

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A DOCTORAL THESIS THEME**

(Faculty of Medicine, Commission for Doctorates, Vrazov trg 2, Ljubljana)

**INFORMATION ON DOCTORAL PROGRAMME IN BIOMEDICINE Level 3 (study programme, which started in the academic year 2007/2008) available for the candidates on the website of the University of Ljubljana: [https://www.uni-lj.si/study/study\\_programmes/doctoral\\_study/biomedicine/](https://www.uni-lj.si/study/study_programmes/doctoral_study/biomedicine/)**

### **I. APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF DOCTORAL THESIS THEME:**

**The Program Board of the University Doctoral Study in Biomedicine (Level 3) accepted the recommendation to the students and mentors for a doctoral thesis theme application at its meeting on 19 February 2009.**

In order to rationalize the duration of the study and to shorten the timeframe of certain procedures from the application to the approval of the doctoral thesis theme, as well as taking into account the curriculum of the doctoral program the Program Board made the following **recommendations**:

1. The candidate submits the application of the doctoral thesis **in the third semester of doctoral studies or no later than the beginning of the 2nd semester of the 2nd year (January)**. Only in this case the faculty can ensure that the Commission can make an assessment until June (if the theme is suitable). A positive assessment of the theme is a prerequisite for the enrollment in the third year.
2. The candidate should be obtained the approval to the topic of the doctoral dissertation from the Senate of the University of Ljubljana by the end of the first semester of the 3rd year, so that he/she could have rendered their 3rd year other obligations and successfully complete their studies.

*Students are kindly reminded that the last senate session of the Faculty of Medicine (decision on the doctoral procedures) in the spring semester takes place in June and in the winter semester in early October. They should therefore take this into account when applying for the doctoral thesis themes.*

According to the program of the University Doctoral Program in BIOMEDICINE Level 3, **a graduate student in the third year of study has to internally present his/her doctoral thesis.**

The procedure for internal presentation of the doctoral thesis (phase report) is initiated by the mentor and organized by the doctoral candidate. He/she submits a structured abstract and an extended summary (up to 5 pages) to the members of the committee. **Unlike the proposal, this written work**

**already includes results and summarizes the discussion.** Ideally, the students prepares the defense while writing a doctoral dissertation. The commission writes about this report **in the form of the minutes** (the applicant is given a form of the minutes together with the decision on the approval of the theme). The report – the minutes are forwarded to the Secretariat of the Faculty of Medicine.

## **II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS THEME and course of the proceedings:**

Candidates wishing to obtain a PhD should submit the following documents to the Faculty member (responsible for the area of their doctoral thesis):

- **application form**
- **biography (exact dates of completed studies, not only years)**
- **bibliography**
- **confirmation of completed study obligations at the University Doctoral Program – Level 3 (given to the candidate in the Office of Postgraduate Studies)**
- **doctoral thesis theme proposal** in accordance with the instructions in **four copies (the title must be in Slovenian and English)** \*. In accordance with the decision of the Senate of the University of Ljubljana of September 27, 2011, a disposition of the doctoral thesis waiting to obtain consent to the theme of doctoral dissertations should include up to 3 to 5 pages (excluding bibliography). The proposal of the doctoral thesis theme must include the information about which statistical methods are going to be used.  
*\* The title of the doctoral thesis disposition should reflect the content of the doctoral dissertation in a concise form, preferably in one sentence. The titles should not include colons, semicolons, dashes and subordinate clauses.*
- prior to the Senate session, the candidate should send **a doctoral dissertation proposal with a structured abstract per e-mail** (no later than 25 days before the meeting of the Senate) comprising: **a title** in Slovenian and English language, a **brief summary** of the introduction, the objectives with the hypothesis (clearly defined objectives and hypothesis), **methods** and expected **results**. The structured extract should be sent to [doktorati@mf.uni-lj.si](mailto:doktorati@mf.uni-lj.si). A single document should include the structured extract, the name of the candidate, the name of the mentor and the institution where the work will take place, as well as three to five references of the mentor in the area of the doctoral thesis theme. In addition, their researcher ID and the number of SICIRIS points (Z 1 + Z 2) achieved by the mentor/co-mentor in the last five years should be stated. The file should be prepared in Microsoft Word and named the following way: (name-surname.doc). The e-mail subject should be: Doctorate - application.

