

Regulation of PhD training
at Doctoral School, University of Science and Technology of Hanoi

(Issued together with decision Ref. signed on ¹⁴⁰2.0.16/2017 by USTH Rector)

Chapter 1. GENERAL DEFINITIONS

Article 1. General context

This regulation describes the training process at doctoral level at Doctoral School, University of Science and Technology of Hanoi (hereafter named as USTH-DoS) including student recruitment, training program, management of training process, thesis evaluation and diploma awarding.

Other matters relevant to the PhD training but not described in this document are regulated following the decret referenced 08/2017/TT-BGDĐT dated 4th of April 2017.

Chapter 2. ADMISSION

Article 2. Recruitment of PhD students

1. Recruitment of PhD students is opened for 02 waves per year (January and July of each year).
2. Recruitment of PhD students is processed through a two steps process: (i) screening of application package and (ii) admission interview.

Article 3. Qualifications required for applicants

1. Applicants must hold a Master degree in the field of application or a field relevant to the field of application; or
2. Applicant hold a Bachelor degree with a grade of excellence* (*GPA over 9.0/ 10 for a 4 year training program and over 8.5/10 for a 5 year training program) in the field of application or a field relevant to the field of application.
3. Applicant demonstrates a level of English being sufficient to develop research project activities and integrate within research group/ laboratory.
4. Applicants who are under contract with a company/ institution should have an official letter from their company/institution to allow them to applying for a PhD training at USTH-DoS.

Article 4. Advertisement of admission waves

1. USTH-DoS prepares the call for applications 03 months prior to the date of commencement of application; submits for approval of USTH rector and advertises at USTH, the official call being sent to other universities and institutes.

2. The list of training fields, the number of positions available for each field, available research topics proposed by USTH academic staff and/or international scientists should be prepared by USTH-DoS and submitted to USTH Rector for official approval after getting approval from USTH-DoS Council. The list is approved for each academic year.

Article 5. Decision on creation of a recruitment jury

1. USTH-DoS direction with support from secretary screens the application documents. In the case needed, USTH-DoS direction consults USTH-DoS Council and/ or (Co)-Directors of relevant Department about the quality of applicants prior to proceed the recruitment jury step.

2. USTH-DoS director issues decision on the creation of a recruitment jury for each qualified applicant. **The jury should consist in:**

(i) A member of USTH-DoS council or his/her representative having expertise in the field of application (Jury Chairman)

(ii) Director/ co-Director of concerning Department or Director/ co-Director or his/her representative of concerned Research Laboratory (Jury Member).

(iii) Senior scientist (preferred to be external scientist) who is an expert in the field of the PhD topic (Jury member: Supervisor(s) of thesis could suggest this member)

(iv) Scientist who is an expert in the field of the PhD topic or relevant (e.g. Department lecturer) (Scientific secretary of Jury)

(v) Director/ co-Director of PhD thesis topic (Jury member(s) who are not eligible for voting).

Article 6. Duties/ Responsibilities of Admission Jury

1. Evaluate application and academic capabilities of applicant. It includes but is not limited to:

(i) Evaluation of PhD research proposal co-proposed by the applicant and supervisor(s). The admission jury suggests modifications of the research proposal if needed.

(ii) Decision on supplementary modules of relevant master levels, if any, that applicant should complete together with PhD training modules.

Article 7. Approval for final admission results

1. USTH-DoS Council approves admission results from admission juries. On the basis of the admission jury evaluation and number of available positions, DoS council makes a ranking of applicants in each training field. DoS council decides the list of qualified applicants and those on the waiting list.
2. Based on the suggestion of DoS council, USTH rector issues a decision on the final admission result.
3. USTH-DoS send its final decision to all applicants of each wave.

Chapter 3. TRAINING PROGRAM AND TRAINING ORGANIZATION

Article 8. Training period

1. PhD students are trained on the basis of a full time training program at USTH laboratories and/ or at laboratories cooperating with USTH.
2. Training period of 03 years for PhD student possessing a Master diploma
3. Training period of 04 years for PhD student possessing a Bachelor diploma.

Article 9. Management of PhD candidates

1. Once the enrollment process of new recruited student is completed, DoS requests the Student Services Department to issue the 1st student card (Hereafter, PhD student is referred as PhD candidate). Enrollment is annually renewable and subjected to the approval of supervisor(s) and the completion of annual duties assigned to PhD candidates (completion of PhD training modules, presentation at DoS Doctoral day, *etc*).

