



**REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEAN**

REGULATION

**“ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCTORATE STUDY PROGRAM AT THE
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES, UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA”**

**Approved by Dean's Decision
No. 135, date 20.12.2022**



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Article 1

Scope

The scope of this Regulation is to establish general rules regarding the organization and functioning of doctoral study programs in the basic units of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Tirana.

Article 2

Legal basis

This Regulation is based on:

Law no. 80/2015 *"On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania"*; Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 41, dated 24.01.2018, *"On the Elements of Study Programs Offered by Higher Education Institutions,"* as amended; Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 112, dated 23.02.2018, *"On the Determination of the Criteria for Earning the Academic Degree 'Doctor' and State Standards for Earning the Academic Titles 'Associate Professor' and 'Professor',"* as amended; Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 777, dated 26.12.2018, *"On Anti-Plagiarism Control of Dissertations for the Awarding of Scientific Degrees,"* as amended; Decision of the Council of Ministers no. 75, dated 12.02.2018, *"On the Approval of the Funding Model for Public Higher Education and Scientific Research Institutions"*; Instruction of the Minister of Education, Sports, and Youth no. 52, dated 03.12.2015, *"On the Determination of the Levels of Foreign Languages and International Tests for Admissions to Second and Third Cycle Study Programs in Higher Education Institutions,"* as amended; Instruction of the Minister of Education, Sports, and Youth no. 16, dated 08.07.2019, *"On the Provision of Higher Education Institutions with the Basic Student Register, the Academic Achievements Register, and the Register of Issued Diplomas and Certificates"*; Joint Instruction of the Minister of Education, Sports, and Youth and the Minister of Finance and Economy no. 20, dated 20.09.2019, *"On the Scheme and Implementation of the Funding Model for Public Higher Education and Scientific Research Institutions"*; Instruction of the Minister of Education, Sports, and Youth no. 29, dated 18.12.2019, *"On the Creation and Administration of State Registers for Scientific Degrees and Academic Titles Issued in the Republic of Albania"*; Instruction of the Minister of Education, Sports, and Youth no. 1, dated 14.01.2020, *"On Documentation and Procedures for Opening, Reorganizing, and Closing Higher Education Institutions, Their Departments, Main Units, and Study Programs, as well as for the Division or Merger of Higher Education Institutions,"* as amended; Instruction of the Minister of Education, Sports, and Youth no. 10, dated 30.03.2020, *"On the Determination of the Components, Form of Diplomas or Certificates Issued by Higher Education Institutions, and the Registration Procedure in the State Register of Diplomas and Certificates for Higher Education and Scientific Research"*; Instruction



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of the Minister of Education, Sports, and Youth no. 29, dated 10.09.2018, "*On the Activity and Teaching Load of Academic Staff in HEIs*"; the Internal Regulation of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, the relevant regulations of Basic Units, as well as the Statute of the University of Tirana.

Article 3

Objectives of the Doctoral Program

- 3.1** The doctoral study programs are part of the third cycle of university studies, at the end of which the diploma for the scientific degree "Doctor" is awarded.
- 3.2** The doctoral program aims to promote scientific research in a specific field/subfield, focusing on the creation, deepening, reconceptualization, and reintegration of scientific knowledge, to bring innovation in scientific thinking and contributions of social interest and benefit.
- 3.3** Doctoral studies are fundamentally based on scientific research and independent creative activity, serving as the foundation for preparing the doctoral thesis, which is required to obtain the scientific degree "Doctor," and are linked to research projects of the basic units as well as the qualification and professional growth of academic staff. The candidate applies based on the quotas announced by the basic units, within the framework of a scientific research project.
- 3.4** Doctoral studies are built upon individual programs to develop the candidates' independent skills in scientific research, in the fields/subfields defined by the basic units. The basic units announce the main fields/subfields according to their objectives or common fields between them, with a priority for deepening scientific research.
- 3.5** The candidate applies individually to the approved study program in the fields/subfields of scientific research offered by the basic unit. The basic unit approves the individual research programs of the candidates only for those fields/subfields that belong to the approved doctoral programs it offers, based on its priorities or the priorities of the respective higher education institution (HEI).

Article 4

Bodies



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- 4.1** The basic unit(s) of the Faculty of Foreign Languages are responsible for organizing and managing doctoral study programs. The admission criteria for the doctoral study program, as determined by the basic units, are submitted to the Dean's Office for approval.
- 4.2** If the study program is offered by more than one basic unit, the organization and management of the doctoral study programs, as well as the criteria, are determined in collaboration between the basic units. In cases where programs involve more than one basic unit, one of the basic units is designated as responsible for providing the candidate's research program, in mutual agreement between them. The basic unit(s) may also be supported by the scientific research centers of the main unit for the implementation of the doctoral program.
- 4.3** The person responsible for doctoral study programs at the main unit level is the Vice Dean for Scientific Research.
- 4.4** The Commission for the Awarding of the Scientific Degree "Doctor" is responsible for evaluating the candidate's dossier, establishing the jury, and making decisions regarding the awarding of the scientific degree "Doctor."
- 4.5** The evaluation of the candidate's doctoral thesis for the scientific degree "Doctor" is carried out by a special jury established for this purpose.

Article 5

The Organization of Doctoral Study Programs

- 5.1** Each basic unit may formulate a proposal for the opening of doctoral study programs if it meets the conditions stipulated in the applicable legal framework, including but not limited to:
- a)** Has academic staff with the title of "Associate Professor" or "Professor";
 - b)** Has the necessary number of academic staff to supervise each doctoral student in research activities and relevant teaching duties;
 - c)** Has dedicated operational and research structures for the activities foreseen in the doctoral study program (laboratories, libraries, and the necessary infrastructure);
 - d)** Has supporting financial resources.
- 5.2** The basic unit, through the main unit, submits to the University Senate a proposal for the opening of a new doctoral study program or the reorganization of an existing program. The proposal is formulated in accordance with the requirements of Law No. 80/2015 "On Higher



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Education and Scientific Research in the Republic of Albania", Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 41, dated 24.01.2018 "On the Elements of Study Programs Offered by Higher Education Institutions", Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 112, dated 23.02.2018 "On Defining the Criteria for Obtaining the Scientific Degree 'Doctor' and the State Standards for Obtaining the Academic Titles 'Associate Professor' and 'Professor'", as amended, as well as Decision No. 75, dated 12.02.2018 "On the Approval of the Funding Model for Public Higher Education and Scientific Research Institutions."

