

## **DECISION**

**No. 112, dated 23.02.2018**

### **On the Specification of Criteria for Earning the Scientific Title “Doctor” and the National Standards for Earning Academic Titles “Associate Professor” and “Professor”**

Pursuant to Article 100 of the Constitution, Articles 60(3) and 79(7) of Law No. 80/2015, “On Higher Education and Scientific Research in Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania,” and upon the proposal of the Minister of Education, Sports and Youth, the Council of Ministers

**DECIDED:**

#### **CHAPTER I**

##### **CRITERIA FOR EARNING THE SCIENTIFIC TITLE “DOCTOR”**

1. Studies for the "doctor" scientific degree are carried out full-time at the basic unit or long term, in cases when the doctoral student is employed as academic staff in another institution of higher education or as research personnel in a basic or applied research institution, at higher education institutions of the "university" or "academy" type, which meet the legal criteria and those defined in this decision.

2. The scientific degree "doctor" is obtained after the successful defense of the dissertation thesis, at the end of the doctoral studies in the field of higher education and scientific research, according to the criteria and within the deadlines set by the legislation for higher education and scientific research.

3. Doctoral studies are conducted in the form of research groups, which are led by Academic staff, who has the academic title "associate professor" or "professor". The number of doctoral students in the composition of each research group, which includes all the leadership that the academic staff follows in all higher education institutions where he is engaged are:

- a) no more than 7 (seven), in the case of academic personnel holding the title "professor";
- b) no more than 5 (five), in the case of academic personnel holding the title "associate professor";
- c) no more than 3 (three), in the case when the academic staff, who has the academic title "associate professor" or "professor", is engaged part-time.

4. The candidate applies individually to the approved study program in the fields of scientific research, offered by the basic unit or the main unit. The basic unit approves individual research programs of the candidates only for those fields, which belong to the approved doctoral programs it offers. When the fields of research are intertwined between two or more basic units, one of the basic units is designated responsible for delivering the candidate's research program, in agreement between them.

5. The main unit, in the regulation of the third cycle of studies, defines the specific criteria:

- a) that the candidate must match in order to be accepted or to transfer studies to the study program, according to the field of research;
- b) for the annual evaluation of the progress of the candidates and the continuation of the work for the development of the research project during the period of doctoral studies;
- c) that the candidate must match before the final defense of the dissertation thesis;
- ç) when doctoral studies are interrupted, postponed or suspended;
- d) for payment terms for the entire cycle of the program.

6. The basic criteria, which must be met by the candidate before the defense of the dissertation, are:

- a) To have performed as the first or second author, when the first author is the scientific leader, at least 3 (three) references, 2 (two) of which were held in an international scientific event (symposium, conference, congress), in one of the member countries of the European Union, the OECD or the G20, accepted on the basis of a preliminary scientific evaluation and published in "*Proceedings*", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code;
- b) To have published, at least, 3 (three) scientific articles in scientific journals, of which 2 (two) are published or accepted for publication in indexed journals of OECD, EU or G20 countries, with editorial board, where, at least, one of them is the first author and the other is the second author.

7. The candidate drafts the dissertation according to the format approved in the regulation of the third cycle of studies. The dissertation must bring theoretical and/or empirical innovation in the relevant field of research, as well as be a contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge. The dissertation is written in the Albanian language and a summary of it (2000–4000 words) in one of the five languages of the European Union: English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, in print and electronic format. The dissertation is approved by the scientific supervisor before submission.

8. The candidate submits the dissertation, as defined in point 7 of this chapter, together with the file, herewith the head of the main unit, who forwards it to the basic unit for evaluation within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of delivery. After the assessment by the basic unit, the dissertation and the candidate's file are forwarded to the Commission for the Awarding of the Scientific Degree "Doctor", within 30 (thirty) days. If the Commission evaluates the file positively, within 30 (thirty) days appoints the jury for the evaluation of the dissertation. The jury sets the date of the dissertation defense within 15 (fifteen) days from its formation. The dissertation is presented to the jury, which evaluates it. The jury drafts the evaluation report and sends it to the Commission for the Awarding of the Scientific Degree "Doctor", who, within 10 (ten) days, takes the decision on awarding scientific degree "doctor" and forwards it to the head of the main unit for further procedures.

