

Internal Rules for the Doctoral (PhD) Program of Study in Environmental and Public Health

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1. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DPC	Department of Rehabilitation Sciences Postgraduate Committee
DC	Department of Rehabilitation Sciences Council
SC	Selection Committee for doctoral applicants (appointed by the DC following a recommendation by the DPC
TAC	Thesis Advisory Committee (appointed by the DC following a recommendation by the DPC)
DT	Doctoral thesis
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Summation System

2. GENERAL

The aim of the doctoral program in Environmental and Public Health is to promote Research and Theory across the disciplines of Environmental and Public Health. Graduates of the Doctoral Program, who are awarded the title Doctorate (PhD) in Environmental and Public Health, are able to conduct autonomous research in accordance with international research methodology standards, to teach within their specialty at all academic levels, and to pursue key positions in research, academic and clinical institutions or companies and generally enjoy all the obligations and privileges of PhD holders.

3. DEPARTMENTAL POSTGRADUATE STUDIES COMMITTEE

3.1 The supreme body of the Department's Postgraduate Study Programs is the Departmental Council (DC).

3.2 The Department's postgraduate programs are supervised by the Departmental Postgraduate Studies Committee (DPC), which consists of active elected faculty members at the Department of Rehabilitation Sciences who are involved in teaching and supervising PhD students. The DPC is appointed by the Department Council through elections and serves for two-year terms. The Departmental Council also appoints the DPC Coordinator, who chairs the Committee.

3.3 The main responsibilities of the DPC are set out in the general rules of the postgraduate programs of the Cyprus University of Technology and are summarized as follows:

- i) Evaluates applications for the doctoral study program in accordance with the legal criteria and regulations and may appoint, after each call, a three-member Selection Committee for Doctoral Applicants (SC) to evaluate applications, conduct interviews and record minutes. In each case, the SC is composed of the faculty member who announces the position (Chair) and two other faculty members from the elected faculty member staff.
- ii) After a preliminary evaluation of the applications, the SC may interview the candidates who meet the minimum criteria as set out in Call, but shall not be obliged to do so for all other candidates. The SC is not obliged to allocate all the positions that were announced.
- iii) Based on the recommendations of the SC, the DPC ratifies the suggestion after reviewing the minutes and presents the names and qualifications of the selected students for intake into the doctoral study program to the Departmental Council. In the event that the DPC disagrees with the suggestions of the SC, the final responsibility for the allocation of the number of places which were announced in the Call rests with the Departmental Council, which reserves the right not to fill all the positions.
- iv) Makes recommendations to the DC for the appointment of committees (Applicant Selection Committee, Thesis Advisory Committee, Thesis Examination Board) as specified in the relevant Rules and Regulations.
- v) Is responsible for ensuring the smooth conduct of the whole process towards the award of the PhD title
- vi) Deals with any dispute resolution issues that may arise during doctoral studies, including a request for change of Research Advisors from the doctoral candidate.

vii) Supervises in cooperation with the Research Advisors the progress of each postgraduate student through the various stages of the study program and recommends to the Council the approval of the completion of studies after ensuring that all necessary prerequisites have been fulfilled.

viii) Develops in collaboration with the academic staff of the Department, the content of the various modules of the Doctoral and Master's study programs, and presents it to the Departmental Council for approval.

4. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

4.1 Applicants for the Doctoral program should hold a postgraduate degree at Master's level to be eligible. Applicants should apply in response to a specific PhD position call. The application must be accompanied by a full CV, as well as a brief description of the applicant's goals and research interests.

4.2 In exceptional cases and following the decision of the SC, a student application for a doctoral degree that does not hold a postgraduate degree may be considered, provided that the postgraduate degree was not specified in the announcement as a prerequisite. In such a case, students must complete the total of 60 ECTS required to obtain their doctoral degree either through relevant courses offered in the Department's postgraduate programs or other Departments of the University or similar programs of study offered at other Universities or research centers and organizations locally or internationally and/or relevant research work and activities, as determined according to the needs and peculiarities of each case into a customized curriculum. The responsibility for the development of the curriculum is borne by the Main Advisor of the candidate and endorsed by the Departmental Council.

