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# **CONCEPTION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF CYCLE 3 PROGRAMS**

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## **General Provisions**

The conception of internal quality assurance of Cycle 3 programs (hereinafter – Conception) is an integral part of the System of Quality Assurance of Scientific and Educational Activity in Higher Education (System of Quality Management at State University of Trade and Economics (hereinafter – SQM SUTE)).

The Conception is developed according to the requirements of the Law of Ukraine “On Education”, “On higher education”, the instructions of Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (hereinafter – MESU), Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, ISO 9001:2015, Licence Conditions for training activities in higher education institutions, and other laws and regulations.

The Conception serves for quality assessment and improvement of Cycle 3 programs in State University of Trade and Economics (hereinafter – SUTE, the University).

Internal quality assurance of Cycle 3 programs includes the following:

1. Cycle 3 programs are accompanied by internal mechanisms of quality control, which ensure compliance with the officially adopted internal and external quality standards/ instructions and rules.

2. Cycle 3 programs are revised periodically to be improved and updated.

The Conception is developed to monitor, assess, and improve a Cycle 3 program.

### **1. Organizational Activity**

1.1. Organizational structure of Cycle 3 programs includes research, academic, and administrative staff, which guides and coordinates the training activity (Appendix).

1.2. There are rules for PhD study support, which are clear and accessible to PhD students, their academic supervisors, directors of Cycle 3 programs, academic staff, and the heads of academic departments.

1.3. Conditions, rights, and obligations of the University and a PhD student, responsibilities of parties, settlement of disputes are clearly defined in the agreement on training of PhD students.

1.4. Transparency of expectations and obligations of educational process participants is assured by presenting all the fundamentals in the PhD student handbook.

1.5. PhD students and their supervisors follow the well-determined procedures formally documented as the SUTE internal higher education standards and Provisions published on the SUTE official web site.

1.6. PhD studies start from the meeting of PhD students with the rector, Vice-Rector for scientific work, deans, the heads of academic departments, the directors of programs, thesis supervisors, and the staff of a doctorate school administration. The issues for consideration are:

- the common conditions of study and research,

- the rights and the obligations of educational process participants,
- the procedure of thesis performance monitoring;
- the attestation procedure;
- the rules of intellectual property development and protection of intellectual property rights,
- the definition of unlawful research results, adherence to academic integrity and prevention of plagiarism,
- the range of SUTE Cycle 3 programs' regulations.

1.7. The University monitors career progression of the PhD graduates by the Center of Career Development.

1.8. The University introduces and promotes independent and official procedures of consideration of complaints and appeals, which are fair and understandable for all participants.

## **2. Research Environment**

2.1. SUTE research infrastructure includes modern common and specialized technical support and software, free access to all open research information, libraries, and information funds of the University. The University has Financial Research Institute, Business Incubator, Technology Transfer Centre, Scientific Fellowship of students, PhD and doctoral students and young scientists, Laboratory of Distance Learning, specialized laboratories, which ensure research performance and quality of training activities.

2.2. Professional scientific and academic staff executes scientific supervision of PhD students and training support.

2.3. The heads of academic departments, thesis supervisors, Cycle 3 programs' guarantors and doctorate school officials monitor permanently academic progress of PhD students, quality of training activities and completion of individual plans (individual curriculum, individual plan of research) by PhD students.

2.4. The University creates necessary conditions for personal and professional development.

2.5. All the participants of educational process adhere to the SUTE Student's Code of Ethics.

## **3. Enrolment Policy and Criteria**

3.1. According to Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 261 'Procedure of training PhD and doctoral students in higher education institutions (research institutions)' dated March 23, 2016 and Admission conditions to higher education institutions in Ukraine, SUTE Admission Regulation is developed annually by the SUTE Admission Commission. It determines the procedure of admission to entrance exams and competitive selection.

3.2. Enrolment to Cycle 3 program is performed within a scope of the license by the specialties from the List of fields and specialties for enrolment of applicants, which is approved by Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 266 dated April 29, 2015.

3.3. The entrance exams are permitted for those applicants who previously gained the academic degree of Master or Specialist and submitted all documents timely in accordance with the Admission Rules.

