

UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY – SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTRICAL & COMPUTER ENGINEERING (ECE) GRADUATE STUDIES PROGRAM

DOCTORAL STUDIES (PhD) PROGRAM

POLICY COMPENDIUM

1. GENERAL REGULATIONS & PROCEDURES

Within the Graduate studies framework, the Doctoral Studies (D.S) at the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering (ECE) lead to the awarding of a Doctoral Diploma (D.D.) according to the existing provisions.

1.1 GOVERNING BODIES AT THE DEPARTMENTAL LEVEL

- Specific Membership General Assembly (SMGA).
- Graduate Studies Steering Committee of (GSSC)
- Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

Extensive reference to their composition and operation is made in paragraph 5 of the present document.

2. STUDENT SELECTION AND PROGRAM ENROLMENT

2.1 Candidates

Holders of a Master's Degree (MSc) related to the subject areas of the ECE Department have the right to apply for admission to the PhD program. An MSc with a Thesis option is actually a prerequisite for the candidates of the PhD Program, according to the provisions in appendix A.

Only in exceptional cases non holders of an MSc Degree can be admitted as PhD candidates as listed below:

1. Graduates of Electrical and/or Electronic Engineering Departments as well as graduates of Computer Engineering Departments from Accredited Institutions of Higher Learning, domestic or foreign
2. Graduates of other Engineering Departments from Accredited Institutions of Higher Learning, foreign or domestic
3. Graduates of non-Engineering Departments of domestic or foreign Accredited Institutions of Higher Learning
4. Graduates of Departments from Junior Technical Colleges, whose subject area is related to Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, Telecommunications and Networks, according to the conditions of the Law currently in effect

Prospective PhD students may submit their admissions application throughout the academic year, only after securing support statements from at least one faculty member of the ECE Department.

2.2 APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Those desiring to be admitted to the PhD program must submit to the ECE Department Secretariat the following Application Package:

1. Admissions Application
2. Certified copies of all degrees previously awarded
3. Detailed transcripts for all the years of undergraduate and any possible graduate studies
4. English language proficiency proof, substantiated by a relevant certificate corresponding to at least the National Foreign Language Exam System Level B2 or other certification of working knowledge. Excluded from this obligation are those holding an undergraduate or graduate degree from a foreign institution whose language of instruction is the English.
5. At least two (2) letters of recommendation, submitted through the online recommendation letters handling system. The letters should be provided by Faculty members from the candidate's originating education institution or Faculty members from other education institution familiar with the candidate's scientific skills. In the case of candidates with significant working experience, letters from their work supervisors are accepted as well.
6. Detailed Curriculum Vitae that necessarily includes the following:
 - a) A brief report of the candidate's research interests, including the reasons for which the candidate is interested in graduate studies at the ECE Department.
 - b) List of scientific publications, if they exist and
 - c) Thesis abstract, in case it is completed or is being completed by the candidate

Additionally, any other piece of information that the candidate considers in support of one's application can be included.

7. Candidates admitted to the program, during the enrollment period, shall present a Formal Statement according to the Greek Law 1599/86 declaring that they "are not already enrolled in the ECE Department, and until the completion of the doctoral studies in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, do not intend to enroll to a doctoral program of another Department"

The documents 3, 5 and 6 are considered essential for the consideration of the application and not submitting them implies its automatic rejection.

3. STUDIES, COURSES AND POSTGRADUATE DEGREES

3.1 Duration of studies

The duration for obtaining a PhD Degree starting from the time of the initial enrollment to the graduate program is defined (see Graduate Studies Internal Regulation, University of Thessaly, Article 5, and

Paragraph 2) as follows:

- For students holding an MSc Degree three (3) years minimum to eight (8) years maximum.
- For students not holding an MSc Degree four (4) years minimum to eight (8) years maximum. In this case the PhD student will have to attend a series of graduate courses suggested by the G.S.S.C and approved by the S.M.G.A. as described in appendix A.

