

**University of Szeged Graduate School in Linguistics**  
**Quality assurance system for courses starting from September 2016**

8 April 2022

The quality assurance plan of the University of Szeged Graduate School in Linguistics is consistent with

- the ESG 2015 quality assurance principles and standards
- the strategic objectives and recommendations of the European Higher Education Area
- the University of Szeged Institutional Quality Assurance Guidelines and Strategic Plans
- the current University of Szeged Doctoral Regulations
- the relevant decisions and recommendations of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee
- the relevant legislation in force.

**1. Responsibilities of the Doctoral School leadership with regard to quality assurance**

**1.1.** The Doctoral School Council, which consists of the Head of the Doctoral School and the heads of programmes (with voting rights) and the Secretary of the Doctoral School and the representative for the doctoral students (with right of consultation), adopts the training regulations and the quality assurance plan of the Doctoral School and the annual quality assurance report by simple majority. At the same time as the annual quality assurance report is adopted (after the end of the academic year), the Doctoral School Council shall review the Doctoral School's training regulations and quality assurance plan.

Once adopted, the annual quality assurance reports are published on the Doctoral School website and kept in the Doctoral School archives.

The involvement of the heads of the programmes, supervisors, and doctoral students in the regulatory, quality assurance, and information management processes is as follows:

By 15 September after each academic year, the doctoral student submits a brief report on their academic activities to the head of the programme, together with a draft plan of their activities (updated each year), which is reviewed and approved by the supervisor. The head of the programme forwards the documents to the members of the Doctoral School Council by 30 September at the latest. The doctoral students and their supervisors/heads of programmes submit annual reports on the work conducted by the time of their application for the in-house defence. If the dissertation is not completed within this period or if the relationship with the doctoral student has been terminated, the report shall state the reasons. Reasons must also be provided if the doctoral student forgoes the scholarship or withdraws from the training.

The Doctoral School Council decides on the form and content of the teaching in each programme on the basis of the annual reports from the heads of the programmes and monitors the implementation of the approved curricula on an annual basis. It monitors the progress of students, manages their studies until a supervisor is appointed, and, if necessary, proposes and decides on any necessary changes. The head of the programme

reports any deviations from the approved curriculum and teaching staff to the head of the Doctoral School, who decides at their discretion whether the change should be submitted to the Doctoral School Council for approval, but the Doctoral School Council must always be notified of any changes. If the Head of the Doctoral School does not agree with the change, they must submit the proposal to the Doctoral School Council.

**1.2.** The person in charge of quality assurance in the Graduate School in Linguistics (the Doctoral Quality Assurance Officer) is elected by the Doctoral School Council from among its members with voting rights.

**1.3.** The public documents of the Doctoral School (regulations, forms etc.) in Hungarian and English are available on the Doctoral School website.

**1.4.** In the event of a complaint by a Doctoral School student, they may submit a written complaint to the heads of the programmes or to the Head of the Doctoral School. If the officers named do not have the appropriate authority to resolve the complaint, they will refer the matter to the Head of the Doctoral School/University Doctoral Council (UDC).

## **2. Requirements for instructors**

**2.1.** A Doctoral School instructor must have at least a PhD degree and two years of professional experience after obtaining this degree, and must have obtained a majority of votes in the Doctoral School Council.

The supervisor for a doctoral research area is an instructor or researcher with an academic degree, whose publications appear regularly and whose research area announcement has been approved by the Doctoral School Council, and who, on this basis, responsibly directs and assists the studies and research work of the doctoral student working in the research area and the preparation of the doctoral student for the awarding of an academic degree.

The supervisor, who must hold a degree but need not be employed by the University, must be approved by the Doctoral School Council. An acceptance letter from the proposed supervisor must be obtained prior to the procedure. The dissertation supervisor must sign the dissertation for submission for the defence procedure. The doctoral candidate may appeal a refusal by the supervisor to the Doctoral School Council. A supervisor may have no more than three doctoral candidates at the same time with the agreement of the relevant Doctoral School Council. A doctoral student may have a maximum of one co-supervisor.

If the doctoral student's research area falls partly or entirely within an area that does not fit into the research profile of any of the internal supervisors of the doctoral programme concerned or if the capacity of the internal supervisors competent in the research area does not allow for any additional supervision, an external supervisor may be involved in the student's supervision – provided that the conditions set out above in relation to the supervisor are met.