4.3 The Department accepts students for the doctoral program each year on the dates and subject to the announcement procedures provided by the relevant University Rules. Applications are submitted centrally to the University.

4.4 The doctoral candidate is accepted following a decision of the Departmental Council following the recommendation of the DPC on the basis of the recommendation by the three-member Selection Committee.

4.5 The three-member selection committee shall consist of the Faculty Member, in whose field of enquiry the new post for a doctoral candidate has been announced, who also chairs the committee, and two Faculty Members of the Department from the elected members of staff. If the candidate is accepted, the chair of the three-member committee shall be appointed as the main Research Advisor, and the three-member Selection Committee shall forward to the DC through the DPC their suggestion for the appointment of the candidate's Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC).

5. THESIS ADVISORS

5.1 The doctoral student is guided by the Main Advisor along with the other members of the Advisory Committee and the progress of the thesis is systematically monitored. The doctoral candidate and the TAC should update the DPC and the DC with annual reports on the progress of the doctoral thesis (see attached *Appendix G*). The Advisor calls the doctoral candidate to a formal discussion on the progress of their doctoral thesis at least once every six months with the TAC members.

5.2 As a Code of Good Practice, each elected faculty member should not supervise more than 5 doctoral theses at the same time unless some of the PhD candidates are in the process of completing their doctoral thesis or the new position is a funded research position.

6. THESIS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

6.1 For each PhD candidate, upon recommendation of the DPC, a three-member Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) is appointed by the DC. The designated TAC is responsible for guiding and supervising the doctoral thesis.

6.2 The TAC shall consist of the main Thesis Advisor who must be an elected Faculty member of the Department and two additional members who may be members of the Academic Staff of the Department or other Department of the University or other recognized University or University Research Center. Members outside CUT are appointed given that there are no scientifically relevant (expert) faculty members at CUT, contingent on the decision of the DC. The Thesis Advisory Committee is responsible for guiding the research work of the doctoral student and supervising the writing of the thesis, but also monitoring the process through all the stages of the doctoral student's evaluation. The members of the Advisory Committee are mainly selected according to their own research interests and activities in the specific field of enquiry of the particular doctoral research work.

6.3 Depending on the topic of the Doctoral Thesis (DT) and the judgment of the TAC, up to 2 External Advisors may be appointed. The External Advisors must be doctoral degree holders, but not necessarily academic staff. Members of the Faculty at the School of Health Sciences, other Schools and Departments of CUT and academic institutions of the country and/or abroad, as well as other experts, may be included as external advisors without the status of member of the TAC.

7. THREE-MEMBER EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

7.1 The doctoral candidate shall defend the Doctoral Thesis (DT) in front of a three-member Examination Board. This Committee (Board) is nominated by the Departmental Postgraduate Studies Committee with the recommendation of the Thesis Advisor and appointed by the DC, and consists of:

The candidate's Thesis Advisor, following the unanimous opinion of the other two members of the Thesis Advisory Committee that the thesis is to be examined.

A faculty member from another Department of the University or from another University or Research Center at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor with prior experience in examining doctoral theses.

One member from another University or Research Center, at the rank of Associate Professor or Professor with prior experience in examining doctoral theses.

7.2 The Chair of the Examination Board is the Faculty member with the highest academic rank, but not the Thesis Advisor. The other two members of the Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC) attend the doctoral dissertation defense process as observers.

8. STAGES OF THE DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAM

8.1 It is the responsibility of the Thesis Advisory Committee to submit to the Secretariat of the Department a complete research protocol and the tentative title of the PhD thesis within four months of a successful Oral Qualifying Exam. In case the topic of a doctoral thesis changes, the minimum time for obtaining a doctorate is estimated from the time of approval of the new thesis topic.

8.2 The research protocol shall include at least the following sections:

- (a) theoretical background, where the importance of the proposed research is emphasized;
- (b) the purpose and specific objectives or research hypotheses of the proposed study;
- (c) the proposed materials and methods (e.g. measurement scales, statistical analysis);
- (d) expected results and expected contribution; and
- (e) a relevant timetable for the implementation of the planned work.