9. If the basic unit assesses the dissertation and/or file negatively, the candidate has the right to resubmit the completed dissertation and/or file after a period of at least 3 (three) months.

10. The Commission for the Awarding of the Scientific Degree "Doctor", which monitors the process for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor", consists of no less than 5 (five) elected members of the main unit where the doctoral program is offered, who have the academic title "associate professor" or "professor".

11. The jury for the defense of the scientific degree "Doctor" is established by the Commission for the Awarding of the Scientific Degree "Doctor" and consists of 5 (five) members, of which, at least 2 (two) members belong to basic units from local, homologue or foreign institutions. Two members of the jury are appointed opponents for the evaluation of the dissertation, one of whom belongs to the basic units from homologue, local or foreign

institutions. Jury members are proposed by the basic unit, with the approval of the head of the main unit. Number of proposed members is not less than 8 (eight).

12. The list of graduates in the third cycle programs is forwarded by the institution of higher education to the ministry responsible for education, to be reflected in the state register of scientific degrees and academic titles and in the relevant HEI registers. At the end of the studies, a diploma is issued for the award of the scientific degree "doctor", signed by the head of the main unit and the rector.

13. The most detailed procedures for obtaining the scientific degree "doctor" are defined in the statute of the higher education institution (HEI) and the regulation of the third cycle of studies, in accordance with state quality standards.

## CHAPTER II

### THE STANDARDS FOR EARNING THE ACADEMIC TITLE “ASSOCIATED PROFESSOR”

1. The academic title “associated professor” is awarded by the institutions of higher education, of the genre “University”, which comply with the legal criteria and the ones specified in this decision.

2. The applications for earning the academic title “associated professor” are made by the members of the academic staff of the category “Lecturer”.

3. The academic staff of the category “lecturer” applies for earning the academic title “associated professor” starting from 5 (five) years, from the date of defending the scientific degree “doctor”.

4. Full time or part-time academic staff, that applies for the title “associated professor”, should:

a) Have developed a full cycle of lectures for, at least, one subject, for 3 (three) academic years;

b) Have work experience as full time academic staff for a period of at least 5 years (five years), with or without interruption, or as a part-time lecturer, for an academic period of 8-years (eight years), with or without interruption, after earning the scientific degree “doctor”;

c) Be able to give lectures in one of the five languages of the European Union: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish or to defend the publishing research activity before the Commission for the Promotion of the Academic Staff, in one of the above languages, in accordance with the HEI’s statute and the Regulation.

Academic staff that applies for the title of “associated professor”, should fully comprehend his research field, which is reflected in completing the following tasks:

a) Has published at least 5 (five) local or international indexed scientific articles and journals. At least 2 (two) of the articles should be published in international journals with an impact factor, ranked by *Thomson Reuters* and/or *Scopus*. In case these articles are co-authored, the candidate must be the first or the second author. The candidate must be the first or the sole author in at least 2 (two) scientific articles presented for earning the title;

b) the candidate has realized as the first author, at least, 5 (five) references, from which, at least 2 (two) have been held in international scientific activity (symposium, conference, congress), in one of the member countries of the European Union, the OECD or the G20, accepted on the basis of a preliminary scientific evaluation and published in "Proceedings", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code;

6. When the candidate submits a monograph, which meets the following criteria, he is exempted from the obligations defined in letters "a" and "b", point 4, of this chapter, according to the following equivalence:

a) The publication of 1 (one) scientific monograph, published after obtaining the scientific degree "doctor", inside or outside the country, which must fulfill the conditions of originality and must have been evaluated in terms of content as a scientific paper by, at least, 2 (two) independent evaluators of the research-scientific field, and have been accepted by the basic unit, which covers the research field. A scientific monograph published abroad is considered valid if the publishing house is ranked by SENSE Ranking of Academic Publishers, in category A, B, C or D. Monographs are considered different from each other when they differ in content by at least 70%. The monograph published domestically must be evaluated in terms of content as a scientific paper by, at least, 2 (two) "professors" of the scientific research field, of whom, at least one of them must be from EU, OECD or G20 member countries.

b) The monograph published domestically is equivalent to:

- i. 2 (two) scientific articles, published in scientific journals in the country;
- ii. 1 (one) scientific article, published in an international scientific journal with an impact factor.

c) The monograph published abroad is equivalent to:

- i. 4 (four) scientific articles, published in a scientific journal in the country;
- ii. 2 (two) scientific articles, published in an international scientific journal with an impact factor.

