



*I hereby endorse*

Rector \_\_\_\_\_

“ \_\_\_\_ ” \_\_\_\_\_ 2019

## **Doctoral program self-evaluation**

**French University of Armenia (UFAR)**

10 David Anhaght str., 0037 Yerevan, Armenia



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## **1. Institutional strategies**

*The Higher Education Institution's (hereinafter HEI) research strategy is in concord with its mission and goals.*

French University in Armenia was established 15 years ago with the joint efforts of Armenian and French governments. The prime aim of the said initiative was to establish an excellent university collaboration with an outcome of educating future professionals in the fields of Law, Management, Marketing and Finance in the first and second cycles of education. From the very first day of its establishment, the UFAR has been carrying out transnational education with its historical partner; the University of Jean Moulin Lyon 3. Since 2018-2019 academic year an undergraduate programme in informatics and applied mathematics is implemented in partnership with Paul-Sabatier Toulouse 3 University. It is with the said universities that the UFAR awards double diploma and carries out the academic process which turns the UFAR into a unique HEI among other universities of Armenia.

UFAR's mission is to prepare high-level specialists corresponding to the demands of the Armenian labor market, able to apply their international skills, knowledge and know-how to the benefit of Armenia's economic development and relations between Armenia, France and Europe. As can be seen from the mission itself, the UFAR underlines the importance of reacting to labour market demands, which constitutes the cornerstone of its mission.

The strategy of the University heavily relies on the below-given 5 domains, out of which research is the first pillar:

1. Research
2. A modernization of governance: a qualitative process (from theory to practice)
3. Anticipation of the needs of economies sector
4. Francophonie and international attractiveness
5. Alumni (see Annex 1).

In line with the University goals, the following objectives are assigned to research activities in UFAR:

1. The involvement of the UFAR deans in development of scientific partnership in collaboration with the colleagues from Lon 3 University,

2. The establishment of a structure in charge of training of the students enrolled in thesis in France and Armenia, including thesis French supervisors and research laboratories in France.
3. Setting an annual flow of 5 to 6 new doctoral students,
4. Obtaining necessary funding for allocation of scholarships for the doctoral thesis, allowing students to devote full time to their thesis,
5. Recruitment of up to 30 % of the future doctors and constitute a team of 15 full time researchers in 10 years,
6. Capacity to have the indicators for publication and research.

*1.1 HEI has a research strategy that is adopted at the institutional level of the HEI, represents the institution's mission and its goals for research.*

The UFAR research strategy is adopted at the institutional level and is in line with UFAR's mission and vision. The research strategy heavily focuses the below given aspects:

- Knowledge creation.
- Transfer of French scientific traditions into Armenian reality, taking into account Armenian sensitivities.
- Contribution to social and economic development of the Republic of Armenia.
- Establishment of the bank of teachers, who will become a valuable asset of the French University.

*1.2 Research strategy reflects the needs of the internal and external stakeholders and includes ethical concepts.*

As stated in the UFAR Strategic Document 2017-2021, the University's research strategy has to meet certain number of objectives, out of which the involvement of the UFAR deans and teacher researcher of Lyon 3 with the aim of developing scientific collaborations, is the first one. This collaboration ensures that most up-to-date topics and core issues tantalizing the scientific world are being voiced and discussed.

Topics of doctoral theses are decided by the UFAR and in doing so the University ensures the needs of its partner organizations (which represent the labour market) are reflected. At times the topics are entirely provided by the organizations, who finance this or that particular doctoral

student, as well as public administration. In this scenario the UFAR and the Doctoral School cater the needs of Armenian labour market or Armenian public administration representatives.