The student has the option to change their research area once if the supervisor supports same or if there is a supervisor competent in the new area who is willing to take the lead on the new area. The change of supervisor is made as described in section 2.2. The change of area also requires the agreement of the head of the doctoral programme.

**2.2.** The Doctoral School Council shall review the composition of the core members and the teaching staff every 4 years on the basis of reports from the heads of the programmes. The Doctoral School Council may recruit new announcers and instructors on the basis of a proposal from the heads of the programmes; an instructor must have a PhD degree and at least two years of professional experience from the date of the degree, and an announcer must have an academic degree and publish regularly.

The appointment of an internal or external supervisor may be terminated on the supervisor's own initiative or on the initiative of the student. In both cases, a decision of the Doctoral School Council is required. Approval of the new supervisor by the Doctoral School Council will take place within one month after the termination of the previous supervisor's appointment, in accordance with the procedure described in point 2.1.

The information available through the student review of the instructors will be published by the Doctoral School on its Coospace platform. This information shall be included in the head of the programme's report on which the review of the composition of the Doctoral School teaching staff is based. If the instructor's average rating is below the medium level, the Head of the Doctoral School Council will issue a warning. If the instructor's average rating is below the medium level the following year, the instructor's appointment in the Doctoral School will be terminated.

**2.3.** The Doctoral School shall devote at least 20% of its annual financial resources to the continuous improvement of the educational environment and to the acquisition of new knowledge/methodologies at the highest level by its instructors. The Doctoral School shall contribute financially to the participation of its instructors at academic conferences, organise conferences, subscribe to journals, and purchase textbooks to help them acquire new knowledge/methodologies.

### **3. Academic requirements**

The Doctoral School Council will monitor and review the research areas on an annual basis, based on the reports submitted by the heads of the programmes.

The Doctoral School publishes on its website and updates annually the conditions for admission to the doctoral programme, as well as information on the admission procedure and examination, including the list of required and recommended readings. The rules on the composition of the admission committee and on the admission procedure, which are detailed in point 4, also serve to ensure a quality-oriented admission of students.

The credit-based training in the Doctoral School is composed of a module of compulsory (or choice-of) and elective modules. The main components of the compulsory (or elective) modules are a total of at least 6x2 theoretical courses (lectures or seminars) and a research project, the individualised assignments of which are recorded in writing by the heads of the programmes/instructors and a copy of which is sent to the Head of the Doctoral School. The acceptance of elective submissions is subject to the prior approval of the head of the programme/supervisor. As an exception, on the recommendation of the head of the programme and with the permission of the Head of the Doctoral School, credit may be given for a course offered in another Doctoral School. The principles of credit transfer for credits earned outside the Doctoral School are decided by the Doctoral School Council.

The list of courses to be taken in Doctoral School programmes is published and regularly updated on the Doctoral School website. A detailed description of the courses advertised for the semester in question will be published on Neptun by the end of the second week of the academic term.

#### **4. The doctoral admission procedure**

**4.1.** Each year, the Doctoral School Council proposes to the UDC the composition of the admission committee. The admission committee for a given year shall consist of at least two core members, in addition to one faculty member each from the doctoral programmes or orientations chosen by the applicants. The marks for the admission examination are divided by a proportion of 30-70 for marks obtained, calculated on the basis of the documents submitted by the candidate, and 'earned' marks awarded by the committee on the basis of the candidate's performance on the oral examination. The maximum total number of points available for the admission test is 100.

The admission examination may be taken in person or online. Information on this will be sent to candidates together with a notification of the date of the admission examination.

Applicants will be awarded points

- on the basis of the merits of their diploma and any other qualifications they have obtained,
- their academic achievements (e.g. results of scientific students' associations and publications accepted for publication), and
- the oral admission examination (the main aim of which is to evaluate professional knowledge, plans for doctoral activities, and language skills).
- Extra points may be awarded for knowledge of additional foreign languages indicated.