5.3 The proposal shall include:

- a. The field/subfield of scientific research and the title of the doctoral study program;
- b. The timeline for the implementation of the study program;
- c. Financial resources for conducting the study process, including the possibility of self-financing or grants for research projects;
- d. The projected maximum number of students who can enroll in the doctoral programs each year, determined in accordance with the capacities of the basic unit;
- e. Admission and selection criteria for successful applicants, defined by the basic unit in accordance with legal and sub-legal acts and based on the principle of deepening studies in the same or a related field as the first and second cycle studies;
- f. The academic staff responsible for supervising doctoral candidates, as well as whether the teaching teams will include invited academic staff, who must be approved by the head of the main unit;
- g. Information on the organizational structure and management of doctoral study programs, including administrative oversight for interdisciplinary programs;
- h. Data on previous experiences of the Faculty of Foreign Languages in postgraduate education, if applicable.

5.4 Doctoral studies are organized within the framework of a scientific research and development project and are carried out in coordination with the research activities of research teams within the basic unit(s), main units, and the University of Tirana (UT). These units apply for funding from the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (AKKSHI) or other national and international funding institutions.



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In cases where the candidate holds the status of internal academic staff, doctoral studies may be supported by UT's internal resources. Additionally, candidates may secure funding from other entities or opt for self-financing to complete their doctoral studies.

Article 6

Deadlines regarding admission to the third cycle of studies

- 6.1** The basic unit(s) must determine the admission quotas based on the scientific research projects proposed by the basic units and the selection criteria for successful applicants no later than December 10 of the previous calendar year for all study programs offered. These quotas are submitted to the Academic Senate of the University of Tirana (UT) for approval.
- 6.2** Each main unit is responsible for making public the criteria established by the basic units for all fields of scientific research it offers. These criteria cannot be changed until the completion of the new admission process.
- 6.3** The criteria, procedures, and deadlines for the admission competition to the doctoral study program are published on the official website of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and UT, as well as in their premises, at least one month before the application deadline.

Article 7

Fundamental requirements and candidate registration procedures

- 7.1** To enroll in doctoral study programs, the student must meet the following criteria:
- a)** must have an academic engagement at a higher education institution or be research personnel at a basic or applied research institution;
 - b)** must have completed higher education and hold a second-cycle degree such as a "master of science" / "master of arts", an integrated second-level diploma, or a diploma under the old system or an equivalent academic title obtained abroad and recognized by the competent authorities. These studies must have been completed in linguistic, didactic, and literary sciences or in related humanities fields relevant to this study program. If the candidate has not completed studies at the faculty of foreign languages, they will, on a case-by-case basis, in collaboration with their supervisor, supplement their theoretical and scientific research training and engage in specific activities on research methodology, according to their specific field.



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- c) Must have a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of:
- No less than 8.00 (eight) in the first and second cycle studies combined,
 - No less than 8.00 (eight) in the case of an integrated second-level diploma (DIND), or an equivalent GPA for studies completed abroad.
- d) must have proficiency in one of the following foreign languages: *English, French, Italian, German, or Spanish*, in accordance with the levels specified in Point 3 of Instruction No. 52, dated 03.12.2015, "*On Defining Foreign Language Levels and International Tests for Admission to Second and Third Cycle Study Programs in Higher Education Institutions*," as amended by Instruction No. 10, dated 16.06.2023. For admission to third-cycle studies, the candidate must have at least a B2¹ level in the foreign language. If the candidate has obtained a degree from a study program conducted in one of these languages, the diploma serves as proof of meeting this requirement.
- e) must provide two recommendations from individuals holding the academic title of "Associate Professor" or "Professor", who are familiar with the candidate's academic and professional abilities.
- f) must not have been subject to disciplinary measures, violations of scientific research ethics, intellectual property rights, or plagiarism regulations, and must self-declare their ability to adhere to scientific and ethical standards.

7.2 The candidate's application to enroll in the doctoral study program, which includes the research topic proposal, scientific research objectives, and expected innovations, is part of the personal file, which also contains the following documents:

- a) Curriculum vitae;
- b) Notarized copies of diplomas, accompanied by diploma supplements or transcripts with corresponding credits. Diplomas obtained abroad must be accompanied by a recognition/equivalence certificate issued by the Ministry responsible for education.

¹ **Instruction No. 10, dated 16.06.2023 – Amendment to Instruction No. 52, dated 03.12.2015,**
"On Defining Foreign Language Levels and International Tests for Admission to Second and Third Cycle Study Programs in Higher Education Institutions," as amended.



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Notarized copies of third-cycle diplomas, such as "Executive Master", specialization diploma, or their equivalent diplomas, along with transcripts or diploma supplements, if applicable.

- c) Birth certificate and a photocopy of the identity card/passport.
- d) Two recommendation letters from academic staff holding the title of "Associate Professor" or "Professor".
- e) Proof of foreign language proficiency, as specified in Point 7.1(d). Candidates who have completed university studies in one of these languages are exempt from this requirement.
- f) Certificates and confirmations regarding qualifications, training, postgraduate exams, or scientific articles, as well as participation in scientific conferences.
- g) A personal declaration by the student regarding their ability to cover the costs of the doctoral study program, if applicable.
- h) Confirmation from the base unit verifying the receipt of the application documents.
- i) Scientific research proposal, detailing: Research objectives, Methodology to be followed, The need for an in-depth study in the proposed field, Expected innovations from the research, structured by year, The impact of the research on the scientific development sector and society, Possibility of funding through scientific research grants.
- j) Workplace certification, verifying that the candidate has an academic engagement at a higher education institution or is a research staff member at a basic or applied research institution.
- k) Payment receipt for the application fee.
- l) Self-declaration by the applicant stating their commitment to complying with scientific and ethical standards.

