

ADOPTED by the Senate of the University of Tartu  
Regulation no. 8 of 26 November 2021  
(effective as of 26 November 2021)

AMENDED by the Senate of the University of Tartu  
Regulation no. 6 of 29 April 2022  
(effective as of 29 April 2022)

AMENDED by the Senate of the University of Tartu  
Regulation no. 12 of 28 October 2022  
(effective as of 28 October 2022)

## ADMISSION RULES FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES

Adopted based on subsection 13 (1) of the Higher Education Act, subsection 2<sup>3</sup> (4) of the University of Tartu Act and clause 12 (2) 5) of the Statutes of the University of Tartu.

### I. General provisions

1. The admission rules for doctoral studies ('rules') of the University of Tartu ('university') regulate the admission of applicants to the university's doctoral programmes.
2. An applicant is a person applying for doctoral studies at the university. An international applicant is an applicant who does not have Estonian citizenship, long-term residence permit or permanent right of residence.
3. The rector
  - 3.1. establishes the following for the next academic year by 1 November at the latest:
    - 3.1.1. the total number of student places financed from the state activity support ('state-funded student place') by faculties;
    - 3.1.2. the conditions of opening student places not financed from the state activity support ('non-state-funded student place');
    - 3.1.3. the admission schedule in line with clause 9;
  - 3.2. opens non-state-funded student places based on the dean's request, considering the conditions specified in clause 3.1.2, four times a year, following the admission schedule;
  - 3.3. forms by 15 January a doctoral admission steering committee for the following academic year, tasked with observing compliance with the rules and adopting decisions in matters not regulated in these rules.
4. The vice rector for research establishes the acceptable ways of proving language proficiency at level B2 required for starting studies. To take effect for the admission for the following academic year, changes must be made by 1 November at the latest.
5. [repealed as of 29 April 2022]
6. The dean

- 6.1. establishes the distribution of state-funded student places by the specialisations of the doctoral programme within the total number of student places established by the rector;
- 6.2. announces admission to state-funded, non-state funded and unfilled student places according to the admission schedule established by the rector and taking into consideration the provisions of clauses 8–10 of these rules;
- 6.3. forms the admission committees;
- 6.4. establishes the content of the admission requirements and the specifications concerning the assessment of their fulfilment. Changes concerning the admission of the following academic year must be made by 31 December.  
[effective as of 1 December 2022]
7. An admission committee organises the assessment of the fulfilment of admission requirements, assesses the fulfilment of admission requirements, and forms a ranking list of applicants for admission. At least three members of the committee take part in assessing the applicant.
8. Admission to doctoral studies takes place by way of public competition unless the rules provide otherwise. The dean may announce one or more competitions per programme by specialisations or projects or jointly for several specialisations. In a specialisation competition, application is based on the applicant's research plan or the list of research topics approved by the dean. In a project competition, application is based on the list of projects approved by the dean. The call for competition must specify whether or not the applicants are also considered for the junior research fellow's position in addition to the student place, and the workload of the position. [effective as of 28 October 2022]
- 8<sup>1</sup>. Organising a public competition is not required if the doctoral student starts work outside the university under a cooperation agreement and the doctoral student's employment contract is concluded to fulfil the doctoral student's individual plan. [effective as of 28 October 2022]
9. Competitions are organised in four admission periods according to the schedule established by the rector. Applications are submitted in February for the first admission period, May and June for the second admission period, September for the third admission period, and November for the fourth admission period.
10. Admission to state-funded student places takes place in the first and second admission periods. If state-funded student places remain unfilled in the first and second admission periods, admission to them may also be announced in the third and fourth admission periods. Admission to non-state-funded student places may be announced in all four admission periods. In the first admission period, also admission to the non-state-funded student places of the current academic year may be announced.
11. Information about the competitions, admission requirements and other information necessary for application is published on [www.ut.ee/](http://www.ut.ee/) and [www.ut.ee/en](http://www.ut.ee/en) according to the admission schedule established by the rector. [effective as of 29 April 2022]
12. The university's official environments for exchanging admission-related information are the admissions information system SAIS ([www.sais.ee](http://www.sais.ee)) and the admissions information system for international applicants DreamApply ([www.dreamapply.com](http://www.dreamapply.com)).

