

WP1 – STOCKTAKING

REPORT ON THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

1. Introduction

This report summarizes the main conclusions obtained from the reading of the UZ legislation about doctoral education, the analysis of the questionnaires submitted by some universities of Uzbekistan, and the discussions held during the project First Study Visit in Tashkent (June 30 – July 2, 2014).

The analysis of the Uzbek legislation about doctoral education enabled us to understand that a reform was carried out in 2013 (see Figure 1). According to the new legislation, the title of “Doctor of Science” can now be obtained after a doctoral education of three years.

It is worth to mention that, previously, the title of “Doctor of Science” could be reached only after finalizing the full doctoral education (six years), whereas an intermediate title of “Candidate of Science” could be obtained after three years (see Figure 2). The consequence is that, from now on, students who followed two different tracks (both in the former and in the new Uzbek system of doctoral education) can own the same title of Doctor of Science.

Apart from this main feature of the new legal framework, the analysis of the nine questionnaires helped us to highlight the following issues, which were duly discussed at the Study Visit: entry procedure, supervision and quality assurance, activities of doctoral candidates (teaching, learning, transferable skills), admission criteria for final defence.

2. Entry procedure

There are two types of doctoral candidates: senior researchers (with scholarship) and independent researcher (without scholarship).

2.1 Senior researchers

Quotas are rated by field/speciality and university. A call is opened each academic year by September 15, informing about those quotas. Students can then submit an application in the period between October 15 and November 15.

Applicants must hold a Bachelor’s degree (4 years) and a Master degree (2 years) diploma. If applicants do not hold the mentioned diplomas, a diploma of higher military education or PhD obtained abroad can be accepted.

In addition, scientific and pedagogical experience (2 years) must be acquired (at least 3 articles, 2 abstracts, 1 or more patents) and Competence Test passed.

2.2 Independent researchers

Independent researchers must hold a Bachelor's degree (4 years) or a Master degree (2 years). Practical experience of (5 years) must be acquired, and applicants must pass a Competence test.

2.3 Common procedures for senior and independent researchers

Once the Competence Test has been passed, applicants are allowed to select a topic either in a national database of research topics (managed by the Uzbek Higher Attestation Commission) or by proposing a topic themselves, which has to undergo a two steps approval (first step at local level; second step at state level).

The procedure to create the national database of research topics is as follows:

- May 1 topics are proposed by university Professors and evaluated by the university scientific councils.
- May 15 a list of recommended topics is sent to the Uzbek Committee for Coordination and Development of Research and Technology. This Committee selects the topics proposed by the Uzbek HEIs according to the national research priorities.
- By June 1 the Database of Research Topics is created and published on the Higher Attestation Commission website.

Once the topic has been selected (from December 1 to 20) applicants must pass 4 oral admission examinations (about the History of Uzbekistan, Philosophy, English, and an exam on the selected specialty). These oral exams are evaluated by a commission composed of the university Rector, 5 Professors (approved by the Rector), and external members if necessary.

The results of these exams are published between December 22 and 25, and successful applicants start doctoral studies in January.

Critical issues – There is no autonomy for Universities concerning admission procedures; the choice of research topics is fully centralized; there might be difficulties for applicants to find the topics in the database. In addition, there are not clearly stated transition procedures from old to new system available.

3. Supervision and Quality assurance

Supervision is carried out in a traditional way (1:1 master-apprentice model).

Any experienced person who has a degree of Doctor of Science can be selected as a supervisor.

Candidates can choose the title and supervisor of dissertation from the list provided by the Committee for Coordination of Development of Science and Technologies of the Cabinet of Ministers-HAC-Scientific council of HEI.

One or more than one supervisor can be appointed per doctoral candidate.

The monitoring of the activity of supervisors is carried out by the Scientific Council of HEI (i.e. annual reports).

Critical issues – There are no training courses for supervisors; there is little awareness about transferable skills.

4. Activities of doctoral candidates

A workload of 36 hours per week is expected, including 12 hours of learning activities and 4 hours of teaching.

Critical issues – Teaching and learning activities are heavy and research activities could be affected, also considering the number of publications requested (see below).

5. Admission criteria for final defence

A candidate has to publish at least:

- 15 research papers, of which at least 10 papers must be published in scientific journals recognized by the Higher Attestation Commission (HAC)
- 2 papers must be published in international specialized scientific journals, determined by the HAC
- 2 papers in proceedings of international scientific conferences, one of the conferences abroad

Final defence can be presented after 3 years, with a possible extension of 1 year. To finalise the doctoral studies the following procedure is applied:

- **Step 1:** Defendant presents the results to the supervisor for reviewing.
- **Step 2:** Defendant presents the results to Departmental Council (internal).
- **Step 3:** The department recommends the results to the consideration of the Scientific Council at the university level.

- **Step 4:** The Scientific Council discusses the results and appoints 3 external opponents and 1 external leading university¹ for reviewing.
- **Step 5:** The Scientific Council allows the candidate to publish the summary and sets the date for the defence
- **Step 6:** The candidate sends the summary to all members of the council and to the universities in the field (reviews arrive from other universities or scientists)
- **Step 7:** After 1 month the defence will take place (10 days prior to the defence the opponents send reviews and the leading university provides its recommendation for the defendant to prepare a reply)
- **Step 8:** Defence in front of 21 members of the Scientific Council of the university, 3 opponents, a representative of the HAC, the supervisor and public. Defence languages allowed are Uzbek, Russian, English and Qaraqalpaq
- **Step 9:** Secret vote by 21 members of scientific council (resolution by scientific council is formalized by minutes)
- **Step 10:** Within 1 month the dissertation together with complimentary documentation is sent to HAC for final approval

Critical issues – Publication requirements are too demanding; procedure to obtain the doctoral degree and access the final defence seems very complex; the definition of “international publication” could be too generic; Many European universities refer to the JOURNAL CITATION REPORTS, a list of selected journals with impact factor (<http://thomsonreuters.com/journal-citation-reports/>).