7.3 The scientific supervisor for a doctoral program applicant must hold the title of "Professor" or "Associate Professor." The number of doctoral candidates that an academic staff member can supervise across all higher education institutions where they are engaged is:

- no more than 3 (three) for academic staff holding the title of "Professor."
- no more than 2 (two) for academic staff holding the title of "Associate Professor."



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7.4 The doctoral application file is reviewed by an *ad hoc* commission established by the decision of the basic unit. This commission remains active until the selection of candidates, the announcement of the winners, and the resolution of appeals. The composition of the *ad hoc* Commission must have an odd number of members, with no fewer than three (3) members, all holding the title of "Professor" and/or "Associate Professor."

In cases where the basic unit does not have a sufficient number of members to form the *ad hoc* Commission, "Professors" and/or "Associate Professors" from another unit may be included, based on a proposal from the basic unit and with the approval of the head of the main unit.

Each basic unit will establish two *ad hoc* commissions, corresponding to the two main fields of study: "Linguistic Sciences" and "Modern and Postmodern World Literature".

Members of this Commission must be Professors/Associate Professors who have proposed and had their scientific research projects approved, as well as heads of basic units. The methodology and procedures for evaluating candidates' application files are approved by the Dean's Office, ensuring transparency, and are published on the official website of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, along with the deadlines for the review of applications.

7.5 The *ad hoc* Commission, after verifying compliance with the fundamental criteria, selects the candidates no later than 30-60 working days from the closing date of applications.

The selection is based on: The applicant's proposal, the documentation in the respective file, the evaluation follows a clear and transparent scoring system based on specific criteria for applicants.

7.6 Candidate evaluation consists of two consecutive phases: Application file review and the interview. Only candidates who pass the file review phase proceed to the interview. The *ad hoc* Commission notifies applicants whether they have passed the first evaluation phase and schedules an interview date.

7.7 The *ad hoc* Commission proposes a supervisor for each candidate, ensuring alignment with the research field/subfield and prioritizing Professors or Associate Professors who have approved scientific research projects. The assigned supervisor must not have a conflict of interest with the doctoral student. The basic unit formally approves dissertation supervisors, and the conflict of interest declaration and supervisor's confirmation of availability are attached to the candidate's file.

7.8 If the number of doctoral applicants in a basic unit exceeds the academic staff capacity (particularly Professors), applicants may be reassigned to another basic unit if:

- The neighboring basic unit has sufficient supervisory capacity.



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- The applicant's field/subfield aligns with the scientific research field of a potential supervisor in the neighboring unit.
- The supervisor demonstrates expertise and real capacity for high-quality supervision.
- The supervisor's individual project aligns with a project in the unit where the candidate is signed as supervisor.

In these cases, an *ad hoc* mixed commission is established for the review of the applicant's file, composed of members from the two relevant base units, which makes decisions based on the aforementioned criteria. In the selection of the members of the *ad hoc* mixed commission, priority is given to the category of Professor/Associate Professor who have proposed and had their scientific research projects approved. In this case, the *ad hoc* commission is approved by the head of the main unit.

- 7.9** A preliminary list of selected candidates is approved by the basic unit within *two days after the interview* and submitted to the main unit head, who publishes the list on the official website.
- 7.10** Candidates may appeal the evaluation procedure within three working days. Appeals are reviewed by the *ad hoc* Commission within five working days, and candidates are notified within two additional working days.
- 7.11** The final list of accepted candidates is published after the appeal process, and candidates sign a standard contract with the doctoral program coordinator. Upon enrollment, each candidate is assigned a unique matriculation number (NIM), which remains until graduation.
- 7.12** The files of the selected candidates are forwarded to the Department of Scientific Qualification and Publications, accompanied by a written report detailing the contents of the file.
- 7.13** A standard contract is signed between the successful candidate and the doctoral study program coordinator at the main unit level.
- 7.14** At the time of enrollment in the doctoral study program, the candidate is assigned a unique matriculation number (NIM), which remains valid until the awarding of the degree. This number is recorded in the main unit's primary register. The formation of the NIM is determined by an Instruction from the Ministry responsible for education..
- 7.15** If a student withdraws from the study program, their NIM is deactivated and cannot be reassigned to another student.



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- 7.16** If a student transfers to a doctoral study program at another higher education institution (HEI), their NIM is deactivated and cannot be reassigned to another student. The student is assigned a new NIM at the receiving HEI.
- 7.17** If a student postpones or suspends their studies, their NIM remains active and stays the same when they resume their studies.

Article 8

Basic Requirements for Completing the Doctoral Study Program

- 8.1** During the doctoral study period, before the dissertation defense, the student must fulfill the following requirements, in accordance with Decision of the Council of Ministers (DCM) No. 112, dated 23.02.2018, as amended by DCM No. 808, dated 11.12.2019.
- a)** Have completed at least three (3) scientific presentations or conference papers as the first author or second author (if the first author is the scientific supervisor). At least two (2) of these presentations must have been delivered at an international scientific/professional event (symposium, conference, congress) held in an EU member state, OECD country, or G-20 country. These must have been peer-reviewed and published in indexed conference proceedings with an ISBN or ISSN code.
 - b)** Have published at least three (3) scientific articles of which at least one (1) article must be published or accepted in an internationally indexed journal listed in *Journal Citation Reports* or *Scopus*, where the student is at least the second author.
 - c)** Have completed the doctoral dissertation, following the format specified in this regulation and the related regulations of the doctoral study program. The dissertation must comply with the legal and sub-legal framework, as well as with the University of Tirana's (UT) approved policies on academic integrity and scientific research ethics.
- 8.2** At least once a year, the research team of the project within the basic unit(s) must review the progress of the student's doctoral studies, based on the annual work plan submitted by the student and the written evaluations provided by the scientific supervisor, following a predefined format.



