

# **Operational Regulations of the Doctoral School of Biology at Eötvös Loránd University**

## **Section 1 General Provisions**

- (1) The Doctoral School of Biology at Eötvös Loránd University's Faculty of Science (hereinafter: DSB) is a functional educational organisational unit operating in the Institute of Biology under the approval of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, providing organised regular or individual training programmes in the discipline of biological sciences aimed at the obtainment of a PhD degree.
- (2) The present regulations have been drafted in line with the relevant effective laws and other legislation, as well as the Doctoral Regulations of Eötvös Loránd University (hereinafter: UDR) and its Annex pertaining to the Faculty of Science (hereinafter: FDR), particularly Section 14 (2) of UDR and Section 3 (3) of FDR. The regulations mainly consist of rules that are unique to or elaborate on various issues within the framework of the provisions in question. Matters not covered by the present regulations are regulated by the relevant provisions of the UDR and FDR, respectively.
- (3) The present regulations have been approved by the University Doctoral Council (hereinafter: EDT) as advised by the Doctoral Council of Sciences (TDT).

## **Section 2 DSB Leadership**

- (1) Regulations pertaining to the Head of the DSB can be found in Section 15 (1)-(4) of the UDR and Section 3 (1) of the FDR.
- (2) The DSB Council is to appoint a permanent deputy head with signing authority from among its core members to represent the doctoral school in the event that the Head of the DSB is unavailable.
- (3) The DSB Council has the authority to assign certain organisational responsibilities to the permanent deputy head (e.g. international affairs) at the recommendation of the Head of the DSB.

## **Section 3 The DSB Council**

- (1) The DSB Council (hereinafter: DSBC) is a body tasked with assisting the work of the Head of the DSB. Its members comprise the Head of the DSB, who functions as the chair of the council, and the leaders of the various doctoral programmes. The council's remaining members are to be elected by the DSB's core members from among themselves in a secret ballot. The DSBC is required to convene on a regular basis.
- (2) The proportion of elected core members within the DSBC shall not exceed one-third of all members, with at least two of them required to be external members not employed by the University. When electing new members, the Council should strive to ensure that all departments within doctoral programmes comprising multiple

disciplines as well as researchers of the various disciplines working at external institutions have core members representing them.

- (3) The DSBC may elect a secretary to assist the Head of the DSB and the Council in their handling of the administrative and operational tasks related to the DSB's daily operations.
- (4) A former head of the DSB along with a student pursuing a doctoral programme at the doctoral school shall be members of the Council with consultation rights.
- (5) The duration of the mandates of the members of the Council shall coincide with the duration of the mandate of the Head of the DSB.
- (6) Members of the Council shall be appointed and relieved by the TDT.
- (7) The responsibilities and operational regulations of the Council are set out by the relevant provisions of the UDR and the FDR.

#### **Section 4**

##### **Doctoral Programmes and Programme Leaders**

- (1) Instructors and doctoral students of the DSB are to carry out their tasks within the framework of the following doctoral programmes, the details of which are laid out in the DSB Doctoral Plan of Study (Annex 1):

1. Ecology and Evolution
2. Ethology
3. Immunology
4. Experimental Plant Biology
5. Classical and Molecular Genetics
6. Molecular Cell and Neurobiology
7. Neurobiology and Human Biology
8. Structural Biochemistry
9. Zootaxonomy, Animal Ecology, Hydrobiology

- (2) Doctoral programme leaders are appointed and relieved by the TDT at the recommendation of the Head of the DSB. Programme leaders are responsible for the quality assurance of the teaching and research carried out within the framework of the programmes.
- (3) The programme council, at the recommendation of the Head of the DSB, may also elect a permanent deputy programme leader with signing authority from among its members to represent the programme in the event that the programme leader is unavailable.
- (4) The programme leader is responsible for organising and conducting students' annual reviews.
- (5) Programme leaders are responsible for organising and conducting entrance exams which are overseen and monitored by the Head of the DSB.
- (6) The TDT shall set up a programme council comprising at least three members recommended by the programme leader for a term no longer than the duration of the mandate of the Head of the DSB. One of the members of the council must be an individual not employed by the University. A doctoral student of DSB from the given programme shall be member of the Council with consultation rights.

## **Section 5 Instructors and Advisors**

- (1) The instructors and dissertation advisors of the doctoral school may be lecturers and researchers with academic degrees recommended by the Head of the DSB who are considered qualified to carry out the responsibilities required of instructors and advisors. The rules pertaining to instructors and advisors can be found in greater detail in the DSB's Quality Assurance Plan (Annex 2).