The purpose of this process is to ascertain and verify the quality and originality of the research proposal and to make the necessary modifications, additions and other recommendations if and where the Committee considers the proposal to be incomplete. Following the approval of all three members of the Thesis Advisory Committee, the protocol is submitted in its final form to the Department's PSC.

8.3 At the end of the 2nd semester and not later than the 5th semester, doctoral students are invited to take a **Comprehensive Oral Qualifying Examination** before the Thesis Advisory Committee. If, at the decision of the three-member Advisory Committee, the candidate succeeds in the examination, the DPC shall give a written approval to the student-doctoral candidate to continue with his/her dissertation. In case the student is not successful at the Comprehensive Examination, the PSC invites the student again to take the comprehensive examination within the next semester. Doctoral students who have completed all required coursework, but who have not

passed their Oral Qualifying Examination may register for research credits for **one semester only**

8.4 The purpose of the comprehensive examination is to evaluate the student's range of theoretical knowledge, skills and competences in Research Methodology, as well as more specialized knowledge of the specific subject area of his or her PhD. The student must submit a written report of 2500-5000 words to the Secretariat of the Department no later than one month before the scheduled date of the examination, describing the research activity up to that point as well as the planned activities for the future. The text should include at least (a) a comprehensive evaluation of the relevant literature which displays a grounded understanding of the general research topic of the dissertation, (b) a description of the methodology and analytical processes that have been or are planned to be used, and (c) if any, preliminary results and/or pilot study results.

8.5 The examination shall be oral after the applicant has presented his work to the Thesis Advisory Committee. If the members of the TAC have any doubts about either the substance of the proposal or the student's general level of understanding of the subject of the thesis, then the student will have three months to prepare a second presentation with a focus on the areas of doubt. The Committee shall inform the DPC of the outcome of the examination. The student can continue his research work only if the proposal is accepted.

8.6 After six semesters from entry into the Doctoral Study Program, given the student successfully completed the Comprehensive Examination, and following the consensus of the members of the Thesis Advisory Committee that the Doctoral Thesis is nearing completion, the Doctoral Candidate may request the appointment of a **three-member Examination Committee**. The Examination Committee is appointed by decision of the Departmental Council following the recommendation of the Postgraduate Studies Committee:

- a. Lapse of six semesters at minimum from the date of entry into the study program.
- b. Presentation of at least one paper at a local, Greek or international scientific conference
- c. Publication of at least one thesis-related article in an International scientific journal with a peer review system, as first author. It is also expected that the candidate will have prepared two additional manuscripts as first author, in the form of a scientific article, in publishable form even though these may not have been published yet.
- d. Certificate of attendance and successful completion of the compulsory courses of the doctoral study program.
- e. Request to the DPC by the student to proceed to the defense of the doctoral thesis accompanied by the following:
 - i. Copy of doctoral thesis signed by the three-member Thesis Advisory Committee.
 - ii. Curriculum Vitae

8.7 The TAC shall forward to the Departmental Council the student's request for the appointment of the three-member Examination Board along with their suggestion

for the members for the Council's approval. The decision of the Council is notified to the candidate and the members of the three-member Examination Board.

8.8 The date of the defense is announced publically at least 20 days before the Examination, and shall not exceed 4 months from the date the invitation was send out.

8.9 The **defense** of the dissertation by the candidate is open to the public in accordance with the relevant rules of the University presided over by the three-member Examination Board. Specifically, each doctoral candidate is asked to defend the originality and quality of his/her research work during an oral presentation in the form of an open lecture. The examination consists of the presentation by the candidate, which lasts not more than one hour, followed by one hour of open discussion, and a closed meeting of the Examining Board to decide on the outcome of the doctoral thesis defense.

8.10 At least one month before the doctoral thesis is presented publically; the candidate must provide a copy of the thesis to each member of the Examining Board. The PhD thesis can be written in English. In this case, the abstract is also provided in Greek. The candidate must also make the necessary arrangements so that the date of the thesis defense is announced publically by the DPC.