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8.3 The doctoral dissertation must be completed in accordance with the criteria and deadlines set forth in this regulation. The dissertation, along with the documentation proving compliance with the above requirements, is submitted to the head of the main unit, who then forwards it to the basic unit for evaluation, before proceeding with the defense procedures, as specified in this regulation.

Article 9

Rights and Responsibilities of the Doctoral Student

9.1 The student has the right to:

- a.** Receive the legal and sub-legal framework package related to the doctoral study process and the dissertation defense for obtaining the Scientific Degree "Doctor";
- b.** Request the creation of necessary conditions for attending academic and scientific activities included in their doctoral study program;
- c.** Utilize the library of the Faculty of Foreign Languages or other University of Tirana (UT) units' libraries, depending on the specific research needs;
- d.** Access libraries of institutions with which the University of Tirana or the Faculty of Foreign Languages has academic and/or scientific cooperation agreements, by presenting a document issued by the main unit, verifying their research study purpose and status as a third-cycle student;
- e.** Use study/research facilities and databases of public/private institutions necessary for their research, based on recommendations issued by the main unit on a case-by-case basis;
- f.** Voluntarily withdraw from doctoral studies by submitting a written request to the basic unit

9.2 The student is obligated to:

- a.** Acknowledge and fulfill all legal obligations arising from the applicable legal and sub-legal framework, including this regulation;



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- b.** Adhere to the doctoral work plan;
- c.** Respect the deadlines set for completing doctoral studies and fulfilling financial obligations (for self-financed students);
- d.** Report at least once a year to the research team of the basic unit(s) regarding their research progress and scientific research activities;
- e.** Comply with the scientific and ethical standards outlined in this regulation and other legal and sub-legal acts;
- f.** Maintain ethics and integrity in scientific research throughout the preparation of their dissertation;
- g.** Submit the doctoral dissertation and the corresponding file within the legal deadlines, in accordance with the provisions of this regulation and applicable legal and sub-legal acts;
- h.** Settle all financial obligations, if applicable, before submitting the doctoral dissertation and file to the head of the main unit.

Article 10

Responsibilities of the Scientific Supervisor of the Student

- 10.1** To guide the candidate in conducting scientific research and completing the doctoral thesis within the time frame specified in legal and sub-legal acts.
- 10.2** To clarify the candidate on the implementation of all scientific and ethical rules of scientific research during the doctoral supervision period, as well as to inform them about the consequences of plagiarism.
- 10.3** To provide the necessary academic support and consultation to enable the candidate to achieve high standards in scientific research.
- 10.4** To maintain regular communication with the student regarding the progress of the scientific work.
- 10.5** To regularly assess the student's progress and monitor their work according to the required standard. To raise the student's awareness in cases where their work is below the required standard and to take the necessary supportive actions.



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- 10.6** To support the student in preparing research materials, including articles and presentations for national and international scientific conferences, as well as other scientific publications, when their topics are in line with and serve the purpose of scientific research and the doctoral thesis, and in compliance with the defined criteria.
- 10.7** To ensure that the candidate has addressed all comments and recommendations when the research team of the unit(s) has made suggestions during the thesis presentations.
- 10.8** In cases of co-supervision, with local academic personnel or professors from foreign institutions who meet the criteria specified in Article 7 of this regulation, the supervisor/co-supervisor must clearly define their responsibilities and maintain regular contact. The supervisor must sign a preliminary and individual agreement with the foreign co-supervisor for each student, in which the rights and obligations of both parties are clearly specified.
- 10.9** The department responsible for scientific qualification and publications, in charge of the third cycle of studies, administers the doctoral candidate's file, which is updated by them with the relevant documentation according to the procedures outlined by the applicable legal and sub-legal acts.

Article 11

Responsibilities of the Basic Unit

- 11.1** The basic unit is the structure responsible for developing work for scientific research, opening and reorganizing the doctoral program, and monitoring all phases of the doctoral process.
- 11.2** The basic unit defines and approves the fields/subfields of scientific research where the doctoral projects will be developed.
- 11.3** The basic unit sets the quotas and criteria for the admission of doctoral students, reviews and approves the list of successful candidates for its doctoral program.
- 11.4** The basic unit approves the supervisors/co-supervisors for doctoral theses.
- 11.5** The basic unit is responsible for providing doctoral students with the necessary administrative support for obtaining information and research-scientific literature from public and private institutions.
- 11.6** The basic unit is responsible for ensuring that the candidates meet the formal criteria and anti-plagiarism requirements before their files are reviewed by the Commission for the Award of



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the Doctoral Degree. The basic unit may use software such as “Turnitin” and “Plagiarism Checker” for plagiarism checks, which is tolerable up to 20-25%.

- 11.7** The basic unit is responsible for reviewing the progress reports of the scientific research, presented by students and supervisors, and ensuring that the supervisors maintain regular contact with the students. In cases where issues are identified, it proposes necessary changes.
- 11.8** The basic unit is responsible for informing students admitted to its doctoral program about the relevant legal and sub-legal acts, including this regulation, related to the process of obtaining the scientific degree.

