

UNIVERSITY OF
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Doctoral School of Sport Sciences

QUALITYS ASSURANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



1. Doctoral School of University of Physical Education

The Doctoral School of the University of Physical Education was formed around outstanding professors and research personalities in the form of three distinct doctoral training programmes. The personalities of the heads of the doctoral programmes had an important impact on the research team that gathered around them, which was then expanded by the students. There is only one Doctoral School Council at our university, which coordinates the University Doctoral School; the advantage of the system is the unified Doctoral Regulations, which apply equally to all three programmes.

The well-functioning system has been found to be in order by the HAC experts during all the previous doctoral school accreditation procedures, so we will try to maintain the current system in the future as well.

The Doctoral School of the University of Physical Education has the following training structure: Doctoral School, programmes and topics within them. An important directive is the elimination of topic announcement of similar topics and the elimination of existing parallels.

We want to increase the importance of the topic (thesis supervisors - student), which is the actual basic unit of doctoral training programme, by carefully regulating and consistently adhering to the criteria of topic accreditation, and by delegating the right to dispose of the research grant directly to the thesis supervisor and the student. Transparent reporting on all lecturers and thesis supervisors ensure that, in addition to internal accreditation, re-accreditation becomes ongoing, and we can regularly screen out topics or thesis supervisors that do not meet the criteria. The database of the National Doctoral Council, which provides information on the performance of all participants in doctoral training programmes in an accessible way, helps a lot in this work.

Our website (<https://english.tf.hu/school-of-doctoral-studies>) is operated for the sake of consistency too. There is a user-friendly information panel on the website of the University of Physical Education, which provides guidance on all relevant issues. We provide information about the announcement of topics, courses, course plans, as well as about the defences (date, place, committee) composition, theses) and all those who visit the website can be informed about the processes taking place within the individual Doctoral Schools, the structure of the doctoral training programmes.

2. Quality Assurance at the Doctoral School of Sports Sciences, at the University of Physical Education

The most important result of the operation of the Doctoral School is the **prestige of the scientific degree to be obtained by the students**. Therefore, the evaluation of the dissertation and the underlying academic publications is the most important quality assurance procedure. Because of the importance of the task a **Review and Quality Control Committee (VMB)** works at the Doctoral School, whose most important task is to establish Scientometric requirements taking into account the specialties of the discipline and to lay down the formal requirements related to the dissertation, and then to consistently check this system of requirements for all graduates. In order to ensure a consistent evaluation, even before sending them to the officially invited opponents, the VMB carefully reviews and criticizes the submitted dissertations, the attached publications and gives opinions on the appointed opponents and the members of the Assessment Committee. The official critique and then the defence can only take place if the VMB formulates a positive preliminary critique with the help of the Library's audit work.

At the University of Physical Education, the authenticity and impact of the publications is checked by the Library of the University of Physical Education, an organization independent of both the candidate and the programme, and thus able to give an objective professional review of the candidate's publication activity.

The preliminary opinion can certainly be negative as well, in which case the candidate is obliged to rewrite the dissertation in accordance with the proposal, or eventually to prepare additional publications. In some cases, the VMB reveals minor deficiencies that can be remedied without a new procedure. As a result of years of practice, we are able to save our students from serious criticism in the public disputation and avoid negative opponent's opinions.

Another important quality assurance factor for the quality of the dissertations and publication activity is the **research centre disputation**. Research centre defence shall take place in the case of all dissertations and the minutes shall be attached to the documents submitted to the VMB. Thus, the narrow professional circle, the staff of the research centre, can assist the candidate in preparing the final form of the dissertation in a way which allows criticism to be expressed and shortcomings revealed without the risk of public embarrassment. The professionalism of the research centre disputation is strengthened by the presence of at least five professionals with academic degree. In order to speed up the procedure, there is a regular

need to abolish the institution of the research centre disputation, but we will withstand the attempt to weaken the significance of this old tradition. Our Doctoral Regulations, valid from September 1, 2016, already require the invitations of two pre-opponents and the dissertation can be submitted for preliminary critique only upon confirmation by the chairman of the research centre disputation on making the corrections proposed at the research centre disputation.