8.11 After the thesis presentation and the oral defense examination, the Examination Board meets in a closed session and considers the originality of the thesis and its contribution to science. Any corrections, changes and/or suggestions for improvement are attached to the Examination Board's report and a specific timetable is given to the candidate for their completion. The Thesis Advisor records the minutes of the examination procedure which, after being signed by all the members of the Examination Board, are deposited with the Secretariat of the Department together with one signed copy of the doctoral thesis by all members of the Examination Board.

8.12 If the dissertation defense is satisfactory (and, in case corrections were required, only after the relevant written confirmation from the Thesis Advisory Committee to the Postgraduate Studies Committee for their successful completion) the candidate must submit at least three original copies of the thesis; one for the library of the University, one for the Department's archive and one for the Thesis Advisor.

8.13 The Chair of the Examination Board submits their recommendation to the Departmental Council for their consideration, and the Departmental Council submits their recommendation for the award or not of the doctoral title, via the Faculty of Health Sciences Council, to the University Senate. The report of the Examination Board submitted for Senate's consideration must convincingly justify the recommendation for the award of the title by analyzing the importance and the originality of the research carried out and therefore recording its scientific contribution to the specific field of enquiry.

8.14 In case of failing to pass the dissertation defense, the candidate has the right to request the procedure to be repeated once more. In this case, the time and the conditions for re-submission of the thesis shall be determined in writing by the Examination Board.

8.15 When the Departmental Council approves the Examination Board's positive recommendation, the candidate may be awarded a certificate of completion by the Department. The doctoral title is officially awarded only by the Senate.

9. DURATION OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

9.1 The maximum period of time for completing the doctoral thesis may not exceed eight (8) academic years from the date of acceptance into the doctoral program up to the formal appointment of the Examination Committee. After the expiry of this maximum time, the Doctoral Candidate is automatically ceased.

9.2 If the Examining Board proposes changes or improvements, the candidate may be granted an extension of up to one year to implement these changes or improvements (section 1.8.1.4.10 in the Postgraduate Rules).

9.3 Suspension of studies from the doctoral program may be granted only in exceptional cases (e.g., army recruitment, unexpected and serious personal/family reasons and health problems) following a decision of the Council.

10. STRUCTURE OF THE DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAM

10.1 The curriculum at the Cyprus University of Technology is based on the European Credit Transfer and Summation System (ECTS). The ECTS is a student-centered system and is based on the workload required to achieve the goals of a program by obtaining European Credit Units (ECTs) for each course.

10.2. Students are expected to submit to the DPC a Prospective Program, i.e. a preliminary plan in which students list the formal course work they intend to take to support their doctoral studies by the end of the first semester and to submit their Final Program by the end of the third semester. Course work presented in the Final Program must be completed prior to the Oral Examination. An exception for a maximum of 10 ECTS to be completed after the Oral examination can be granted from the Departmental Postgraduate committee on an individual basis. Approval of the Final Program rests with the DC.

10.3 Students preparing their prospective and/or final programs are required to present course work totaling a minimum of 60 ECTS in post graduate courses (including 10 ECTS for CII810-Research Methodology) and at least 180 ECTS for research. The DPC will consider course work taken for previous Master's or Doctoral programs from CUT, or other Universities to be applied towards the Prospective and

Final Programs (see 9.5). Preparation of the research protocol, the comprehensive examination and the writing of the PhD thesis correspond to 60 credits while the purely research process of the program corresponds to 180 credits.

10.4 The taught part of the program includes at least one compulsory course equivalent to 10 ECTS – Research Methodology (CII810) and another 50 ECTS from other graduate courses (see 9.5 and Tables 2 and 3). For the course on Research Methodology, doctoral students are not charged tuition fees, as provided by the Quality Assurance of doctoral theses framework approved by the Senate.

