

# Quality Assurance Plan of the Doctoral School of Biology at Eötvös Loránd University

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The Quality Assurance Plan of the Doctoral School of Biology (DSB) is based on the principles and regulations codified in the Doctoral Regulations of Eötvös Loránd University (UDR), its special provisions about the Faculty Doctoral Regulations of the Faculty of Science and on the Organisational and Operational Regulations of the Doctoral School of Biology. The Quality Assurance plan of the DSB adopted the recommendations of the Quality Improvement Programme 2021-2024 accepted by ELTE Senate CLXXV/2021. (IX. 29.).

The DSB ensures the high quality of all stages of the doctoral programme and the doctoral degree procedure (admission, doctoral training, obtaining the doctoral degree) through its adherence to its Quality Assurance Plan.

The quality assurance plan contains all the regulations and institutions used to set and assess the doctoral school's requirements of its students and lecturers, and considers the directives of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

## **Objectives related to the quality of operation**

- Full compliance with the relevant legal regulations in the operation of the DSB and in the fulfilment of its tasks.
- Operation in accordance with the organizational and operational regulations of ELTE, ELTE Faculty of Science, and DSB and with other internal regulations, especially in compliance with the conflict of interest rules, impartiality, and fact-based decision-making.
- Operation that takes into account the accreditation requirement system and the accreditation and quality assessment statements.
- Establishing and maintaining the quality awareness and quality culture of organizations and participants responsible for the operation of DSB.
- An important element of quality assurance is the regular collection of students' comments and opinions and integration of them into the operational practice of the doctoral school.
- Compliance with efficiency, economy and publicity standards for the use of public funds.
- The fulfilment of these goals is ensured by the publicity consistently enforced during the operation of the DSB.

To ensure the achievement of the above goals, DSB operates an internal quality assurance system. Its main elements are the following:

- Regular monitoring of legal regulations and their enforcement, following changes in the legal environment;
- Regular monitoring of DSB's organizational and operational regulations and internal university regulations, revision and updating of DSB's organizational and operational regulations as necessary.
- Regular review and updating of compliance with the system of accreditation requirements.
- Regular examination of the opinions of participants in the DSB's activities, students and instructors, and taking the necessary measures based on the results.
- DSB designates its responsibilities and roles within the framework of its quality assurance system.

- The DSB reviews the quality assurance objectives at least every 5 years and amends them if justified.

## **Internal quality assurance system**

### ***1. Doctoral programmes***

The head of the DSB can recommend the creation, possible merger, or termination of programmes if this is justified by changes within the scientific field, interest in individual programmes, disproportionalities between programmes, or other reasons. The DSB Council (DSBC) decides on the changes.

Checkpoint: Creating, merging, and cancelling doctoral programmes

Responsible person: Head of the Doctoral School

Decision maker: DSBC

### ***2. Core members, supervisors, and lecturers***

The core members, supervisors, and lecturers from both ELTE and other external research institutions of the DSB must be professors or research scientists with a PhD degree and a high-level academic track record and be seen by the TDT as qualified to take part in the operations of the doctoral school based on the recommendation of the DSBC. The personal data of the doctoral school's lecturers and supervisors appear in the electronic database of Hungarian Doctoral Council.

Checkpoint: Approval and accreditation of new core members

Responsible person: Head of the Doctoral School

Decision maker: DSBC

Checkpoint: Yearly monitoring the conditions of being core members, corrections if needed

Responsible person: Head of the Doctoral School

Decision maker: DSBC

Doctoral topics may be announced by anyone deemed acceptable by the DSBC. It is expected that an announcer of doctoral topics is active in scientific research and their scientometric values of the previous 5 years considerably exceed what is required for obtaining a PhD degree. To this end, candidates are required to fill out and submit the table found in Annex 1 to the DSB programme leader in charge of the topic in question, who will then submit it to the DSBC after the approval of the programme council.

Checkpoint: Monitoring the scientific achievements of doctoral topic announcers every 5 years

Responsible persons: Head of the Doctoral School, Head of Programmes

Decision maker: DSBC

Checkpoint: Accreditation of lecturers

Responsible persons: Head of the Doctoral School, Head of Programmes

Decision maker: SBC

### ***3. Doctoral topics and supervisors***

Doctoral topics to be announced in the DSB are approved by the DSBC. The DSBC is also responsible for checking that topic announcements are up to date with the latest developments in the given discipline.