**Article 12
Responsibilities of the Doctoral Study Program Director**

- 12.1** The doctoral programs at the main unit level are followed/managed and coordinated by the director of the doctoral study programs, who is the Vice Dean for Scientific Research. The director is responsible for:
- a)** Supervising and ensuring that the basic units adhere to the legal and sub-legal framework in force, this regulation, and their responsibilities regarding the doctoral study programs, specifically:
 - Adhering to the deadlines and criteria for announcing research projects and doctoral quotas;
 - Adhering to the rules for selecting successful candidates;
 - Adhering to the criteria for scientific supervisors, including, but not limited to, the academic title required for the supervisor (Professor or Associate Professor), and the maximum number of doctoral students they can supervise;
 - Adhering to the procedures for supervision and reviewing the progress of scientific research.
 - b)** Supervising and ensuring that doctoral students are informed about all legal and sub-legal acts, guidelines, and regulations related to the process of obtaining the doctoral degree.
 - c)** Supervising the timely and proper completion of the doctoral student register at the main unit level.



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Article 13

Responsibilities of the Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor"

- 13.1** The Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor" is a permanent commission established at the level of the main unit. It is responsible for monitoring the process of awarding the scientific degree of 'Doctor.'
- 13.2** The Commission consists of no fewer than 5 (five) members and no more than 11 (eleven) members, who are elected by self-nomination from the academic staff assembly. Members must hold the academic title of "Professor" or "Associate Professor" and have no less than 5 (five) years of full-time academic work experience. Members of this commission serve a two-year mandate, with the possibility of re-election.
- 13.3** The Commission is responsible for reviewing the candidate's file, and if it determines that the file contains all the necessary documentation and meets the criteria set forth in this regulation, it shall establish the Jury within 30 days of receiving the file for review.
- 13.4** The Commission is the competent body to make decisions regarding the granting of the scientific degree "Doctor" after reviewing the Jury's evaluation report

Article 14

Duration of Doctoral Studies

- 14.1** Doctoral studies last no less than 3 (three) academic years and no more than 5 (five) academic years. For full-time academic staff within or outside the main unit, the normal duration of the study program is 3 (three) academic years, while for candidates who are not full-time academic staff, the duration is up to 5 (five) years.
- 14.2** In exceptional cases, at the student's request, the ad hoc commission established by the relevant basic unit may decide only once to extend or suspend doctoral studies, but not more than 2 (two) years in total.
- 14.3** The doctoral study program may be suspended or postponed at the candidate's request when they are unable to continue the program for objective reasons, which are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In any case, the reasons for requesting an extension/suspension must be



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documented. The request for extension is submitted when the doctoral student finds that they are unable to complete their research project within the specified deadline. The period of suspension does not count towards the maximum deadline established by law for completing the doctoral program. In both cases, the request for extension/suspension must be approved by the doctoral supervisor.

- 14.4** The relevant basic unit establishes an *ad hoc* commission, consisting of 3 (three) academic staff members of the "Professor" category, to examine the conditions for the extension/suspension of the study program, as well as the legal or financial consequences. Subsequently, through the head of the basic unit, the *ad hoc* commission submits the proposal, along with the supporting documentation, for approval by the head of the main unit.

Article 15

Organization of the Approval Process for Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programs

- 15.1** Basic units may organize interdisciplinary doctoral programs with one or more basic units of public or private higher education institutions, both domestically and abroad, in accordance with collaboration agreements, specifying the responsible unit.
- a) In interdisciplinary doctoral programs, basic units must consider that:
The research fields/subfields are intertwined and closely related;
The doctoral study program and the preparation of the doctoral thesis are carried out in alternating periods, according to the provisions in the collaboration agreement;
 - b) Two supervisors are appointed, one for each unit involved in this program. A positive evaluation from each basic unit is a prerequisite for advancing to the defense of the doctoral thesis;
 - c) The procedure for the defense of the scientific degree "Doctor" is carried out in accordance with this regulation and the applicable legal and sub-legal acts;
 - d) At the end of the studies, the Faculty of Foreign Languages and the homologous higher education institutions or basic units issue a joint or dual/multiple diploma, according to the collaboration agreement and the applicable legal and sub-legal acts.

Article 16



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Formation and Functioning of the Jury for Doctoral Defense

- 16.1** The doctoral defense is conducted before a jury consisting of 5 (five) members, of whom 2 (two) members belong to the academic staff of the basic units from domestic or foreign homologous institutions.
- 16.2** The formation of the jury takes place once the candidate has fulfilled all the requirements stipulated in the applicable legal and sub-legal acts and this Regulation, and has completed their doctoral work, following this procedure:
- a)** The candidate submits a draft of their thesis in 2 (two) copies, along with the supervisor's approval to start the doctoral defense procedures, to the head of the main unit. The head of the main unit, together with the completed candidate's file, which is administered by academic support staff, sends it for verification of the fulfillment of the basic criteria to the program coordinator. After verifying the doctoral student's obligations, the head of the main unit sends the draft thesis and the personal file to the basic unit within 15 (fifteen) calendar days from the date of receipt. The basic unit, upon receiving the draft thesis and candidate's file, conducts an assessment of the fulfillment of formal criteria and anti-plagiarism checks, and sends the doctoral thesis and candidate's file to the Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor" within 30 (thirty) days.
 - b)** Within 7 (seven) calendar days, the head of the basic unit, in collaboration with the doctoral supervisor, appoints two review rapporteurs of the "Professor" category, one of whom is from the basic unit's academic staff and the other is an academic staff member in the same research field from another higher education institution, domestic or foreign. The reviewers prepare their review reports within 10 (ten) calendar days and submit them to the head of the basic unit.
 - c)** The head of the basic unit, within 7 (seven) days after receiving the reviews, organizes a meeting of the basic unit, in the presence of the candidate, who presents their thesis. During the meeting, the reviewers present their evaluations, and the academic staff of the basic unit may ask the candidate questions and provide suggestions. Based on the comments and suggestions, the candidate is given no more than 10 (ten) days to revise the draft thesis.



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- d) If the basic unit gives a negative evaluation of the draft doctoral thesis and/or the file, the candidate has the right to resubmit the revised draft thesis and/or file, no earlier than 3 (three) months.
- e) After the evaluation of the revised thesis by the doctoral supervisor and after the anti-plagiarism check, the head of the basic unit, within 7 (seven) calendar days, submits the doctoral thesis and candidate's file to the Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor."
- f) If the Commission evaluates the file positively, it forms the jury for the doctoral thesis evaluation within 30 (thirty) days. As a rule, the reviewers are selected as opponents in the jury.