10.5 Pursuant to the General Rules of the Postgraduate Degree of the University, the possession of a postgraduate degree at Master's level or equivalent and at the discretion of the Department, partially exempts the student from the requirement of the taught part of the degree. The Departmental Postgraduate Committee will consider course work taken for previous Master's or Doctoral programs from CUT or other universities to be applied towards the required 60 ECTS for course work. Students who wish to apply such previous course work to their studies must submit course descriptions and an official transcript either during the admission procedure or early during the first semester (Table 1). Up to a maximum of 40 ECTS coursework can be credited towards the doctoral program, pending evaluation from the DPC. All Doctoral students must take the compulsory course: CII810 Research Methodology, as per CUT rules and regulations for Quality Assurance for Doctoral Dissertations.

10.6 The Thesis Advisory Committee may, upon recommendation by the Advisor, suggest that the student completes additional courses tailored to the needs of each candidate, whether or not they hold a postgraduate degree. Courses can be either advanced undergraduate or postgraduate and can be offered either by the Department or by another Department of the University, or by another University or a recognized Research Center or international organization not excluding online accredited programs (provided the program already has or can be evaluated in ECTS). These courses may count towards the required 60 ECTS of course work.

10.6 In special cases, doctoral students who do not hold a Master's Degree, and whose admission to the Doctoral Program has been approved by the Departmental Council (in accordance with 3.2 above), a total of 60 ECTS (in the taught part) is required that may include courses at either an advanced undergraduate or postgraduate level and offered either by the Department or by another Department of the University, or by another University or recognized Research Center or international body (provided that the program already has or can be measured in ECTS).

11. OBLIGATIONS OF DOCTORAL CANDIDATES

11.1 The doctoral candidate has an obligation to observe the deadlines and to be consistent with their obligations. If the Advisor and/or members of the Thesis Advisory Committee do not respond to the student's needs, then it is the duty of the doctoral student to bring this to their attention and if needed to the DPC

11.2 The doctoral student should aim to participate in the teaching and research activities of the Department, invigilating examinations, contributing to laboratory and tutorial classes and, in general, participating in scientific activities under the accountability of the Advisor.

11.3 Each doctoral student should aim to participate with or without reimbursement as Teaching Assistant or otherwise in one course for a whole semester during his/her doctoral studies.

11.4 All doctoral students must participate at least once during their studies in the Doctoral students' Colloquium organized by the Department or the Faculty. The Colloquium is organized to provide opportunities for the doctoral candidates to publically present their research work.

11.5 All doctoral students should aim to participate to the Department's "Seminar Series", during the whole duration of their studies.

12. NON RESIDENTIAL DOCTORAL STATUS

12.1 Doctoral students occasionally need to perform dissertation research *in absentia* (non-residential status is defined as requiring the student to live outside of the Republic of Cyprus). To do so, the student must apply to the DPC for approval of non-resident status. The completion of the taught component of the doctoral program and the satisfactory completion of the Oral Qualifying Examination are prerequisites to gain nonresident status—and before the DPC will consider a request for non-resident status, it is necessary for the Thesis Advisory Committee to meet with the candidate to appraise the dissertation plan. The Committee must complete the Annual Progress Report Form and the student must submit it with the petition for non-resident status to the DPC prior to the end of the semester preceding the requested departure. The progress report must include the committee's assessment of the acceptability and feasibility of the proposed dissertation plan, the timing and scope of the periodic written reports required of the student, the arrangements which have been or will be made for direct supervision of the student and an estimate of the minimum period of time the student will spend at CUT prior to dissertation presentation and defense. Nonresident students are required to return to CUT at least once a year for a committee meeting--the remaining biannual meetings/reviews may be done via conference call or e-mail.

It is assumed that the doctoral student will pursue dissertation work on a full-time basis while a nonresident. Therefore, the student must still adhere to the Doctoral Student Timetable. If students wish to change their status from full- to part-time, (or

continue part-time), additional information must be supplied to the DPC declaring the reason(s) research will be conducted only on a part-time basis.