## **II. Application requirements**

13. Upon applying for doctoral studies,

- 13.1. the applicant must have obtained a master's degree or equivalent qualification based on a nationally recognised curriculum. An applicant who has not yet obtained the required qualification by the time of applying in the first or second admission period may do that by 1 August of the same year at the latest, except if the applicant applies for a non-state-funded student place of the current academic year;
  - 13.2. the applicant must submit the admission application ('application') and other documents required in these rules;
  - 13.3. the applicant must meet the admission requirements or the requirements of the competition specified in clause 16;
  - 13.4. the applicant must comply with the terms arising from an agreement forming the basis for the financing (e.g. cooperation or grant agreement) or another similar document;
  - 13.5. the international applicant must certify their English language proficiency at the minimum level of B2, excl. in the specialisation of Russian and Slavonic Philology, in which the applicant must certify their Russian language proficiency at the minimum level of B2.
14. During one admission period, the applicant may submit one application to apply in one competition.
15. Applicants are admitted to doctoral studies based on a ranking list formed on the basis of points received for the fulfilment of admission requirements.
16. The following are considered equal to a public competition of the University of Tartu:
- 16.1. a competition organised by the financer in case the person applies for a non-state-funded student place financed from outside the university;
  - 16.2. a public competition organised by the financer or employer in case the person starts employment outside the university under a cooperation agreement;
  - 16.3. a competition organised by the partner university in case the person applies for a non-state-funded student place under a cotutelle agreement.
17. The requirements of the competition deemed equal to a public competition of the University of Tartu are published on the website specified by the financer or employer. The university verifies the applicant's compliance with the requirements stipulated in clause 13.

### **III. Admission requirements**

18. Admission requirements are:
- 18.1. a doctoral thesis project, if the applicant applies with his or her research plan or based on the list of research topics approved by the dean, or
  - 18.2. a motivation letter, if the applicant applies based on the list of projects approved by the dean, and
  - 18.3. an interview.
19. The fulfilment of admission requirements is assessed in points. The highest possible score for the doctoral thesis project or motivation letter and the interview is 100 points, with each of the admission requirements accounting for up to 50 points, except in the specialisation of law of the doctoral programme of Social Sciences, where the doctoral thesis project or motivation letter accounts for up to 60 points and the interview up to 40 points. [effective as of 29 April 2022]

20. Applicants whose doctoral thesis project or motivation letter has received at least 70 per cent of the possible maximum score are invited to the interview. The interview may be held using real-time two-way audio-video communication. To be allowed to the interview, the applicant presents an identity document.
21. The results of the assessment of the fulfilment of admission requirements are published as follows:
  - 21.1. the results of the assessment of the doctoral thesis project or motivation letter at least one day before the interview takes place;
  - 21.2. the results of the interview on the day of making the admission decision at the latest.
22. If the applicant applies in several application periods, the applicant is assessed again every time.
23. The chair of the admission committee has
  - 23.1. the right to allow an applicant who failed to appear at the interview with a good reason to come to the interview at another time;
  - 23.2. the obligation to remove the applicant from the interview or not to consider the applicant's written submission in the event of academic fraud.
24. An applicant must notify the admission committee of the good reason for failure to appear at the interview no later than on the date of the interview or immediately after the reason ceases to apply.
25. An applicant who receives less than 70 per cent of the maximum score in the assessment of either admission requirement does not meet the admission requirements.