*1.3 HEI has formal mechanisms and procedures to evaluate the effectiveness of research strategy and to further improve it.*

The UFAR has the following mechanisms and procedures to evaluate effectiveness of its research strategy:

1. As part of its research strategy, the UFAR measures the effectiveness of courses offered to doctoral students (see Annex 2 for the list of courses). This is being conducted by means of lesson observations undertaken by Armenian Deans and French adjacent Deans/Thesis supervisors and surveys conducted among the students with the aim of revealing the level of their satisfaction.
2. Another quantitative indicator to measure the effectiveness of its research strategy is the annual flow of doctoral candidates. As stipulated in the 2017-2021 Strategic document of the UFAR, "...an annual flow of 5-6 students must be ensured".
3. Another mechanism is the constant collaboration of Armenian deans and French adjacent deans, with the aim of revealing any issue that might be related to doctoral studies.
4. Another mechanism is the accountability report of the Rector, which is being presented every 6 months to the Boar of Trustees (BoT).

## **2. Doctoral program**

*The doctoral program's ambitions are in concord with the institution's research strategy, forms part of institutional planning and resource allocation is designed to meet new challenges and needs of global labour market.*

*Please analyse how the doctoral program intended learning outcomes are achieved (stressing doctoral candidate progress).*

*2.1 Doctoral program is thoroughly formulated, according to the intended outcomes, is flexible, meets the needs of doctoral candidates and is in line with the institution's research strategy.*

Like all other academic programmes in the first and second cycles of educations at UFAR, doctoral academic programmes as well are the ones of our French partners which are

implemented in Armenia, taking into account local sensitivities.

The doctoral programmes that are executed at the UFAR are the ones of French Doctoral Schools, yet, they thoroughly correspond to the research mission of the UFAR, since, as highlighted above, the topics of doctoral theses are decided by the UFAR and in doing so the University ensures the needs of its partner organizations (which represent the labour market or public administration) are reflected. At times the topics are entirely provided by the organizations, who finance this or that particular doctoral student or are suggested by students/UFAR and approved by organizations. In this scenario the UFAR and the Doctoral School cater the needs of Armenian labour market and Armenian public administration representatives. By this mean, UFAR accomplish on of its mission: contribution of economic and social development of Armenian through training of qualified specialists.

The concept of doctoral programmes and the profile of the doctorate are the ones ratified by corresponding doctoral schools and they correspond to the below-given regulations, in-laws, and national documents:

- Doctoral contract between the French University in Armenia and the doctoral student
- National charter of ethics of research professions (France)
- PhD charter of the doctoral school the student is attached to
- Internal Regulation of corresponding Doctoral School
- Rules of procedure of the attached doctoral school
- Order of 25 May 2016 setting the national training framework and the procedures leading to the award of the national doctoral degree. The transversal courses offered by University Lyon for doctoral students are presented in Annex 2.

## *2.2 Doctoral program is contextually coherent with other relevant doctoral programs.*

All doctoral schools in France are being accredited by the High Council for Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcéres) which is an independent administrative authority which seeks to follow best international practice in the performance of its missions. Among the criteria of evaluation, the HCERES has heading of “European and International Policies”, where some of the sub-criteria define the following:

- In research, the institution supports multilateral cooperation, as well as conducts projects and

contracts, notably within the framework of the European Research Area and innovation.

- The institution encourages and supports international mobility, both incoming and outgoing, students and his staff. It develops devices for preparing for outgoing mobility and in the context of incoming mobility. It integrates a social dimension into its policy of student mobility.

These sub-criteria form a necessary part of Hceres evaluation process, which means that Doctoral Schools should do their utmost in order to ensure permanent contacts with other relevant stakeholders.

The rapport of last assessment of the Doctoral School 492 by Hceres is presented in annex 3.

### *2.3 Doctoral program is functioning in the context of a strong research environment ensuring critical mass of researchers and relevant resources promoting interdisciplinary approach.*

All French Doctoral Schools ensure a strong research environment to promote the development of a critical mass of researchers. The information of resources and research environment of the Doctoral School 492 are in line with standards requested by Heceres. Hence, the rapport of last assessment of the Doctoral School 492 by Hceres presented in Annex 4 resume the main points of research environment and resources available for doctoral students.

Being enrolled at the Doctoral School 492, the doctoral students of UFAR benefit from this research environment.