- **Written consent of the mentor** for having accepted the supervision of the doctoral thesis. A co-mentor can only be proposed if the theme of the doctoral thesis is interdisciplinary (the mentor needs to substantially justify the role of the co-mentor) or if this is required by an accredited study program. Exceptionally, it is possible to appoint a co-mentor even when the mentor is not a regular or additional employee of the University of Ljubljana. In the event of the proposed co-mentor, his/her appointment must be specifically justified due to the interdisciplinarity or because they are not employed in the University of Ljubljana.

**When collecting proposals for mentors, the following criteria need to be met:**

1. In accordance with the rules and procedures of the doctoral studies at the University of Ljubljana a mentor (co-mentor) has to hold a title of a university professor (Assistant Professor, Assoc. Prof., Prof.) or the scientific worker (Research Associate, Senior Research Fellow, Scientific Advisor).
2. A mentor has to be an employee of the University of Ljubljana. If the mentor exceptionally comes from other institutions (foreign or domestic), it is necessary to appoint a co-mentor from the University of Ljubljana and provide adequate justification. In case the mentor/co-mentor comes from other institutions (domestic or foreign), which uses other titles, they have to be comparable with titles in The University of Ljubljana.
3. A mentor/co-mentor can also be a person with an adequate habilitation from other institutions (domestic or foreign) if he/she participates in a doctoral program, carried out by the University of Ljubljana, or is employed by the institution (domestic or foreign), with which the University of Ljubljana shares a relevant agreement or a cooperation contract. The same applies to all the participants in the joint doctoral programs prepared by the University of Ljubljana or prepared in collaboration with other institutions.
4. In addition to the basic criteria for mentors and co-mentors (valid teaching or equivalent academic title), the minimum requirement to demonstrate mentor's or co-mentor's research activities is that in the case of basic research bibliography in the last five year he/she reaches 100 points according to SICRIS or in the case of applied research 40 points and evidence on the effectiveness of the transfer of the project results into practice. For **generations enrolled from the academic year 2014/2015 onwards**, a mentor and co-mentor for the doctoral thesis can be a person with the title of university professor (assistant professor, associate professor, ...), scientific worker (Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Research Advisor) and has shown research activity with appropriate scientific bibliography in the field of the doctoral thesis. A minimum requirement for disclosure of the research activities of the mentor/co-mentor is 100 points according to SICRIS in the last five years.
5. The criteria which take effect in mentoring/co-mentoring doctoral students first enrolled in the doctoral studies at the University of Ljubljana in the academic year 2017/2018. In addition to the basic criteria, the minimum requirement for research activities of **a mentor/co-mentor in the last five years is 150 Z points according to SICRIS. They should as well rank in the quantitative assessment of important achievements A<sup>1/2</sup> more than 0.**

Into consideration should also be taken that a mentor of doctoral studies should guide up to five doctoral students who are enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Ljubljana and are regularly promoted. This number does not include doctoral candidates, who have fulfilled all the obligations of the doctoral program with the exception of the defense of the doctoral dissertation and it has been more than four years since the enrollment in the first year of the doctoral program. The limit of the number of doctoral students does not apply for co-mentors. (senate of The University of Ljubljana, 27 October, 2015). The mentor is responsible for keeping records on the number of mentorships.

The topics in the field of medical and dental sciences must be submitted to the **opinion** of the National Medical Ethics Committee. For topics where the research includes tests on animals, the doctoral thesis theme should be authorized for animal experiments.

If the mentor, co-mentor or a member of the commission come from abroad, the candidate must prepare a theme proposal in Slovenian and English.

