

EURODOC survey on the Doctorate¹ structure across Europe (version May 2018)
prepared by the EURODOC Doctoral Training Working Group

Ukraine

I. General information and application procedure

Introduction and general information on national legislation in Ukraine:

The system of advanced research qualifications in Ukraine includes scientific degrees and titles. There are two scientific degrees: doctoral degree (former candidate of sciences), and Dr. Sc. Degree (doctor of sciences degree, which is comparable to a habilitation). Besides, there are two scientific titles: the title of docent (or equivalent scientific title "Senior researcher" for doctoral degree holder who are full time doing research without teaching) and the title of professor. Both scientific degrees and titles comprise the formal career development of the researchers in Ukraine.

The process, procedures of doctoral training and awarding of the scientific degrees are defined by the following legal acts:

- The Law of Ukraine of Higher Education (2014);
- The Law of Ukraine of Science and Scientific and Technical Activity (2015);
- The Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from March 23, 2016, No. 261 "On Approval of the Procedure for Preparing candidates for the doctoral degree and Doctor of Sciences in the higher educational institutions (research institutions)" (this document made significant formal changes).

In this report we use translation of legal acts and official documents prepared by panel of EU experts within the PSF Peer Review of Ukraine's research and innovation system (2016).

Which institutions award doctoral degrees?

In Ukraine "Doctor of philosophy degree is awarded by a Specialized Academic Council of a higher education institution or research institution upon successful completion of a relevant doctoral program and passing a public defence of a dissertation at a Specialized Academic Council" (Art. 5 p. 6, Law on Higher Education), which is licensed in several types of institutions:

- Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), i.e. Universities, Academies, and Technical Universities, both public and private ones;
- Institutes of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU);
- 5 specialized National Academies of Sciences: National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, National Academy of Medical Sciences, National Academy of Legal Sciences, National Academy of Arts, National Academy of Agrarian Sciences.

Summary: Higher Education Institutions, institutes of 6 Academies of Sciences.

¹ **Doctorate** is understood as the institutional frameworks and processes geared towards the completion of a doctoral degree.

What forms of doctorate attendance are available?

Doctoral training system is called “aspirantura” (or adjuncture for military and law enforcement research institutions). There are 2 main forms of doctorate attendance available in Ukraine: full-time (day-time and so called evening-time) and part-time doctoral training. Also a non-resident (external) form is possible for “individuals engaged in professional scientific, R&D or pedagogical activity at their main workplace” without interruption of labour activity or by taking a sabbatical leave, they also subject to successful completion of a relevant program and public defence of a dissertation at a Specialized Academic Council.

Summary: full-time, part-time, non-resident (for university teachers and researchers only).

What is the formal length of time foreseen for completing a doctorate?

The formal length of the doctoral training is 4 years (previously it was 3 years for full-time and 4 years for part-time). It must be finished with the defence of the doctoral dissertation and obtaining doctoral degree. It is possible to complete a doctorate earlier. For external candidates the term is 5 years max.

There is a possibility to have a break during the doctorate, in case of mobility reasons, health impairment, maternity leave or for any other serious reason, on request of the doctoral candidate and if approved by the scientific committee (by the University administration).

Summary: 4 years, a possibility to have a break.

What is the status of the doctoral candidates²?

Doctoral candidates in Ukraine have a special status by the law, which is joint one (or even mixed), but traditionally comparable to students, and they don't have any benefits besides scholarship (which is comparable to the one graduate students get).

According to the legal framework in Ukraine, doctoral candidates are called “aspirants” or “adjuncts” (if military) and have different definition in the main legal acts:

- doctoral candidates as students

Law on Higher Education, art. 61 p.3.3: translates “aspirant” as a “graduate student – a person enrolled at a HEI (research institution) for attainment of doctor of philosophy degree”. And introduces a confusing translation of a “doctorant” (postdoctoral researcher) as a “doctoral candidate – a person enrolled in or affiliated to a higher education institution (research institution) for attainment of doctor of sciences degree”.

- doctoral candidates as researchers

By the Law of Science and Scientific and Technology Activity: “aspirant” / doctoral candidate is a scientist who conducts fundamental and / or applied research in the framework of doctoral training at a higher educational institution / research institution for the degree of a doctor of philosophy” (Art. 1, p.2).

Summary: specific status, but closer to student.

What are the social benefits for doctoral candidates with student status?

Doctoral candidates have the right to academic leave for health reasons and maternity leaves (for pregnancy and childbirth, for the care of the child until the 3-year age, but

² **Doctoral candidate** is a person enrolled in a doctorate.

without paying a scholarship for that period), but procedures to obtain these are specific for the different institutions. Social assistance (possibility to rent an accommodation in a students' dormitory, access to sports facilities) can be provided; the institution does not cover health insurance. Doctoral candidates have no discounts for cultural events or public transport and trains.

