The Doctorate and the Attestation in Uzbekistan: The Thesis, the Council and the Degree

How a System Produces Its Own Scholars

Ulugbek Yusupov

Ulugbek Yusupov, Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences, Independent researcher, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan has reorganised its doctoral formation twice in a decade and has kept in both versions the institution that decides the degree, which is the attestation. This article examines that institution. It considers the two degrees of the system and the difference that the reform introduced; the doctoral programme and its supervision; the council that examines the thesis and the composition that its decisions require; the opponent who reads the work and the report that the procedure expects; the publication that the defence requires and the journals that the ministry lists; the plagiarism that the digital check has made visible and the procedure that it has not changed; the doctoral candidate who teaches and the load that delays the thesis; the faculty that supervises and the count that limits it; the candidate from the region and the cost of the travel to the defence; the recognition of the foreign doctorate and the return that it does not produce; the figures by which a doctoral system can be judged; and the comparison with the region. It argues that a doctorate is a formation of a scholar and not an examination of a thesis, and that a council which examines a work without a programme of supervision examines the candidate twice and trains her once.

Contents **Page**

1. The Two Degrees and the Reform **335**
2. The Programme and the Supervision **335**
3. The Council and Its Composition **336**
4. The Opponent and the Report **336**
5. The Publication and the List **337**
6. The Plagiarism and the Digital Check **337**
7. The Candidate Who Teaches **338**
8. The Supervisor and the Count **338**
9. The Candidate from the Region **339**
10. The Foreign Doctorate and the Return **339**
11. The Figures of a Doctoral System **340**
12. The Comparison and the Lesson **340**
13. The Cost of the Degree **341**
14. The Doctoral School That Could Be Built **341**
15. Conclusions **342**

1. The Two Degrees and the Reform

Uzbekistan maintains two doctoral degrees, and the distinction is the element of the system that the reform of the previous decade reorganised without abolishing. The first is the doctor of philosophy, which corresponds to the international doctorate and requires a thesis, a set of the publications and a defence. The second is the doctor of science, which is a higher degree awarded for a body of the work and which was retained from the previous system.

The consequence is a ladder with two rungs that the international recognition reads as one. A graduate who holds the first degree is a doctor in the terms of the Bologna area; the second is a title that the foreign universities do not recognise and that the national career requires. The two are both necessary for the academic promotion in Uzbekistan and only the first is portable.

The instrument is a clarification: the two degrees stated in the diploma with the international equivalence, the second recognised as a national habilitation rather than as a doctorate, and the foreign institutions informed of the distinction. A clarification of that structure costs a regulation and a translation, and it is the one that allows a scholar to present her degree abroad without a letter of explanation.

2. The Programme and the Supervision

The doctoral programme of Uzbekistan is organised around the candidate rather than around a cohort, and the organisation decides the formation. A candidate is attached to a supervisor and to an institution, writes a thesis, publishes the articles that the procedure requires and defends before a council, and the cohort as a unit does not exist.

The consequence is a formation that depends entirely on the supervisor and on the institution, and a variance that the system does not measure. A candidate supervised by a scholar who reads the drafts, who introduces her to the field and who insists on the method is formed; a candidate whose supervisor signs the plan and does not read the work is not, and the two receive the same degree.

The instrument is a doctoral school with a cohort: an admission by a competition, a seminar of the work in progress each fortnight, a set of the courses in the method, a co-supervision from another institution and a defence before a committee of three. A school of that structure is the one that reduces the variance to the level of the supervisor's engagement, and it is the one that the reform has described and not built.

3. The Council and Its Composition

The council that examines the thesis is the institution that decides the degree, and its composition is regulated in a detail that the reform has retained. The council has a chair, a secretary, a set of the members with the degrees, an opponent from another institution and a leading institution that reviews the work.

The consequence is a procedure that is thorough in the form and dependent on the persons in the substance. A council that includes a specialist of the field will examine the work; a council that includes the colleagues of the supervisor will confirm it; and the composition is decided by the institution that presents the candidate, which is the institution that has the interest.

The instrument is an independence of the council: the members appointed by an authority that is not the institution of the candidate, the opponent from outside the region, the report published with the decision and the composition of the vote recorded. An arrangement of that structure is the one that the systems with a credible doctorate have adopted, and it is the one that converts the council from a ceremony into an examination.

4. The Opponent and the Report

The opponent is the scholar who reads the thesis and writes the report, and the report is the element of the procedure that carries the assessment. An opponent who reads the work in a week, writes four pages in the language of the formula and recommends the degree is an opponent who has performed the function of the procedure.

The consequence is a set of the reports that are interchangeable and a defence in which the objections arrive at the session rather than in the document. The candidate receives the report a few days before the defence, and the days are not the time in which a thesis is revised.

The instrument is an opponent with the time and the mandate: a fee that corresponds to the reading, a period of a month, a report that names the three weaknesses and the two contributions, and a right to require a revision before the defence. An arrangement of that structure costs a fee and it is the one that converts the opponent from a signature into a reader, and it is the cheapest reform of the doctoral system.