16.3 The Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor" selects the jury members from a list of no fewer than 8 (eight) members, proposed by the basic unit and previously approved by the head of the main unit. Jury members must belong to the "Professor" category. Two jury members are appointed as opponents for evaluating the doctoral thesis, with one being an academic staff member from the basic unit or a homologous institution, either domestic or foreign. One of the jury members is appointed as the chair.

16.4 The jury sets the date for the defense within 15 (fifteen) days from its formation.

16.5 If, for justified reasons, one of the jury members cannot attend the scheduled doctoral defense, the head of the basic unit informs the head of the main unit, proposing an alternative date for the defense. The head of the main unit informs the Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor." The jury decides to change the defense date after notification and prior approval by the Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor." This procedure also applies if the doctoral candidate, for justified reasons, cannot attend the scheduled defense date.

16.6 After the candidate presents their doctoral thesis, the jury prepares the evaluation report and sends it to the Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor."

16.7 The Commission for Granting the Scientific Degree "Doctor," after receiving the evaluation report from the jury within 10 (ten) days, makes a decision regarding the granting of the scientific degree "Doctor" and forwards it for further procedures to the head of the main unit.

Article 17

PhD Defense



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- 17.1** The PhD defense is generally public, except in cases where, due to the specific nature of the issues addressed (secrets, confidential data, etc.), it must be closed. The head of the main unit, upon request from the base unit, authorizes a limited public defense, according to the proposal of the Committee for Granting the Scientific Degree of "Doctor".
- 17.2** The doctoral thesis is presented to the Jury, which evaluates it.
- 17.3** The procedure for defending the doctoral thesis includes:
- Presentation by the chairperson of the jury of the documentation of the file, the composition of the jury, and declaration by the chairperson for the opening of the defense procedure;
 - Presentation of the doctoral thesis by the student for a period of 25-30 minutes;
 - Presentation of the oppositions. The opponents provide a written evaluation of the doctoral thesis, specifying whether the thesis fully meets the requirements outlined in the doctoral program, paying attention to the original contributions of the thesis, as well as highlighting its positive and negative aspects (if any);
 - Questions from those present about the thesis and the oppositions, directed to the doctoral student;
 - Discussions;
 - Possible clarifications from the doctoral student and the academic advisor;
 - Distribution of open and incomplete voting sheets and secret voting for the evaluation of the doctoral thesis;
 - Reflection of the voting result in the minutes and the written announcement of the decision.
- 17.4** The thesis is evaluated on a scale from 0 to 100 points. 100-80% of the possible points = "very good", 79-65% of the possible points = "good", 64-50% of the possible points = "sufficient", 49% or less of the possible points = "fail".
- 17.5** After the PhD defense, the main unit sends one copy of the doctoral thesis to the National Library, one copy to the scientific library of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, and one copy in electronic format to the University of Tirana.
- 17.6** At the end of the studies, the diploma for the scientific degree of "Doctor" is issued, signed by the head of the main unit and the rector.



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17.7 The list of graduates in third-cycle programs is sent to the University of Tirana, which then forwards it to the ministry responsible for education, to be reflected in the state register of scientific degrees and academic titles, as well as in the relevant registers of higher education institutions.

Article 18

Non-completion, Interruption/Withdrawal from the Doctoral Study Program

18.1 The interruption of doctoral studies is the process of withdrawal from the program, in the following cases:

- a) For health or personal reasons, upon the written request of the candidate, duly documented, to the head of the basic unit and the doctoral supervisor.
- b) When severe and repeated behaviors against the research ethics standards are identified, after the procedures outlined in Article 20 of this Regulation have been followed.
- c) When it is repeatedly found that the candidate has not fulfilled the obligations related to the progress of the doctoral research project.
- d) When the maximum duration for completing the doctoral program has passed, and no request for extension or suspension of the deadline has been made by the candidate.

18.2 The head of the basic unit organizes a meeting to examine the request. In cases outlined in points b), c), and d), the relevant basic unit forms an *ad-hoc* committee to assess the conditions for interrupting this study program, as well as the legal or financial consequences. The *ad-hoc* committee should consist of an odd number of members, not fewer than 3 (three) members holding the title "Professor" and/or "Associate Professor." Members of this committee should be professors/associate professors who have proposed and had research projects approved, along with the heads of the basic units. The *ad-hoc* committee then submits its evaluation to the head of the basic unit, who forwards it for a decision to the head of the main unit. The decision of the head of the main unit is also communicated to the person responsible for the doctoral study programs.

Article 19

Transfer of Doctoral Studies



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19.1 Higher education institutions provide opportunities for the transfer of the doctoral research project, within the same institution or between different higher education institutions, domestic or foreign. The transfer is possible when:

- a) The field of the doctoral research project is the same as or similar to that of the unit to which the candidate seeks to transfer;
- b) The financing of the doctoral research project allows for the transfer of funds;
- c) The host unit has the infrastructural and human capacities;
- d) The doctoral supervisor and the unit responsible for the development of the doctoral project have given their approval;
- e) When the candidate seeks to transfer from another higher education institution to the University of Tirana, they must also meet the criteria set forth in this Regulation for admission to a doctoral study program.

19.2 In any case of transfer, the level of similarity of the doctoral research project shall be verified by an *ad hoc* commission established by the main unit, in cooperation with the basic unit that has organized this study program. The decision on the transfer is made by the Rector, upon the proposal of the *ad hoc* commission, forwarded by the head of the main unit.

19.3 When the transfer is requested by a candidate who self-finances the doctoral research project, the transfer is carried out taking into account the criteria set forth in this Regulation.