7. Due to academic promotion, higher education institutions consider the engagement and participation of the candidate, after earning the scientific degree "doctor", in:

- a) editing or scientific committees;
- b) evaluative activity as a member of the scientific or editorial committee for scientific periodicals or non-periodicals;
- c) research-scientific projects at the level of a director, coordinator or member;
- ç) the benefit of funding based on competition at the national and international level;
- d) projects financed by programs with foreign donors, which bring benefits to the institution, in the role of project coordinator;
- dh) evaluations of national or international research projects;
- e) as a leader in the organizing committees of national or international scientific conferences;
- ë) patent technology transfer projects.

8. Candidates engagement and participation in one or more than one activities specified in point 7 of this chapter, can be equivalent to:

- a) 1 (one) scientific article, published in a scientific international journal with impact factor;
- b) 1 (one) scientific article, published in a scientific journal within the country and 2 (two) references held in an international scientific activity (symposium, conference, congress), in one of the member countries of the European Union, the OECD or the G20, accepted on the basis of a preliminary scientific evaluation and published in "*Proceedings*", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code.

9. The quantitative level of the indicators, defined in point 7 of this chapter, as well as their corresponding value are foreseen in the relevant regulation of HEIs and are set in function of their academic and strategic priorities. The report on engagement and participation for the activities provided for in point 7 of this chapter is drawn up by the basic unit and the main unit and approved by the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Staff.

10. In cases where the candidate has completed a postdoctoral study in one of the member countries of the European Union, the OECD or the G20, with a duration of at least 6 (six) months, accompanied by a detailed report on the research-scientific activity developed

during this period, it is equivalent to 1 (one) scientific article published in an international scientific journal with an impact factor and 1 (one) reference held in an international scientific activity (symposium, conference, congress) in one of the member countries of the European Union, OECD or G20, accepted on the basis of a preliminary scientific assessment and published in "Proceedings", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code.

11. For obtaining the academic title "associate professor", valid scientific publications are those produced after the defense of the scientific degree "doctor", until the date of submission of the application file for the academic title "associate professor".

12. HEIs define in their respective regulations the criteria for the academic-didactic evaluation of candidates for obtaining academic titles.

### CHAPTER III CRITERIA FOR EARNING THE ACADEMIC TITLE “PROFESSOR”

1. The academic title “professor” is awarded by the institutions of higher education, of the type “University”, which complete the legal criteria and those specified in this decision.

2. The academic staff, awarded with the academic title “associated professor”, applies for earning the academic title “professor”, at least, 5 (five) years after earning the academic title "associate professor".

3. Full time or part time academic staff that applies for the academic title “professor” must:

a) have been lecturer of the subject or module and leader of the scientific activity for a period not shorter than 5 (five) academic years;

b) be or have been employed as a full-time academic staff, as a lecturer for an 8-year (eight-year) academic period, after obtaining the scientific degree "doctor", or part-time, as a lecturer, for a 12-year (twelve-year) academic period after obtaining the scientific degree "doctor";

c) have supervised, at least, 2 (two) completed doctorates. In the event that the candidate has exercised his academic scientific activity at a main unit with less than 40 (forty) full-time academic personnel, at the time of application he has supervised, at least, 1 (one) completed doctorate;

ç) be able to give lectures in one of the five languages of the European Union: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish or to defend the research-scientific activity before the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Personnel in one of these languages, in accordance with the statute and regulation of HEI.

