c) degree in Foreign Language and Philology or a degree in Translation and Interpretation of Foreign Languages from a Greek or a foreign University recognized as equivalent, d) Bachelor's degree, undergraduate or postgraduate diploma or a doctorate degree from any recognized institution of higher education abroad, e) degree equivalent to a certificate of Greek secondary education as long as it has been obtained after a regular full-time attendance of six years in a foreign institution. The foreign language teaching proficiency license does not prove the knowledge of a foreign language (p.d. 347/2003). Applicants who hold the relevant license must provide a certified copy and exact translation of the degree on the basis of which the foreign language teaching proficiency license was issued.

2. The general grade of the diploma or degree must be at least 6.50 or an equivalent one according to the criteria of the Hellenic National Recognition and Information Centre (Hellenic N.A.R.I.C. / Δ.Ο.Α.Τ.Α.Π.).

#### **Article 4. Duration of studies**

The duration for obtaining the Ph.D. is at least three (3) full calendar years from the date of appointment of the Three-Member Advisory Committee.

The maximum preparation time of the doctoral dissertation is set at six (6) full calendar years from the date of appointment of the Three-member Advisory Committee. The above time may be extended for two (2) additional years, at the request of the candidate and approval of the School Assembly.

The doctoral candidate may apply for a suspension of one (1) full calendar year accompanied by a sufficiently reasoned recommendation of the Three-member Advisory Committee and approved by decision of the Assembly of the School. During the suspension, his/her status shall be lifted. The duration of the suspension is not counted in the maximum total time of preparation of the Ph.D. During the suspension, the candidate's status as a doctoral candidate as well as any rights deriving from it, are withdrawn. The period of suspension is not added to the maximum total period for the completion of the doctorate Thesis.

The expiry of the extension period implies the loss of the doctoral candidate's status and the removal of the subject of the doctoral thesis, by decision of the Assembly.

A change of title or specialization of title may take place on the basis of a justified recommendation by the Three-member Advisory Committee and approval of the School Assembly. A change of subject of the Ph.D. thesis can take place on the basis of a justified recommendation by the Three-member Advisory Committee and approval of the School Assembly. Where the change of subject leads to a new scientific field, the procedure laid down in Article 7 of this Regulation shall be followed.

## **Article 5. Rights / Benefits and Obligations of the Candidates**

### **Rights/Benefits**

Ph.D. studies are offered free of charge. Doctoral candidates shall retain full rights and benefits provided for the students of the second-degree course for five (5) years from the date of appointment of the Three-member Advisory Committee. Indicative examples of the above benefits are: technological and financial support, awards, scholarships, student care, representation in collective institutions, etc. In addition, doctoral candidates retain rights related to access, borrowing and use of the university library e-services for up to five (5) years after the award of the PhD.

### **Obligations**

The doctoral candidate is obliged to renew his/her registration for each academic year. Candidates that do not hold a 5-year Forestry degree should successfully attend at least 3 undergraduate or post graduate courses of the School of Forestry and Natural Environment or other University after recommendation from the thesis supervisor and subsequent approval by the School Assembly. The public presentation of the doctoral thesis can only proceed upon successful examination of the doctoral candidate on the above courses.

The Three-member Advisory Committee in cooperation with the doctoral candidate submits an annual report of the thesis.

Prior to finishing the thesis, the publication of at least one paper in an international conference or a reputable scientific journal is required.

## **Article 6. Participation of the Candidates to the educational procedure**

The doctoral candidate is obliged to participate (upon request) in educational activities of the School in which he/she is carrying out his/her dissertation.

By decision of the Assembly of the School (Article 9 par. 3 subsection 'e' of . 3685/2008 which remains in force according to Article 88 subsection 'a' of L. 4485/2017) and a joint decision of the Ministers of Education and Finance, doctoral candidates may be assigned the assistance of School faculty members at undergraduate and postgraduate level with an hourly remuneration, which burdens the regular budget of the Institution.