#### **IV. Submission of documents**

26. To apply for doctoral studies, the applicant must submit the application, a curriculum vitae including the list of research papers, either a doctoral thesis project or motivation letter according to the admission requirements, and other documents specified in the rules electronically. If the applicant cannot submit the documents electronically, the application and documents may be submitted on paper.
27. The electronic application and documents are submitted on the information exchange environment specified in clause 12. An application and documents on paper are submitted to the Student Admissions unit of the university's Office of Academic Affairs.
28. Electronically submitted documents must be digitally signed or confirmed with a digital signature or stamp. Paper documents are submitted
  - 28.1. as original documents and their copies or
  - 28.2. as copies certified by a notary or issuer.
29. In the application, the applicant must choose the language(s) of instruction established for the specialisation. [effective as of 29 April 2022]
30. If information is not available for the university from national registers via the information exchange environment specified in clause 12, the applicant submits the following documents:
  - 30.1. a diploma and diploma supplement certifying a master's degree or equivalent qualification or, in the absence of the latter, a transcript of records. An applicant who cannot submit the qualification documents by the time of applying in the first or second admission period may do that by 7 August of the same year at the latest, except if the

applicant applies for a non-state-funded student place of the current academic year;  
[effective as of 29 April 2022]

30.2. an identity document or its copy;

30.3. a document certifying the change of name of an applicant who has changed their name;

30.4. advisably an assessment of the Estonian ENIC/NARIC on the equivalence of the qualification to the master's degree if the applicant has obtained the master's degree or equivalent qualification in a foreign country and is a citizen of Estonia or has a long-term residence permit or a permanent residence permit of Estonia; [effective as of 29 April 2022]

30.4<sup>1</sup>. a diploma and diploma supplement of the first level of higher education if the applicant has obtained the master's degree or equivalent qualification in a foreign country;  
[effective as of 29 April 2022]

30.4<sup>2</sup>. a description of the educational background, drawn up by the Estonian ENIC/NARIC, if the applicant is a beneficiary of international protection, an applicant for international protection or a person in a similar situation and is unable to submit all or part of the documents certifying a master's degree or equivalent qualification.

[effective as of 29 April 2022]

30.5. in the case of an international applicant, a document certifying English or Russian language proficiency at level B2 according to clause 13.5.

31. Documents are submitted in Estonian or English. Along with documents not in Estonian or English, the applicant must submit Estonian or English translations certified by the issuer or a notary or translated by a sworn translator.
32. To verify and specify the information provided in the application, the university has the right to use the study information system of the University of Tartu and the Estonian Education Information System, make inquiries to educational and other institutions and submit documents certifying education to the Estonian ENIC/NARIC for the purpose of assessing the qualification.
33. If the information provided in the applicant's application is incomplete or the applicant fails to submit all the required documents by the deadline set by the rector, the university has the right to reject the application.
34. The application, the copies and transcripts of documents submitted upon entering the university and the written assignments are not returned.

## **V. Filling student places**

35. The university admits an applicant who complies with the requirements set in clause 13 and whose place in the ranking list is within the number of student places established in accordance with clauses 3.2 or 6.1 of the rules. A decision on admission to the university becomes effective if the applicant has submitted the documents specified in clause 30.1 of the rules in due time.  
[effective as of 29 April 2022]
36. A person can be admitted to a non-state-funded student place financed from outside the university if the person has successfully passed the competition organised by the financier and complies with the requirements set in clause 13.