The admission scoring in the Doctoral School is as follows:

#### **I. Total points 'earned': 30 points**

##### **1. Evaluation of diplomas, other courses, summer schools, academic scholarships etc.: max. 13 points**

- a) Evaluation of the MA-level diploma to be counted for admission to the programme:  
Distinguished: 10 points; Good: 8 points; Average: 6 points; Satisfactory: 4 points
- b) Second MA-level diploma relevant to the course: 3 points
- c) Additional BA relevant to the course: 2 points
- d) Other relevant courses, study trips, summer schools: 1 point each

##### **2. Language skills: max. 8 points**

Other than the language examination required for the diploma or PhD

- a) Advanced complex language examination: 4 points
- b) Advanced spoken language examination: 2 points
- c) Advanced written language examination: 2 points

- d) Intermediate complex language examination: 2 points
- e) Intermediate spoken language examination: 1 point
- f) Intermediate written language examination: 1 point

**3. Placing in scientific students' association conferences: max. 8 points**

- a) First place at the national level: 6 points
  - b) Second place at the national level: 5 points
  - c) Third place at the national level: 4 points
  - d) First place at the faculty level: 3 points
  - e) Second place at the faculty level: 2 points
  - f) Third place at the faculty level: 1 point
- (Only the highest score per paper will be taken into account.)

**4. Publications and conference presentations: max. 12 points**

- a) Foreign-language paper published abroad: 5 points
- b) Foreign-language paper published in a national publication: 4 points
- c) Publication in Hungarian: 3 points
- d) Conference presentation in a foreign language abroad: 3 points
- e) Conference presentation in a foreign language at home: 2 points
- f) Presentation in Hungarian: 1 point

The total for the points from (1) to (4) may not exceed 30 points.

**II. Total points obtained: 70 points**

**1. The candidate's general content knowledge of the subject, literature, and methodology:**

max. 20 points

**2. The candidate's competences, problem-solving ability, reasoning ability, and creativity in linguistic research and, more specifically, in the area of research chosen:**

max. 25 points

**3. The soundness of the candidate's research plan, the researchability of the topic, its relevance to the doctoral programme:**

max. 25 points

Candidates will be ranked in order of the total number of points they obtain.

**4.2.** The Doctoral School annual quality assurance report will include the experience of the admission procedure.

## **5. Doctoral training**

**5.1.** The Doctoral School shall ensure the provision of human and financial resources, including the acquisition and use of the latest methods and tools for evaluation and physical and electronic access to research material (see 2.3 above).

The administration and archives of the Doctoral School will be managed by a remunerated member of staff, who will also act as database coordinator for the school on the doktori.hu database.

The Doctoral School is responsible for monitoring students' progress in their doctoral studies (see point 1.1). In addition, the Doctoral School organises annual doctoral review conferences, at which first-, third-, and fourth-year students present their research and are peer-reviewed by students and lecturers. All students and Doctoral School core members are required to attend.

The Doctoral School maintains extensive links with other higher education institutions and research centres at home and abroad and is constantly seeking opportunities to build new relationships. Through co-tutelle training, study visits, and conference participation, it promotes students' academic advancement and international mobility, as well as an expansion of a network of contacts. It seeks to support open access publishing through its own resources, mainly through grant funding.

With the help of the Doctoral School Secretary, students regularly upload their publications to the university repositories and record the bibliographic data for their publications on the MTMT.

**5.2.** To be eligible to sit the comprehensive examination, students must have acquired at least 90 credits in the first phase of their doctoral studies (first four semesters) and all the "training credits" provided for in the Doctoral School's curriculum (except for doctoral candidates working toward their doctorate by individual study, whose student status is established by applying for and passing the comprehensive examination), and the preparation of a 5–10-page summary for the dissertation part of the comprehensive examination, in which they report on their research results, outline their research plan for the second stage of their doctoral studies and the timetable for the preparation of the dissertation and publication of the results, and send this document to the members of the comprehensive examination committee and the Doctoral School Council at least two weeks prior to the comprehensive examination.

Comprehensive examinations may be taken not only in Hungarian, but also in another language of instruction at the Graduate School in Linguistics. (In the case of hearing impaired candidates, a sign language interpreter must be provided.)

The members of the comprehensive examination committees and the subjects of the comprehensive examination are proposed by the Head of the Doctoral School, taking into account the opinion of the relevant head of the training programme, and submitted by electronic mail to the members of the Doctoral School Council, who vote on the proposal in the same way. If the supervisor and the head of the programme are one and the same, the Head of the Doctoral School will ask another instructor from the relevant training programme to make a recommendation. If the Head of the Doctoral School is the

supervisor, the entire procedure is carried out by the Deputy Head of the Doctoral School. A member of the Doctoral School Council may not participate in the procedure if they are involved.

The procedures and requirements for the comprehensive examination, the evaluation criteria, and the quality requirements for the members of the comprehensive examination committee are reviewed annually by the Doctoral School Council.