### *2.4 Doctoral program provides training in core discipline areas and transferable skills and ensures an active involvement of doctoral candidates in research activities.*

The UFAR Regulation on Doctoral Student Selection and Advancement (see Annex 5) stipulates the following:

In accordance with part 2 of the doctoral contract between UFAR and the PhD student:

"The PhD student is enrolled at a French partner university, under the responsibility of a French thesis director. A referent, whose mission is the daily supervision of the PhD student in Armenia, is designated within the UFAR.

The PhD student is officially attached to the research institute in France; that of his/her thesis

supervisor. He does and publishes research, benefits from all the scientific resources thus made available by the French partner institute. "

The PhD student travels to corresponding doctoral school nearly 2 months a year, to work with his thesis director, to participate in the research and publication work of the institute. At UFAR, the PhD student carries out his research and is integrated into the teaching process ..."

In accordance with article 10 of the decree of 25 May 2016 setting the national training framework and the procedures leading to the issuance of the national doctoral degree: "The doctorate is prepared in a doctoral school under the responsibility of accredited institutions, within a unit or a recognized research team". The catalogue of transversals doctoral training at University of Lyon is presented in Annex 2.

#### *2.5 Doctoral program has set criteria on the assessment of the quality of research results against achieved outcomes and mechanisms for the evaluation of the research results' social impact.*

Doctoral schools have their set standards and criteria on the assessment of the quality of research results against achieved outcomes. Moreover, every school has its own mechanisms and the toolkit to measure whether the standards and criteria have been met.

In line with article 3 of the decree of 25 May 2016 setting the national training framework and the procedures leading to the issuance of the national doctoral degree, the doctoral school ensures a quality approach to training by setting up training programs, individual monitoring committees of doctoral students by offering doctoral students' supervisors specific training and support.

An individual follow-up committee of the doctoral student ensures the smooth running of the course based on the doctoral charter and the training agreement. It evaluates, throughout an interview with the doctoral student, the conditions of his/her training and the progress of his/her research. It formulates recommendations and sends a report of the interview to the director of the doctoral school, the doctoral student and the thesis director (Annex 4 example of the follow-up committee report). The composition, organization and functioning of this committee are determined by the council of the doctoral school. The members of this committee do not

participate in the supervision of the doctoral student's work.

The French University in Armenia supports doctoral students by organizing regular meetings with all doctoral students, in the presence of the Rector, the General Secretary and the deans. Each meeting is an opportunity for a doctoral student to present the progress of his/her work, the difficulties, current projects as well as the bibliography of the thesis. This presentation is followed by a discussion and a question-answer session with other doctoral students and UFAR administration present. Particular attention is paid to the oral and written presentation methodology, as well as the format of the proposed bibliography.

*2.6 There are set mechanisms and procedures in place to ensure development, approval, monitoring and periodic review of doctoral program with an active involvement of internal and external stakeholders.*

Every doctoral school has set mechanisms and procedures to ensure the development, approval and monitoring, and periodic review of doctoral programmes which ensures active involvement of internal and external stakeholders. For the assessment results concerning the procedure in place for development, approval, monitoring and periodic review of doctoral program at Doctoral School ED 492 see Annex 3.

### **3. Admission Policy**

***HEI's admission policy on doctoral program is transparent, is in line with doctoral program's ambitions.***

*Please analyse whether the selection mechanisms of doctoral candidates are aligned with the doctoral program's ambitions.*

*3.1 HEI has set mechanisms for promoting equitable recruitment, selection and admission procedures.*

The admission to the Doctoral School 492 is undertaken in line with the Order of 25 May 2016 setting the national training framework and the procedures leading to the award of the national doctoral degree in France (See Annex 5) and according to the requirements set up by Internal

Regulations at the school (See Annex 6).

In line with the above-mentioned requirements and Regulation on Doctoral Student Selection and Advancement (see Annex 7), the admission process of doctoral students at UFAR follows the following steps:

- Public announcement for all the candidates who have been awarded second degree UFAR diplomas or diplomas from any other Higher Education Institution.
- Shortlisting candidates for an interview.
- Interview conducted by Armenian deans and French Associate deans of the faculty concerned, the Rector and General Secretary.
- Final decision.
- Soliciting French partners to find a thesis supervisor based on the topic of research.

