



**St. Elisabeth University of Health Care
and Social Work in Bratislava**

Internal Provision no. 12/25

Directive on Rigorosum Procedure

**Vysoká škola zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce sv. Alžbety v Bratislave, n. o.
[St. Elisabeth University of Health Care and Social Work in Bratislava]**

BRATISLAVA 2025

This Directive on Rigorosum Procedure of the St. Elisabeth University of Health Care and Social Work in Bratislava (hereinafter "directive") is an internal provision of Vysoká škola zdravotníctva a sociálnej práce sv. Alžbety v Bratislave, n. o. (hereinafter "VŠZaSP" or "University"), released by the rector of the University in accordance with § 48 paragraph 1 letter n) of the Act no. 131/2002 Coll., on Universities and on amendment and completion of certain laws as amended (hereinafter "Higher Education Act"), with the Statute of the University, and with other relevant internal provisions of the University. In case of contrast between this directive and other internal provisions relating to Rigorosum Procedure, priority shall be given to this directive. This directive is binding for all organisational parts of the University, its employees, and candidates applying in Rigorosum Procedure. The Rigorosum Procedure at the University shall be carried out in accordance with this directive.

Article 1

General provisions

1. This directive regulates the terms and conditions, organisation, administration, and course of the Rigorosum Procedure at the University, within the conferral of academic degrees obtained on the basis of a Rigorosum Procedure, that the University is authorised to confer according to specific regulations.
2. This directive guarantees a common, transparent, centralised, and high-quality system for Rigorosum procedures, without differences between centres, study programmes, and study forms.
3. Moreover, this directive has the following goals:
 - a) to protect public interest and good reputation of the University,
 - b) to assure a high technical standard of Rigorosum Theses and Examinations,
 - c) to guarantee equal and fair conditions to all candidates,

- d) to minimise legal, reputational, and ethical risks, by reinforcing confidence in titles to be conferred.
4. The University carried out Rigorosum Procedure in a centralised manner across the University itself.
 5. The faculty, departments, institutes, or other work centres of the University are not entitled to establish or apply different local proceedings within the Rigorosum Procedure. Deviations are allowed only to the extent expressly permitted by this directive or specific regulations.
 6. The University assures the implementation of this directive and releases methodological guidelines for its application in all study fields and study programmes within which the University is entitled to confer academic degrees on the basis of Rigorosum Examination.
 7. Organs and individuals subject to Rigorosum Procedure are obliged to proceed according to this directive and to use the common forms, document templates, and processes approved by the University. Use of different forms or processes is not admitted, unless otherwise specified in this directive.
 8. Tasks relating to coordination and administrative implementation of Rigorosum Procedure are carried out by the Rector's office responsible for Rigorosum Procedures (hereinafter only "PPRK"). The PPRK is an office established by the rector in order to implement the Rigorosum Procedure agenda. During the transitional period, the PPRK is regulated by the article "Transitional provisions".
 9. The PPRK has notably the following tasks:
 - a) coordination and administration of all Rigorosum Procedures,
 - b) processing of applications and communication with the candidates,
 - c) management of the Rigorosum Procedure agenda within the University electronic information system (hereinafter "IS"),
 - d) keeping records and managing documentation relating to Rigorosum Procedures and its storage in accordance with the university's filing system,

e) organisational arrangements for committee meetings, Rigorosum Examinations, and defences

of Rigorosum Theses.

10. The PPRK is the official contact point for the candidates in terms of communication and administration of the Rigorosum Procedure. It guarantees the consistency of procedures according to this directive.
11. Within the frame of Rigorosum Procedure, the PPRK cooperates notably with the study programme guarantors and with the University Quality Board (RVSZK), particularly in terms of methodological guidance and evaluation of the application of this directive.

Article 2

Conditions for participation and material scope of Rigorosum Procedure

1. A graduate of a study field or study program who has obtained a master's degree ("magister") may take a Rigorosum Examination in a related study field, which includes the defence of a Rigorosum Thesis (hereinafter "candidate"). The definition of the related study fields for the purposes of the Rigorosum Procedure, according to this directive, is approved by the competent scientific board of the University.
2. A graduate of a foreign university may apply for a Rigorosum Procedure provided that their document certifying the completion of the second level of university education issued by a foreign university is in the field of public health, nursing, laboratory testing methods in healthcare, social work, and is equivalent to a certificate of education issued by a university in the Slovak Republic.
3. Through Rigorosum Examination and defence of a Rigorosum Thesis, the candidate must demonstrate, on the basis of independent study, that they have a deeper knowledge of the study field in its broader context and that they are capable of independently acquiring new scientific and practical knowledge, can independently work with professional literature and scientific domestic and foreign texts, and are able to apply the acquired knowledge creatively in practice.