**5.3.** The Doctoral School Council pays particular attention to the collection, processing, and use of student feedback (in particular student satisfaction with training, courses, instructors, supervisors, administrative management, and learning support tools) and data on student progress (in particular drop-out rates) and to the monitoring of the implementation of decisions taken on the basis of the information used.

Every 4 years, the Doctoral School will monitor and review the topics and subject areas of the compulsory and elective courses of each programme. The monitoring is carried out by the Head of the Doctoral School with the head of the programme concerned, on the basis of the course data published on Neptun. The head of the programme then prepares a report on the results of the review and makes recommendations for possible modifications, which are adopted by the Doctoral School Council.

## **6. Obtaining a doctorate**

**6.1.** In order to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), the educational programme must be completed in full and all the required credits must be obtained. This is certified jointly by the head of the programme and the Head of the Doctoral School.

The Doctoral School requires the publication of at least 5 (five) peer-reviewed independent papers as a prerequisite for the dissertation. A list of accepted journals is available on the Doctoral School website. Publication in refereed journals is approved on a case-by-case basis by the head of the programme on the recommendation of the supervisor or, if they are one and the same, by the Head of the Doctoral School or a representative. In the case of co-authored works, the fulfilment of the publication prerequisites for the dissertation will be accepted in proportion to the co-authorship (confirmed by a declaration or, failing this, by the number of co-authors).

Knowledge of foreign languages: Knowledge of a language in which scientific/scholarly publications are regularly published in the discipline concerned is acceptable. (If the discipline requires the use of a dead language (Latin, Ancient Greek etc.), knowledge of that language is also acceptable.)

You must have at least an intermediate (complex) state language certificate or equivalent in one of the languages. (In the case of hearing impaired doctoral candidates, knowledge of a non-Hungarian sign language may also be taken into account for the knowledge of two foreign languages requirement.)

In the case of foreign nationals whose mother tongue is not Hungarian, the mother tongue shall be accepted as fulfilling the requirement for one of the foreign languages, provided that it meets the language requirements of the Doctoral School concerned. Hungarian is also considered a foreign language in their case.

The dissertation may be written in English or in another foreign language relevant to the doctoral programme/orientation. Dissertations written in a foreign language may be submitted for defence only after being proof-read by a native speaker. Dissertation

examiners and members of the dissertation committee must have a documented knowledge of the language of the dissertation. Proficiency may be demonstrated by conference presentations, courses, and publications in the relevant foreign language.

Immediately prior to the submission of the dissertations for discussion and defence, the Doctoral School will use the plagiarism search software provided by the University of Szeged Klebelsberg Library to check the content of the dissertations. The plagiarism search will be carried out and the results of the search evaluated by the member of the Doctoral School responsible for quality control, involving in the procedure the relevant program director and supervisor.

**6.2.** All doctoral students who have satisfied the prerequisites for the dissertation shall submit their dissertation, which meets the requirements of the final version in terms of both content and form, for a preliminary in-house defence. The in-house defence shall be held at least two months before the deadline for submission of the dissertation for which the preferences are granted.

The in-house defence must be announced at least one month before the date set for the in-house defence, at least within the Doctoral School, with an indication of the means of accessing the dissertation (hard copy, web link, or file on request). At least five persons with academic degrees must participate in the in-house defence, either in person or by sending a written opinion in advance, two of whom must be invited evaluators and one of whom must be the chair. The written opinion shall state whether the dissertation is suitable for public defence. Before the in-house defence, the candidate will give a presentation of up to 20 minutes, in which they summarise their findings. At the end of the in-house defence, the participants with doctorates present will vote yes or no on the suitability of the dissertation according to the following three positions: a) pass and submit without changes, b) fail, or c) submit after making the changes specified in the attached points. The minutes of the in-house defence, signed by the secretary and the chair, will be circulated to the members of the Doctoral School Council, and the original will be kept in the Doctoral School archives. As an annex to the dissertation submitted for the public in-house defence, the candidate shall list in a separate document where and how they have implemented the proposed amendments to the dissertation as recorded in the minutes. Only with this information can the supervisor agree to the submission of the dissertation.

An in-house defence is also compulsory for candidates working toward their doctorate by individual study. The supervisor is also responsible for the academic quality of the dissertation of such doctoral candidates.

The in-house defence procedure and requirements are reviewed every 4 years.