5. The Publication and the List

The defence requires a set of the publications in the journals that the ministry lists, and the list is the instrument through which the state decides what counts as the research. The list has been revised toward the international databases and it retains a set of the national journals that the ministry recognises.

The consequence is a double requirement that the candidates meet with the two kinds of the article and the time that the two require. A candidate who publishes in the national journal satisfies the list and is not read abroad; a candidate who publishes in the international journal enters the field and may not satisfy the national requirement in the time of the programme.

The instrument is a list that recognises both with the weights stated, and a national journal with a peer review that the international databases index. A list of that structure allows a candidate to publish the research about her country in her country and to be read in the field, and it is the one that the ministry can revise without a new institution.

6. The Plagiarism and the Digital Check

The digital check of the text has made the plagiarism visible and it has not changed the procedure that responds to it. A thesis that returns a percentage of the coincidence above the threshold is examined by a commission, and the commission decides whether the coincidence is a citation or a copy, and the decision is not published.

The consequence is a check that produces a number and a procedure that produces a discretion. The candidate whose thesis is copied in the part that the commission does not read receives the degree, and the candidate whose citation is extensive is delayed, and the two outcomes are decided by the same number.

The instrument is a procedure with the published criteria: the threshold, the exclusion of the citations, the report of the comparison available to the opponent and the sanction stated in the regulation. A procedure of that structure is the one that the systems with a credible doctorate operate, and it is the one that converts the check from a ritual into an instrument.

7. The Candidate Who Teaches

A large share of the Uzbek doctoral candidates teach, and the teaching is the reason that the thesis is delayed. A candidate who teaches sixteen hours a week, supervises the students and sits on the committees writes the thesis in the margins of the week, and the margins are the nights of a tired person.

The consequence is a duration of the programme that exceeds the term by a half in a large number of the cases, and a thesis that is completed late and revised in a hurry. The institution, for its part, obtains the teaching of a candidate at the salary of a junior, and the arrangement is the subsidy that the doctorate pays to the department.

The instrument is a doctoral contract: a stipend or a salary with a teaching obligation of four hours, a reduction of the load in the final year, and a term that the institution respects. A contract of that structure is the one that the systems with a completed doctorate in the term have, and it is the one that converts the candidate from a junior teacher into a scholar in formation.

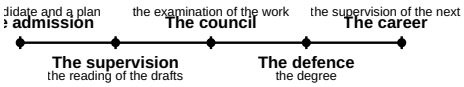


Figure 1 The formation of a scholar and the point of the failure

8. The Supervisor and the Count

The supervisor of the Uzbek candidate supervises a number that the regulation limits and the practice exceeds, and the count is the arithmetic of the formation. A supervisor with eight candidates, sixteen hours of the teaching and a set of the committees does not have the

hours that the reading of eight theses requires, and the reading is what the supervision is.

The consequence is a supervision that is a signature on a plan, and a candidate who is supervised in that sense writes alone. The department counts the candidates as the output of the supervisor and it does not count the time, and the two figures are the description of the problem.

The instrument is a limit of four candidates per supervisor, a reduction of the load that corresponds to the supervision and a recognition in the promotion. A limit of that structure is the one that the doctoral schools of the region have adopted, and it is the one that would make the count a measure of the capacity rather than of the prestige.

9. The Candidate from the Region

The doctoral candidate from a regional institution travels to the capital for the admission, the consultations and the defence, and the travel is a cost that the stipend does not cover. A candidate who lives six hours from the council spends a part of the year in the trains, and the hours of the trains are the hours of the thesis.

The consequence is a system in which the doctorate is easier for the candidate of the capital, and a set of the regional institutions that do not produce their own doctors. The regional university then imports the doctors or does without them, and the departments that the region needs are staffed by the graduates of the capital who do not stay.

The instrument is a regional council and a distance supervision: the councils accredited in the regional centres, the defence by the video with the committee assembled in the two places, and a budget for the travel of the candidate and the opponent. A provision of that structure is the one that the geography requires, and it is the one that the digital infrastructure of the country can now support.

10. The Foreign Doctorate and the Return

A Uzbek scholar who obtains a doctorate abroad returns rarely, and the return is the instrument that the system has not designed. The graduate who stays abroad is employed by the university that trained her or by a laboratory of the country, and the return would require a post, a laboratory, a budget and a recognition.

The consequence is a system that imports the training and exports the scholar, and a set of the departments that are staffed by the graduates of the national programme. The national doctorate is then the formation of the second rank, and the first is the one that the country finances and does not use.

The instrument is a fellowship of the return: a post created for the returning scholar, a start-up grant, a reduction of the load for three years and a recognition of the foreign degree by a rule. A fellowship of that structure is the one that the region's states have begun to create, and it is the one that converts the foreign doctorate into a national capacity.