6. Conclusions

The reading of the UZ legislation about the doctoral education, mainly the new legislation from 2013, the analysis of the nine questionnaires submitted to some UZ Universities and the discussions held during the First Study Visit at Tashkent enabled us to analyse the present situation of doctoral education in Uzbekistan (entry procedure, supervision and quality assurance, activities of doctoral candidates, admission criteria for final defence) and gaining understanding about the main features and critical issues, which will be duly considered in the future for possible actions.

Moreover, the analysis of the questionnaires and the reading of the Uzbek legislation highlighted a significant lack of a common and precise vocabulary related to doctoral education. It appears mandatory to prepare of a glossary to avoid misunderstandings and enhance communication.

¹ We agreed this term refers to a reference university in a specific topic. Presently, an official list of these universities is not available.

7. References

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- Law on Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 1997
- Resolution N° 365 About measures for further improvement of system of postgraduate education and certification of scientific and pedagogical shots of the top skills. 28/December/2012
- Resolution N° 2440 About the adoption of the Provision on scientific council on award of a scientific degree of the Doctor of Science. 25/March/2013
- Resolution N° 2441 On the adoption of the Provision on an order of award of a scientific degree of the Doctor of Science. 25/March/2013
- Resolution N° 2443 About the approval of the Law about expert council. 25/March/2013
- Resolution N° 2444 About the adoption of the Provision on an order of assignment of academic statuses. 25/March/2013
- Decree On further improvement of the System of Training and Certification of the Scientific and Scientific-pedagogical Staff of higher qualification. 2012
- Resolution On development and Introduction of State Education Standards for Continuing the education System. 1998
- Regulation of the functioning of the Higher Attestation Commission

8. Acknowledgments

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- Tashkent State University of Economics
- Tashkent State Pedagogical University
- Tashkent Financial Institute
- National Institute of Arts and Design named after Kamoliddin Behzod

9. Figures

Figure 1. Educational system of the Republic of Uzbekistan as from 1st Jan 2013.

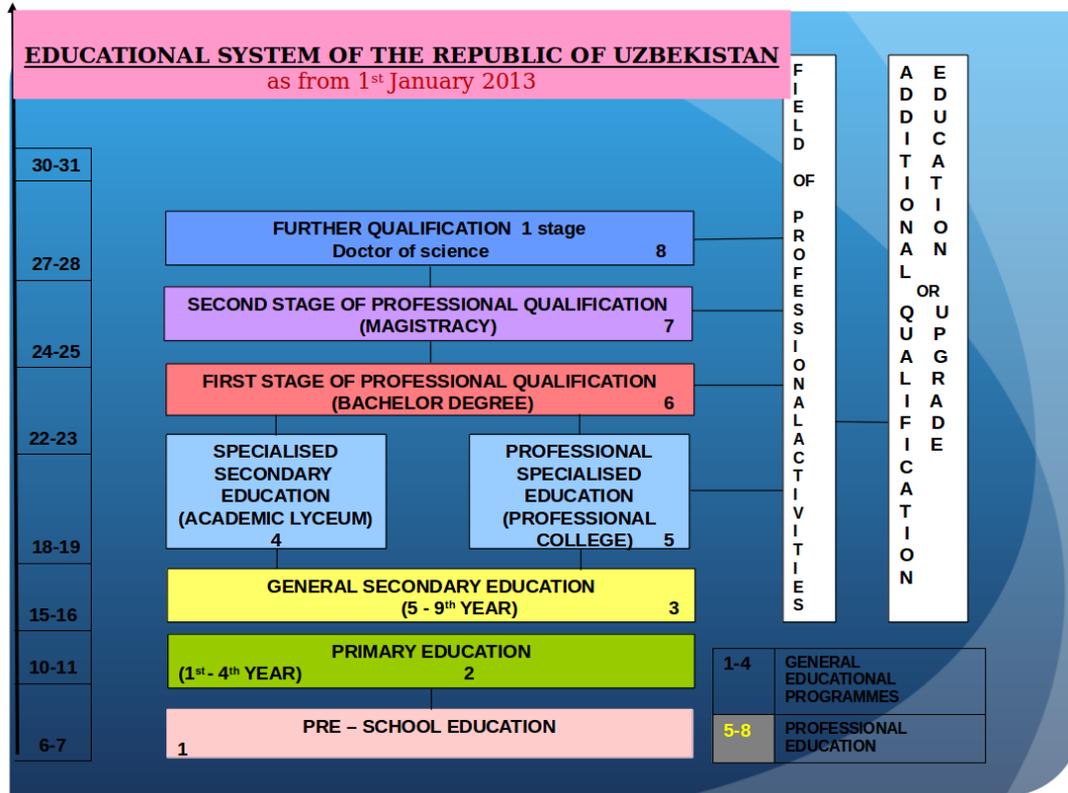


Figure 2. Educational system of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 1st Jan 2013.