In addition to the time limits mentioned above, the successful completion of the Postgraduate Program also presumes the accomplishment of the obligations listed in Paragraph 3.3

3.2 Criteria for Awarding a Doctoral Degree (PhD)

The candidates for a PhD should meet the following requirements:

- Fulfill the conditions of attending an organized curriculum of courses offered within the Graduate Studies Program for their enrollment as PhD students, as mandated by the “Prerequisites Regulation for PhD Candidates” described in appendix A
- The condition of attendance of these courses must be met within a period no longer than two (2) years. In the first year particularly, the number of courses, the candidate successfully attends cannot be less than half of the total number of courses, determined, at candidate's enrollment.
- Demonstrable specialization in a research area. The student's satisfactory progress, after receiving the MSc degree (if requested), will be certified every academic year by an Annual Progress Report submitted by the Advising Professor and a three member committee, at the end of each year after the Committee's appointment. The report is examined by GSSC and approved by SCGA. It is necessary for the student to be allowed to continue his or her studies. In case the annual progress report is rejected, on the recommendation of the GSSC, the PhD student is directly dismissed from the PhD program.
- Doctoral Dissertation Write up.

It is possible, with the approval of the SCGA, within the framework of the existing legislation and the University of Thessaly Internal Regulations, that the requirements for each degree offered be amended. The same holds for the evaluation method of the candidates.

Candidates who fail to meet the conditions set forth for the awarding of a Doctoral Degree (PhD), is immediately dismissed from the ECE Department.

A PhD student, who has been dismissed from the PhD program for any reason mentioned in the present regulation, does not have the right to be ever again apply to this Department.

3.3 Assistantships

All PhD students have to offer their assistance in the undergraduate courses of the Department. The type of the assistance depends upon the needs of the undergraduate program .e.g. conducting and supporting tutorial and lab sessions, supervising exams, etc. In particular:

- PhD students have to offer assistance to what is the equivalent of six (6) hours per week maximum, every semester.
- Those enrolled in the MSc program who do not offer any assistance in a given semester are precluded from participating in the graduate course exams of the MSc degree program for that semester.
- The assistance assignment is conducted by the GSSC.

- The assistance is confirmed by the instructor of the undergraduate course and is communicated to the secretariat of the Department. Graduate students' continued refusal to assist, for two consecutive semesters implies their automatic dismissal from the Graduate Studies Program.
 - The cumulative assistance of each candidate is verified prior to the awarding of any graduate degree.
 - In certain cases, with the approval of the SMGA, part of this obligation described above can be fulfilled with assistance in other areas, such as Technical Support for the Department's or the Lab Compute Systems.
 - PhD students could supervise under graduate thesis, after consultation with Professors. This work is not considered as assistance and does not exclude the student from the obligation to assist for six (6) hours, maximum every week.
 - The GSSC will evaluate the assistance work at the end of each semester. A related work confirmation will be provided to the students that will be positively evaluated, and the assistance will be registered in their records.
 - Participation in exam session supervising is mandatory. Only the PhD students on leave of absence are exempt from the obligation of supervising exam sessions. Regarding supervising exam sessions:
 - Exam Supervisors have to communicate with the course instructor well ahead of time, in order to arrange the details, e.g. time of arrival
 - Exam Supervisors must sign the "Supervisors' Attendance Form" during the exam session.
 - Upon the GSSC proposal, the following imply a written warning:
 - a) Refusal to accept the task of exam supervisor
 - b) Absence from the exam session
 - c) Unsatisfactory performance during the supervision task
- Three (3) total warnings imply the student's dismissal from the program

3.4 Enrolment to the Doctoral Studies and the courses

3.4.1 Enrolment

PhD students are enrolled to the Doctoral Studies Program, as prescribed in PhD Students' Regulations Compendium in Appendix A. To be allowed to continue their studies, PhD Students in order must:

- a) Enroll at the beginning of the of each academic year and
- b) Submit an annual progress report written by their Supervisor Professor with the "Three Member Supervising Committee" at the end of each academic year starting from their initial enrollment. This is submitted to and approved by the SMGA (see Paragraph 3.3).

Students that plan to continue towards a Doctoral Degree (PhD), while studying for receiving an MSc degree must follow the registration policy that governs the MSc Program.