## **Section 6 The Doctoral Programme**

- (1) The regulations pertaining to the doctoral programme, including the rules on applications, admissions, the student status, changing the doctoral topic, the suspension of studies, partial training abroad, the Plan of Study, the training plan and registration can be found in Sections 23-56 of the UDR and Sections 6-8 of the FDR.
- (2) Decisions on admissions to programmes based on uniquely-tailored study arrangements (part-time correspondence-based individual programmes) are made by the TDT. The duration of the student status, which must cover at least two semesters, is determined by the TDT based on the recommendation of the DSB. PhD students pursuing individual programmes are also required to obtain 240 credits to meet the academic requirements. The DSBT may propose awarding credits to a PhD student pursuing an individual doctoral programme in recognition of their studies, exempting them from the requirement to obtain 50% of the programme's academic credits. The exemption is to be proposed by the DSB Council and approved by the TDT.
- (3) The obtainment of a doctoral degree without preliminary doctoral training (individual preparation) is a unique opportunity to obtain a doctoral degree. The applicant's qualification to take the comprehensive exam may be granted by the TDT at the proposal of the DSB Council. A core member selected by the DSBT shall conduct a habitus investigation of the applicant's research and lecturing performance. The Head of the DSB shall present the findings of the habitus investigation to the TDT. The TDT is to take into consideration that the obtainment of a doctoral degree without preliminary doctoral training is an exceptional case, and that the academic requirements for the approval of such a programme significantly exceed the requirements placed before applicants who have participated in the programme (see DSB Quality Assurance Plan).

## **Section 7 Credit Acquisition**

- (1) The PhD student is required to obtain 240 credits over the duration of the doctoral programme (8 semesters; 4 years). Credits are earned with the completion of courses (32 academic credits), research (196-208 research credits) and educational tasks (0-12 credits). Educational credits can be obtained by teaching labs or seminars at the Institute of Biology (determined by the programme leader and limited to the credit value of the course in question), serving as an advisor for an Bachelor's thesis after

passing the comprehensive exam (1 credit/semester), serving as a co-advisor for a Master's thesis (2 credits/semester) and other tasks related to education (e.g. advising for a Scientific Student Associations' Conference (TDK) paper, evaluating a thesis) verified by the leader of the given programme and the institution department involved (limited to 2 credits/semester).

- (2) The PhD student is required to obtain a total of 32 academic credits over the first four semesters of the two-part doctoral programme, completing an average of two courses each semester. One contact hour a week and preparing for the exam will earn the student 2 credits provided that the student passes the exam. The lecturer in charge of the subject will verify the student's completion of the course by entering a grade on a scale of 1-5 into the NEPTUN system.
- (3) The PhD student must earn 196 credits through research work, provided that they also earn 12 lecturing credits. If a student undertakes educational work only partially or not at all, they are required to obtain 208 research credits. The advisor is to evaluate the student's research activities on a three-grade scale (excellent – satisfactory – fail). The advisor is to verify the student's obtainment of the credits in the NEPTUN system. Students are advised to complete 25 credits over the first four semesters, 30 credits over the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> semesters and 18-24 credits over the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> semesters as part of the Directed Research course depending on the number of their lecturing credits. A possible distribution of the credits is shown in the table below. Students can earn between 4 and 20 academic credits over the first four semesters.

Semester	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Academic credits	8	8	8	8	0	0	0	0	32
Educational credits			2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Research credits	25	25	25	25	30	30	18	18	196

- (4) In order for the first two semesters of the programme to be considered valid, the PhD student is required to obtain at least 4 academic credits and 15 research credits per semester. A student who ends those semesters with fewer credits will automatically be moved to a tuition-paying programme. If justified (for instance, in the case of study trips abroad), a student can be exempted from this rule by the programme leader based on the recommendation of their advisor.
- (5) The PhD student may obtain academic credits by completing courses at another doctoral school. The decision on approving the student's studies at another institution is made by the programme council after seeking the opinion of the advisor.
- (6) The PhD student may also obtain research and academic credits by pursuing partial studies at another domestic or foreign institution. The work programme to be followed by the student during their partial studies is approved by the DSB Council based on the recommendation of the advisor and the programme leader.

- (7) The maximum number of academic credits a student can earn by completing courses or pursuing partial studies at another institution or through the recognition of preliminary studies cannot exceed 30% of the total number of academic credits that can be earned in the doctoral programme.
- (8) The grades awarded to the student in their partial studies abroad are to be converted to ECTS grades. (ECTS grade: A, B, C, D, E – Hungarian grade: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1).