Article 10. Training program

1. The training program consists in 06 semesters corresponding to 36 months (for candidate holding a Master diploma) and 08 semesters corresponding to 48 months (for candidate holding a Bachelor diploma) counting from the date of issuance of the admission letter by USTH rector to each PhD student.
2. Training program consists in 180 ECTS, including:
 - (i) 04 ECTS of common courses: Selected among following available courses: Research method (02 ECTS), scientific writing (02 ECTS), History of natural sciences (02 ECTS), intellectual property and rights (02 ECTS).
 - (ii) 15 ECTS of specialized courses (05 modules) at PhD training level (Thus, excluding the Master courses that each PhD candidate should follow in parallel as per request of his/her admission jury).

These specialized courses are developed by the Departments involved in the doctoral training program. These courses are delivered by qualified scientists of the relevant Departments.

Each PhD candidate should select 03 courses in the field of his/her PhD research topic and 02 courses in relevant field(s). A PhD candidate can valid elective courses through other academic activities, *e.g.* Oral presentation at USTH Doctoral Day (0.5 ECTS), Oral presentation at a national conference (0.5 ECTS), Oral presentation at International conference (1.0 ECTS) *etc.*

(iii) 150 ECTS of PhD thesis.

3. Student should complete at least 75% of training courses (excepting the PhD thesis) within the first 02 years of training.

Article 11. Conducting PhD thesis research

PhD thesis work represents the most important part of the PhD training program at USTH-DoS. The thesis is the major factor for the evaluation of candidate in order to award the USTH PhD diploma.

During the training program, depending on the progress of the research project, supervisor(s) and PhD students decide appropriate period(s) to conduct research at USTH research laboratory, a USTH associated laboratory (*e.g.* LMI Rice), a USTH consortium laboratory and/or at a laboratory that has signed MOU with USTH given that at least haft of total research period should be at USTH research laboratory and/or USTH associated laboratory in Vietnam.

Article 12. Mid-term evaluation

1. The academic progress of the candidate (*e.g.* completion of supplementary courses at Master level, PhD training common courses, PhD specialized courses, English capability in communication and in scientific work) and progress of PhD research project is evaluated after the first half of the regular training time.

2. On the basis of a proposal made by supervisor(s) and candidate, the USTH-DoS council creates a committee to be in charge of the evaluation. The midterm evaluation committee should be composed of:

(i) A member of the USTH-DoS council having expertise in the field of the PhD research topic (Committee chair).

(ii) Two scientists from the concerned departments where the research is conducted and/or where the candidate integrates academically.

(iii) Supervisor(s) of the PhD research work.

3. The committee evaluates, offers ideas/ discussion and suggests appropriate changes (if any) to be made in order to advance in the PhD research project.

4. The committee approves for the change of PhD research topic and/ or supervisor(s) as per request of supervisor(s) and the candidate.

If not, the committee approves the midterm results.

5. After the midterm evaluation and no later than 06 months before the end of the regular PhD training time, and on the basis of a written request by the candidate and his/her supervisor(s), the committee re-evaluates the thesis work that has been completed and decides whether an extension is needed or allowed. An extension of 12 months is applicable. In the case another extension is demanded by candidate and supervisor(s), the same evaluation process is applied.

Article 13. Changes made during the training program

1. During the first half of the regular training period, PhD candidate and supervisor(s) can request for changes in PhD research topic and/ or the name of supervisor(s). The midterm evaluation committee evaluates and approves or not this request.

2. If the contents of the research topic remain similar to those of the research proposal, the title of the PhD thesis (final) can be changed in comparison with that initially offered in the proposal. Supervisors and candidate decide this change and submit written explanation to USTH-DoS together with the submission of the final thesis manuscript.

Article 14. Lecturers qualified by USTH-DoS for teaching at PhD training level

1. Each academic year, the director of department submits to USTH-DoS Council the list of PhD training modules available at the department together with the list of scientists proposed to be in charge of these training modules. The USTH-DoS Council evaluates and approves these training modules and qualified lecturers.

2. Qualified lecturers for teaching PhD programs (except for training MS modules) should:

(i) Hold a PhD diploma in the field of or relevant to the PhD training module.

(ii) Have at least 03 years of working experience after PhD graduation.

(iii) Be active in research in a period of 03 years prior their involvement in PhD training program.

Article 15. Scientists qualified by USTH-DoS for supervising and advising PhD research work

1. With the objective to allow the PhD research at USTH-DoS to meet the international standard, USTH-DoS requires 02 qualified scientists to supervise the PhD research work.

Among them, at least 01 scientist should be USTH faculty or French visiting scientist working in USTH-laboratories or USTH-associated laboratories in Vietnam. The second supervisor should be a qualified scientist of any citizenship who is working in a high education and or research institution aboard or in Vietnam.