We have introduced a system of **profession-specific requirements**, which differentiates between the field and the branch of science as well as the disciplines. In the field of social sciences, where Scientometric evaluation by impact factor is not relevant, we have introduced publication points. It leads often to misunderstandings whether to interpret the requirement according to the name of the programme or based on the scientific work actually performed. Obviously, the requirement can only be interpreted on the basis of the classification of the research work actually carried out, as only this method makes it possible to take into account the specific publication possibilities of the individual fields. This is the reason of the careful scrutiny of the actual content of the dissertation and the academic publications during the preliminary critique, as otherwise the results achieved would be judged on the basis of unfairly severe or even unreasonably mild requirements for graduates working in border areas.

The Doctoral Council shall decide whether to submit the dissertation to opponents or not. When making this decision, they rely on the preliminary opinion of the Review and Quality Control Committee, which examines all formal and administrative conditions (including compliance with the publication requirements). Thus, the evaluation of the professional merit of the dissertation remains primarily for the opponents. The Scientometric evaluation of the publications is no longer the task of the opponents. (Of course, it may be an opponent's task to filter out false or fabricated, possibly plagiarized academic publications.)

The **disputation of the doctoral dissertation** is open to the public; the result of the disputation (the defence) is also published. The decision of the Doctoral Council on awarding the degree is also made public at the University.

Student's work is evaluated in several of cases. Some form of accountability in the courses is unavoidable, credit points cannot be awarded otherwise. In case of an unsatisfactory performance, study credit points cannot be approved. The student and their thesis supervisors are obliged to report annually on the results of the work done.

Since the key factor in the successful work of PhD students is the selection of their thesis

supervisors, we take special care in **accrediting new thesis supervisors**. A researcher with an academic degree can only apply for position of a thesis supervisors if they meet several requirements. The most important of these is active publishing, at least at the level that is expected from a student entrusted with the care of the thesis supervisor. In addition, it must be proved that the prospective thesis supervisor has the scientific background that underpins the scientific work of the PhD student as well as a well-formulated topic plan and topic description. The accreditation procedure is carried out first by the Doctoral School Council and then by the University Doctoral Council. The same bodies are entitled to withdraw the accreditation of a topic from a researcher who is constantly unable to demonstrate an adequate level of scientific activity or does not participate effectively in the training of students. Topic accreditation can take place primarily before the admission, but the DIT and EDT are ready to evaluate applications submitted throughout the year. The importance of the topic accreditation is underlined in particular by the fact that the financial support of the student 's research work can be spent jointly by the student and the supervisor, within the limits set by economic regulators.

Accreditation and quality control of the programmes are the responsibilities of the Doctoral School and the University Doctoral Council. An important task of the Council is to find a balance between enlarging the list of topics and involving new training places. Therefore, to launch a new programme, the initiator of the new programme must first outline the available human resources and the possible topics. The head of the Doctoral School shall examine the submitted proposal and the new program can only be developed in detail if they issues a statement of acceptance on the fact that there are no parallels between the previously approved programmes and the new one. Subsequently, the President of the University Doctoral Council shall invite critics to scrutinize the new program in terms of scientific value, training capacity, and originality. The University Doctoral Council decides on the adoption of the new program in the light of these opinions. If the names of thesis supervisors or lecturers who have already been involved in other programs appear in the new program, they are requested to quit the older program to join the new one.

Quality assurance aspects related to **the admission of students, the official critique of the dissertations and the conduct of the defence procedure** are detailed in the Doctoral Regulations of the University of Physical Education.

3. Quality improvement objectives of the Doctoral School in headlines

The objectives of the University of Physical Education relating the Doctoral Schools can be

summarized under the following headings:

Keywords: continuous quality improvement (VMB audit responsibilities, application of profession-specific system of requirements before the official critique procedure), the comprehensive examination, the research centre disputation as the first and internal quality control, feedback, reporting, partnership, international relations, innovation, comparison with other institutions, statistical data.

Committees: the main tasks of the Doctoral School Committee: VMB is one of the most important pillars of quality control of PhD degrees. Their job is to verify that the PhD student has met the training requirements and can begin the doctoral procedure. Whether the doctoral dissertation is formally and structurally appropriate and whether the candidate has met the desired publication requirements. They regularly inform the Doctoral Council about their work. Due to the strict preliminary critique, the rejection rate is low in the defence phase! (Certainly, the ratio of rejection or request for rewrite is relatively high in the course of the preliminary critique. The VMB may make recommendation and express their opinion on the amendments of the Doctoral Regulations. Other ad hoc committees also play an important role in quality improvement (weavers, reimbursement reduction, travel grants, etc.) An important objective is to prepare and store the minutes of all committee meetings in the Secretariat's materials.