4. The Rigorosum Examination and defence of a Rigorosum Thesis are carried out at the University, in the study programmes accredited at the university/faculty as master's degree programmes.
5. The application to start the Rigorosum Procedure can be submitted in those study fields in which the University has been granted the right to provide second-level university education:
 - a) Nursing
 - b) Public health
 - c) Laboratory testing methods in healthcare
 - d) Social work

If the candidate applies for the start of Rigorosum Procedure in the above-mentioned fields (as a person graduated in relevant study fields), their application shall be assessed by the Expert Committee.

6. After successful completion of the Rigorosum Procedure, students obtain the following title in the given study field:
 - a) Nursing "Philosophiae Doctor" (abbreviation "PhDr.")
 - b) Public health "Philosophiae Doctor" (abbreviation "PhDr.")
 - c) Social work "Philosophiae Doctor" (abbreviation "PhDr.")
 - d) Laboratory testing methods in healthcare "Rerum Naturalium Doctor" (abbreviation "RNDr.").

Article 3

Application for admission to the Rigorosum Procedure

1. The application for admission to the Rigorosum Procedure is submitted by the candidate in paper or electronic form via IS to the PPRK.
2. The Rigorosum Procedure can be started throughout the academic year. The deadlines for submission of applications for admission to the Rigorosum Procedure are notified by the PPRK in the University website. At least twice a year, the PPRK defines deadlines for

submission of applications for admission to the Rigorosum Procedure winter deadline (by the end of February, by 28/02 of the given academic year) or autumn deadline (by the end of September, by 30/09 of the given academic year).

3. All documents relating to the Rigorosum Procedure and Rigorosum Thesis must be marked "RK" by the candidate.
4. Electronic/paper application for admission to the Rigorosum Procedure shall contain, notably:
 - a) name, surname, date of birth, contact address, telephone number, and e-mail of the candidate
 - b) name of the higher education institution, study programme, and study field in which the candidate completed
second-level university education (or equivalent),
 - c) study field and study programme in which the candidate applies for Rigorosum Procedure,
 - d) information about the chosen field/subjects of the Rigorosum Examination according to the valid list,
 - e) proposal of the topic of Rigorosum Thesis in Slovak and, usually, also in English,
 - f) date of submission of the application and (electronic) signature of the candidate.
5. The application must include a draft topic of the Rigorosum Thesis and a brief outline of the of Rigorosum Thesis, which will serve as a basis for assessing and approving the topic. The form must contain the following elements: topic of Rigorosum Thesis; contents of Rigorosum Thesis; introduction; work goals; theoretical principles; methodology of research; definition of the issue; research objectives (methods and techniques for data collection and assessment, design of statistical methods to be used for data processing); hypotheses, expected benefit for the field; literary recherche (3-5 standard pages).
6. The topic of the Rigorosum Thesis must not be identical to the topic of the candidate's Graduation Thesis or other Qualification Thesis.

7. The candidate for Rigorosum Procedure can select a topic within the study field that is published on the University's website.
8. The topics of Rigorosum Theses in the given fields are approved by the Expert Committee in the relevant field, after submission of proposals by PPRK.
9. The candidate can propose their own topic of Rigorosum Thesis within the study field, but they must submit it to the Expert Committee (via PPRK) in order to get an opinion. If the Expert Committee doesn't approve the proposed candidate's topic, it shall recommend a change or a modification of the proposed topic. The written opinion is sent to the PPRK, which will then forward it to the candidate. The candidate (in paper or electronic form, via IS) shall confirm their agreement with the proposed modification of the topic and the revised title of the topic with the revised proposal for the Rigorosum Thesis in accordance with paragraph 5. Then, they will send this confirmation to the PPRK and for renewed approval by the Expert Committee within the deadline set by the Expert Committee. If the topic is not approved by the Expert Committee in the relevant study field, the Rigorosum Thesis cannot be accepted for elaboration and cannot be elaborated.
10. The candidate may submit a written request to the Expert Committee in the relevant study field to change the approved topic.
11. Recommended topics must be consistent with the accredited study programme that is part of the study field for which the candidate is applying.
12. The candidate shall attach the following annexes to their application for admission to Rigorosum Procedure:
 - a) an officially certified copy of their university diploma (the certification requirement does not apply to graduates of the St. Elisabeth University of Health Care and Social Work),
 - b) nostrified diploma of completion of second-level university education in the case of a foreign candidate pursuant to article 2 paragraph 2,
 - c) state examination certificate,
 - d) list of published works, or confirmation that the candidate has not yet published any works,

- e) officially certified birth certificate, certified marriage certificate for married women,
- f) signed professional CV,
- g) written consent of the candidate to the processing of personal data for the purposes of Rigorosum

Procedure.