## **Article 7. Selection Procedure**

Applications for doctoral studies are submitted twice per year (during July and February). During the selection procedure the following criteria shall be considered:

- (a) The overall degree of the diploma, which must be at least 6.50/10 and is multiplied by a factor of 4,5.
- (b) The general degree of their postgraduate diploma, which is multiplied by a factor of 3,5.
- (c) Publications – research activity – professional activity: max 10 points, as follows:

Each publication in peer reviewed international journal (with Impact Factor) is equivalent to 5 points. Each reviewed publication in national or international journal (without Impact Factor) is equivalent to 3 points. Each reviewed publication in international conference proceedings is equivalent to 3 points and for each publication in national conference proceedings (with review) is equivalent to 2 points.

Each proven year of research activity is equivalent to 2 points. In case of smaller duration activity, the proportional points will be calculated.

Holders of an abroad postgraduate diploma will get additional 5 points.

Each year of professional activity related to the thesis proposal is equivalent to 1 point. In case of smaller duration activity, the proportional points will be calculated.

- (d) Interview to the three-member committee: max 10 points.

The candidate is accepted if the total points he/she canvassed are more than 65/100.

The School announces positions of doctoral candidates, publicized in the daily press and are posted on the School's website.

### **The candidate**

During the periods that are defined in this regulation, the candidate submits an application to the Secretariat of the School.

The application includes the proposed title, the proposed language of preparation, which may be different from Greek and the proposed supervisor of the doctoral thesis, who belongs to those who have the right to supervise a doctoral thesis, in accordance with Article 39 of Law 4485/2017 and Article 8 of this Regulation. The application shall be accompanied by a detailed CV of the candidate and a draft of the proposed doctoral thesis.

### **The School**

Based on the relevance of the research subject of the applications submitted, the School Assembly, appoints three-member Committees consisting of faculty members of the School, by category of applications. Each Commission shall examine the submitted applications and attached documents and shall interview the applicant.

Each Committee shall then submit to the School Assembly a proposal with a detailed memorandum stating the reasons why the candidate qualifies or not for the approval. In addition, it proposes the

supervisor if he/she has not been nominated by the candidate and the other two members of the Three-member Advisory Committee. In any case, the matter is responsibility of the Assembly of the School.

The School Assembly, taking into account the Commission's memorandum, approves or rejects the candidate's application on a reasoned basis. The approval decision of the Assembly also defines the language for the preparation and writing of the Doctoral Thesis. In the same decision, the Assembly may define as a condition for the preparation of the candidate's Doctoral Thesis, the parallel successful course/s follow-up or other scientific research-related obligations.

#### **Article 8. Supervision of Doctoral Thesis**

The right to supervise doctoral dissertations is upon professors of 1st degree, associate and assistant professors at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki or other University School or researchers A, B or C degree of the research centers referred in Article 13A of Law 4310/2014 including the research centers of the and the Institute of Medical Research and Academy of Athens.

The Assembly of the School shall appoint the proposed supervisor, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 38 of Law 45485/2017, with the supervision of the Doctoral Thesis. The supervisor recommends to the Assembly of the School the appointment of a three-member Advisory Committee, with the responsibility to frame and support candidates with preparation and writing of the thesis.

The three-member Advisory Committee shall consist of the supervisor and two other members, professors of 1st degree, associate and assistant professors of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki or other University School, or professors recognized as equivalent foreign institutions, who hold a doctoral degree, or researchers in grades A, B or C from research centers under Article 13A of Law 4310/2014, including the research centers of the Academy of Athens and the Institute of Medical Research of the Academy of Athens or from foreign recognized research centers or institutes and have the same or related specialization as the proposed doctoral thesis. Members of the Three-member Advisory Committee may also be appointed when are on leave. The Three-member Advisory Committee includes at least one (1) member from the first three levels of the School of Forestry and Natural Environment.