4. The academic personnel, who applies for the title "professor", must show full mastery of their research field, which is reflected in the execution of the obligations, as follows:

a) Has published, at least, 7 (seven) scientific articles, published in national or international indexed scientific journals. At least 3 (three) of the articles have been published in international scientific journals with an impact factor, ranked by *Thomson Reuters* and/or *Scopus*. When these articles are co-authored, the candidate must be the first or second author. The candidate must be the first author in, at least, 4 (four) scientific articles submitted to win the title;

b) As the first author, he has produced at least 5 (five) references, of which at least 2 (two) have been held in international scientific activities (symposium, conference, congress) in one of the member countries of the European Union, OECD or G20, accepted on the basis

of a preliminary scientific assessment and published in "*Proceedings*", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code.

5. When the candidate submits a monograph, which meets the following criteria, he is exempted from the obligations defined in letter "a", point 4, of this chapter, according to the following equivalence:

a) Publication of 1 (one) scientific monograph, published after obtaining the scientific degree "associate professor" in the country or abroad, which must meet the conditions of originality and must have been evaluated in terms of content as a scientific paper by, at least, 2 (two) independent evaluators of the research-scientific field, and have been accepted by the basic unit, which covers the research field. A scientific monograph published abroad is considered valid if the publishing house is ranked by SENSE Ranking of Academic Publishers, in category A, B, C or D. Monographs are considered different when they differ in content by at least 70%. The monograph published within the country must be evaluated in content as a scientific paper by, at least, 2 (two) "professors" of the scientific research field, of which, at least one of them must be from EU countries, the OECD or the G20;

b) The monograph published domestically is equivalent to:

i) 2 (two) scientific articles, published in a scientific journal within the country;

ii) 1 (one) scientific article, published in an international scientific journal with an impact factor.

c) The monograph published abroad is equivalent to:

i) 4 (four) scientific articles, published in a scientific journal within the country;

ii) 2 (two) scientific articles, published in an international scientific journal with an impact factor.

6. For the purpose of academic promotion, higher education institutions consider the commitment and participation of the candidate, after winning the academic title "associate professor", in:

a) scientific or editorial committees;

b) evaluation activity as a member of the scientific or editorial committee, on behalf of scientific periodicals or non-periodicals;

c) research-scientific projects at the level of leader, coordinator or member;

ç) the benefit of funding based on competition at the national and international level;

d) projects financed by programs with foreign donors, which bring benefits to the institution, in the role of project coordinator;

dh) evaluations of national or international research projects;

e) as a leader in the organizing committees of national or international scientific conferences;

ë) technological patent transfer projects.

7. The commitment and participation of the candidate in one or several activities defined in point 5, of this chapter, can be equivalent to:

a) 1 (one) scientific article, published in an international scientific journal with an impact factor;

b) 1 (one) scientific article, published in a scientific journal within the country, and 2 (two) references held in an international scientific activity (symposium, conference, congress) in one of the member countries of the European Union, OECD or G20 -s, accepted on the basis of a preliminary scientific assessment and published in "*Proceedings*", indexed by ISBN or ISSN code.

8. The quantitative level of the indicators defined in point 6 of this chapter, as well as their corresponding value, are foreseen in the relevant regulation of HEIs and are set in function of their academic and strategic priorities. The report on engagement and participation for the activities provided for in point 6 of this chapter is drawn up by the basic

unit and the main unit and is approved by the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Staff.

9. For obtaining the academic title "professor", valid scientific publications are those realized after the defense of the academic title "associate professor" until the date of submission of the application file for the academic title "professor".

10. The HEIs, in their respective regulations, determine the criteria for the academic-didactic assessment of candidates for obtaining academic titles.

#### CHAPTER IV PROCEDURES FOR EARNING THE ACADEMIC TITLES

1. The candidate submits the request and file to the head of the main unit, who forwards it to the basic unit for evaluation within 20 (twenty) days. After the assessment by the basic unit, within 45 (forty-five) days, the candidate's file is forwarded to the Academic Senate, which, within 20 (twenty) days of receiving the file, forwards it to the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Staff.