But doctoral candidates as researchers have a right to be sent for a research internship (traineeship) abroad, and the years of doctorate are counted into a period of general labour activity and into a research activity.

Summary: long-term sickness and maternity leaves, retirement benefits, employment term.

How are doctoral candidates financially supported?

There are two forms of doctoral training depending on financial support: a state-funded scholarship and training for a tuition fee paid by individuals or legal persons. Those, who pay for their programs do not receive any support from the government. Those, who are enrolled for so called budgetary-funded places, receive a basic scholarship (stipend), which is under taxation and is near 100 euro per month.

Foreign doctoral candidates in public institutions must pay a fee or get a scholarship from external funds or from their national foundations.

In Ukraine there is a wide range of possibilities to get additional support from the state and regional authorities: state awards for ECRs by the Government, President and the Parliament, which are also open to doctoral candidates (e.g. Grant of the President of Ukraine for Young Scientists, Award of the Cabinet of Ministers for Young Scientists, etc.), different local and state project grant competitions dedicated to ECRs (e.g. by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the State Foundation for Fundamental Research).

Summary: basic scholarships/stipends, additional possibilities on a competitive base.

What are the admission requirements for a doctorate?

Admission to doctoral training is held on a competitive basis. For state-funded places can be accepted only citizens of Ukraine. Admission to the doctoral training of higher educational institutions and research institutions is carried out taking into account the provisions of their statutes (regulations) in accordance with the procedure established by law.

The admission process consists of two stages:

1. Submission of the documents: an applicant should submit the following main required documents: application form, certificate of Master's (Specialist) degree, CV, list of publications (if any). For foreigner applicants, additional documents can be asked (e.g. translation of documents on education, etc.).
2. Entrance exams: usually 3 exams are carried out on major subject, on a foreign language (at the choice of the academic council to the extent that corresponds to level B2); other forms of entrance examinations (exams, interviews, research proposals, previously there was an exam in philosophy, it is preserved in many institutions).

In accordance with the rules of admission, persons who enter doctoral training from another field of science (specialty) than those indicated in their master's degree may be assigned additional entrance examinations.

The results of entrance examinations for doctoral training are valid for admission to this institution within one calendar year. The special admission examination commission decides on the results.

In a majority of Ukrainian institutions the application process starts in September, but there is no restriction to have spring admission session. The doctoral program usually starts in October (November).

Summary: required qualification, exams, C1 level of foreign language, and formal preliminary procedure.

II. Progression

How is a doctorate organized in your country?

Doctoral training is organized by HEIs and research institutions on a scientific specialties licensed by the Ministry of Education and Science (Attestation Committee, by the Law – by the National Quality Assurance Agency, but it hasn't started yet). The departments and university faculties construct and carry out doctoral programs, organizational support is provided by specially established units – departments for postgraduate education (department of doctoral and postdoctoral training).

Doctoral training consists of the educational component and scientific program. The amount of education component is 30-60 ECTS, which by to the Government Decree must include not less than four components in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework:

1. hard research skills, profound knowledge in the specialty in the relevant field of science (12 and more ECTS);
2. general scientific (philosophical) competencies, professional ethics and general cultural outlook (4-6 ECTS);
3. some universal researchers' skills and some transferable skills, in particular oral and written presentation of the results of his own scientific research in the Ukrainian language, IT in scientific activity, organization and conducting of research, etc. (6 and more ECTS);
4. linguistic competencies (in English or another according to the specialty of the specialty) (6-8 ECTS).

Doctoral candidates who has confirmed their level of knowledge of a foreign language, in particular English, a valid TOEFL test certificate, or the International English Language Testing System, or the Cambridge English Language Assessment certificate, at level C1 have the right to transfer these results as doctoral exam and to be excused of the exams within the training program as well as to use the amount of study load provided for the acquisition of language competences for the acquisition of other competencies (in agreement with the supervisor).

The Academic Council can recognize the competences acquired by a doctoral candidate in other higher educational establishments (research institutions) from one or more disciplines (ECTS transfer).

The scientific component of the educational-scientific program is issued in the form of an individual plan of research activity of the doctoral candidate and is an integral part of the curriculum of the doctoral training. Usually the topic of a dissertation is defined by the

Specialized Academic Council at the beginning of doctoral training and can be changed or modified up to the defence.

Also doctoral program usually has a teaching component (as a teaching internship).

Summary: mandatory attendance of accredited courses, 4 types of courses, teaching is mandatory, subject exams and doctoral exams.

How is doctoral supervision provided?

Doctoral candidates have an individual supervisor from the institution (department, faculty) defined by the Specialized Academic Council at the moment time with his enrolment.