13. No later than 30 days after notification of the request, the PPRK shall assess the correctness and completeness of the notified application. If the application doesn't meet all the requirements, the PPRK shall invite the candidate in writing to remedy the deficiencies and supplement the necessary information or annexes within 15 days. If the candidate fails to remedy the deficiencies within the given deadline, the rector will suspend the Rigorosum Procedure. Certified copies of documents will be sent back to the candidate along with the application.
14. The Rigorosum Procedure starts with the rector's decision about admission to Rigorosum Procedure. If the application meets all the requirements and it is approved by the Expert Committee in the relevant study field, the candidate meets all the required criteria, the rector shall decide on admission to the Rigorosum Procedure within 30 days at the latest.
15. Starting from the date of the decision on admission to the Rigorosum Procedure, a period of 24 months begins for the submission of the Rigorosum Thesis.

Article 4

Application for the Rigorosum Examination

1. The candidate whose application and thesis topic have been approved shall submit a written application for the Rigorosum Examination and defence of the Rigorosum Thesis to the PPRK no earlier than 12 months and no later than 24 months from the date of the decision on admission to the Rigorosum Procedure. The Rigorosum Examinations shall take place within 6 months from the submission of the Rigorosum Thesis.
2. The application for the Rigorosum Examination shall be in written form and shall contain:

- a) name, surname, birth surname, title,
 - b) date of birth and personal number,
 - c) identity card number (passport number for foreign nationals),
 - d) contact address,
 - e) details of the university attended, study programme, and year of graduation
 - f) title of the defended Graduation Thesis,
 - g) indication of the study programme/field in which the Rigorosum Procedure is conducted,
 - h) title of the approved Rigorosum Thesis,
 - i) selection of compulsory and compulsory elective subject or thematic areas of Rigorosum Examination according to the valid list,
 - j) date of the decision about the acceptance of the application for the Rigorosum Procedure,
 - k) date and electronic confirmation (signature) of the candidate.
3. The application must include the candidate's consent to the publication and disclosure of the Rigorosum Thesis to the public for the duration of its retention without entitlement to remuneration in accordance with applicable law.
 4. The PPRK provides the candidate with login details for the IS Final Thesis register.
 5. If the application for the Rigorosum Examination does not meet the requirements set out in paragraph 2, the PPRK will invite the candidate to remedy the deficiencies and supplement the necessary information or annexes within 10 days; at the same time, the PPRK will inform the candidate that otherwise the rector will suspend the procedure. If the candidate fails to remedy the deficiencies within the given deadline, the rector will suspend the Rigorosum Procedure.

Article 5

Rigorosum Thesis

1. The Rigorosum Thesis is the result of the candidate's independent professional or scientific-professional activity, which demonstrates their ability to:
 - a) work creatively and critically with scientific knowledge in the relevant study field,
 - b) formulate and manage specific issues by using adequate methods.
2. The Rigorosum Thesis must not be purely compilatory in its nature; it must contain a research section and original results or an original/comprehensive elaboration of the issue, including systematic or meta-analytical synthesis.
3. The Rigorosum Thesis is usually drawn up in the official language of the Slovak Republic. Based on a justified written request, the rector may allow the Thesis to be written in another language.
4. When a Rigorosum Thesis is written in a foreign language, it must include an abstract in Slovak and a summary in Slovak covering 10% of the entire Thesis.
5. The Rigorosum Thesis must include a structured abstract with a list of keywords:
 - a) in Slovak and English with identical wording,
 - b) it shall contain: Introduction, Goals, Material and Methods, Results, Conclusion,
 - c) it does not contain literature citations,
 - d) is a factual and comprehensive overview of the main findings of the Thesis.The scope of the abstract is determined by the PPRK methodological instruction; the list of keywords usually contains 5–7 terms.
6. The recommended length of a Rigorosum Thesis is 80–100 standard pages of main text (without title page, table of contents, abstracts, bibliography, and appendices), i.e. approximately 144,000–180,000 characters, including spaces. The exact technical parameters (format, font, line spacing) will be specified in the PPRK methodological guidelines.
7. The structure of a Rigorosum Thesis mainly includes:
 - a) the introduction briefly and objectively introduces the issue, explains its relevance, presents
the context, and formulates the starting principles. It does not reproduce the abstract or description of the structure of the Thesis,

b) theoretical principles / current state of knowledge; it provides an expert overview of relevant

literature both at home and abroad; it explains key terms and concepts that form the point of departure for the research part;