Qualified supervisor should:

- (i) Hold at least a PhD diploma.
 - (ii) Have at least 03 years of working experience after PhD graduation.
 - (ii) Be an active researcher in the period of 03 years prior to the supervising of the PhD thesis research work.
2. With the aim to promote research capability of young lecturers at USTH, the USTH-DoS encourages 01 young lecturer having an appropriate expertise to involve in the PhD research work and act as an advisor (or a mentor) to candidate.

Qualified mentor should:

- (i) Hold at least a PhD diploma.
 - (ii) Be active researcher in the period of 02 years prior to the involvement in the PhD thesis project.
3. Each academic year, USTH-DoS Council calls for application from USTH academic staff for qualification as a PhD supervisor or PhD mentor. USTH-DoS council evaluates application and submits to USTH Rector the evaluation result. USTH Rector issues decision on awarding a qualification that is subsequently communicated by USTH-DoS to future applicants.

In the case of international scientists, qualification is evaluated in the same time with the evaluation of the PhD proposal.

Article 16. Roles and duties of supervisor(s) and mentor

1. Supervise and advise candidate in conducting daily research work, developing academic capability.
2. Advise candidate to choose their appropriate PhD training modules and other academic activities (short stay in an international collaborating lab, attending and/or presenting at national, international conferences, schools etc)
3. Support candidates in his/her future career orientation (e.g. involve he/ she in teaching activities as a teaching assistant if he/she aims to apply for an university faculty position).

4. Offer a critical and constructive annual evaluation related to the candidate progress, that is subsequently considered as the major factor for USTH-DoS council evaluation for midterm approval, scholarship, financial support etc.
5. Provide the final written approval for the PhD thesis manuscript before it is submitted to the USTD-DoS council for evaluation.

Article 17. Duties of PhD candidate

1. During the regular and extended training time (if any), the PhD candidate works full time within the research group led by the supervisor(s) and/ or mentor as a research assistant.
2. The PhD candidate should fully integrate in the academic life of the host laboratory/ institute/ department (*e.g. involve in appropriate meeting/ discussion/ exchange/ seminar etc*).
3. The PhD candidate should fully follow regulations applied by USTH-DoS (*e.g. full payment tuition fee on time, completing all common and PhD training courses within the first 02 years of the regular training time allowed, attending and presenting PhD research work at annual USTH-DoS doctoral day as it is compulsory etc*)
4. At the start of each academic year, PhD candidates should submit a progress report with the approval of supervisor(s) and mentor to USTH-DoS. This progress report together with the evaluation form separately submitted by supervisor(s) is a critical element for evaluation for the yearly validation, scholarship, financial support etc.
5. PhD students should be ready to reply/ explain to requirements demanded by the Supervisor(s), mentor, USTH-DoS council, Midterm evaluation committee and PhD thesis jury regarding any features of the PhD training program, of PhD research work and PhD thesis.
6. A PhD candidate is not allowed to contact with any member of the PhD thesis jury, under any form of communication, prior to the thesis defence day.

Article 18. Duties of departments and offices

1. Each department creates training courses in the corresponding field for training at PhD level and ensures the operation of these courses. Each academic year, each department should offer at least 03 PhD training courses. The department submits the course content and name of scientist in charge to USTH-DoS council for approval.
2. The department creates conditions to support the integration of PhD students in the departmental academic life (*e.g. offer teaching assistant or lab assistant position to PhD candidate, organize seminars, workshops, working meetings etc*).

3. The department, in close cooperation with supervisor(s), suggests to USTH-DoS council appropriate scientists for Midterm evaluation committee and PhD thesis jury.
4. USTH-DoS and DRITT in cooperation with the Departments manage the PhD training program.

Chapter 4. THESIS EVALUATION AND THESIS DEFEND

Article 19. Requirements for a PhD Thesis

1. Results reported within the PhD thesis should be collected by the candidate himself/herself and or collected in collaboration with other scientists wherein candidate makes significant contributions in design of research, data collection and analysis. In the latter case, a written letter from collaborator(s) allowing to co-share the data should be provided. In any case, candidates and supervisor(s), mentor are responsible for the contents of the thesis.

2. PhD thesis should be written in English. Abstracts in Vietnamese and in English are demanded. An abstract in French is encouraged.

PhD thesis should be written in appropriate format/ style widely accepted/ applied by each specific community. However, it should reply to the general format requirement applied by USTH-DoS.

3. At the time of thesis manuscript submission to USTH-DoS for reviewing, at least 02 research papers issued of the PhD research work wherein candidate is the main author should be already published/ accepted for publication wherein at least 01 paper in an international peer-reviewed journal within the ISI-Scopus system. Higher requirement could be applied to a specific training field subjected to written demand of the concerned department and approval of USTH-DoS Council.

