

# **Quality Assurance Plan of the Doctoral School of Biology at Eötvös Loránd University (2016)**

The Quality Assurance Plan of the Biology Doctoral School is based on principles and regulations codified in the Doctoral Regulations of Eötvös Loránd University, which is part of volume 2 of Eötvös Loránd University Organizational and Operational Regulation and its specific section, the Faculty Doctoral Regulation of Faculty of Science, and on the Organizational and Operational Regulation of the Doctoral School of Biology. The operation of the Doctoral School is supervised by the Doctoral Council of Sciences and the University Doctoral Council. The Doctoral Schools provides the high quality of all steps of the doctoral program and the degree obtaining procedure (admission, doctoral training, obtaining the doctoral degree) through the regulation described in the quality assurance plan. The quality assurance plan contains all the regulations and institutions to continuously control the requirements for both the students and lecturers.

## **1. Announcing of the doctoral topics**

The Council of the Doctoral School evaluates every topic and allows to announce those where both the intellectual and infrastructural background is assured and it is realistic that a high-standard dissertation can be submitted within 4 to 5 years. It is expected that an announcer of doctoral topics is active in scientific research and his/her scientometric values are considerably higher than the the required for obtaining a PhD degree. Announcer of a doctoral topic become a topic supervisor if an applicant of the doctoral program is formally accepted as a doctoral student and he/she enrolled to the doctoral school. Every doctoral student has a supervisor who is fully responsible for supervising and helping the studies, research activities and preparation for obtaining a degree of the doctoral student working on the given doctoral program. If justified it is possible that a co-supervisor helps the work of a supervisor. One supervisor can have upto three doctoral students who has not obtained yet his/her pre-degree certificate.

## **2. Admission to the doctoral training program**

The prerequisite to be admitted to the doctoral program is the online application via [www.doktori.hu](http://www.doktori.hu) to any announce doctoral topic, and a successful entrance exam in front of an admission committee. At the entrance exam the applicant is evaluated partially based on his/her expertise in the chosen research topic. The announced research topics of the Doctoral School are formally accepted by the Council of the Doctoral School (CDS). The CDS provides the the doctoral topic follow the actual research trends. The entrance exam (conversation) is conducted by an at least three member committee of each program of the doctoral school. The entrance committee examines the research and language competence, former research achievements, diplomas and scores at former educations of the applicant, as well as the feasibility of his/her doctoral research plan. This procedure gives the assurance that only those applicants are admitted to the program who has the required former knowledge. The CDS makes a recommendation to the Doctoral Council of Sciences (DCS) to the admission of the applicants.

## **3. The doctoral training program**

The CDS decides the list of courses and their topics, accepted and offered in the Programs of the Doctoral School.

#### *Core members, topic supervisors and lecturers*

The core members, topic supervisors and lecturers of the Doctoral School (DS) must have a PhD degree, they are either professors or research scientists with high-quality career track record, and are recommended by CDS and formally accepted by DCS. The personal data the lecturers and supervisors of the Doctoral School appears in the electronic database of Hungarian Doctoral Council. The topic supervisor oversees the work of the PhD student. He/she provides the doctoral student the necessary information to choose the appropriate doctoral courses and supervises his/her research activity.

#### *Credit system of the doctoral training program*

Academic and research achievements in the doctoral program at the University is evaluated in accordance with the rules of the credit system. This system contain all the requirements the students should complete during the training, stimulating them for continuous studying and conducting research work. If a doctoral student fails to fulfill the credit requirements they can be expelled from the training program or transferred to the self-financed program.

#### *Courses of the training program*

Program councils of the DS reevaluate the list of the offered courses and ask the lecturers to update the topics, discuss the new or modified courses and topics or ask for changes if they found it necessary.

The doctoral students are allowed to sign in courses offered by other DS. The acceptance of these elected courses and the final evaluation of the students is decided by the program councils. CDS promotes the invitation of external lecturers both from Hungary and from abroad.

### **4. Research activities**

Doctoral students are expected to conduct individual research work during the four year of their training. It is required that the student give at least one research talk every year, preferably in English speaking occasions, about his/her progress in the chosen research topic. The DS supports at least a short-term visits of the doctoral students to foreign Universities or research institutes to conduct research related to their topics.

### **5. Monitoring**

The program councils of the DS evaluate every year every students of their progress in their research activity. Doctoral students talk about their results, publications, future research plans in the presence of their topic supervisor and anyone interested.

### **6. Publication requirements for obtaining doctoral degree**

The prerequisite to submit a PhD dissertation is publication of minimum two research paper, one of which is first-authored or co-first-authored, from his/her results of the doctoral topic in

English in international peer-reviewed journal. The sum of the impact factors of the journals need to be minimum 2, except in research areas where the average impact factor of research journals is lower than this number. Some areas of the 10 Programs of DC of Biology do have respected journal without impact factors. In such cases the DSC accept research articles as a publication to be considered for PhD degree if they appeared in research journals suggested by the council of the particular program. Even if a doctoral student initiates the procedure to obtain the doctoral degree in the 8<sup>th</sup> semester of the training program by a draft version of a doctoral dissertation, he/she should attach publications from his/her doctoral topic.

## **7. Obtaining the doctoral degree**

### *Requirements for obtaining the doctoral degree*

Details of the requirements of obtaining the degree are listed in the Doctoral Regulations of Eötvös Loránd University and its specific section, the Faculty Doctoral Regulation of Faculty of Science. The program councils discuss in detail all applications for obtaining the doctoral degree. The topic supervisor must declare in writing that he/she recommends the submission of the doctoral dissertation of his/her doctoral student and the start of the procedure to obtain the degree. The program councils regularly review the topics of the complex exams and if needed modify them. The doctoral dissertation is evaluated by two referees, one from the Eötvös University, the other from an external university or research institute. If strongly justified, the program council could allow exemption from applying the last rule. The defense of the doctoral dissertation is open for the public, and before that the thesis of the dissertation is freely accessible at the homepage of the DS.

Prior to the submission of the doctoral dissertation the appropriate program council of the DS may choose from the following two procedure.

1. The head of the program council in agreement with the doctoral supervisor may propose to hold an in-house disputation. In this case the dissertation is reviewed by an expert “opponent” who has a PhD degree. A record has to be made containing the discussion, especially suggestions and/or requests to modify the dissertation. If considerably revision is requested, the academic disputation should be repeated.
2. The head of the program council and an expert asked by the program council will pre-evaluate the doctoral dissertation according to the regulations of the faculty.

After the submission of the doctoral dissertation the members of the Evaluation Committee will receive it together with a short thesis both in a printed and an electronic version. The reviewers are anonymous until they submit their evaluation report. The reviews and the replies of the doctoral candidate will be sent to the members of the Evaluation Committee at least a week before the public disputation. After the announcement of the public disputation the doctoral dissertation and the thesis will become freely accessible at the internet site [www.doktori.hu](http://www.doktori.hu) and the home page of the DS.

The doctoral dissertation cannot be modified after it was sent to the reviewers. If the Evaluation Committee found incorrect statements in the dissertation or could not accept thesis points, the minutes of the Public Disputation will be attached to the dissertation (in electronic form) and the doctoral dissertation will be made public together with this appendix (in libraries or electronic repositories).

## **8. Closing remarks**

*Yearly evaluation report*

The Doctoral School reviews yearly its financial, educational, research activities and prepares a report for the University Doctoral Council (UDC). The UDC evaluates the Doctoral School as part of its yearly report based on its assessment plan.

(Approved by the University Doctoral Council in 2016)