11. The Figures of a Doctoral System

A doctoral system can be judged on six figures and none of them is the number of the defences. The first is the share of the candidates who complete within the term. The second is the number of the publications per graduate in the three years after the defence. The third is the share of the graduates employed in the research.

The fourth is the number of the candidates per supervisor. The fifth is the share of the theses examined by a committee with a member from outside the institution. The sixth is the share of the graduates who supervise a candidate within five years. The six describe a system that reproduces the scholars, and they are collectable from the records of the councils and the institutions.

The instrument is a report of the six, published by the ministry with the data of the institutions, and used in the accreditation of the doctoral programmes. A report of that structure is the accounting that a decade of the reform is owed, and it is the one that would allow the state to see whether the doctorate produces a scholar.

12. The Comparison and the Lesson

The five states of the region have reorganised the doctorate in the same period and have kept the attestation in different forms. Kazakhstan has built the doctoral schools with the foreign co-supervision and a publication requirement; Kyrgyzstan has a small programme and a strong dependence on the foreign degree; Tajikistan has the academy and a thin university doctorate; Turkmenistan has the academy and the isolation; Uzbekistan has the two degrees and the largest number of the candidates.

The comparison suggests that the doctorate is decided by the two instruments that the states have not built: the doctoral school with the cohort and the council that is independent of the institution of the candidate. A state that has the two produces the scholars; a state that has the procedure produces the theses.

The instrument is the regional network of the doctoral schools, with the shared seminars, the co-supervision across the borders and the committees of three states. A network of that structure is the one that a small system can afford, and it is the one that would make the regional doctorate a formation rather than an examination.

13. The Cost of the Degree

The cost of a doctorate that is an examination rather than a formation is paid by the candidate, the institution and the state. The candidate pays the years of the delay and the teaching that she performs for the salary of a junior; the institution pays the supervision that is not performed and the department that is not renewed; the state pays the salary of the councils and the cost of the doctor who does not publish.

The consequence is a system that produces the degrees in the number that the plan requires and the scholars in the number that the departments do not. The two figures are the description of the reform, and the difference between them is the cost that the accounting of the doctorate does not record.

The instrument is the accounting of the three: the duration, the publications, the supervision and the employment, in a single report published by the ministry. A report of that structure is the argument for the doctoral school, and it is the one that a ministry of finance can read.

14. The Doctoral School That Could Be Built

The doctoral school of a small system is not a building; it is a set of the routines. A cohort admitted by a competition, a seminar of the work in progress, a set of the courses in the method, a supervision limited and reduced, a co-supervision from another institution, a defence before a committee of three, and a publication required before the defence.

The seven routines cost a budget of the modest size and they require an institution that has the authority to admit, to supervise and to exam-

ine. The academy and the universities of the region have the scholars and the fields; what they do not have is the school that joins them, and the joining is the reform.

The instrument is a pilot: one institution, one field and one cohort, with the seven routines, evaluated after four years and extended on the evidence. A pilot of that structure is the one that the ministry can authorise in a year, and it is the one that would tell the system whether the school produces the scholars before the school is built in every field.

15. Conclusions

A doctorate is a formation of a scholar and not an examination of a thesis, and a council which examines a work without a programme of supervision examines the candidate twice and trains her once. Uzbekistan has the two degrees, the councils and the largest number of the candidates of the region, and the school is the element that the reform has described and not built.

Five conclusions follow. The doctoral school should be built with the cohort, the seminar and the courses, because the supervision of a single candidate depends on the accident of the supervisor. The council should be independent of the institution of the candidate, because a council appointed by the interested institution confirms. The opponent should have the time and the mandate, because a report of four pages is a signature. The supervisor should be limited and his reduction of the load funded, because the count is a measure of the capacity. And the candidate should be paid, because a doctorate performed in the margins of a teaching load is a doctorate delayed.

A system that has done the five will produce the scholars who can supervise the next generation and who publish about their own country. A system that has done none of them will produce the theses, the degrees and the councils, and it will import the scholars who write the literature of its own problems.

Instrument	Content	Failure it prevents
Doctoral school	A cohort, a seminar, the courses	A formation left to the supervisor
Independent council	Members appointed outside	A confirmation by the colleagues
Opponent with a mandate	A month, a fee, a named report	A report of four pages
Paid candidate	A stipend and four hours	A thesis delayed by the teaching

Table 1 Four instruments of a doctoral system and the failure each prevents

References

[1] Yusupov, U. (2023). The doctorate and the attestation in Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Fan.

[2] Ibodullayev, K. (2024). The credit-module system in practice. Tashkent.

[3] OECD (2021). Supporting the reform of higher education in Uzbekistan. Paris.

[4] Suleimenova, A. (2023). Scholarships abroad and elite formation. Astana.

[5] Suleimanova, Z. (2023). Statistics and the governance of higher education. Dushanbe.

Biography:

Ulugbek Yusupov is an independent researcher in Tashkent working on the doctoral formation, the attestation of the scientific degrees and the research policy of Uzbekistan.