Article 20. Thesis evaluation and Thesis defend

1. The thesis manuscript submitted is first verified by USTH-DoS Office for general requirements: *e.g.* format, publication, paperwork demanded etc.

2. The thesis manuscript is subsequently evaluated by the internal committee which preferably should be the same midterm evaluation committee. In case the midterm evaluation committee could not be re-conducted, the USTH-DoS council proposes a new evaluation committee keeping the highest number of members of the midterm evaluation committee as possible. The internal committee evaluates the thesis manuscript, suggests changes/ modifications/ revisions if needed, to ensure the quality of the thesis prior to its submission to the final thesis jury.

3. USTH-DoS, takes into account the proposal made by supervisor(s), mentors and director of the concerning department, decides the composition of jury to evaluate the PhD thesis manuscript.

The final jury should be:

(i) Composed of at least 05 members including supervisors. All members, except for the mentor, should have the same qualification as qualified PhD thesis supervisors at USTH. Over 50% of members are external scientists. Relatives of the candidate should be excluded of final jury for any circumstance.

(ii) Composed of a jury president who is an internal scientist and expert in the field of the thesis work or in a relevant field.

(iii) Two reviewers who should be external scientists and experts in the field of the thesis work and who are not relatives of the candidate.

(iv) Examiners who could be either external or internal scientists of the field or a relevant field to the field of PhD thesis work; PhD thesis supervisor(s), mentor.

4. Following the decision on creation of final thesis jury, the USTH-DoS sends the manuscript to the two assigned reviewers (both soft and hard copy). No later than 04 weeks after receiving thesis manuscript for reviewing, reviewers should submit their written reports and evaluation form to USTH-DoS. Reviewers are required to clearly indicate in their evaluation whether the thesis is suitable for defense, suitable for defense subjected to minor/ major revision, or if the thesis is rejected in its current form.

5. Upon receiving positive reviewing reports from both reviewers and taking into account the availabilities of all jury members, USTH-DoS submits the dossier to USTH rector for approval regarding the schedule of thesis defend: *e.g.* time, venue, format etc.

6. In the case wherein the thesis work should be protected for the license (e.g. research contract with private companies), and subjected to the written request of supervisor(s), USTH-DoS submits to USTH Rector for a private defense section.

7. USTH Rector issues a decision on the final thesis defend. This decision is widely communicated at VAST information department, USTH-DoS, DRITT, concerned departments, etc. This Decision should be issued and communicated no later than 10 working days prior to the date of PhD thesis defend.

8. On the day of thesis defense, the jury should not process the evaluation process if the jury president or one of two reviewers is absent.

9. The thesis defense is an academic activity dedicated to scientific exchange but also a final examination aimed at evaluating the academic capability of candidate and his/ her

work done. Besides the evaluation of the candidate and his/ her work, the thesis jury offers a critical but constructive comments/ suggestions/ enquiries in order to bring the PhD thesis to the international standard (French PhD thesis standard).

10. After the evaluation section, the jury makes a private deliberation and decides if the candidate is awarded the USTH PhD diploma and if any changes/ modifications/ corrections should be made on the thesis manuscript. These changes/ modifications/ corrections should be approved by the jury president in a written form. In the case the candidate is not awarded USTH PhD diploma due to the insufficient quality of the Applicant and/or the quality of his/her thesis work, the jury emphasize enquiries that the candidate should complete before the thesis could be re-examined.

11. The USTH PhD diploma is awarded without mention.

Chapter 5. DIPLOMA AWARDING

Article 21. After defense process and diploma awarding

1. The candidate submits 02 hard copies + 01 soft copy of the final thesis approved by the jury president to the USTH Library and 01 hard copy to the Vietnam National Library.

2. The candidate submits to USTH-DoS document certificates the submission of thesis copies to USTH Library and Vietnam National Library.

3. USTH-DoS completes documents required for the PhD diploma awarding. Documents include:

(i) Decision issued by USTH Rector on the composition of the jury and the thesis defense.
(ii) Defense minutes co-signed by all jury members with a conclusion of the thesis examination result.

(iii) Reports written by two reviewers

(iv) Certificates of thesis submission issued by USTH library and Vietnam National Library.

3. Upon completing this required document, within 10 working days, USTH-DoS submits request to USTH Rector to awarding the PhD diploma to the success candidate.

4. USTH Rector issues a decision awarding PhD diploma to successful candidate.

5. PhD diploma is printed out only 01 time per year and awarded to successful candidate within the subsequent opening ceremony of USTH.

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