*3.2 Selection criteria of doctoral candidates are transparent, publicly available and are in line with the explicit outcomes of doctoral program.*

According to the procedure on selection and accompaniment of doctoral students at UFAR, the following selection criteria are used (Appendix 7):

- Interest of the research topic
- Quality of the thesis project
- Respect of the conditions for an admission in a French doctoral school (minimum note in master and the memory)
- Motivation and professional project
- Ability to conduct research and integrate into a scientific team.

The following eligibility conditions are set-up at Doctoral School 492 (see Appendix 6):

1- Holder of a national diploma of Master 2 with the production of a research dissertation. A mark of 14/20 in the thesis of Master 2 and a mark of 12/20 to the average of Master 2 will be necessary to be registered in thesis.

2- Holder of a national Master 2 degree with the production of an internship report. An average of 12/20 at the Master 2 is required. In addition to regular documents, the candidate have to provide a research work on his thesis topic (about forty pages), supported by a scientific apparatus.

3- Non-titular of a national degree of Master 2. In addition to the regular documents, a summary in French of the dissertation of a volume at least equal to one third of the volume of the dissertation (minimum 25 p.) out of plan and bibliography is required. It is up to Council to assess the aptitude for research with regard to the documents provided.

Selection criteria are transparent and are publicly available on the UFAR website.

### *3.3 HEI periodically analyses the effectiveness of applicants' assessment system.*

The assessment system at UAFR is regularly being reviewed with the aim of revealing any discrepancies that certain articles might entail. The review process is organized with the participation of Armenian and French partners.

## **4. Supervisor**

***HEI provides highly qualified supervisors/well-structured supervisory team to achieve doctoral program's ambitions.***

*Please analyse how the HEI assures sufficient supervision motivated for the implementation of doctoral program's ambition.*

### *4.1 Supervisors/supervisory team responsibilities, qualifications, workload, recognition criteria are comprehensively stated and described and are in line with doctoral program's ambitions.*

In line with national requirements, French Doctoral Schools have set standards and criteria for the selection of theses supervisors. Those are clearly stated in their regulations and are publicly available. The responsibilities of the supervisor and/or the team are also clearly indicated in the contract that is being signed between the doctoral students and his/her supervisor. The global information on the supervision at ED 492 is presented in the Annex 9.

In addition to the supervision at Doctoral School ED 492, a supervision team headed by Rector and including the Secretary General responsible of Doctoral Service at UFAR (see Annex 8), as well as relevant faculty dean is created. The supervision team is carrying out monthly monitoring of research activities of the doctoral students. The Annex 9 presents some of the presentations

made by doctoral student during the monitoring meetings.

*4.2 HEI has supervisor/ supervisory team appointment procedures.*

For the Procedures on supervisors' appointment please refer to the Annexes 6, 7 and 9.

*4.3 HEI has motivation mechanisms for supervisors to be involved in active researching and be part of relevant scientific network.*

In France, the position of an associate professor and that of a professor are anchored around three pillars:

- teaching activity for a total of 192 hours per year,
- administrative follow-up of formations,
- research activity.

The monitoring and supervision of doctoral students is mandatory throughout research laboratory activities and is one of the criteria for evaluating the activities of a teacher-researcher. Doctoral student supervision, contracts, research and publication results also fall within the host laboratory performance indicators.

The decree n ° 2014-557 of May 28th, 2014 modifying the decree n ° 2009-851 of July 8th, 2009 stipulates "an additional payment for doctoral and research supervision" envisaged with the article L954-2 of the Code of Education which can be attributed to university professors and lecturers, research directors and research staff, teaching and support staff, hospital staff and trainees and teaching staff of generic medicine and trainees.

*4.4 There is well-established system for periodic evaluation of supervision that foster to review existing policies and procedures for supervision and to reveal the professional needs of supervisors.*

The evaluation of the teaching and research activities of teacher-researchers is periodic (4 years). It is based on a report of activities covering all the undertaking within the laboratory and the teaching unit. The award for doctoral and research supervision is attributed for high level

scientific activity especially with regard to:

- publications and scientific product,
- doctoral and scientific supervision,
- dissemination of works,
- scientific responsibilities and conditions of practice.