19.4 In cases where the doctoral research project is funded by the funds of the University of Tirana, the candidate requesting the transfer to another higher education institution, domestic or foreign, must, along with their request for transfer, compensate the University of Tirana for the funding provided up to the moment of transfer.

19.5 When the transfer is requested by a candidate who has individually received funds for the doctoral research project from donors, the transfer shall take place only if the donor expressly states that the transfer of the funds is permitted.

19.6 In any case of transfer, the candidate must have official confirmation from the institution to which they will transfer that the latter has the available capacity to accept the candidate's transfer.



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Article 20

Revocation of the scientific degree “Doctor”

20.1 The doctoral degree may be revoked in cases where it is proven that, in the scientific activity that contributed to obtaining the degree, unacceptable behaviors and practices are identified, contrary to the principles of ethics and integrity in scientific research, specifically:

- a) Fabrication – creation of results and recording them as if they were true;
- b) Falsification – manipulation of research materials, equipment, or processes, or alteration, removal, or evasion of data or results without justification;
- c) Plagiarism – use of others' ideas and work without acknowledging the original source, thereby violating the rights of authors and their intellectual products;
- d) Unauthorized use of joint research-scientific work.

20.2 The doctoral degree may also be revoked when it is proven that the candidate has submitted false data or falsified them, with the intention of meeting the standards set by the relevant decision of the Council of Ministers for obtaining the degree.

20.3 The decision for revocation is made only after the administrative procedures have been followed, according to the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Code.

20.4 The burden of proof for accusations regarding plagiarism or manipulation of data in the candidate's work falls on the party that has raised the accusation.

20.5 The decision is made with a 2/3 majority vote of all members of the Doctoral Degree Awarding Commission of the relevant main unit, after the recommendation given by the *ad-hoc* committee, appointed by this Commission, consisting of at least three (3) academic staff members of the main unit, at the "Professor" level, in the same or related fields.

20.6 Before the decision is made, the Doctoral Degree Awarding Commission notifies the person against whom the proceedings have been initiated:

- a) About the accusations raised according to points 20.1 and/or 20.2 of this article;
- b) About the right to submit, in writing, clarifications regarding the accusation, as well as a reasonable deadline by which this clarification should be submitted;



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- c) About the right to inspect the proceedings file, to be heard personally or by legal representative, to present witnesses, to present evidence, or to request the collection of evidence.
- 20.7** After the *ad-hoc* committee has received the requested information according to letter b) of point 6 of this provision, it notifies the person against whom the proceedings have been initiated about the date when the alleged accusation will be reviewed, which cannot be set earlier than 5 (five) working days and not later than 10 (ten) working days from the notification.
- 20.8** The verification process is carried out impartially, comprehensively, without compromising the accuracy and objectivity of the proceedings.
- 20.9** The parties involved in the administrative proceedings declare any conflict of interest that may arise during the verification process. The procedures are carried out confidentially, in order to protect the individuals involved in the verification

Article 21

Rules for the Presentation of the Doctoral Thesis

- 21.1** The thesis should reflect the fields/subfields of the doctoral study programs as well as the candidate's professional ability for scientific research.
- 21.2** The thesis should introduce theoretical and/or empirical innovation in the relevant field of research and should be a contribution to enriching scientific knowledge with a social impact.
- 21.3** The doctoral thesis should be written in Albanian, and a summary (2000-4000 words) should be provided in one of the five European Union languages (*English, French, German, Spanish, Italian*), in both printed and electronic formats. Before submission, the thesis must be approved by the scientific supervisor.
- 21.4** The length of the thesis should not be less than 180 (one hundred and eighty) pages.
- 21.5** The doctoral thesis must meet the following formatting requirements:
- a) The writing style used in the thesis should be Times New Roman, font size 12, *justified*, line spacing 1.15 (one point fifteen), unless otherwise specified in this regulation.



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- b) The margins for the entire text should be:
- Top margin: 1"
 - Bottom margin: 1"
 - Left margin: 1.25"
 - Right margin: 1.25"
- c) All page numbers should be placed at the bottom center of the page.
- d) The preface should be printed in italics.
- e) The introduction should be numbered with Roman numerals.
- f) The body of the study should be numbered with Arabic numerals.
- g) The pages of the bibliography and appendices should be numbered with Arabic numerals following the numbering of the study pages.
- h) Footnotes should be placed at the bottom of the page, using a computer program, in Times New Roman, font size 10, *justified*, with a line spacing of 1.
- i) Tables included in the text should be centered on the page within the specified margins. Each table should be assigned a reference number with Arabic numerals. Tables should be numbered consecutively in the thesis. The word "Table," the table number, and the caption should be placed at the top of the table. If a table continues to the next page, the caption should not be repeated. If a table contains quotes or references, these should be placed in a *footnote*. The font size for text within the table should generally be 10, with line spacing of 1, *justified*, unless the application of these technical elements affects the visual presentation of the table.
- j) Diagrams, photographs, illustrations, and graphs should be labeled as "Figure." Each figure should be assigned a reference number with Arabic numerals. Figures should be numbered consecutively in the thesis. The word "Figure," its number, and the caption should be placed below. If a figure contains quotes or references, they should be placed in a footnote. The font size for figure captions should generally be 12, with line spacing of 1.15, *justified*, unless the application of these technical elements affects their visual presentation. In general, figures should not exceed one page. If they continue on the next page, the same rules as for tables should be followed.



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- k) Accompanying materials – If the thesis includes accompanying materials such as CDs, videos, or tapes that are an important part of the thesis, they should be attached to the thesis.
- l) Printing – The material should be printed only on one side of the page. All copies of the thesis should be printed clearly and legibly using a computer. Handwritten drafts are not accepted.
- m) Paper type – High-quality white paper, A4 format, should be used.
- n) The final version of the thesis should be submitted in at least 4 (four) original copies, one (1) of which is kept in the candidate's file, as well as in electronic form in PDF format.
- o) The front cover of the thesis should include: (as per the attached model):
 - Name of the University (at the top center of the cover);
 - Name of the main unit (at the top center of the cover);
 - Name of the base unit where the doctoral program was developed (at the top center of the cover);
 - University emblem (at the top left of the cover);
 - Emblem of the main unit (at the top right of the cover);
 - The word DOCTORATE (in capital letters in the center of the cover, font size 20);
 - Name of the doctoral program (in the center of the cover);
 - Name of the candidate (at the bottom left of the cover);
 - Name and degree of the supervisor (at the bottom right of the cover);
 - City and year of defense (at the bottom center of the cover).