c) the goals of the Thesis are clearly, specifically, and measurably formulated; they can be listed in bullet points,

d) research methodology, research goals, data collection methods, respondent selection,

proceedings, tools, statistical methods, and ethical aspects so that the research is fundamentally reproducible,

e) the results represent the candidate's own findings, arranged in a clear manner, with the use of

appropriate tables and graphs; without excessive repetition of text and without subjective

comments that pertain to the discussion,

f) the discussion compares the results of the Thesis with professional literature and other researches,

it analyses the context, limitations, and contributions of the Thesis; it is factual, well-argued, and does not contain unsubstantiated claims;

g) the conclusion summarises the most important findings with regard to the aims of the thesis and formulates concrete

recommendations for practice, further research, or development of the field. It doesn't reproduce and

it doesn't contain citations,

h) The list of bibliography contains complete and correct bibliographic data with regard to all

cited source, in a uniform format according to STN ISO 690 or other approved citation standard,

- i) the annexes contain additional material that clearly supports the main part of the text.
8. The Rigorousum Thesis must be supported by relevant scientific and professional sources:
 - a) the recommended minimum is 60 sources,
 - b) a significant proportion should be foreign and indexed sources (recommended minimum 50%).
 - c) the majority of citations should be taken from the last 10 years; preference is given to peer-reviewed and scientific publications.
 9. The candidate cannot submit:
 - a) their Graduation Thesis or other Qualification Thesis as Rigorousum Thesis,
 - b) a Thesis that is a plagiarism or infringes copyright.
 10. Every thesis is subject to an originality check; any violations detected are dealt with in accordance with internal regulations on academic integrity.
 11. Within the processing of their Rigorousum Thesis, the candidate can request the help of a consultant (through the PPRK) with regard to methodological guidance. The consultant is appointed by the head of the relevant department and approved by the rector. A consultant may be a university teacher or researcher with relevant scientific-pedagogical or scientific qualifications. The consultant is responsible for methodological guidance, not for the content and results of the Thesis.

Article 6

Submission of Rigorousum Thesis

1. The candidate shall submit to the PPRK their Rigorousum Thesis together with their written application for the Rigorousum Examination, according to the deadline for submission of Rigorousum Theses and defence of Rigorousum Theses.
2. The deadline for submission of Rigorousum Theses, in each single academic year, is: by 28 February (for summer term); by 31 August (for winter term).
3. The candidate shall submit their Rigorousum Thesis to the PPRK in two copies in hardcover, together with the Originality Check Protocol and the Licence Agreement.

4. Before being admitted to the defence of their Rigorosum Thesis, the candidate shall send their Thesis in electronic form to the central register of Final, Rigorosum, and Habilitation Theses. Consequently, the university shall check the originality of the submitted Thesis on the basis of data from the central register of Final, Rigorosum, and Habilitation Theses. The modes and conditions are regulated by the relevant internal provision of the university.
5. The electronic version of the Rigorosum Thesis must be identical in content to the printed version of the work. The candidate will fill in and sign the Licence Agreement (see annex 1) or the Declaration on the provision of work without the possibility of disclosure (see annex 2) and the completed form "Method of use of work and licence scope" (see annex 3).
6. If the candidate fails to meet the deadline for submitting the Rigorosum Thesis, the rector will terminate the Rigorosum Procedure.
7. Request for Extension of the Rigorosum Procedure may be approved by the Rector.

Article 7

Committee for the Rigorosum Examinations

1. The Rigorosum Examination is conducted before the committee for Rigorosum Examinations (hereinafter "examination committee").
2. The PPRK shall notify the candidate of the date and place of the Rigorosum Examination at the proposal of the chairperson of the examination committee, at least 21 calendar days before the date of the examination.
3. The right to examine in the examination committee is held by university teachers working at universities in the positions of professors and associate professors and other experts approved by the Scientific Board of VŠZaSP.
4. The examination committee consists of a chairperson and at least three other members. At least two members of the examination committee shall be university teachers holding the

positions of professor or associate professor. The chairperson of the committee is a university teacher working as a professor or associate professor at university.

5. The examination committee shall have a quorum if its chairperson and at least two other members are present.
6. It is possible to include in the examination committee even experts of a given study field from other universities or from external environment. At least one member of the examination committee must come from a different workplace/department than the other members of the examination committee.
7. The chairperson and the members of the relevant examination board are appointed/removed by the university rector. The members of the examination committee are appointed according to the study field in which they work.