Contacts: The Doctoral School maintains a website that functions as a link to PhD students. At the beginning of the academic year, the Doctoral School introduces itself and holds an opening of the academic year for the PhD students starting their studies. The staff of the Doctoral Secretariat and the EDT, and the President of the DIT are available to PhD students at regular times.

Recognition: How many students do apply, has the number of the applicants changed in the past 3 years? How difficult is the entrance exam? Who are the members of the examining board? What requirements should the applicants meet? How many points are necessary for the admission? Has it changed in recent years? How many foreign students have obtained PhD degrees, how many foreign students are currently studying? These issues are analysed on a regular basis since the data reflect recognition. Announcement of tenders.

Stability: How qualified is the staff of the Doctoral Secretariat, do they receive further training? How do we support their professional development? Changes in the topic of doctoral students, changing programmes, number of career changer. These are also important issues that must be analysed on a regular basis.

Goals: A closer contact with the students. We are planning to evaluate the feedback

from PhD students more closely. For example, how do students evaluate thesis supervisors and lecturers? For this purpose, in 2016, an anonymous questionnaire based evaluation was introduced in the Neptun system for students. Each year, we evaluate the number of publications related to doctoral graduation and impact factor thereof. Expanding international relations and co-operations (currently functioning and to be built).

Comparison: With the requirements, efficiency and data of the doctoral schools of other universities (comparison of doctoral regulations)

4. The most important elements in the quality development system of the Doctoral School

The Doctoral School operates a quality assurance system, the aim of which is to ensure that doctoral students with a high level of theoretical and practical professional knowledge obtain a doctoral degree at the University of Physical Education, who excel in both domestic and international standards.

The key elements, control points of the quality assurance system and the responsible persons:

- ranking applicants based on the evaluations (Doctoral School and the Admissions Committee)
- examining the aptitude of the thesis supervisors, commenting on the research topics (Doctoral School Council)
- reviewing and checking the courses advertised for the students, updating the courses (Doctoral School Council)
- checking the research work of the students and the completion of the required courses (thesis supervisors, head of the doctoral programme, head of the Doctoral School)
- checking the output requirements before starting the doctoral procedure (thesis supervisors, head of the doctoral programme, heads of Doctoral Schools)
- accreditation of the thesis supervisors, heads of the doctoral programmes, research topics, decision on the admission of the state-or other grant-funded, self-financed, and students in individual training form, on changes of thesis supervisors and research topics, on initiating a doctoral procedure, on the suitability of the dissertation for official critique, conferring a doctoral degree (University Doctoral Council)
- checking academic publications in *peer-reviewed* journals, which are considered to be external judgment of the scientific research work of PhD students, the authenticity of the academic publications related to the doctoral dissertation and the fulfilment of the impact factor requirements (Library)

- the so-called research centre disputation before the official critique of the doctoral dissertation, (thesis supervisors, head of the doctoral programme, Head of the Doctoral School, professionals, students)
- preliminary critique of the formal requirements of the dissertation and the requirements for obtaining the degree before the official critique procedure (Review and Quality Control Committee)
- operating a questionnaire system for student feedback and a career tracking system (Head of the Doctoral School, President of the Doctoral Council)
- Organizing a PhD Symposium at which all active students are required to present their research findings.

5. Strategic goals of the training development of the Doctoral School

The training development goals closely related to the quality improvement goals in the doctoral training programme at the University of Physical Education are outlined below.

Training fields, disciplines

The Doctoral School offers doctoral training programmes in natural sciences, social sciences and health sciences within the discipline of sport sciences. The academic discipline of sports sciences belongs to the academic field of medicine. The master's degree programs assigned thereto: human kinesiology, recreation and specialised sport coaching.