The back cover should contain:

- ***An abstract in Albanian and English.*** Each version should contain 200 words, using font size 10. This element should allow both local and international readers to understand how the topic under study is addressed. The English abstract is a requirement of international standards.



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Field and keywords. The student, in collaboration with the scientific supervisor, defines the field and selects the keywords based on their relevance to the terminology used in the respective discipline. These help in identifying the thesis in collective catalogs in libraries.

Article 22

Registration of the “Doctor” Academic Degree

22.1 The “Doctor” academic degree is registered in the state register of academic degrees and titles, maintained by the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (AKKSHI), as well as in the internal register of the doctoral study program, kept in each main unit of the University of Tirana (UT).

22.2 The diploma for the “Doctor” academic degree, according to the form and elements approved by the Academic Senate, is issued by the University of Tirana and is signed by the Rector and the head of the main unit. As a rule, it is issued within 30 (thirty) working days from the date of receipt of the official notification of the registration number from AKKSHI.

22.3 Each main unit maintains a Register for the “Doctor” academic degree, which contains the following data:

- a) Serial number;
- b) Name, father’s name, and surname of the person to whom the “Doctor” degree is awarded;
- c) Gender;
- d) Date of birth;
- e) Nationality;
- f) Name of the main unit where the candidate completed the doctoral studies;
- g) Name of the base unit where the candidate completed the doctoral studies;
- h) Type of study program;
- i) Enrollment number;
- j) Date of registration in the doctoral study program;



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- k)** Number and date of the decision of the jury for awarding the “Doctor” academic degree;
- l)** Date of registration in the academic degree register, at AKKSHI;
- m)** Topic of the doctoral thesis;
- n)** Field of study and evaluation.

22.4 The distribution of diplomas is carried out by the Protocol and Archive Sector at the Rectorate of the University of Tirana. The diploma/certificate is collected personally by the graduate, against their signature, and it is recorded in the corresponding register. If it is objectively impossible for the graduate to be present, the diploma may be collected by a representative, who must present an identification document and a special power of attorney. The power of attorney should be attached to the doctoral diploma collection register, where the diploma number, name, father’s name, surname, and signature are recorded

Article 23

Research Work Ethics

- 23.1** Every research paper must reflect the rules related to research work ethics and academic integrity, respecting ethics and integrity in scientific research.
- 23.2** When submitting the paper, the candidate must declare in writing that the study is their original work.
- 23.3** The candidate is not allowed to present a paper that has been previously submitted in the same unit or in another unit for obtaining another degree. They may present a part of their work, as long as it is clearly indicated which part was previously used, and this part cannot exceed 20% of the paper. The candidate may also include sections from individual studies or works done with co-authors, or data obtained from research in the framework of other research projects. If the research was done in a team, the candidate must acknowledge this and recognize the contribution of collaborators.
- 23.4** During the preparation of the paper, the candidate may publish parts of the scientific study in the form of articles or scientific references (with the written permission of the supervisor).



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- 23.5** The paper must not contain elements that constitute plagiarism. In every case where ideas, words, or concepts from other sources are used, the appropriate reference must be cited.
- 23.6** If the original source is not available but is mentioned in another document, both documents must be cited: the original source and the secondary one.
- 23.7** The supervisor must clarify to the candidate at the beginning of the work about the risks and consequences in cases of detected fraud, falsification, and plagiarism.
- 23.8** Intellectual property, the copyright for the paper (as well as for any published material), is protected by copyright law and other applicable acts. The copyright notice, the relevant symbol ©, the name of the copyright holder, and the year of the paper must be placed on the page following the title of the paper.

Article 24

Funding

- 24.1** The value of the research project is planned and covered by the research funds of the base or main unit, and/or by research grants funded by the state budget in accordance with the applicable legal regulations, and/or by other funding institutions and/or from other public and non-public sources.
- 24.2** For conducting doctoral studies, the student may self-finance.

Article 25

Protection of Students' Personal Data

The Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Tirana protects, stores, secures, and manages personal data in accordance with the applicable Albanian legislation. The processing of data is done in accordance with the Constitution, Law 9887, dated 10.03.2008, "On the Protection of Personal Data" as amended, and the regulation for "Protection, Processing, Storage, and Security of Personal Data at the University of Tirana", as well as the mission of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Tirana, respecting human rights and freedoms. Every employee of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at the University of Tirana who processes students' personal data is required to comply with the provisions of the law "On the Protection of Personal Data" as follows:



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- a) Respecting the principle of lawful processing of personal data, ensuring and guaranteeing the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, and in particular the right to the protection of privacy.
- b) Processing data in a fair and lawful manner.
- c) Collecting personal data for specific, legitimate purposes clearly defined and processing them in accordance with these purposes.
- d) The data to be processed must be adequate, relevant to the purpose of processing, and must not exceed that purpose.
- e) The data must be accurate and, where necessary, updated and all necessary actions must be taken to ensure that inaccurate or incomplete data is deleted or corrected.

Article 26

Transitional Provisions

This regulation applies to students who will enroll in doctoral study programs after its entry into force. For students who started the program before the entry into force of this regulation, the relevant provisions of Law 80/2015 “On Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Republic of Albania” and the subordinate acts based on and for its implementation will apply.

Article 27

This regulation enters into force after approval by the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Foreign Languages.

DEAN

Prof. Dr. Esmeralda KROMIDHA