Article 8

Opponent of the Rigorousum Thesis

1. Depending on the topic of the Rigorousum Thesis, the chairperson of the examination committee shall appoint at least one opponent to assess the Rigorousum Thesis. The opponent is selected from professors, associate professors, researchers with scientific qualifications CSc., PhD. or DrSc. or from assistant professors with scientific or academic title CSc. or PhD.
2. The chairperson of the examination committee shall send the Rigorousum Thesis to the opponent together with a request for an assessment.
3. The opponent is obliged to submit an opponent's review of the Rigorousum Thesis (in both printed and electronic form) to the chairperson of the committee no later than 30 days from the date on which the chairperson of the committee submitted the Thesis to the opponent.
4. The opponent shall draw up a written assessment of the Thesis and propose its evaluation with a grade of "passed" or "failed".

5. If the opponent does not recommend the Thesis for defence, they will grade it as "failed" and suggest that it be reviewed. The chairperson of the committee shall notify the candidate in writing of the need to revise the Thesis and shall set a deadline by which the candidate must revise the Thesis.
6. The revised Rigorosum Thesis is then evaluated by two opponents. If even a revised Rigorosum Thesis is repeatedly evaluated by both opponents with a classification grade of "failed," the Rigorosum Procedure will be terminated.
7. The opponent's review shall be delivered to the candidate via the IS no later than 7 days before the Rigorosum Examination.
8. The opponent assesses the level, quality, and fulfilment of the thesis objectives in writing. The opponent's assessment must contain comments on the content of the Rigorosum Thesis and their opinion on whether the Thesis meets or does not meet the requirements for a Rigorosum Thesis. The opponent shall comment on the theoretical basis of the Thesis, methodology, data collection methods, level of data analysis and statistical methods used to evaluate the data, discussion, and contribution of the Thesis to the study field. The opponent expresses their opinion about the extent of conformity reported in the protocol of originality check. At the end, the opponent shall issue a recommendation in favour of the Thesis defence or a recommendation against the Thesis defence with a proposal to revise the Thesis. The assessment shall include questions to which the participant in the Rigorosum Procedure will respond.
9. If, for provable reasons, the opponent is unable to draw up the assessment or fails to submit it within 30 working days of the date of delivery of the appointment decree and the Rigorosum Thesis, the chairperson of the examination committee shall appoint a new opponent.

Article 9

Flow of the Rigorosum Examination and defence of the Rigorosum Thesis

1. The Rigorosum Examination may only take place if the examination committee has a quorum. The course of the Rigorosum Examination and the proclamation of its results are public.
2. The Rigorosum Examination is divided into two parts: (i) defence of the Rigorosum Thesis, followed immediately by (ii) an oral examination on specified study subjects.
3. During the defence of the Rigorosum Thesis, the candidate shall respond to the comments made in the opponent's assessment and shall answer questions from the members of the committee.
4. Individual parts of the Rigorosum Examination are assessed with the classification grade "passed" or "failed". The Rigorosum Examination, as a whole, is evaluated according to the following classification scale:
 - a) "passed" if both parts of the Rigorosum Examination were graded "passed".
 - b) "failed" if one or both parts of the Rigorosum Examination were graded "failed".
5. If the defence of the Rigorosum Thesis was graded as "failed," the participant in the Rigorosum Procedure does not have the right to continue to the oral part of the Rigorosum Examination.
6. A candidate who fails to pass the defence of their Rigorosum Thesis or oral examination may retake the Rigorosum Examination upon written request in accordance with the proceedings set out in article 10 of this directive.
7. The examination committee decides on the result of the Rigorosum Examination by secret ballot in a closed session. To successfully pass the Rigorosum Examination, a majority of the votes of the members of the examination committee present is required.
8. In accordance with university regulations, a protocol on the completion of the Rigorosum Thesis and the Rigorosum Examination shall be drawn up. This protocol shall be then archived together with other documentation pursuant to applicable provisions. The protocol is signed by all members of the examination committee. Mandatory annexes to the Rigorosum Examination record: (i) opponent's assessment; (ii) result of the originality check from the centralised register of Final and Qualification Theses; and (iii) a copy of the Licence Agreement.

9. If, for serious reasons, the candidate is unable to take the Rigorosum Examination on the appointed date, they are required to submit a written justification to the chairperson of the examination committee in advance or no later than three working days after the date of the Rigorosum Examination (if they had serious obstacles preventing them from apologising in advance). Based on a written justification from the candidate, the chairperson of the examination committee shall propose an alternative date to the rector in order to take the Rigorosum Examination. The PPRK shall notify the candidate in writing about the aforementioned alternative date.
10. If a candidate fails to appear for the Rigorosum Examination without justification, they will be graded as "failed."
11. The defence of the Rigorosum Thesis and the Rigorosum Examination are conducted in the official language of the Slovak Republic.
12. On the basis of a written request from the candidate, the rector may grant permission to defend the Rigorosum Thesis and take the Rigorosum Examination in a foreign language.