Topic announcers become topic supervisors, once a student is admitted to the announced research topic and enrolls to the DSB. Each PhD student is assigned to one supervisor who is responsible for aiding the PhD student's studies, research and preparation for the obtainment of the doctoral degree. If justified, a co-supervisor may assist the work of the supervisor. One supervisor may be assigned no more than three active PhD students who have not yet received their pre-degree certificates (with co-supervising duties counted proportionately). Permission to deviate from this rule, in justified cases, can be given by the DSBC.

Checkpoint: Examination of the suitability of topic announcers to become supervisors based on the principles of DSB and the internal quality assurance expectations

Responsible persons: Head of the Doctoral School, Head of Programmes

Decision maker: DSBC

### ***4. Admission to the doctoral programme***

The prerequisite to be admitted to the doctoral programme is the online application via [www.doktori.hu](http://www.doktori.hu) to any announced doctoral topic and a successful entrance exam in front of an admission committee.

The entrance exam is conducted by a committee of at least three members for each programme of the doctoral school in the form of a conversation. The committee examines the research and language competence, former research achievements, degree certificates, and past academic scores of the applicant, as well as the feasibility of their doctoral research plan. This procedure ensures that only those applicants are admitted to the programme who possess the required knowledge. The entrance exam is scored in accordance with the rules laid out in Annex 2. Recommendations on admissions are made to the TDT by the DSBC based on the scoring order.

Checkpoint: Upon admission, review of the material of applicants for the doctoral programme, detailed assessment of their previous progress, conduct of the admission interview, scoring of candidates

Responsible persons: Programme Leader and the Admissions Committee invited by the Programme Councils

Checkpoint: Establishing the admission ranking, submitting the results to the Doctoral Council of Sciences (TDT).

Responsible person: Head of School

Decision maker: DSBC

## **5. *The doctoral programme***

The supervisors oversee the work of the PhD students. They provide the doctoral student with the necessary information to choose the appropriate doctoral courses and supervise their research activity based on their continuously updated research plan.

### *Credit system of the doctoral programme*

The doctoral programme's credit system laid out in the doctoral regulations of the faculty provides an organised framework for the academic requirements, encouraging doctoral students to carry out continuous study and research work. Students who do not meet the required credit criteria may be excluded from the state fellowship and reallocated to self-financed programme.

### *Courses*

The DSB's programme councils are to conduct a yearly review of the list of courses to be announced and require lecturers to update the topics of the subjects. The programme councils discuss and approve the topics of the new courses and request changes to them if necessary. The DSBC encourages and facilitates the invitation of foreign and domestic external lecturers.

Checkpoint: Annual update of the offered courses and content of courses, introduction of new ones as necessary.

Responsible persons: Head of School, Heads of Programmes

Decision maker: DSBC

### *The comprehensive examination*

The programme councils regularly review the material covered by the subjects of the comprehensive examination and update them when necessary. The exam subjects are listed in the DSB's Plan of Study.

Checkpoint: Annual update of the subjects and topics of the comprehensive examination, introduction of new topics as necessary

Responsible persons: Head of School, Heads of Programmes

Decision maker: DSBC

## **6. *Research***

Doctoral students are expected to conduct individual research work during the four-year programme. Students are required to give a presentation about the progress in their research each year, preferably in English. The doctoral school supports at least short-term visits of its doctoral students to foreign universities and/or research institutes where research related to their topics is conducted.

The doctoral school's programme councils require their students pursuing doctoral studies and conducting research to give reports on their progress each year. The PhD students present how they progress academically, also their research findings and publications and outline their plans for the remainder of their studies in the presence of their supervisors.

Checkpoint: Monitoring the academic and research progress of the doctoral student  
Responsible persons: Supervisor (continuously), Heads of Programmes (yearly)

### ***7. The doctoral procedure***

Upon completion of the doctoral programme, the student is expected to apply for the graduation procedure. The doctoral school supports its students in starting the degree process, if the conditions are met. The given Programme council discusses the applications submitted to start the doctoral degree procedure.