Complete applications are always reviewed by The Commission for Doctorates, so they must be in at the office on Friday, two weeks before the session of the Senate. A structured abstract of the theme proposal must be sent by electronic mail to the above-mentioned to address by Friday, **three** weeks before the session of the Senate.

After the submission of doctoral thesis themes, according to the proposal of Commission for Doctorates of the Faculty of Medicine (Commission usually meets 14 days before the meeting of the Senate and deals with all the applications, which are then forwarded to the Senate), the **Senate** appoints a three-member committee \* to determine whether a candidate meets the requirements for a doctoral degree and assess the adequacy of the proposed topics. The candidate presents the doctoral thesis proposal at a **seminar** in front of the Commission. The candidate agrees the date of presentation with the Commission.

- \*The Commission for Doctorates asks the mentor to suggest a name (ideally three) of a foreign professor as a committee member.

Within the next two months, the Committee prepares a report and submits it to the **Commission for Doctorates** and **The Senate of the Faculty of Medicine**, which reviews it at its next session. If the commission report is positive, the Commission proposes a mentor to monitor the candidate's work while preparing the dissertation.

After reviewing positive reports, **the Senate of the Faculty of Medicine** sends them to the University Senate along with all the materials and their opinion. Prior to the Senate of the University, they are also reviewed by the Commission for Doctoral Studies at the university. The University Senate is obliged that within three months, a decision on the proposal is made and consent to the proposed topics is given.

After receiving the consent of the **University Senate**, the **Faculty of Medicine** issues a document of doctoral thesis theme approval.

According to the program of the University Doctoral Program in BIOMEDICINE Level 3, **a post-graduate student in the third year of study and before the public defense of the doctoral thesis has to internally present his/her dissertation** to the committee, which was appointed to assess the proposal of the doctoral thesis theme - 5 credits.

**The presentation of the doctoral thesis** (phase report) is generally carried out in the third year of study. The process is initiated by a mentor and organized by doctoral candidate, who provides the members of the Commission with a structured abstract and an extended summary (up to 5 pages), which **unlike the proposal, already presents results and summarizes the discussion**. Ideally, a post-graduate student prepares the defense in the course of writing a doctoral dissertation. The Commission writes a report in the form of the minutes of the presentation of the doctoral thesis. The report is submitted to the Office for Postgraduate Studies by the Commission.

The form of the minutes is given to the candidate together with the notification of approval of doctoral thesis theme.

No later than four years after the doctoral thesis theme approval, the doctoral candidate has to submit a completed doctoral dissertation to the **Senate of the Faculty of Medicine**. **The process is carried out so that the supervisor sends a written opinion to the Commission for Doctorates (Secretariat of UL MF) that the dissertation is completed and ready for evaluation. The mentor has to describe the dissertation in terms of the contribution to science and the notice has to be accompanied by an article in the field of the doctoral thesis, which was published in the journal indexed by SCI or SSCI, indicating IF, which must be greater than 0.1. (IF above applies to the generation of students who enrolled before the academic year 2011/2012).** The author of the doctoral dissertation has to be **the first author of the published article**. The published paper or the article accepted for publication must be from the area of the doctoral dissertation topic and can be reasonably included in the doctoral thesis. The members of the commission for the evaluation of the doctoral dissertation have to specifically state that the article was accepted for publication in their report.

**In accordance with the decision of the Senate of the Faculty of Medicine, which was adopted at the 19th session on 23 May, 2011** (the consent of the Program Board of BIOMEDICINE from 1 September, 2011), a post-graduate student has to publish one or more articles as the first author in a journal, indexed by SCI or SSCI; the impact factor sum must be (1) or greater than (1). The condition applies to the generation of students, who enrolled in doctoral studies Level 3 BIOMEDICINE from the academic year 2011/2012 onwards, for the scientific fields coordinated by the UL Faculty of Medicine.