It is evaluated by a national committee.

#### *4.5 HEI fosters the development and professional progress of supervisors.*

The accompaniment of thesis supervisors is mainly conducted through the political action of the laboratory to advance the scientific themes that are identified as major for its activity, validated by the University and the HCERES.

The research budget, the doctoral ministerial allowances, the European contracts are part of the laboratory tools at the service of researchers and encourage the best ones to maximally amplify their activities.

## **5. Research Environment**

### ***HEI promotes the quality research provisions by creating an environment conducive to research.***

*Please analyse how the HEI ensures the proper implementation of the doctoral program.*

#### *5.1 There are necessary resources for the implementation of doctoral program in accordance with its content, which effectively support the implementation of program's ambitions and create an environment conducive to research.*

All French Doctoral Schools are accredited by corresponding accreditation agencies, which implies that they guarantee all necessary resources for the implementation of doctoral programmes (for more details see Annex 3).

As far as the UFAR is concerned, it ensures that its doctoral students receive a monthly scholarship to be full-time present at the UFAR and carry out their research (see Annex 11 for list of doctoral students in Law receiving scholarship since 2016-2017 academic year). Moreover, during their research doctoral students make use of scientific equipment, laboratories, computer

equipment, the library the same way as the staff of the universities, both in Armenia and in France.

*5.2 HEI monitors the scientific progress of the individual doctoral candidates by achieved scientific results and provides career development opportunities. Supervisors have primary responsibility in doctoral candidate's scientific progress.*

In accordance with Part 3 of the doctoral contract between UFAR and the doctoral student:

UFAR is committed to:

- Formalize, in collaboration with the thesis supervisor, doctoral student's work plan for the period of his doctoral studies and in particular the periods of stay in France.
- In accordance with the work plan, carry out a formal meeting of progress of the work of the doctoral student each year in the presence of the thesis director " (Annex 12, example of contract signed with doctoral students).

In addition, a weekly presentation of a doctoral student in front of his peers is organized in the presence of the supervision team.

In accordance with article 12 of the decree of 25 May 2016 setting the national training framework and the procedures leading to the issuance of the national doctoral degree:

"Under the responsibility of accredited institutions, the doctoral school sets the conditions for monitoring and supervising doctoral students in line with a doctoral charter. This charter provides in particular the methods mediation in case of conflict between the doctoral student and his thesis supervisor and the commitment of the doctoral student to answer any request for information concerning his insertion and his professional career at the end of doctoral studies. This charter is approved by the director of the doctoral school, the director of the research unit or research team, or the thesis supervisor (s). It is signed by the doctoral student and the thesis supervisor at the time of its first registration.

Implementation of this charter, a training agreement, signed by the thesis supervisor and the doctoral student, indicates the names of the doctoral student's registration establishment, the doctoral school and the unit or the research team; it also mentions the name (s) of the supervisor (s), the director of the unit or the host team, the doctoral student as well as the rights and duties

of the parties involved.

*5.3 HEI ensures that all doctoral candidates receive useful and regular information and advice to promote research and to have opportunity to work in research teams and different research environments.*

In accordance with the work plan, the UFAR carries out a formal meeting of progress of the work of the doctoral student each year in the presence of the thesis director, and organizes a weekly presentation of a doctoral student in front of his peers in the presence of the Rector and the dean concerned.

Moreover, doctoral students are in constant touch with their theses supervisors via videoconferencing and other means of communication.

*5.4 HEI has sound financial distribution policy and capacity to sustain and ensure the integrity and continuity of doctoral programs at the institution.*

The UFAR ensures the continuity of doctoral studies by means of finding appropriate scholarships for all doctoral students. In addition in the budget of UFAR a line is devoted to the research related activities: participation of doctoral students to scientific conferences, publications, in service training of academic personal, etc..