3.4. If the scores are equal, the applicant who has conducted research and published his / her works in scientific publications by the selected specialty is privileged.

3.5. The procedure of selection to Cycle 3 programs is open, transparent, while the decision on enrolment is made collectively by the selection board, basing on the decisions of relevant course committees, and published on the University web site usually on the day of enrolment, but not later the next day after enrolment date.

3.6. The course committees include academic staff, who are specialized in the particular study field and who has valuable research results in the relevant sphere.

3.7. An applicant, who submits the diploma issued by a foreign higher education institution, is permitted to entrance exams on the equal basis with other applicants. Enrolment of such applicant is performed in case of successful completion of entrance exams and the decision made by SUTE Academic Board on recognition of such diploma.

#### **4. Cycle 3 Program**

4.1. The University has gained the licenses on 15 Cycle 3 programs. System of educational components is determined within a program. It also determines the requirements for applicants, the list and the logframe of study courses and, number of ECTS credits necessary to complete this program, and the expected learning outputs, competencies to be acquired by a PhD student.

4.2. The goal of a Cycle 3 program is to provide a PhD student with in-depth knowledge, skills, and other competencies to generate new ideas, solve complex problems in professional and/or research and innovation activity through scientific and pedagogical methodologies, and conduct research of scientific novelty, practical and theoretical meaning.

4.3. A Cycle 3 program specifies at least four groups of competences, being in line with the National Qualification Framework. Among them are deep professional knowledge, general scientific (philosophical) competences, cross-functional research skills, language competences.

Scientific component of a Cycle 3 program envisages conducting of scientific research and formalisation of its results within a thesis.

4.4. A Cycle 3 program complies with the requirements of Higher Education Standard in terms of:

- number of ECTS credits;
- competences to be acquired;
- learning outcomes;
- forms of PhD candidates' appraisal;
- requirements of functionality of a system of quality assurance in higher education.

4.5. SUTE ensures the right of a PhD student to elect training courses from the pool, determined by the educational component of a Cycle 3 program, as well as the relevant curriculum, which cover at least 25% of a study load in ECTS.

4.6. Educational component combines self-study with obligatory attendance of lectures, practical trainings, and scientific seminars. Researches are supervised by a highly qualified doctor of sciences (a PhD as an exception).

4.7. PhD student is supported permanently to make qualitative research timely through its systematic planning, including the planned consultations, advanced trainings, seminars; participation in research works, etc.

4.8. The University supports participation of PhD students in competition for grant support for research and scholarships, founded in honor of outstanding scientists, academics, culture and public persons, as well as established by the President of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, state and non-state bodies, enterprises, institutions or organizations.

4.8. The criteria of monitoring and improvement of Cycle 3 programs in SUTE are formulated by the results of feedback of academic staff, PhD students, graduates, partners, and other stakeholders as well as by projected development of specialties and change of society needs.

4.9. Updated Cycle 3 programs are the component of SQM SUTE. They are included into ECTS Portfolios, which are published annually on the official website of SUTE.

## **5. Supervision of PhD students' scientific work**

5.1. Thesis supervisor is assigned by SUTE Academic Board among scientific and academic staff, who has a doctor (PhD as an exception) degree. He or she executes the thesis supervision, provides advice on the content and methodology of a PhD research, controls the implementation of the individual plan of research and the individual curriculum of a PhD student, and responds to SUTE Academic Board for the proper and timely performance of own responsibilities as a thesis supervisor.

5.2. SUTE Academic Board may decide on appointment of two thesis supervisors for a PhD student with an appropriate distribution of academic workload and responsibilities between them.

5.3. SUTE Academic Board decides to assign a doctor of philosophy to carry out PhD thesis supervision according to the recommendation provided by an academic council of the faculty. The criteria for providing thesis supervision are the following:

- supervision or participation in researches;
- publications (min 10), published after his / her own PhD thesis defence in domestic and / or foreign (international) peer-reviewed journals, of which at least three publications are in periodicals included in the scientometric databases Scopus or Web of Science.

5.4. As an exception, SUTE Academic Board may change a thesis supervisor for a PhD student in answer to his or her inquiry.

