

UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

THE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN OF THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL

The general considerations of quality assurance

In accordance with the related regulation of the University of Szeged, the quality control of the theoretical and practical instruction and of research is implemented primarily by

- a) consistent control over the quality of publications required for the submission of the doctoral dissertation;
- b) the involvement of independent and recognised experts in the review process;
- c) the appraisal of PhD students at double blind peer reviewed national and international conferences; and
- d) following the career of those earning their degree in the programme.

The elected representative of the *PhD students* is a permanent member of the Doctoral School Council (DSC) with the right of consultation. The representative voices the quality related expectations and interests of their peers and communicates the PhD students' requests to supervisors and staff members, as well as their critical observations.

Maintaining and further improving the excellent quality of the disciplinary and scholarly knowledge of the supervisors, staff members and researchers, and the preservation of the competitiveness of the Doctoral School (DS) are ensured by facilitating participation in national and international academic life and strengthening existing cooperations.

Expectations of the staff members of the Doctoral School

The training programmes of the Doctoral School are led by representatives distinguished in their field and possessing outstanding research achievements. All staff members of the Doctoral School are expected to carry out research resulting in documented, excellent quality. The scientific and teaching activities of the staff members (teaching staff) of the Doctoral School are regularly evaluated by the Doctoral School Council, according to accepted academic norms.

Among the major indicators of scientific activity, determining weight is given to scientific publication activity, participation in research grants, activities in national and international academic organisations, work to promote science, contributing to projects as experts, and membership or leading positions in distinguished national and foreign/international societies and organisations as well as recognitions by such bodies (honorary membership or honours). An emphatic criterion in the evaluation is the number and quality of joint publications with supervised PhD students.

The evaluation of the quality of instructional activities takes place primarily on the basis of training activities in the Doctoral School. The most important component of this is supervision, the quality of dissertations produced under the supervision of the supervisors. Of great significance are the quality of the courses and consultations provided in the Doctoral School and the support given to the scientific career of the PhD students (engagement in research, conference participation, helping with publication, and establishing academic connections).

The Doctoral School expresses its expectations of core members, supervisors and teaching staff in quantitative terms as well, indicated by the impact of their work, the number of their citations. The quantitative expectations are implemented for new core members, supervisors and teaching staff on the basis of the citations recorded in MTMT. Accordingly:

- a) a core member must have at least 200 independent citations and a Hirsch index of 8;
- b) a supervisor must have at least 100 independent citations and a Hirsch index of 5;
- c) a member of the teaching staff must have at least 50 independent citations and a Hirsch index of 4.

In the case of young supervisors and teaching staff members, if they have outstanding publications refereed in Web of Science, the Doctoral School Council may accept fewer citations in a process of individual consideration.

Expectations of the PhD students of the Doctoral School

The quality of the Doctoral School is primarily expressed in the quality of the scientific publications and presentations of the PhD students. Output requirements can be satisfied in two ways. The traditional system requires five publications of own findings, of which one is published in an international journal, or, if such publication is missing, the presentation of findings at two prestigious (peer reviewed) international conferences is acceptable. In order to raise the quality of publications, from 2020 the requirements can be satisfied with fewer, but higher quality publications in the Scopus qualification system (1 D1 or 1 Q1 + 1 English language publication or 2 Q2 or 1 Q2 + 2 English language publications or 1 Q3 + 3 English language publications). The PhD student decides on which requirement system to satisfy.

PhD students participate in university instruction. The teaching staff of the Doctoral School help them to hone their instructional skills in their work with undergraduate students.

The permanent development of quality

The aim of the quality improvement of the Doctoral School is to achieve the PhD training quality of the leading European universities. To achieve this aim, the DS strives to have the highest possible number of internationally distinguished professors to teach courses in the Doctoral School. The main directions of quality improvement are raising of research, publication and citation requirements of the teaching staff, and strengthening expectations regarding international publications.

The emphatic direction of quality improvement regarding PhD students is the continued raising of publication requirements and the help provided for publishing in international journals. One of the main means to implement this is prioritised support given to conference participations and study trips abroad, and the extension of the possibility of part-time training in high quality training/research institutes abroad.

Quality control and indicators

The quality of the programme can be examined by following the career of PhD students who have earned their degree. It is the aim of the DS that its graduates have successful careers primarily in higher education and research institutions. The quality of the work of the DS is indicated by the ratio and the progress of its graduates working in institutions of higher education. The DS regularly analyses the indicators of its graduates' publications and their citations based on MTMT data.

Code of Ethics and the Institutional Review Board

The PhD students of the Doctoral School developed a Code of Ethics to summarise the ethical principles of training and research, which was approved by the Doctoral School Council.

At the beginning of their studies, the PhD students of the DS become familiar with the principles of the Code of Ethics and accept to follow them.

The Doctoral School Council established the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is tasked with the ethical evaluation of research in the Doctoral School, and with issuing institutional ethical approval. The approval is to verify that the submitted research plan conforms to the ethical principles of research in the Social Sciences.