As an academic discipline, belonging to the academic field of health sciences and medicine (Government Decree No 169/2000; 29th November) it examines the regularities and possibilities of the development of human health in a systems-based, interdisciplinary approach. The basic aim of this academic discipline is to examine the biological and social determinants of the health status and quality of life in the population. A health preservation strategy includes providing opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices, supporting healthy behaviours, and avoiding unhealthy lifestyles. **The presence and prominent representation of health sciences in the doctoral training programmes of the University** is justified by considerations tailored to public health needs (social-scale prevention, international and national health preservation programs).

Doctoral research topics

The **rich selection of research topics** announced at the Doctoral School offer a great choice for those interested in the training. Among the core members, the heads of the doctoral programmes and thesis supervisors participating in doctoral training programme there are also internationally recognized personalities of the fields. This is also a guarantee of a high

standard of training. Missing topics need to be made up for and we strive to eliminate the shortcomings in our training development strategy.

State and other grant funded, self-financed training and study in an individual training programme

When allocating state-funded places, the University Doctoral Council takes into account the efficiency of the training in addition to the traditionally established participants' ratios. (number of students obtaining a degree/enrolled students). The possibility of the grant-funded doctoral training programme has been expanded by the **Dr. János Mészáros Doctoral Scholarship**, which provides an opportunity for students who have not been admitted due to unavailability of places in spite of a successful entrance examination.

The possibility of acquiring a PhD degree in an individual training programme is debated, like in the doctoral schools of other Universities. Its operation may be justified by the need to obtain a PhD degree for professional advancement and managerial appointments, while its abolishment may be justified by considerations arising from the lack of essential elements of the training.

Student mobility, international relations

Through the international relations of the university research groups participating in the PhD programme, the students of the Doctoral School can pursue partial studies abroad, which is enabled by the Doctoral Regulations. A four-week or a one-month partial study abroad is a justified official absence, in case of a longer absence we offer the possibility of suspension of studies. There is very little demand for partial studies at domestic universities. Interoperability between the universities is also promoted through jointly organized courses, but there is no obstacle for the students to obtain the required credit points with courses at other universities either. Our courses are available to students of any university, there are no administrative or financial obstacles to do so.

To facilitate inter-university mobility opportunities, the Doctoral Secretariat provides a travel grant for the students. The transparent application system provides the opportunity for the most successful to receive significant financial assistance to participate in a prestigious conference abroad or to carry out a research task. Successful applicants will report on their work upon return.

Student mobility is facilitated by the relationships established with the research groups of domestic and foreign universities and institutes, which ensure cooperation not only in the field of training (course attendance), but also in the field of research.

Foreign students, English-language training

The whole doctoral programme is available both in Hungarian and in English.

The number of students in the English-language training programmes is relatively small, so we have a lot to do to increase the ratio of foreign PhD students. Although there is a continuous demand for an English-language training, our services are not yet considered ideal in all respects. Doing research in a foreign language as possible without any difficulty, and there is no obstacle to the use of English in our courses either.

Vision, the strategic goal of training development

The role of the Doctoral School is of special importance when defining the role of the university, therefore the training development strategy of the Doctoral School strives to meet the requirements aimed at maintaining and developing this status. In connection with the University's top priorities, the aim of the Doctoral School's training development is to provide PhD students with the opportunity to learn about, apply and further develop new scientific results and achieve new results at the highest level.

Training development goals and tasks

- The Doctoral School attached great importance to the **continuous renewal of the training programmes, research topics and course**.
- We consider it desirable to improve the communication **of the results achieved by the doctoral training programme at the University of Physical Education and by the PhD students** (English language publications, website, participation in international PhD events).
- An important task for the upcoming period is the **increase of the number of foreign students participating in the English-language doctoral training programmes**. In order to achieve this, in addition to the tasks related to the emphasized international presence of the Doctoral School, the expansion of the English-language courses, and the introduction of other methods (e.g. establishing a scholarship) seems to be necessary.
- It is of utmost importance to emphasize the **R&D&I elements in the training**, and to **further strengthen the international cooperation** with prestigious European higher education institutions.

The Doctoral School **intends to improve their quality assurance system** and attaches great importance to all activities that help to achieve the goals by improving quality and quality assurance.

**6. Availability of further documents related to the quality assurance plan of the
Doctoral School**

The website of the Doctoral School: <https://english.tf.hu/school-of-doctoral-studies>