*5.5 HEI has mechanisms in place for the evaluation of the effectiveness, applicability and availability of resources.*

As far as the UFAR is concerned, the effectiveness, applicability and availability of resources is ensured by means of regular surveys, that are conducted among doctoral students. In addition, the effectiveness, applicability and availability of resources allocated to the research is assessed through Rector's annual report to the BT, as well as through Audit report, as part of the assessment of UFAR's finances.

As far as doctoral schools are concerned, this is regulated by their internal policies and regulations, and forms part of the Hceres standards and criteria (see Annex 3).

## 6. Doctoral Candidates

*Doctoral candidates are recognized as professionals with commensurate rights.*

*Please analyse whether the doctoral candidates are part of implementation of the HEI's ambitions in research.*

*6.1 HEI has formal mechanisms to regulate relations between candidate, supervisors and institution where the rights and responsibilities of doctoral candidates are clearly formulated.*

1. A contract is signed between the doctoral students and the UFAR (see Annex 12), where the rights and responsibilities of both parties are stipulated. Following the said documents, the doctoral students agrees to:

- Finish and defend the thesis in 3 years from the signing of the agreement.
- Annually present a report to the UFAR and / or the co-funding organization, in accordance with the work plan.
- Take compulsory courses organized as part of doctoral training in France and / or at UFAR.
- Be present full-time at UFAR, supporting the corresponding chair throughout educational and research activities, as well as during the organization of events.
- Conduct and publish research papers, in addition to the thesis.
- Cooperate with his French PhD supervisor and UFAR referee.
- Teach about 60 hours of courses per year at the University, for which the University will pay a remuneration complementary to the monthly amount of the scholarship, calculated according to the tariff in force at the UFAR. The list of courses taught by doctoral students in Law is presented in Annex 13.
- Pay annual doctoral registration fees at the French partner university (approximately 300 euros).
- Support the teaching at the University, as far as possible, during the 3 academic years following the defense of the thesis.
- Respect the statutes, rules of procedure and internal legal acts of the University.

The PhD student has the right to:

- Take 35 working days of paid vacation per year, at least half of which are over the summer period.
- During his/her research make use of scientific equipment, laboratories, computer equipment,

the library the same way as the staff of the University".

The doctoral school sets the conditions for monitoring and supervising doctoral students in line with a doctoral charter. This charter provides in particular the methods mediation in case of conflict between the doctoral student and his thesis supervisor and the commitment of the doctoral student to answer any request for information concerning his insertion and his professional career at the end of doctoral studies. This charter is approved by the director of the doctoral school, the director of the research unit or research team, or the thesis supervisor(s).

*6.2 Doctoral candidates are engaged in governance at the university and participate in decision-making.*

Since doctoral candidates are full-time at the UFAR, they have quite an active participation in the academic and administrative life of the University. In particular, they participate in chair meetings, meetings initiated by the Dean of their faculty, some of them are involved in Pedagogical Council of the UFAR and organization of scientific conferences, etc.

*6.3 HEI has set mechanisms that ensure quality of the student services and doctoral candidates are involved in the quality assurance practices.*

In order to ensure that services rendered to PhD students are of quality, the UFAR has set a Service to Doctoral Students (SDS), the operations of which are regulated with a corresponding Internal Regulation on Services to Doctoral Students (see Annex 10).

The said internal document stipulates that the SDS is directly under the authority of the Rector, who makes all decisions related to the service. The administrative management of the SDS is entrusted to the Secretary General. These two clauses underline the importance of high quality services the UFAR renders to doctoral students.

The same document stipulates that the SDS is the referential transversal entity for all administrative questions related to UFAR doctoral students, whether physically within the institution, or on the move in France or abroad.

## **7. Internationalization**

*Internationalization is coherent with institution's research strategy and the individual needs of the doctoral candidates.*

*Please analyse how the HEI strives to be a part of local and international research networks by the implementation of the doctoral program.*

*7.1 HEI promotes fruitful and effective collaboration with local and international counterparts aiming to create critical mass and networking as well as to implement joint research and doctoral programs.*

The UFAR is an intergovernmental institution of higher education per se, and all its activities; including the third cycle of education is international, given the fact that UFAR doctoral candidates are attached to corresponding French Doctoral Schools and doing a part of research activities in France.