**Postgraduate students who are enrolled in doctoral studies Level 3 in BIOMEDICINE from the academic year 2014/2015 onwards**, for the scientific fields coordinated by the UL Faculty of Medicine, need to publish at least one original scientific paper in a journal indexed by SCI or SSCI as the first author, with impact factor greater than one (1) to complete the doctoral study.

A doctoral candidate, whose doctoral dissertation cannot be submitted within a period of four years, may apply for a deadline extension. The Senate of UL MF makes a decision based on the proposal of the Doctoral Commission of the Faculty of Medicine. The deadline may be extended to up to one year.

If a candidate does not submit their doctoral dissertation in the above-mentioned period and does not request an extension of the deadline before the deadline, it is understood that they have resigned from the topic and the topic is free. After the deadline, the candidate can no longer continue with the topic that is overdue.

**The Senate of the Faculty of Medicine** appoints at least a three-member commission for evaluation of the dissertation at its first meeting following the submission of the completed doctoral dissertation (the Notice of the mentor to the doctoral committee that the work is finished) on the proposal by the Commission for doctorates. The commission members are teachers and scientific workers who hold a PhD in a relevant scientific field.

The reporter for the evaluation of the dissertation has to review the dissertation, submit a written report on the evaluation of the dissertation within three months of their appointment (or the receipt of the doctoral dissertation for assessment). The proposal and the evaluation have to be submitted to the **Commission for Doctorates** and the **Senate of the Faculty of Medicine**.

On the basis of the submitted reports, **the Senate of the Faculty of Medicine** can either accept, reject, or return the doctoral dissertation to the candidate to be amended or supplemented, and set a reasonable time limit. The reporter reviews the completed or amended dissertation again and submits a new report. If a candidate's dissertation is not completed within a specified period, the dissertation is rejected. The rejected doctoral dissertation cannot be submitted again.

If the doctoral dissertation is positively evaluated and approved, the **Senate of the Faculty of Medicine** appoints a committee for the defense. Following the notification of the Secretariat of the Faculty that the Senate has appointed a commission for the defense, the candidate agrees on the date of the defense with the members of the Commission. The candidate has to inform the Secretariat of the Faculty of Medicine about the date of the defense 10 days before the scheduled presentation. The defense takes place in a meeting room at Secretariat of the Faculty. The candidate must align the date of the defense with the occupancy of the meeting rooms (information on the telephone number 01/543 7702). The defense usually takes place within **one month** after the approval of the dissertation at the latest.

Before the defense, the candidate has to submit five copies of the doctoral dissertation at the Secretariat of the Faculty of Medicine. The second inner page has to include the information about the doctoral dissertation approval, the appointed committee members, as well as the signatures of all the committee members and the mentor, all in accordance with the instructions given to the candidate along with the notification of the appointment of the commission for the defense. In addition to the copies of the doctoral dissertation submitted at the Secretariat, bound copies of the doctoral thesis have to be delivered to all members of the commission and the mentor, **at least 5 days prior to the defense**.

### **Doctoral dissertation in the form of articles: (Senate of the Faculty of Medicine on 3 October, 2005)**

*"A doctorate must include a minimum of three articles with the first authorship. The articles must be published in a journal indexed in the SCI with an IF. All published articles have to deal with the topic, which is an integral whole and forming a title should not cause a problem.*

*The proportion of co-authorship is not necessary to define, because the author of the doctorate is the first author of the articles. Unpublished papers can not be placed in a doctoral dissertation. The author of the doctoral thesis can insert their research results, which have not yet been published yet, in their dissertation.*

*Since the articles represent an integral whole, they share a joint introduction and a summary. These are not needed for each individual article."*

### **Doctoral dissertation in English:**

**The Senate of the University of Ljubljana may exceptionally authorize the doctoral thesis in English in case the candidate is a foreigner, as well as if the candidate's mentor, co-mentor or a member of the commission is a foreigner. If the doctoral thesis is written in English or in any other language, an introduction, a conclusion and a comprehensive summary in Slovenian language is required.**

**All documents submitted for the approval of the doctoral thesis topic must be written in the Slovenian language.**