



PhD Candidates' participation in the Development of Policies and Procedures of Doctoral Studies in David Tvildiani Medical University

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DTMU Founded in 1991 as “AIETI Medical School”

First graduates (MDs) in 1997

PhD Programme – since 2009
1st National Accreditation - 2011

First PhD Defense – 2012

To this day – 15 PhD dissertations defended



Programme Objectives

- **Academic personnel – PhD student research interest centered**
- **Academic freedom**
- **Full support to young researchers**
- **Academic Integrity**



PhD Candidates' Contribution to Programme Management

- Regular face-to-face discussions and communication with programme managing staff (directors, administrators, assessors, etc.)
- Quality assurance service evaluation process/reports
- Direct involvement in programme management and quality assurance (as employed administrative staff)
- Representation of PhD students in managing bodies, such as the Academic Council, Rector's Council, Curriculum Committee, etc.



Positive Feedbacks:

- PhD students appraise academic freedom at all stages of PhD studies - from research proposal development, projects' implementation and finally publication/defense processes.
- Mandatory and elective courses receive positive feedback and contribute to knowledge and skills enhancement.
- PhD students also appraise own working environment.
- Highly appraised is personal capacity building and support from the University (including financial support).
- PhD candidates support the internationalization policy, including foreign co-supervising opportunities.
- MD students' contribution to PhD students' research is valued.



Development plans:

- Development of research laboratories, providing opportunity to get familiar with latest high-tech.
- Support to post-docs, motivation and follow-up in later research, early career researcher funding opportunities.
- Provide more opportunities for foreign or local partner institution research environment exposure.

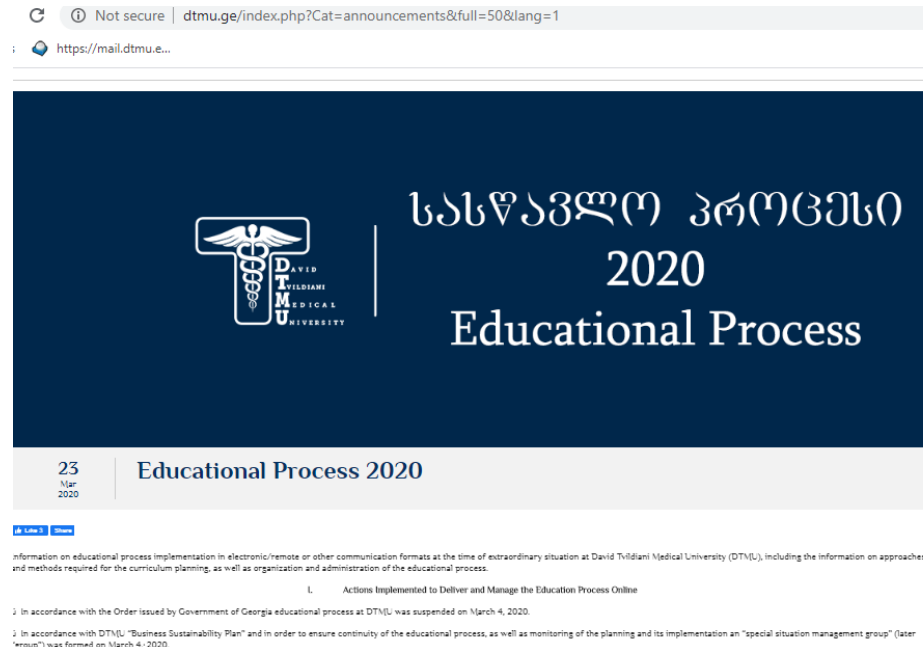


Programme updates

- Supervisor communication recommendations, and monitoring
- Updated supervising reflection in academic personnel workload
- Updated PhD Project Development procedures and forms
- Updated PhD thesis format, added flexibility (language, style, etc.)
- Reviewed publication requirements, journal prioritization, etc.
- Reviewed PhD education progress monitoring procedures
- Updated Biostatistics and Epidemiology Course
- Stimulating MD Students' involvement in PhD research projects support, contributing both to MD and PhD students' careers.

PhD Education in DTMU during the COVID-19 Pandemic


- To support PhD education process during the pandemic, the University explored PhD students' needs, obstacles and challenges.
- This also represents a base for recognition of 2020 Spring semester credits (individually), and further - becomes a base for 2020 Fall semester planning.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "dtmu.ge/index.php?Cat=announcements&full=50&lang=1". The main content area features a dark blue header with the DTMU logo on the left and the text "სასწავლო პროცესი 2020 Educational Process" on the right. Below the header, there is a date "23 Mar 2020" and the title "Educational Process 2020". At the bottom, there is a small text block containing information about educational process implementation in electronic/remote formats, actions implemented to deliver and manage the education process, and references to government orders and university sustainability plans.

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Educational Process

23
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Information on educational process implementation in electronic/remote or other communication formats at the time of extraordinary situation at David Tbilidani Medical University (DTMU), including the information on approaches and methods required for the curriculum planning, as well as organization and administration of the educational process.

Actions Implemented to Deliver and Manage the Education Process Outline

In accordance with the Order issued by Government of Georgia educational process at DTMU was suspended on March 4, 2020.

In accordance with DTMU "Business Sustainability Plan" and in order to ensure continuity of the educational process, as well as monitoring of the planning and its implementation an "special situation management group" (later "group") was formed on March 4, 2020.

COVID-19 Related PhD Students' Needs Assessment Includes:

- Changes in working environment and work processes
- Changes in non-working (home) environment
- How the COVID-19 pandemic challenges fulfillment of individual PhD study plans/requirements for specific semester
- Challenges in preparation for PhD thesis defense or approbation procedures.
- Challenges in communication with opponents, planning and conducting defense.
- Changes in supervisor(s) communication.
- Changes in communication with the University administration.

COVID-19 Impact Conclusions:

- Most of DTMU PhD Students continue their regular work.
- Data collection during pandemic is severely complicated for most.
- PhD research challenges represent a legit and polite reason for delays.
- Many have additional load/pressure from informal/private environment (e.g. families).
- Literature review, distance communication, analysis of already collected data, writing PhD thesis – therefore progress will be required.
- Communication with supervisors was not affected.
- Almost all have evidence for relative credit recognition process.

PhD Education in DTMU during the COVID-19 Pandemic - **Solutions**

- Tuition fees waiver for the 2020 Spring semester.
- Offer of an additional semester, with tuition fees waiver.
- Development of individual plans for each PhD student (literature review, data collection, analysis, etc. as per individual requirements).

PhD Students' individual assessment was discussed and results agreed by the PhD studies committee, with relevant recommendations, requirements and progress plans delivered and agreed with the candidates.



Thank you!

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