The maximum supervision of Doctoral Thesis per member of the School professors varies from five (5) to eight (8). Cases of co-supervision of doctoral dissertations will not be counted in the total. If for any reason the supervisor deceases or confirmed unable to perform the duties of supervisor for a long period of time, the Assembly of the School, assessing the circumstances, appoints another person with supervision, in accordance with the provisions of the preceding paragraphs, at the request of the doctoral candidate and with the agreement of the new proposed supervisor. Otherwise, one of the other two (2) members of the Three-member Advisory Committee shall assume the duties of supervisor, even if the maximum number of supervised doctoral candidates is exceeded.

If the original supervisor moves to another University or School or retires, he/she continues to be the supervisor of the Doctoral Thesis he/she has undertaken, and the title is awarded by the School of Forestry and Natural Environment, where the preparation of the Doctoral Thesis began.

The Secretariat of the School must publish on the School's website, in Greek and English language, the name of the PhD Candidate, the title and brief summary of the Ph.D. Thesis, the names of the supervisor and the other members of the Three-member Advisory Committee.

#### **Article 9. Preparation of Doctoral Thesis under Co-supervision**

The School of Forestry and Natural Environment can collaborate, in accordance with Article 43 of Law 4485/2017, with University Schools, research centers and institutes of Article 13A of Law 4310/2014, including the research centers of the Academy of Athens and the Institute of Medical Research of the Academy of Athens, for the preparation of dissertations with co-supervision. The procedures for drawing up, granting a single or separate title, etc., are laid down in the relevant Special Cooperation Protocol to be drawn up.

The School of Forestry and Natural Environment can also collaborate with foreign recognized institutions or research centers and institutes for the preparation of dissertations with co-supervision. The procedures for drawing up, granting a single or separate title, etc., are laid down in the relevant Special Protocol for Cooperation drawn up in accordance with the relevant decision of the Minister for Education, Research and Religious Affairs 41931/ Z1/13-3-2018 (ΦΕΚ 972/τ. Β713-3-2018).

#### **Article 10. Preparation Process of the Doctoral Thesis**

Each year, the doctoral candidate presents orally before the Three-member Advisory Committee and submits a detailed memorandum on the progress of his/her Doctoral Thesis. A copy of the memorandum, as well as any comments on it from the supervisor or the three-member Advisory Committee and progress reports, shall be entered in the individual folder of the doctoral candidate.

#### **Article 11. Public Defense and Evaluation of the Doctoral Thesis**

After the completion of the Doctoral Thesis, the doctoral candidate submits an application to the Three-member Advisory Committee, through the Secretariat, asking for public support and evaluation of the thesis. The Three-member Advisory Committee shall decide on the approval or justified rejection of the application. If the application is approved, the committee shall prepare a detailed report in which the completion of the doctoral thesis and a proposal for the appointment of a seven-member Examination Committee for the doctoral candidate will be included. If the three-member Advisory Committee does not approve the doctoral candidate's application, it shall provide detailed scientific observations – improvements as well as a timetable for their implementation.

After the submission of a positive Report from the Three-member Advisory Committee, the School Assembly appoints a seven-member Examination Committee for the evaluation of the Doctoral Thesis of the doctoral candidate. The Examination Committee includes the members of the Three-Member Advisory Committee and four additional members who meet the criteria of Article 39(2)(b) of Law 4485/2017 and have the same or related specialization with the scientific field of the Ph.D. Thesis. The

three-member Advisory Committee has the right to propose the members of the Seven-member Examination Committee.

In order to establish the Seven-member Examination Committee, the retired members of the Three-member Advisory Committee shall be replaced by new members who meet the criteria of article 39(2)(b) of Law 4485/2017. The members who have retired are entitled to attend the public presentation and evaluation process with the right to speak, but without the right to vote. Faculty members who are on leave may participate as members of the Seven-member Examination Committee.