The supervisor carries out scientific guidance on the work on the dissertation, advises on the content and methodology of scientific research of the doctoral candidate, supervises the implementation of the individual plan of the research activity and the individual curriculum and is responsible to the scientific council of the higher educational institution (research institution) for proper and timely fulfilment of the duties of the scientific supervisor. In general 50 academic hours of academic load is allocated to a supervisor to conduct this work.

If it is needed the second co-supervisor can be defined (the work load is shared in this case). It is obligatory to have formal attestation (evaluation) each year also by a supervisor.

Summary: supervisor(s), additional consultative support from department.

What are the main obligations of doctoral candidates?

The Law and the Government Decree define main duties of the doctoral candidates, and institutions may specify them in their statutes and their internal regulations on doctoral training.

Doctoral candidates are required:

- to comply with the legislation, the statute and internal rules and procedures of a higher education institution or research institution;
- to adhere to requirements of occupational safety, health and fire-safety regulations set forth in relevant rules and guidelines;
- to adhere to the moral and ethical norms and standards of conduct of researchers in the research field established by the higher educational institution (research institution);
- to meet the requirements of a program of study;
- to carry out an individual plan of research activity and to systematically report on the progress of its implementation at a meeting of a faculty, department, laboratory or other subdivision of a higher educational institution (research institution) authorized by its academic council;
- to defence in a proper time their own scientific achievements in the form of a dissertation in a specialized academic council.

Doctoral candidates must comply with the academic and research requirements for obtaining doctoral degree (subject exams, doctoral exams, publications, participation in conferences).

Summary: attending courses graded with ECTS credits, reports on results of the research, teaching responsibilities, articles publishing in peer-reviewed and national journals, participation in the conferences.

Is any mobility compulsory?

Doctoral candidates have to participate in the national and international scientific conferences and present their research results (usually mobility is not covered). No other mobility is required to obtain doctoral degree.

Summary: mobility is the right, not obligation, but only short-term mobility to participate in the international conferences.

How are courses in transferable skills provided?

The universities and research institutions have to provide some amount of courses on so called transferable skills, and they have autonomy in constructing their doctoral programs. But usually they do not include courses, which are not closely connected with the field of science. Doctoral candidates can improve their transferable skills by means of informal and non-formal education (lectures, seminars, summer schools, trainings, etc.) provided by councils of young scientists, NGOs, or organized within different international programs, or they can apply for international ones.

Summary: usually no.

How is the progress of the doctoral candidate evaluated?

Doctoral candidates should prepare an annual (or semester) report on the progress of the implementation of their individual plan of research activity, including the information about the achieved results according to the curriculum, amount of publications, participation in conferences, obtained awards, patents, etc. Frequently, reports can include information about organizational and other types of activity depending on the field of science and arts. The supervisor should sign report, and then the report is presented (often personally by the doctoral candidate) and must be positively evaluated at the meeting of the council of the department (chair), which is responsible for doctoral training, that allows continuing the doctorate.

Summary: annual written reports, oral presentation of results.

Is it possible for doctoral candidates to change supervisor(s)?

There is the possibility to change supervisor(s), but only by the decision of the Specialized Academic Council according to the regulations of the particular institution.

Summary: only in exceptional cases (e.g. death of the supervisor, retirement).

Are supervisors required to have training in order to supervise doctoral candidates?

There are no requirements for special training for supervisors in order to be allowed to supervise doctoral candidates. Despite of that, in most cases supervisor must hold Dr.Sc. degree. Summary: no.

III. Defence procedure

What requirements should be met to receive acceptance to enter the defence procedure?

- Education program must be completed and necessary amount of ECTS must be achieved.

- Three doctoral qualification examinations should be passed: i) exam for a level of competency in a particular discipline; ii) exam of foreign language (usually English, but can be others), and iii) exam of Philosophy. The exams can be organized for a group of doctoral candidates or individually, and the examination commission is defined by the HEIs/research institution. If the MSc degree of doctoral candidate does not completely match the speciality of doctorate program, fourth doctoral qualification exam can be added.
- Doctoral candidate must publish 3-5 scientific articles, at least 1 in international peer-review journal, and participate in the scientific conferences.
- A preliminary dissertation evaluation and review of the research results achieved by doctoral candidate must be held by the chair/department/institute (the thesis is recommended to the next stage – a public seminar).
- A public seminar is being held by at the institution, where the doctoral candidate shows the results of his/her research and presents the report. The thesis must be accepted by the scientific board of the institution and recommended to the further proceeding at the Specialized Academic Council.
- The proceeding at the Specialized Academic Council starts with the submission of the documents, and internal expertise of the submitted dissertation by the appointed experts from among members of the Specialized Academic Council. After their positive opinion presented at the next meeting, the Council appoints two experts/opponents (outside of institution where the doctorate takes place, and at least one of them must have a Dr.Sc. degree, both must have publications relevant to field of science of doctorate), an announcement about the defence and opponents must be published in the specialized journal.
- The manuscript of the doctoral thesis is sent for reviewing (average time for receiving the reviews is 60 days).
- Thereafter, if the manuscript meets the qualifications set for dissertations, and doesn't contain any plagiarism, experts declare this by sending positive written statements, and the doctoral candidate is accepted to defence.