Article 10

Repetition of Rigorosum Examination

1. A candidate who, within the regular deadline:
 - a) failed the oral part of the Rigorosum Examination, or
 - b) failed to defend their Rigorosum Thesis, may submit a written request for a retake date for the Rigorosum Examination and/or defence of Rigorosum Thesis. The candidate shall send the aforementioned written request to the PPRK, by means of the IS system, no later than 30 days from the date of the Rigorosum Examination.
2. On the basis of the recommendation of the competent examination committee, the rector shall decide on the granting of a retake date and shall inform the candidate of this decision via the IS system.
3. The re-examination date shall be decided by the rector based on a proposal by the chair of the examination committee:

- a) in case of failure in the oral part of the Rigorosum Examination, the re-examination date can be set at the earliest after 3 months,
 - b) in case of failure in the defence of Rigorosum Thesis, the re-examination date can be set no later than 12 months from the date of the regular Rigorosum Examination, in order to ensure space and time for proper revision and high-quality preparation.
4. The candidate shall attach the following documents to the request for a re-examination:
 - a) in the case of a repeated defence of a Rigorosum Thesis: revised or supplemented version of the Rigorosum Thesis according to the recommendations of the committee and opponents,
 - b) confirmation of payment of the relevant fee in accordance with this directive.
 5. If the candidate has successfully defended their thesis, they are not required to defend it again when retaking the Rigorosum Examination. In the opposite case, the examination committee shall determine whether the Thesis needs to be reworked or supplemented.
 6. If, for serious reasons, a candidate is unable to attend the scheduled date of the Rigorosum Examination or defence, they are required to justify their absence in writing or via the IS and request an alternative date no later than 14 days from the specified deadline. The alternate date is determined by the rector upon the recommendation of the chairperson of the examination committee.
 7. If the candidate fails to appear on the appointed date and does not justify their absence within the period specified in paragraph 6, the re-examination shall be deemed to have been unsuccessful.
 8. The defence of a Rigorosum Thesis and the Rigorosum Examination may be repeated only once. The re-examination date is subject to the same requirements regarding knowledge level and quality of work as the regular date.
 9. If a candidate is graded "failed" on the repetition date of the Rigorosum Examination or repetition of defence of Rigorosum Thesis, the Rigorosum Procedure will end unsuccessfully. The candidate no longer has the option of repeating the Rigorosum

Examination or defending their Rigorosum Thesis within the framework of the same Rigorosum Procedure.

10. A candidate cannot apply to take a Rigorosum Examination at university if they received a "failed" grade when retaking the Rigorosum Examination.

Article 11

Completion and discontinuation of the Rigorosum Procedure

1. The Rigorosum Procedure is successfully completed if the candidate:
 - a) submitted their Rigorosum Thesis in accordance with this directive within the specified deadline,
 - b) successfully defended their Rigorosum Thesis, and
 - c) successfully completed the Rigorosum Examination (if it is part of the procedure under the relevant study programme).
2. Based on the proposal of the examination committee, the rector decides on the conferral of the academic title. The decision will be announced to the candidate via the IS and also in writing.
3. The Rigorosum Procedure ends unsuccessfully if:
 - a) During re-examination (Rigorosum examination) or during repeated defence of the Rigorosum Thesis the candidate was graded "failed".
 - b) the candidate does not request a re-examination within the period specified in this directive,
 - c) the candidate does not appear at the designated re-examination without a valid and timely excuse;
in such a case, the re-examination is considered unsuccessful.

4. In cases referred to in paragraph 3, the rector shall decide on the unsuccessful completion of the Rigorousum Procedure upon the proposal of the relevant examination committee. The decision will be announced to the candidate via the IS and also in writing.
5. The Rigorousum Procedure shall be discontinued in the following cases:
 - a) the candidate (even after being requested to do so) fails to remedy the deficiencies in the application form or
in the annexes according to this directive within the specified time limit,
 - b) the candidate fails to pay the fee associated with the Rigorousum Procedure or the fee associated with re-examination within the specified period
 - c) the candidate fails to submit the Rigorousum Thesis within the deadline set by the rector's decision, and the candidate is not
allowed to interrupt or extend the deadline,
 - d) the candidate notifies in writing (via IS or in writing) that they are withdrawing from the Rigorousum Procedure,
 - e) during the Rigorousum Procedure, the university's authorisation to offer the relevant study programme will be suspended or revoked, and it is not possible to ensure continuation under conditions compatible with the legal regulations,
 - f) a serious violation of academic integrity rules is found (especially plagiarism, knowingly providing false information or other conduct contrary to ethical and legal standards)
 - g) death of the candidate.
6. The decision to suspend the Rigorousum Procedure is issued by the rector in accordance with point 5 of this article on the basis of a proposal by the PPRK; the decision shall contain a substantive justification.