The research they conduct is international in the truest sense of the word, since it encompasses the recent trends, gaps and demands of Armenian and French labour markets.

*7.2 The mobility of doctoral candidates is driven by the candidates' research projects.*

The PhD student travels to corresponding Doctoral School in France at least 2 months a year, to work with his/her thesis director, to participate in the research and publication work of the institute. This travel is fully covered by the UFAR.

Besides, the UFAR is encouraging the doctoral students' mobility, especially through Erasmus+ programme schemes. Thus, in partnership agreement for students mobility signed between Alcala University and Institut de Recherche en Informatique de Toulouse mobility of doctoral students is foreseen.

*7.3 HEI allocates sufficient financial resources for internationalization.*

Financial resources are allocated to the activities of internationalization of the research at UFAR: doctoral students' nobilities, doctoral students' participation to the scientific conferences, etc.

## 8. PhD awarding

*HEI has clear mechanisms for monitoring and assessment of the research results (applicable to the institutions having Specialized Councils).*

*Please analyse how the Specialized Councils acknowledge the formation of an autonomous researcher.*

*8.1 Specialized Council has PhD awarding criteria that are applied and periodically reviewed.*

In accordance with article 19 of the decree of 25 May 2016 Setting the National Training Framework and the Procedures Leading to the Issuance of the National Doctoral Degree:

"As part of its deliberations, the jury appreciates the quality of the work of the doctoral student, their innovative nature, the ability of the doctoral student to situate them in their scientific context as well as their qualities of exposure. [...]

In line with article 19 of the decree of 25 May 2016 Specialized Councils have PhD awarding criteria that are applied and periodically reviewed.

*8.2 HEI has set criteria for the nomination of the members of Specialized Council/s.*

*In line with national standards and criteria, French Doctoral Schools have their set criteria for the nomination of the members of Specialized Councils.*

In accordance with article 18 of the decree of 25 May 2016 setting the national training framework and the procedures leading to the issuance of the national doctoral degree:

"The thesis jury is appointed by the institution head after consulting the director of the doctoral school and the thesis director. The number of jury members is between four and eight. It is composed of 50% French and 50% foreign experts, external to the doctoral school and the enrolled institution of the doctoral student and chosen because of their scientific or professional competence in the field of research concerned [...].

Its composition must allow a balanced representation of women and men. [...].

The members of the jury designate among them a president and, if necessary, a defense reporter.

The thesis supervisor participates in the jury, but does not take part in the decision. "

*8.3 HEI periodically implements quality assurance of Specialized Council/s' activities.*

These procedures are being regulated by French Doctoral Schools (see Annex 3).

*8.4 Specialized Council/s periodically publishes reports on the development of the relevant fields.*

These procedures are being regulated by French Doctoral Schools (Annex 3).

## **9. Internal quality assurance**

***HEI has an internal quality assurance system, which promotes continual improvement of all the processes of doctoral education.***

*Please analyse how the HEI promotes the formation of quality assurance culture for doctoral education.*

*9.1 There are well-established and publicly available policies and procedures for internal quality assurance of doctoral education.*

Given the fact that all Doctoral Schools undergo accreditation procedures, having an internal policy on Quality Assurance (hereinafter QA) is a vital component.

As far as the UFAR is concerned, it has a Policy on Internal Quality Assurance, which stipulates all policies and procedures to ensure the quality of doctoral education (See Annex 14).

In particular:

- regular surveys are conducted, to check the satisfaction level of doctoral students,
- there are regular lesson observations by Armenian deans and French Associate Deans to ensure the quality of teaching,
- regular meeting with Armenian and French Partners to ensure all problematic issues are voiced and given due attention to,
- regular meeting of doctoral students with the Rector, with the aim of presenting the work they have undertaken,

- regular accountability report of the Rector to the BoT.