Checkpoint: Checking the professional and publication requirements at the start of the doctoral procedure

Responsible persons: Supervisor, Head of the Programme

### ***8. Student feedback***

Doctoral students fill out a questionnaire sent centrally by the university every year. A report from the results of the student feedbacks is discussed by DSBC, and they are taken into account in the quality assurance plan.

Checkpoint: Discussion and evaluation of the university report prepared from the questionnaires of the doctoral students after each semester.

Responsible person: Head of School

### ***9. Annual management report***

The DSB reviews its operations annually. Within this framework, the head of the doctoral school prepares a report on its financial, educational, research, and other activities. The report is discussed by the DSBC and then forwarded by the head of the doctoral school to the Doctoral Council of Sciences and the University Doctoral Council. The University Doctoral Council evaluates the operation of the DSB in its annual report prepared on the basis of the university's doctoral quality assurance plan.

*Approved by the University Doctoral Council on February 23, 2023.*

Appendix 1

Table for Prospective Doctoral Supervisors

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Job/Title:</b>	
<b>Hungarian Scientific Publications Database link:</b>	
Year of obtainment of PhD degree:	
Number of first-author publications of last 5 years	
Number of last-author publications of last 5 years	
IF of last 5 years of publications (published + accepted)	
Current applications	
Duration:	
Source:	
Sum:	
Number of theses, Scientific Student Associations' Conference (TDK) papers advised	

## Calculating the Admission Point Score at the Doctoral School of Biology at Eötvös Loránd University

### I. The student may be awarded a maximum of 5 academic points for their past academic achievements as follows:

**- In the case of students taking part in single-cycle programmes:**

- the average grade of the comprehensive exams, rounded to the nearest tenth.  
*Points are not awarded for an average below 2.5.*

**- In the case of students taking part in a dual-cycle programme, the candidate's score is calculated by adding the doubled value of the average calculated in point 1 (see below) to the value calculated in point 2 (see below) and dividing the sum by three.**

1. The average of exam grades in *fundamental biology subjects and biology core subjects* in the MSc programme rounded to the nearest tenth.  
*Points are not awarded for an average below 2.5.*
2. The average grade for *specialisation subjects* rounded to the nearest tenth  
*Points are not awarded for an average below 2.5.*

**- In the case of students taking part in teacher training programmes, the score corresponds to the end-of-module exam.**

### II. The student may be awarded a maximum of 19 points by the Admission Committee as follows:

- during the admission procedure
  - 5 points** may be awarded for past work,
  - 5 points** may be awarded for the work plan;
  - +2 points** may be awarded by the committee to a maximum of two candidates per programme for exceptional academic performance.  
*The committee may also award half points during the procedure.*
- for TDK (top 3) placements and special awards  
*the candidate may be awarded a maximum of **3 points** (1.5+1.5 points for 1st-place finishes in faculty and national TDK conferences, 0.5 points for a special award)*
- A maximum of **2 points** may be awarded for published articles\*  
(meaning 1 article is worth 1 point, but the candidate will still earn a maximum of 2 points even if they have more than 2 published articles).
- A maximum of **1 point** may be awarded for published abstracts  
(meaning 1 abstract is worth 0.5 points, but the candidate will still earn a maximum of 1 point even if they have more than 2 published abstracts).
- **1 point** may be awarded for an "Excellent Student of the Faculty Award" or an equivalent title.

**The maximum possible point score shall be: 5+5+5+2+3+2+1+1=24 points, or see \***

\* If the candidate has a first-authored article (which was published in a journal approved by the relevant programme), the BDI Council can award a maximum of **5 points** for the achievement.



### Co-author Statement

I, the undersigned,..... *(co-author's name)* hereby declare that  
..... *(PhD candidate's name)* has consulted with me on the  
use of the article(s) resulting from our shared work, registered with joint authorship / co-first-  
authorship, and on how the results are to be used in the dissertation submitted for the  
obtainment of the PhD degree. Below, I certify the candidate's role in achieving the results  
and agree to present the candidate's new findings in certain parts of the dissertation:

.....  
.....  
.....

*(Publication title)*

*(A brief description of the work carried out by the PhD candidate, similar to the listing of  
contributions to scientific publications, and a brief mention of the candidate's own new  
findings in the PhD dissertation / theses.)*

*(Separate descriptions are required in the case of multiple publications)*

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Date, .....

.....  
*(Name, signature)*