37. A person working or starting to work outside the university under a cooperation agreement who meets the requirements specified in clause 13 can be admitted upon successfully passing the competition organised by the financier or employer or, based on clause 8<sup>1</sup>, without undergoing competition. The prerequisite of starting studies is a valid employment contract for fulfilling the individual plan. [effective as of 28 October 2022]
38. A person can be admitted to a non-state-funded student place under a cotutelle agreement if the person is matriculated in the partner university and complies with the requirements set in clause 13.
39. The university informs the admitted applicant of the admission decision in the information exchange environment specified in clause 12 by the deadline established by the rector.
40. An admitted applicant must notify the university of taking up studies by the deadline established by the rector in the information exchange environment specified in clause 12 or by sending a corresponding application in a format that can be reproduced in writing to the Office of Academic Affairs. Failure to notify by the prescribed time is considered a waiver of the student place, and the vacant student place is filled with the next applicant in the ranking list.
41. The university has the right to revoke the decision on the admission to the university if it becomes evident that
  - 41.1. the applicant's education level or qualification does not provide access to doctoral studies;
  - 41.2. the applicant has submitted forged documents or false information or has committed academic fraud to comply with admission requirements;
  - 41.3. the applicant has considerably violated generally accepted norms of conduct or academic practice;
  - 41.4. the university and the applicant applying to become junior research fellow fail to reach an agreement on the conditions of the employment contract within one month from accepting the student place and the applicant cannot be offered a non-state-funded student place. [effective as of 29 April 2022]
  - 41.5. a long-term visa or a residence permit for study is not issued to the applicant. [effective as of 28 October 2022]
42. An admission decision is revoked by the doctoral admission steering committee on the proposal of the vice rector for research.
43. The university is not liable for any material or non-material damage arising from the revocation of an admission decision.
44. An applicant who has been admitted to the university and has notified that they take up studies is matriculated. An applicant admitted in the first or second admission period is matriculated from the beginning of the autumn semester; an applicant admitted in the third or fourth admission period is matriculated from the beginning of the spring semester at the latest. If an applicant is admitted in the first admission period to a non-state-funded student place of the current academic year, the applicant is matriculated by the end of the spring semester at the latest.
45. The supervisor in charge may submit a reasoned request to the dean to postpone the matriculation of an applicant admitted in the first or second admission period. If the dean approves the request, the applicant is matriculated from the beginning of the spring semester

at the latest. The dean informs the Office of Academic Affairs of postponing the matriculation by 19 August at the latest.

## **VI. Appealing decisions regarding admissions**

46. It is possible to appeal the result of the assessment of admission requirements. For that, a written appeal must be submitted to the vice rector for research within three working days after the publication of the result. The appeal is reviewed by the appeals committee formed by the vice rector for research, comprising at least the chair of the admission committee and a member of the admission steering committee. The appellant is informed of the committee's decision within three working days after submitting the appeal.
47. Other decisions and acts regarding admissions can be appealed by submitting an appeal to the vice rector for research within five working days after the publication of the decision or doing the act. The vice rector for research may forward the appeal for review to the admission steering committee who reviews the appeal following the procedure established by the rector. The applicant is informed of the decision within seven working days after submitting the appeal.
48. The applicant is entitled to receive feedback on the assessment of the fulfilment of admission requirements if the applicant requests that within 30 days after the publication of the assessment results.

## **VII. Implementing provisions**

49. The Admission Rules in Doctoral Studies, adopted by the Senate of the University of Tartu regulation no. 4 of 26 February 2016 and amended by regulation no. 9 of 28 October 2016, regulation no. 4 of 27 October 2017, regulation no. 5 of 24 November 2017, regulation no. 7 of 26 October 2018, regulation no. 1 of 31 January 2020, regulation no. 9 of 19 June 2020 and regulation no. 13 of 27 November 2020, are repealed.
50. In the admission of applicants applying in the fourth admission period of 2021/2022 and in the filling of non-state-funded student places of the academic year 2021/2022 in the first admission period of 2022/2023, the Admission Rules in Doctoral Studies effective until these rules took effect are applied.
51. The content of the admission requirements and the specifications concerning the assessment of their fulfilment established by the faculty council for the academic year 2022/2023 under clause 5 of these rules remain in force until the end of admission for the academic year 2022/2023.  
[effective as of 29 April 2022]
52. Citizens of the Russian Federation who, under the legislation of the Republic of Estonia, cannot apply for a long-term visa or residence permit for study or do not have a valid legal basis to stay in the Republic of Estonia until the end of the curriculum's standard period of study are not eligible to apply to the university in the 2023/2024 academic year.  
[effective as of 28 October 2022]