## **Section 8**

### **The Comprehensive Examination**

- (1) The PhD student is required to pass the comprehensive examination after the end of the fourth semester as a prerequisite for starting the second phase of the programme. The student has to have earned 32 academic credits and 86-90 research credits in order to be eligible to attempt the exam. As preparation for the exam, the PhD student must prepare a written report at a length of 9,000-12,000 characters (with spaces but without the list of references) summarising their research results over the first two years of the programme and outlining their research plans for the following two years. The document must be sent to the chair of the examination committee and the programme leader two weeks ahead of the comprehensive examination upon approval by the advisor.
- (2) The comprehensive exam is public and evaluated by an examination committee. The committee consists of three members all of whom have at least a PhD degree, with one being from outside the institute where the PhD programme is undertaken (ELTE). The Chair of the comprehensive examination committee shall be a professor, professor emeritus, research professor or habilitated associate professor of the institution and its members must hold academic degrees. The preferred language of the exam is English.
- (3) The comprehensive examination consists of two parts. In the theoretical part of the comprehensive examination, the students shall be tested in a main and a secondary subject. The list of main and secondary subjects can be found in the DSB's Plan of Study (Annex 1). In the second part, the student gives a 15-minute presentation on the research work they performed during the first four semesters and their plans for the second half of the programme along with the planned scheduling of their publications. The report is followed by a 15-minute-long discussion.
- (4) In the theoretical part, the performance of the student is evaluated in each subject individually by the committee on a two-grade scale (sufficient – insufficient). If one of the subjects is evaluated by insufficient qualification, the student may attempt the exam a second time within the same exam period. The committee evaluates the second part of the comprehensive examination on a two-grade scale (sufficient – insufficient). The student cannot attempt this part of the exam a second time if they fail to pass and their student status is terminated. The method by which the theoretical part of the exam is evaluated and the grade counting towards the qualification of the doctoral degree in the case of PhD students enrolled in 2019 and later is determined by the doctoral school using the following rule. The main and secondary subjects are counted at a ratio of 2:1, using a four-level grade (summa cum laude, cum laude, rite, insufficienter).
- (5) A minutes shall be prepared of the comprehensive exam.

## **Section 9**

### **Quality Assurance**

- (1) The university level rules of quality assurance are regulated by Sections 21-22 of the UDR. The quality assurance plan of the DSB can be found in Annex 2 of the present regulations.

## **Section 10**

### **Foreign Language Proficiency**

- (1) Under the authorisation provided by Section 10 of the FDR, the doctoral school mandatorily defines English as a first (primary) foreign language required for pursuing research in the field of biology.

## **Section 11**

### **Management of DSB**

- (1) The breakdown of the DSB's budget, proposed by the Head of the DSB, is approved by the Council.
- (2) The doctoral school's revenues consist of the funds redistributed based on the Faculty budget and other (e.g. application-based) funds.
- (3) The Head of the DSB may set aside a part of the income to cover unexpected expenses at the approval of the Council.
- (4) The Head of the DSB is authorised to handle the doctoral school's finances. In a case of permanent absence of the Head of the DSB this right could be delegated to the deputy head of the doctoral school.
- (5) The Head of the DSB is responsible for formally managing the budget.
- (6) Equipment purchased from the DSB's budget are to be allocated to organisational units determined by the DSBC (e.g. Department, Institute of Biology, Faculty Instrument Centre). The Council works out the rules for using and operating shared equipment purchased from the budget of the doctoral school.

## **Section 12**

### **Administration of the Doctoral School**

- (1) Applications for admission are to be submitted electronically to the Faculty's Doctoral, Habilitation and International Affairs group. The time and place of the entrance exam is set by the DSB programme councils of which they are to notify the applicants. The Doctoral Group must also be notified of the date and place of the entrance exams

- (2) Requests submitted by PhD students, irrespective of competency, are to be forwarded to the Doctoral Group for review, archiving after a decision, or registration.
- (3) The responsibilities of the Head of the DSB or another person (secretary) appointed by him/her shall include:
  - a) Preparing a minutes of the Council's sessions and sending it within a week to the chair of the TDT and members of the Council,
  - b) Compiling and publishing the course list of the given semester at the recommendation of the programme leaders and at the approval of the Head of the DSB,
  - c) Participating in the preparation of reports, statistics, grant applications, etc.
- (4) The DSB may appoint an administrator to assist the Head and secretary of the DSB in the technical aspects of their work.
- (5) The administrator
  - a) Assists the Head and secretary of the DSB in administrative matters.
  - b) Keeps account of the doctoral school's finances.

### **Section 13 Closing Provision**

The present regulations of the DSB were discussed and approved by the DSBC. The regulations enter into effect on the day when the EDT confirms it based on the recommendation of TDT. The regulations were approved by the Doctoral Council of Sciences (TDT) on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Annexes:

1. DSB Plan of Study
2. DSB Quality Assurance Plan

*Approved by the University Doctoral Council on March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021*