Article 12

Review of the decision

1. A candidate may request a review of a decision on unsuccessful completion or discontinuation of the Rigorosum Procedure, if they consider that the conditions laid down in this directive or in the legal provisions have not been met.
2. The candidate shall submit their request for review of the decision to the rector via the IS no later than 10 days from the date of delivery of the decision.
3. The rector shall decide after discussion in the relevant examination committee; the decision is final within the internal system of the university.

Article 13

Suspension of the Rigorosum Procedure

1. The candidate may request a suspension of the Rigorosum Procedure for reasons worthy of special consideration (in particular severe health problems, family or work reasons). The candidate shall submit their request to the PPRK via IS.
2. Decisions on the suspension of the Rigorosum Procedure shall be taken by the rector on the basis of the reasons set out in this article.
3. During the period of suspension of the Rigorosum Procedure, the time limits laid down in this directive shall not run. After the suspension period expires, the time limits laid down in this directive shall resume to run.
4. It is possible to suspend Rigorosum Procedure for a maximum of 12 months without providing a reason.
5. If the candidate declares that the reason for the interruption are serious health reasons or other serious personal circumstances (e.g. long-term sick leave, death in the family, crisis situation in life) the Rigorosum Procedure may be suspended for a maximum of 24 months.
6. The Rigorosum Procedure may be suspended for a maximum of 36 months if the candidate states one of the following reasons for suspension:
 - a) risk pregnancy,
 - b) care for a child under three years of age,

- c) caring for a child with a disability younger than five years of age,
 - d) long-term care for a person with a disability or a dependent person in a shared household.
7. The total duration of the suspension of the Rigorosum Procedure pursuant to paragraphs 4 to 6 shall be counted cumulatively; and it may not exceed the maximum period of 36 months established by this directive for the completion of the Rigorosum Procedure. Repeated requests for suspension shall not lead to any circumvention of the aforementioned time limits or to any de facto indefinite prolongation of the Rigorosum Procedure.
 8. In justified cases the rector can ask for adequate documents proving the reasons for suspension; in cases of health and sensitive reasons, the procedure is carried out with regard to the protection of personal data and human dignity.
 9. The decision about suspension of the Rigorosum Procedure (incl. indication of the period of interruption) shall be delivered to the candidate via the IS.

Article 14

Conferral of academic degrees and awarding of diploma

1. The university shall award an academic degree to a candidate who has successfully passed the Rigorosum Examination and defended their Rigorosum Thesis in accordance with this directive, pursuant to the Higher Education Act and the accredited study programme; the academic title is stated together with the study field.
2. The diploma issued by the university serves as proof of the award of an academic degree. The content of the diploma and the manner of its issuance are regulated by legal provisions and internal university regulations.
3. The diploma is usually ceremoniously handed over at a graduation ceremony on dates determined by the university, in accordance with academic traditions and protocol.
4. In exceptional and particularly justified cases (notably long-term ill health, serious family or work reasons, residence abroad, parental responsibilities), the rector may decide to award

the diploma individually outside the graduation ceremony (on the basis of a written request from the student). In this case the diploma shall be handed over on an alternative date or *brevi manu* at the rector's office.

5. The PPRK keeps records of graduates of the Rigorosum Procedure who have been awarded an academic title pursuant to paragraph 1. The data shall be entered in the register of graduates and relevant registers in accordance with applicable legal regulations.

Article 15

Fees for the Rigorosum Procedure and diploma issuance

1. The provisions of this article represent a special regulation of fees for Rigorosum Procedure. In the event of a conflict between this article and the rector's directive on tuition fees and fees related to studies for the current academic year (hereinafter "Fee Directive"), the provisions of this article shall apply. The Fees Directive shall apply to Rigorosum Procedure only on a subsidiary basis., in matters not expressly covered by this article.
2. Candidates accepted for the Rigorosum Procedure are required to pay the fee for the Rigorosum Procedure via bank transfer to the following account number: 2626748634/1100, variable symbol: 8888, with the note "Rigorosum Procedure" and "student's name", within 15 days from the date of delivery of the notification of admission to the Rigorosum Procedure.
3. The candidate is required to submit confirmation of payment of the Rigorosum Examination fee to the PPRK within 15 days from the date of delivery of the notification of acceptance to the Rigorosum Examination. The candidate is required to submit confirmation of payment of the fee for issuing a diploma within 15 days from the successful completion of the Rigorosum Examination.
4. The amounts of fees associated with the Rigorosum Procedure are determined according to the valid "directive on fees related to studies in the current academic year", with regard to:
 - a) fee for Rigorosum Procedure,