3.4.2 Leave of Absence

Only in exceptional cases, candidates in the Doctoral (PhD) Program can take leaves of absence, the maximum cumulative duration of which is limited to one (1) year.

A Leave of Absence must be approved by the SMGA, based on the positive suggestion of the GSSC and the consent of the "Three Member Supervising Committee" once a detailed application with the necessary support documents is submitted by the concerned student.

Exceeding the approved length of the leave of absence or exceeding the maximum allowed duration will

result in the student's immediate dismissal from the program.

4. ADVISORS, DISSERTATIONS, GRADINGS.

4.1 Advising Professor

Upon the PhD student's admittance to the PhD Program, the SMGA appoints an Advising Professor to each student according to the current legislation in effect, given the corresponding student's proposal to GSSC. The professor is a Faculty member of the ECE Department. Each Faculty member can supervise up to five (5) PhD students.

After an advisor's or student's application to GSSC and the approval of SMGAC, a change of the advisor can take place. This change occurs, when, for example the student is interested in pursuing a Doctoral Dissertation with a different Faculty member other than the one initially selected.

In case the SMGA approves the change of the student's advisor, the student in question has to go through the procedure for the appointment of a new Advisor and a new "three member supervising committee" within a maximum of six (6) months. Otherwise, at the end of this six month period, the student is immediately dismissed from the program. The process of changing an advisor must be completed at least one and a half (1.5) year before the Doctoral Dissertation defense.

Deviation from the above time periods for change of an Advisor is possible only after a detailed recommendation of GSSC and the approval of SMGA.

4.2 Doctoral Dissertation

Based on a student's application (which has to be accompanied by a brief research proposal) and the consenting opinion of the supervising professor, the SMGA specifies the wide subject area in which the research and the Doctoral Dissertation of the candidate will be conducted. The SMGA also appoints the "Three Member Supervising Committee" that consists of the Advisor, and two other members. These can be Faculty members of the ECE Department or other Departments of the same or different Accredited Higher Education Institutions, domestic or foreign. They can be (even retired due to age limit) Higher Education Institutions professors, Higher Military Academies Professors or research personnel of Technical Education institutions and Senior Faculty of Pedagogical and Technological Education or researchers of levels A,B or C of recognized research center, domestic or foreign, that hold a Doctoral Diploma. The members of the committee must have the same or related scientific subject area with the one of the PhD student conducting the dissertation.

When the Supervising Professor (Advisor), with the consent of the rest of the members of the Supervising committee, declares the completion of the candidate's research, the SMGA approves the final title of the dissertation and the language it will be written in, given a candidate's related application. This application references the consent of the advisory committee, and proposes the final title of the dissertation, giving an extensive thesis abstract and providing confirmation from the ECE Department secretariat that the candidate has fulfilled the rest of the obligations in the Department (e.g. assistance in coursework).

4.3 Dissertation examination

Upon the completion of the write up of the Doctoral Dissertation and given the approval of the advising professor and the Supervising Committee, the candidate submits to the SMGA a copy of the Doctoral Dissertation and a request for assigning the seven member Defense Committee.

The seven member Defense Committee consists of the members of the Supervising Committee and four (4) additional members. These members must at least comply with the relevant provisions of the Greek law in effect at that point. At least four (4) members of the seven member Defense Committee must be Faculty

members, and from them at least two (2) must belong to the ECE Department (i.e. the PhD Candidate's Department). The remaining members of the Committee can be: members of domestic or foreign Universities of equivalent accreditation, retired professors due to age limitations from Higher Education Institutions, Higher Military Academic institutions Professors or research personnel of Technical Education institutions or researchers of levels A,B or C from accredited research centers, domestic or foreign, that hold a Doctoral Degree. Two (2) from the members of the seven member Defense Committee must be full professors. All members of the seven member Defense Committee must belong to the same or related scientific subject area with the one the PhD candidate pursuing the Doctoral Degree.

The candidate submits the Dissertation thesis to the seven member Defense Committee. Subsequently, the Advising Professor and the candidate, in coordination with the seven member Defense committee determine a date for the public presentation and examination of the Doctoral Dissertation. This cannot take place earlier than one (1) month from the submission of the Dissertation to the Defense committee members. This time limit can be shorter, after a candidate's justified request, the consenting opinion of the Advising professor and the approval of SMGA.