The Ph.D. thesis is presented by the Doctoral candidate in public, for approximately half an hour, against the Seven-member Examination Committee. The process of public support requires the physical presence of at least four (4) members of the Seven-member Examination Committee, while the other members may also participate by teleconference.

The candidate also answers the questions of the members of the Seven-member Examination Committee. With the agreement of the Seven-member Examination Committee, questions may also be asked by the audience. The whole procedure cannot exceed two (2) hours.

The candidate then leaves the room and the Seven-member Examination Committee consults and judges the thesis regarding its quality, completeness, original thinking and contribution to science and on the basis of these criteria formulates its final judgment and scores it. Approval and scoring shall be confirmed by relevant Minutes. The Ph.D. thesis is approved by a majority of at least five (5) members of the Seven-member Examination Committee. The Minutes are signed by all present in the process of evaluating the thesis members of Seven-member Examination Committee and forwarded through the Secretariat to the School Assembly.

The approved doctoral dissertation is graded according to the following scale:

- Excellent with distinction (in very exceptional cases and only with a unanimous decision of the Seven-member Examination Committee)
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good

In case of a split-vote, voting is repeated. In the case of a new split-vote, the vote of the Chairman of the Examination Committee (the Thesis Supervisor) prevails.

## **Article 12. Deliberation and Proclamation of the Doctoral Candidates**

The Assembly deliberates and proclaims the candidate in a public session of the School, with the candidate being present. The Chair of the School presents the Minutes that certify the successful completion of the oral presentation process and evaluation of the Doctoral Thesis and then follows the deliberation and proclamation of the candidate to a Doctor of the School of Forestry and Natural Environment. The meeting is attended by the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor while the Dean can also be present.

The deliberation and proclamation ceremony, as well as the type of the Doctoral Diploma follow the standards of the relative decisions by the Senate of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The ceremony is held three (3) times annually. Prior to the deliberation and proclamation process, the candidate may obtain a document confirming the successful outcome of the Examination. The candidate gets a copy of the Doctoral Diploma. The Doctoral Diploma (membrane) is signed by the Chancellor, the Head of the School and the Head of the Secretariat and carries the official stamp of the AUTH.

If the thesis is written in a foreign language, the submission of an extended abstract in Greek language is obligatory. The doctoral candidate should submit three (3) reprints and an electronic copy (CD) of the thesis to the Secretariat of the School. At least one reprint should be submitted to the Central Library of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The doctoral candidate also submits all the required data to the National Documentation Center.

### **Article 13. Reasons for Disqualification**

The Assembly of the School of Forestry and Natural Environment, following a decision of the Three-member Advisory Committee, may recommend the deletion of a PhD Candidate. The decision shall document the reasons for the deletion, such as insufficient progress of the doctoral candidate, which is documented by at least two (2) negative Annual Progress Reports. The doctoral candidate shall be automatically deleted at his/her request.

### **Article 14. Plagiarism / omission of report to bibliography used**

Upon handing in their Doctoral thesis, the candidate, must report whether they have used the work and views of others. Plagiarism is considered to be a serious academic offence. Plagiarism is the practice of copying another author's work, as well as using another author's work, published or not, without giving credit to the original source. Citation of any documentary resources, even of work by the candidates themselves, without any relevant reference, can lead to the decision by the School assembly to disqualify or deprive the title from the candidate. Any offense or violation of academic ethics is referred to the School Assembly and may result in the cancellation of the candidate. The offenses of plagiarism and, in general, any violation of the provisions on intellectual property by the doctoral candidate during the writing of theses for publication and anything else provided for in Presidential Decree 160/2008, Article 23 and in any existing legislation, are also considered violations.

### **Article 15. Transitional provisions**

All candidates of the School, upon approval and publication of this Regulation of Doctoral Studies, fall within the provisions of L. 4485/2017 and this Regulation. Candidates of the School that have exceeded the maximum duration for the preparation of their doctoral thesis, that is longer than five years, bear the obligation to complete it within two years.