## **6. Procedure of monitoring PhD study outcomes**

6.1. Management and monitoring of PhD learning outcomes are performed by the director of a Cycle 3 program, who is accessible for communication with PhD students and provision with their feedback.

6.2. Study progress and results of completing the individual curriculum and individual plan of research are discussed twice a year on the meeting of academic departments and academic councils of faculties. The decision on further study of a PhD student is taken by the results of consideration.

6.3. The procedure of monitoring of the results of individual curriculum and individual plan of research completing by PhD students is determined in the Regulation on organization of PhD training in SUTE (approved by SUTE Academic Board – minutes 10 dated April 28, 2016) and the Regulation on assessment the learning outcomes of students and PhD students (approved by SUTE Academic Board – minutes 9 dated April 26, 2018). It involves thesis supervisor, the head of relevant academic department, and the reviewers from this academic department. The results of the consideration on the academic department meeting and the academic council of a faculty are formalized in appropriate minutes. They are stored in the file of a PhD student in a doctorate school.

6.4. A PhD student submits a thesis for consideration of the head of the relevant academic department and the reviewers after its completion (or planned stage of completion) by the permission of the thesis supervisor.

6.4. The procedure of considering the controversial issues related to a thesis completion, monitoring of its outcomes, supervision of its performance is determined in the SUTE Documented Procedure 8.7-01 «Control of inconsistencies» and Regulation on adherence to academic integrity by scientific and academic staff, PhD students of SUTE, approved by the SUTE Academic Board (minutes 6 dated January 28, 2018). A PhD student may appeal a formal decision in a due course.

## **7. Final assessment**

7.1. The result of PhD study is a thesis as the qualified research work performed by a PhD student personally in the form of a manuscript prepared or a monography published. The PhD thesis prepared for defence should contain scientifically grounded theoretical or experimental results, scientific positions, as well as should be characterized by the integrity of its content along with the evidence of the individual scientific contribution of PhD student. Quality of a PhD thesis and its adherence to academic integrity are the basis for a PhD degree awarding.

7.2. A PhD thesis should be formalized in accordance with Cabinet of Ministers Resolution No. 40 On approval of requirements to a thesis design dated January 12, 2017.

7.3. The procedure and the terms of preliminary examination of a thesis by the relevant academic department and the members of an interdepartmental panel, thesis defence in the specialized academic council are well determined in the Regulation on the assessment of PhD students and doctoral students in SUTE, approved by SUTE Academic Board (minutes 10 dated June 21, 2018).

7.4. The thesis expertise and discussion on the department meeting are performed by highly qualified staff – PhDs and doctors of science. If necessary, the academic staff of other SUTE academic departments may be involved as reviewers. The procedure of selection, approval, and assignment of reviewers are clearly determined in the Regulation on the assessment of PhD students and doctoral students in SUTE.

7.5. The result of a thesis consideration at the meeting of academic department is the conclusion about its compliance with the requirements and completion, as well as its recommendation for consideration the thesis by the interdepartmental panel. The results of discussion are formalized with the extract from the minutes of the academic department meeting.

7.6. The members of the interdepartmental panel are qualified professionals, namely professors, doctors in sciences, associate professors (PhD), who have relevant research experience of research, the members of specialized academic councils for thesis defence. The goal of the interdepartmental panel meeting is a conclusion on relevance, scientific novelty and practical value of thesis, comparing with the existing achievements of Ukrainian and world science.

7.7. A conclusion is made and the extract from the minutes is formalized by the results of the interdepartmental panel meeting. Common positive conclusion is the rationale for submitting a PhD thesis to a specialized academic council.

7.8. The PhD degree is awarded as the results of public defence of a PhD thesis. The latter helps to ascertain a conformity of the level and extent of a PhD student's knowledge, skills, and other competences to the requirements of higher education standards. PhD thesis defence is carried out openly and publicly in the permanent or one-time specialized academic council of SUTE or other higher education institution or a scientific institution. A PhD student has the right to choose a specialized academic council.

7.9. The only a thesis (scientific report), which is performed by a PhD student personally, is allowed for defence. Disclosure of the violations of academic integrity in the theses submitted to defence appears a reason for refusal to award the corresponding degree of higher education.

7.10. PhD student may appeal the results of the expertise and a formal decision in a due course.