2. If the basic unit gives a negative assessment, the file is returned to the head of the main unit with the relevant arguments and suggestions. The candidate has the right to reapply, within a period of 6 (six) months. The decision of the basic unit is taken by the majority of its members.

3. Within 30 (thirty) days after forwarding the file from the Senate, the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Staff evaluates whether the file submitted by the candidate is complete or not. In case the file is considered complete, the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Staff immediately proceeds with the establishment of the jury for the evaluation of the file. In case of identification of deficiencies in the candidate's file, he is given 15 (fifteen) days to make the necessary additions. If they are not completed, the file is returned to the candidate.

4. The date of initiation of the candidate evaluation procedure is considered the date of the establishment of the jury.

5. The jury consists of 5 (five) members with the academic title "professor" in the same field or fields similar to that of the candidate, of which, at least, 2 (two) must be invited from other HEIs, domestic or foreign. Jury members are proposed by the head of the main unit, with the approval of the rector. The number of proposed members is not less than 8 (eight).

6. Within 45 (forty-five) days from the date of the start of the evaluation procedure, the jury prepares the evaluation report of the academic-didactic and scientific capacities of the candidate, at the end of which a recommendation is given for the awarding or not of the academic title. The evaluation report is forwarded to the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Staff.

7. The Commission for the Promotion of Academic Staff takes a final decision on the approval or rejection of the candidate's request within 15 (fifteen) days, after receiving the evaluation report from the jury.

8. In case of rejection of the request for academic titles by the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Personnel, the candidate has the right to resend the request, after a period of time no shorter than 2 (two) years from the date of submission of the previous request, to the head of the main unit.

9. The academic title is registered in the state register of scientific degrees and academic titles at the ministry responsible for education and in the relevant HEI registers. The academic title is issued by the institution and signed by the rector.

## CHAPTER V FINAL AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

1. The institution of higher education can award the title "*Doctor Honoris Causa*" to prominent figures of science and society, inside and outside the country, for special contribution to the development of education and science, as well as to the overall development of our country. This title is awarded by decision of the Academic Senate of the institution, after obtaining the consent of the ministry responsible for education. The number of "*Doctor Honoris Causa*" titles that a HEI can grant, as a rule, cannot be more than 2 (two) per year.

2. The institution of higher education, in the internal regulation, determines the procedure and criteria for obtaining the title "*Professor Emeritus*" from members of the academic staff who hold the title "professor", after their retirement, after obtaining the consent of the responsible ministry for education.

3. The complete list of scientific journals, published in the country, is published in February of each year by the ministry responsible for higher education, in cooperation with the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (NASRI).

4. Candidates registered in the third cycle study programs, before the entry into force of this decision, fulfill the criteria defined by the legislation in force at the time of registration in the third cycle study program.

5. Candidates, who have started the procedure for obtaining the scientific degree "doctor", complete it according to the procedures defined in the legislation in force, the procedure starts.

6. Candidates, who have not started the procedure of obtaining the scientific degree "doctor", will follow the procedure defined in this decision.

7. Candidates who have started the procedure for obtaining academic titles and have passed the approval stage by the Council of Professors, close the procedure for obtaining the academic title according to the criteria of the legislation in force at the time of submitting the file to the Council of Professors. These candidates follow the procedures defined in this decision for the final stage in the Commission for the Promotion of Academic Personnel.

8. The criteria and procedures for obtaining the scientific degree "doctor" and the academic titles "associate professor" and "professor", for the military, police, arts and sports academic fields, are regulated by a special decision of the Council of Ministers .

9. Except for the year 2018, the deadline defined in point 3 of this chapter is the month of June 2018.

10. Decisions of the Council of Ministers, no. 467, dated 18.7.2007, "On determining the criteria and procedures for the scientific and pedagogical qualification of academic staff", amended, and no. 864, dated 5.12.2007, "On the opening of doctoral study programs in public institutions of higher education and the determination of the conditions that must be met by the student to receive the diploma for the scientific degree "doctor", amended, are repealed.

11. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, the National Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation and higher education institutions are charged with the implementation of this decision. This decision enters into force after publication in the Official Gazette.

PRIME MINISTER  
**Edi Rama**