Summary: educational component fulfilled, thesis submitted, exams passed, formal requirements fulfilled (articles, conferences, patents if needed).

What documents are required to start the defence procedure?

The doctoral thesis must be submitted in a form of manuscript or monograph together with the report of the thesis (with short abstract in Ukrainian and English). The language of the thesis can be Ukrainian (common), English is allowed (quite rare).

Besides, the documents listed above must be also submitted:

- a list of publications;
- conclusions from an expert committee of the Specialized Academic Council on the quality of the dissertation and evaluation of the research results;
- CV of a doctoral candidate and basic information on the results of his doctoral training and/or results of the doctoral exams;
- supervisor's opinion;
- two positive reviewers' (opponents') conclusions;
- a list of his/her achievements and additional information on the research results.

The dissertation manuscript and report need to be available at least a month before the defence (in library of an institution).

The dissertation, or monograph, publication, report shall be made publicly available on official web sites of the HEIs or research institution. The report (extended summary) is sent out to the HEIs and research institutions in order to get feedback (expert reviews with comments and questions) from prominent scientists in the field.

Summary: manuscript should be printed and presented in electronic version, publications and those in peer-review journals, conferences, supervisor's opinion, opponents' conclusion.

What is the defence procedure?

In Ukrainian institutions the defence of doctoral dissertation is a public event and open to all, except cases when the thesis is dealing with security, military issues. The defence is held at the meeting of the Specialized Academic Council (which has proper state license), which is considered to be lawful in case if not less than two thirds of its members participated in its conduct, as well as not less than four doctors of sciences from each doctoral degree and not less than three doctors of sciences on the specialty of the candidate's dissertation. The personal presence of the supervisor(s) and official opponents is obligatory. A decision of a Council on awarding a degree is considered positive if at least three quarters of the members who participated in the meeting voted for it.

The doctoral defence starts with the presentation of the doctoral candidate profile by the Secretary of the Specialized Academic Council, including information on his/her scientific achievements and fulfilment of the formal requirements. Then a doctoral candidate makes an oral presentation of the thesis and his/her research results, using needed visualization tools (e.g. posters, schemes, PowerPoint, additional material, pictures).

The second stage includes the opponents' personal reading of their reviews, which can include some critical conclusions and additional questions to a candidate. A supervisor also reads his/her opinion on the candidate's work and research. Then the Secretary reads the experts reviews and conclusions, which are received by the Council, they also often include additional questions requiring the answers from the doctoral candidate. After that, a doctoral candidate has a possibility to answer the questions and remarks, and then the critical discussion with the public takes place.

The third stage is the secret voting, candidate and non-member are asked to leave the room. The doctoral degree is awarded if there is quorum of the Council of the institution and more than a half of them vote positively.

But the decision of the Academic Council is not final yet. All documents of the defence, minutes, stenogram and results must be submitted to the Ministry of Education and Science, which at the meeting of the Attestation Committee approves or declines awarding doctoral degree.

Summary: the defence is public, procedure of doctoral defence, oral presentation, discussion, voting, approval by state body, etc.

IV. Other specific conditions

There are specific research integrity requirements.

Disclosure of plagiarism in a dissertation (research report) submitted for defence shall lead to non-award of the research degree. Some cases took place last time: whistle-blowers officially informed the universities and research institutions on the revealed plagiarism in the dissertations submitted and prepared for defence, and the public defences were cancelled and the theses were withdrawn by doctoral candidates.

Disclosure of plagiarism in a defended dissertation (research report) shall constitute grounds for cancelling decision of the Specialized Academic Council on awarding a doctoral degree and terminating of the diploma. If a dissertation (research report) with identified plagiarism was defended in a permanent Specialized Academic Council, the supervisor and official opponents who presented positive reviews about this work, and also the Chair of this Council shall be suspended from participation in this council for the period of two years, and the higher education institution (research institution) shall be subject to revocation of accreditation held by the correspondent Specialized Academic Council and lose the right to set up one-time Specialized Academic Councils for the period of one year.

In case of disclosure of plagiarism, the decision of the Specialized Academic Council on the awarding doctoral degree award shall be cancelled by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education on submission by the Ethics Committee (before the Agency starts operating this function is performed by the Ministry of Education and Science with the support of the Attestation Committee).

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