*9.2 The internal and external stakeholders of doctoral education are involved in the quality assurance processes.*

As highlighted in Standard 9.1 the involvement of main actors in the field of QA of the UFAR is insured by the Policy on Internal Quality Assurance. Taking into account the small size and more or less flat/horizontal structure of the UFAR, with fewer levels of management as compared to other TLI (tertiary level institution) is, we can ascertain that external stakeholders are fully integrated in all the procedures. Given the fact that all the Deans have close knit relations with both internal and external stakeholders, it can be assured that their voice is heard. However, alongside with this, the UFAR lacks any formalized procedures aimed at ensuring the involvement of external stakeholders in the internal QA procedures. At present their involvement bears but ad hoc nature and is closely linked with personal ties of deans, vice-rectors and the like.

The involvement of external stakeholders is insured also by the means of negotiation of the topic and funding of research at UFAR with companies' representatives, governmental and non-governmental organizations, such as Central Bank of Armenia, Ministry of Education and research of Armenia, etc.

As far as programme descriptions are concerned, at this stage UFAR lacks a holistic document that would encompass the outcomes of the doctoral programme/qualifications and would highlight the knowledge, competences and skills that a graduate of the programme should have. Having as a basis the Mission Letter of the Rector (see Annex 18), it can be stated that all academic programmes are fully in line with the said mission letter and with the academic programmes of our partner Lyon 3 University , Toulouse 3 University or other French higher education establishment to be involved.

*9.3 HEI collects reliable information on the implemented processes through feedback mechanisms, which is evaluated for the improvement of the goals and processes of doctoral education.*

The outcomes of all the mechanisms and procedures mentioned in 9.1. are documented and

later analyzed with the aim of revealing the areas in need of improvement.

*9.4 The internal quality assurance system of doctoral education is periodically reviewed.*

The Doctoral Education Service of UFAR being establishment since 2016, the 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of internal quality overall assessment is foreseen in the end of 2019.

## SWOT analysis of the doctoral program

<p><b>Strengths (S)</b> - List 4-5 Internal strengths</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Small size of the University and the small number of doctoral students allows for a meticulous monitoring on weekly and monthly basis by the Rector and supervisor team.</li> <li>2. In some 10 years' time the UFAR will have a pool of educated and erudite professionals to work in their corresponding fields of study.</li> <li>3. Entrepreneurial capacities of the UFAR allows for a generating scholarship for doctoral students.</li> <li>4. Well-structured partnership with universities in France is good basis for conducting diversified doctoral research at UFAR in line with the need of Armenian society and economy.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Weaknesses (W)</b> - List 4-5 Internal Weaknesses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provided the number of doctoral students grows, the UFAR will no longer be able to monitor all the students and follow their progress regularly, since currently this is undertaken by the Rector.</li> <li>2. Being both a weakness and a strength, the size of the UFR sometimes impedes the implementation of written mechanisms and procedures, as all questions are very rapidly resolved at the level of individual contacts.</li> <li>3. Lacks of sufficient number of teaching staff with the requested qualifications to be involved as thesis supervisor.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Opportunities (O)</b> - List 4-5 External Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Funding for doctoral students can come not only within the Republic of Armenia but also from abroad, given the fact the doctoral education at UFAR caters the needs and current challenges of not only the Armenia, but also those of the entire world.</li> <li>2. Being part of both Armenia and France, UFAR doctoral education has a very strong potential of becoming a centre of excellence, where European values are adopted to Armenian society, taking into account the sensibilities of the latter.</li> <li>3. UFAR benefits from the support of Armenian and French Governments as transitional higher education institution founded by intergovernmental agreement.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Threats (T)</b> - List 4-5 External Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The fact of heavily depending on external financial flows considerably increases the risks associated to the continuity of doctoral education.</li> <li>2. It might happen that French supervisors have quite a loose understanding of Armenian context, which can result in the thesis being far away from the reality.</li> <li>3. Becoming doctors considerably increases the chances of UFAR graduates to find a well-paid job in abroad and thus encourage brain-drain.</li> <li>4. Well-paid job can increases the risks to abandon teaching at UFAR by graduates of the doctoral programs.</li> </ol>

## **ANNEXES**