**6.3.** The dissertation must also be submitted in electronic format, and a hard copy must be made available to the Doctoral School after the defence for the central collection of dissertations in linguistics. The official invitation to the defence and the title page of the dissertation shall include the name of the supervisor and of each member of the defence committee.

Members of the defence committee shall be proposed by the Head of the Doctoral School, taking into account the opinion of the relevant head of the training programme, and submitted by electronic mail to the members of the Doctoral School Council, who shall vote on the proposal in the same way. If the supervisor and the head of the programme are one and the same, the Head of the Doctoral School will ask another instructor from



the relevant training programme to make a recommendation. If the Head of the Doctoral School is the supervisor, the entire procedure is carried out by the Deputy Head of the Doctoral School. A member of the Doctoral School Council may not participate in the procedure if they are involved.

Members of the defence committee (who are not official evaluators) are required to write a brief evaluation of the dissertation and bring it to the defence. The candidate is required to submit their response to the official evaluators' evaluations one week prior to the day of the defence.

The procedure and requirements for the public defence and the criteria for the evaluation of the dissertation are the same as those laid down by the UDC.

The procedure and requirements for the public defence are as follows:

The public defence is preceded by a closed session during which the head of the committee determines whether the dissertation is admissible: whether the evaluators and the members of the committee are present (at least 4 out of 5 members, including the secretary of the committee, shall be present, and the defence cannot be held in the absence of any official evaluator who has expressed a negative opinion) and asks the members of the committee whether there are any conflicts of interest or objections with regard to the committee. If any such objection is raised, the public in-house defence may not be held. The secretary of the committee shall then present the questions, opinions, and notifications received in writing beforehand, and the chair shall summarise the questions raised and, together with the committee, formulate the committee's questions to the candidate.

At the beginning of the public in-house defence, the head of the committee shall open the defence and announce that the Doctoral Council of the University of Szeged Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has set for a public in-house defence the work of ... (name) .... They then present the composition of the committee and note that the composition of the committee is satisfactory. The Secretary presents the candidate's academic record, and the candidate then gives a presentation of the main points of the dissertation to be defended in about 20–30 minutes.

The official evaluators will then present the main points of their opinion and recommend the awarding or rejection of the doctorate. After the presentations, the candidate will answer the evaluators' questions. The secretary will present the written questions, opinions, and questions from the committee. After they have been read out, questions may be put to the candidate by those present. The candidate may answer the questions and remarks in any order, using books and other aids to substantiate their claims. The head of the committee shall give the floor to all participants in the order in which they indicate their intention to speak, provided there are any that do so. The official evaluators have the right to one reply, to which the candidate may also reply.

At the end of the public in-house defence, the official evaluators shall state whether they maintain their original opinion and the head of the committee shall close the defence.

The public in-house defence is followed by a closed session of the committee, during which the committee evaluates the defence and the head of the committee orders a secret vote, during which the committee members rate the candidate's performance on a scale of 1 to 5. A quorum requires the presence of at least four members who have been present throughout the defence. After the vote, the secretary, on the basis of a proposal from said secretary, shall record the committee's decision, the proportion of votes cast, and the reasons for the vote in the minutes (where they have previously recorded the main

questions and answers that were raised). The score shall be consistent with the textual evaluation. The awarding of a grade may only be proposed if at least 60% of the available marks are obtained. If 60% is not achieved, only a negative proposal may be made.

At the end of the public in-house defence, the head of the committee will announce the result of the secret vote cast by the committee – and the percentage of the available marks – followed by the committee's recommendation, and finally the secretary of the committee will present the committee's reasoning on the basis of the minutes.

In the case of a dissertation in a foreign language, the defence will be conducted, in whole or in part, in the foreign language.

The procedure and requirements for the public examination are reviewed every 4 years.

## **7. Public documents and information**

The Doctoral School's website in Hungarian and English, its regulations and forms:

[http://Graduate\\_School\\_in\\_Linguistics.szte.hu/Nyitolap.html](http://Graduate_School_in_Linguistics.szte.hu/Nyitolap.html)

National Doctoral Council database:

[https://doktori.hu/index.php?menuid=191&lang=HU&di\\_ID=138](https://doktori.hu/index.php?menuid=191&lang=HU&di_ID=138)

### *Clause*

In matters not regulated above, the Doctoral Regulations of the University of Szeged and the legislation in force shall apply.

The main governing body of the Doctoral School is the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Doctoral School Council will adopt the Rules of Procedure at its meeting on 8 April 2022.