13. TABLE 1: DOCTORAL STUDENT TIMETABLE

Relevant Doctoral Milestones	Time period for completion	Status
Appointment of Advisory Committee	Between 1 st and 2 nd semester	Appointment by the DPC and approval by Departmental Council (c/off main Advisor)
Submit Prospective Program	During 1 st semester	Approval by the DPC
Submission of Research protocol (Tentative title)	Between 1 st and 2 nd semester	Submitted to the Department
Submit Final Program	2 nd semester- latest at the end of 4 th semester (prior to the Oral Exam)	Approval by the DPC
Oral Qualifying Exam (OQE)	After the 2 nd semester and before the 5 th semester	Pass/Fail (two attempts total before termination)
Presentation of Research protocol	After the 2 nd semester and before the 5 th semester (following the OQE)	Pass/Fail (two attempts total before termination)
Appointment of Examining Committee (see 7.6)	After a minimum of 6 semesters from the date of entry as full-time student	Approval by the Departmental Council upon recommendation by the DPC
Scheduling a defense (see 7.7-7.15)	After a minimum of 6 semesters from the date of entry as full-time student and a maximum of 16 semesters.	Approval of the recommendation by the DPC and the Departmental Council. Final approval of title from Senate upon recommendation from Department.
*Annual Progress Reports	Annually	Submitted to DPC/Student Services
*6-month formal Progress Meetings with Advisor	Every 6-months	Submitted to DPC/Advisor

14. TABLE 2: STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAM OF STUDY

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	ECTS
Compulsory courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CII810 Research Methodology 	10
Elective courses (students must select courses from the postgraduate courses described in Table 2 for up to 50 ECTS maximum, in addition to the required CII810) (a) Courses of specialization (b) General Education courses / Free Electives	10-50 N/A
Doctoral research and Thesis write-up	180 (6 semesters of 30ECTS per semester on PhD research thesis)
Practical training	N/A
Total ECTS	240

15. **TABLE 3: COURSE DISTRIBUTION PER SEMESTER.** Students can select any relevant combination from the postgraduate courses shown in the table up to 60 ECTS with 30 ECTS max per semester. Courses can be taken during 2-4 semesters. Research methods is compulsory for all.

A/A	Course Type	Course Name	Course Code	Periods per week	Period duration	Number of weeks/ Academic semester	Total periods/ Academic semester	Number of ECTS
Courses offered in the Fall Semester- may be taken on A' and C' semester of doctoral studies based on need								
1	Theory	Research Methodology	CII810	1	2 h	13wks	26	10
2	Theory	Basic Epidemiology	MPH601	2	2 h	13wks	52	10
3	Theory	Basic Biostatistics	MPH602	2	2 h	13wks	52	10
4	Theory	Research Ethics in PH	MPH604	1	2 h	13wks	26	4
5	Theory	Health Informatics	MPH603	1	2h	13wks	26	6
6	Theory	Neuroscience Methods	RES502	1	3 h	13wks	39	8
Courses offered in the Spring Semester- may be taken on B' and D' semester of doctoral studies bases on need								
7	Theory	Health Education and Promotion	MPH605	2	1.5 h	13wks	39	6
8	Theory	Applied Methods for PH	MPH607	2	2 h	13wks	52	6

9	Theory	Environmental Health Evaluation	MPH608	2	1.5 h	13wks	39	6
1	Theory	Advanced Biostatistical Methods for PH	MPH609	2	2h	13wks	52	8
1	Theory	Environment and Population Health	MPH610	2	2h	13wks	52	8
1	Theory	Global Health	MPH611	1	2h	13wks	26	4
1	Theory	Higher Brain and Cognitive Processes	RES507	1	3 h	13	39	8
C' Semester								
1.	Research	Doctoral Thesis/ courses up to 30 ECTS						30
D' Semester								
2.	Research	Doctoral Thesis/ courses up to 30 ECTS						30
E' Semester								
3.	Research	Doctoral Thesis						30

F' Semester								
4.	Research	Doctoral Thesis						30
G' Semester								
5.	Research	Doctoral Thesis						30
H' Semester								
6.	Research	Doctoral Thesis						30