- b) fee for issuing the diploma,
 - c) fee for repetition of Rigorosum Examination.
5. The fee for issuing the diploma must be paid within 14 days after successful completion of the Rigorosum Examination.
 6. The discontinuation, unsuccessful completion, suspension, or interruption of the Rigorosum Procedure is not in itself a reason for refunding the fees paid, unless otherwise specified in the fee directive.
 7. Information on the option of partial refunds or non-refunds of fees is regulated exclusively in the university's fee directive.
 8. Paid fees are usually non-refundable.
 9. If the candidate decides not to proceed with the Rigorosum Procedure and terminates the Rigorosum Procedure before passing the Rigorosum Examination of their own free will, they will be refunded the proportionate part of the fee they have paid. The costs related to the committee meeting will be deducted.
 10. Candidates who are employees of VŠZaSP, or doctoral students in full-time doctoral studies studying for the standard length of study, upon written request, are eligible for a reduction or waiver of the fee for services related to the Rigorosum Procedure.
 11. The deadline for submitting a request for a reduction or waiver of the Rigorosum Procedure fee is 15 days from the date of delivery of the confirmation of acceptance of the application for the Rigorosum Examination.

Article 16

Quality assurance, monitoring, and auditing

1. The Quality Control Centre (hereinafter "UKK") and the Centre for Continuing Education (hereinafter "ČDŮ") shall assess the Rigorous Procedures on a yearly basis, notably:
 - a) number of candidates and success rate,
 - b) occurrence of suspected plagiarism or other violations,
 - c) workload of committees and opponents,
 - d) feedback by candidates.
2. Once a year, an internal audit of Rigorous Procedures is carried out, focusing on:
 - a) observance of this directive,
 - b) compliance with internal quality system,
 - c) documentation completeness, and transparency. Subsequently, this proof of compliance is submitted via the PPRK to the Expert Committee in the relevant field of study after the approval by the RVSZK.
3. Audit results are used to adopt corrective and preventive measures. They may be provided to accreditation bodies to prove the quality and transparency of the system.

Article 17

Transitional provision

1. Prior to the establishment of the Centre for Continuing Education and the Office for Rigorous Procedures (hereinafter "Office for Rigorous Procedures" or "RRK") as the workplace responsible for the agenda of Rigorous Procedures, the agenda of Rigorous Procedures shall be carried out by the PPRK.
2. On the date of establishment of the RRK, the PPRK shall be superseded for the purposes of this directive and replaced by the RRK.

3. The rector is entitled to determine or change the PPRK (including the designation of the RRK) by written notice published in the IS and on the university website. This shall not affect the validity or effectiveness of this directive.
4. The Centre for Continuing Education ensures the issuance and publication of methodological guidelines, sample forms, and schedules which shall further regulate the technical and organizational aspects of the Rigorosum Procedure in accordance with this directive.
5. The Rigorosum Procedures initiated before the entry into force of this directive shall be completed in accordance with the rules in force at the time of their initiation unless the candidate and the university agree in writing on a proceeding in accordance with this directive (as long as it is consistent with the law and in the candidate's best interest, and approved by the relevant Expert Committee). The Rigorosum Examinations and the defence of Rigorosum Thesis are carried out in accordance with this directive.

Article 18

Final provisions

1. The proceedings and decisions in matters of Rigorosum Procedure are not governed by Act no. 71/1967 Coll. on administrative proceedings (Administrative Procedure Code), as amended (except for decisions on the nullity of a Rigorosum Examination or part thereof).
2. This directive replaces and annuls directive no. 2/2015 of VŠZaSP on Rigorosum Procedure.
3. This Directive on Rigorosum Procedure of the St. Elisabeth University of Health Care in Bratislava shall enter into force and become valid on the date of its signing by the rector, after its discussion by the Academic Senate of VŠZaSP.
4. This directive includes:
 - a) Annex 1 Licence Agreement,
 - b) Annex 2 Declaration on the provision of work without the possibility of disclosure,
 - c) Annex 3 Method of use of work and licence scope.

Bratislava, 15.12.2025

prof. PaedDr. PhDr. ThDr. Pavol Tománek, PhD., MBA, MHA.

chairperson of the Academic Senate

prof. MUDr. Stanislav Špánik. CSc.

rector of the St. Elisabeth
University of Health Care and Social
Work