After the completion of the examination, the Committee convenes and decides on the approval or rejection of the Doctoral Dissertation, considering its novelty and whether it constitutes a contribution to science. For the approval of the Doctoral Dissertation, the assent of at least five (5) members of the committee is needed.

In case of rejection, the reasons of the rejection are made known to the student and on a case by case basis, the potential of a new submission within a time period determined by the committee that cannot be shorter than three (3) months. If the candidate decides not to submit the dissertation again, or the dissertation is again rejected, then the candidate is dismissed from the Graduate Studies Program.

The doctoral dissertation, if approved, is graded as: a) Good, b) Very Good, c) Excellent. This grading also determines the total student's performance at the Doctoral Diploma.

The candidate's nomination as a Doctor is awarded by the SMGA according to the state law provisions in effect.

4.4 Submission of Doctoral Dissertations

The final version of the Doctoral Dissertation is presented from the candidate to the Secretariat of the Department in electronic form (pdf) and to the University library in bound printed and electronic form (pdf) as well.

5. COMMITTEES

5.1 GRADUATE STUDIES STEERING COMMITTEE (GSSC)

The GSSC is charged with the monitoring, oversight and coordination of the entire graduate activities of the Department and is responsible for providing recommendations to the SMGA on every issue relating to Graduate studies. The GSSC is appointed by the SMGA at its first meeting of each academic year.

The GSSC consists of at least three Faculty members of the Department from amongst those engaged in teaching graduate courses or supervising doctoral dissertations. The members of GSSC are appointed by a decision of the SMGA. Head of the GSSC is the Graduate Studies Director. Twice a year, at SMGA meetings, a review of the conduct of the graduate courses takes place. All concerned could address the SMGA regarding graduate studies. The Department's Secretariat assumes the secretarial support of the GSSC.

5.1.1 Director of Graduate Studies (GSD)

The Graduate Studies Director is the chairperson of the GSSC and is charged with the responsibility of the administrative, organizational and operational direction of the Graduate Studies Program. The GSD gives recommendations to the GSSC or to the SMGA on any and all issues concerning the effective operation of the GSP. The GSD is appointed by a SMGA decision and is a Faculty member primarily from the ranks of full or associate Professors of the Department. His tenure lasts two years.

6 FINAL PROVISIONS

The SMGA is responsible for any and all issues that are not specified in the present regulations compendium and for each issue that occurs and is in violation of the regulation, as well as the revisions of the regulation.

APPENDIX A

REGULATION & REQUIREMENTS FOR PhD STUDENTS

Article A'

The candidates are admitted to the Doctoral Studies, having the obligation to successfully accomplish a curriculum of graduate courses, during pursuing their Doctoral Dissertation, based on the following:

1. Degree holders or graduates of the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering or Computer mechanical or Informatics of Universities.

1.1 With five year or four year studies, with MSc or Master's Degree in relevant to ECE Department subject areas: Admitted, if during the MSc or Master, they have completed a Thesis Option. Otherwise, the approval of SMGA is necessary, given a consenting recommendation from GSSC.

1.2 With five year or four year or three years studies: Admitted, with a prerequisite to successfully complete the MSc of the ECE Department. During their studies they will pursue an MSc Thesis option.

2. Remaining Degree Holders or Graduates of Polytechnic or University Departments or Degree holders from Informatics Departments OF Technical Education Institutes:

2.1 With MSc or Master's Degree relevant to ECE Department subject areas: Admitted, if during the MSc or Master, they have completed a graduate Thesis Option. Otherwise, the approval of SMGA is necessary, after a consenting recommendation from the GSSC.

2.2 Remaining Candidates: Admitted, with the prerequisite of successful completion of the MSc of the S. E.E.C.E during which they will pursue a Thesis Option.

Article B'

The equivalence of the Masters Degrees, as well as any other case not mentioned in the above articles, is decided by the SMGA given a GSSC recommendation.