

## Quality Assurance Plan

University of Pécs Faculty of Law Doctoral School

### Quality Assurance Plan

#### Preamble

This quality assurance plan serves to align the quality assurance activities of the Doctoral School with the quality management system of the Faculty of Law of the University of Pécs and to present the specific requirements of doctoral training.

The principles and methods of quality assurance for doctoral training and degree awarding are primarily contained in Annex 13 of the Organizational and Operational Rules of the University of Pécs, the University's Doctoral Regulations (hereinafter: PTE DSZ) and the Faculty of Law's Doctoral Regulations (hereinafter: Doctoral Regulations), which are based on Government Decree 387/2012 (XII. 19.). The following presents requirements that partly overlap with and partly extend beyond these documents.

The present quality assurance regulations of the Doctoral School aim, through regulation of seven highlighted phases of doctoral training and degree acquisition, to ensure that the overall quality of the Doctoral School is stable and high.

The highlighted phases are: announcement of doctoral topics, requirements for the quality of doctoral school teaching, admission to doctoral training, the doctoral training itself, evaluation of the doctoral candidate's research work, the requirements for obtaining the pre-degree certificate (absolutorium), and the degree awarding procedure.

#### I. Announcement of Doctoral Topics

Decisions about announcing and publishing doctoral topics — including assessment of the proposer's scientific activity and the scientific adequacy and feasibility of the topics — are made by the Council of the Doctoral School of the Faculty of Law, University of Pécs (hereinafter: Doctoral Council).

The Doctoral Council qualifies as topic proposers those among the Doctoral School's teaching staff who hold an academic degree and who are continuously active in research, i.e., whose publication indicators over the five years preceding the announcement of the topic significantly exceed the publication requirements set by the Doctoral School for degree awarding.

The Doctoral Council evaluates the announced topics annually and, based on admission experiences — taking into account remarks from the representatives of the University of

Pécs Doctoral Students' Council (PTE DOK) — may recommend to department chairs or topic proposers to modify topics or announce new ones.

## **II. Requirements for the Quality of Doctoral School Teaching Staff**

The Doctoral School's teaching staff are the teachers and researchers with scientific degrees whom the Doctoral Council deems suitable, upon the recommendation of the head of the Doctoral School, to perform teaching, research and supervision tasks within the Doctoral School.

### **1. Subprogram Directors**

Training subprograms may be announced by full-time university professors, habilitated associate professors (docents), or emeritus professors of the Faculty. Subprogram directors perform an important quality assurance function in the operation of the Doctoral School: they prepare the subprogram's training syllabus each semester and submit it to the Doctoral Council for approval; they also monitor the academic progress, teaching and research activities, and publication results of the subprogram's students.

### **2. Topic Proposer**

A topic proposer may be a university teacher or researcher who:

- a) holds a scientific degree;
- b) is continuously active in research, i.e., whose publication indicators over the five years preceding the announcement of the topic significantly exceed the publication requirements prescribed by the Doctoral School for degree awarding; and
- c) on this basis is capable of responsibly supervising and assisting the doctoral candidate's studies, research work and preparation for degree awarding.

To support the high-level training profile of the Doctoral School, topic proposers employed by the Faculty are required to announce at least one Hungarian-language and one foreign-language course in the doctoral program each semester, aligned with the topics of their supervised doctoral researchers. If topic proposers employed by the Faculty fail to meet this course announcement obligation for two consecutive semesters, their announced doctoral topics must be removed from the Doctoral School's registry.

### **2. Supervisor**

A staff member who is not a topic proposer in the Doctoral School may only act as a co-supervisor. A supervisor must be a researcher with a scientific degree whose duties include:

- a) monitoring, evaluating and promoting the professional development of the doctoral candidate and the candidate's research;

b) conducting professional consultations with the student at least once a month during the academic period (September to May), if necessary; and

c) determining and certifying the credit values of the student's performance each semester.

With an interdisciplinary approach and in the interest of scientific development, topic proposers and supervisors may also be researchers who are not employed by the Faculty of Law.

The Doctoral Council shall withdraw topic proposer or supervisor appointments from any teacher who fails to fulfill their obligations prescribed in laws or university norms concerning doctoral training.

### **III. Admission to Doctoral Training**

Each academic year the Doctoral School issues a call for admission which contains topic announcements and the formal and substantive requirements for admission to the doctoral program.

An essential element of the admission application — beyond the legally required conditions — is a detailed research plan, which serves both as a measure of scientific rigor and as a tool for assigning the prospective doctoral candidate to a doctoral subprogram.

The admission interview (held in June) aims to verify the candidate's adequate preparation and to establish the admission ranking. The interview takes place before an Admission Committee appointed by the Doctoral Council. Participation in the admission exam requires a written statement of readiness to accept the candidate from the intended supervisor.

The admission exam assesses professional intelligence and foreign language skills. The evaluation should also consider the grade of the applicant's degree obtained during undergraduate studies. In assessing professional intelligence, the candidate's publication and research activities should be taken into account.

Based on the Admission Committee's recommendation, the Doctoral Council determines the admission exam results and the awarding of state scholarships.

### **IV. The Doctoral Training**

The doctoral training assists the doctoral candidate in acquiring the knowledge and independent research practice necessary to obtain the doctoral degree. To this end, the doctoral candidate participates in scientific training and conducts individual research work. Doctoral students may also undertake teaching duties, which, however, do not constitute part of the study requirements.

Within the organized training, students attend scientific lectures, consult individually or in

groups with their supervisors, conduct scientific research and publication activities, and may provide undergraduate teaching.

#### **4. Courses of the Doctoral Training**

At the beginning of each semester, the Doctoral Council determines the training program for that semester. The semester training program includes the announced courses and consultation times.

Research-methodology and theory-of-science courses, which introduce beginning doctoral students to scientific research, are announced both before and after the start of the 2016/2017 academic year. The training is complemented by research seminars tailored to the doctoral candidate's research area, intended to establish the theoretical foundations of the field and to deepen familiarity with the literature.

Additionally, lectures presenting the latest domestic and international scientific and practical results in law and political science are announced in the doctoral program. As a prominent part of the doctoral training, these lectures are frequently delivered by staff of domestic research institutes, legal practitioners and partner universities, or distinguished professors from foreign universities.

To develop foreign language skills, doctoral candidates undertake temporary or partial foreign-language training or complete foreign-language courses announced by the Doctoral School within the training module.

#### **5. The doctoral training starting in the 2016/2017 academic year**

##### **5.1. The training and research phase**

The doctoral training consists of training, research and reporting activities conducted in individual or group preparation tailored to the characteristics of the scientific field and the needs of the doctoral candidate, and comprises a training-and-research phase and a research-and-dissertation phase.

During the doctoral training, the doctoral candidate may obtain credits in training, research and teaching modules.

a) By participating in courses and consultations, the doctoral candidate can earn a total of at least 60 and at most 100 credits during the training period (Training credits).

b) Through research activities the doctoral candidate must obtain at least 140 credits during the organized training period (Research credits).

c) For teaching activities carried out by the doctoral candidate, they may receive up to 40 credits during the entire duration of the organized training (Teaching credits).

The study and research obligations to be completed in the training and research phase are determined by the Doctoral School's training program, with the stipulation that all study obligations must be completed within this phase.

## 5.2. The comprehensive examination

At the end of the fourth semester, as the conclusion of the training-and-research phase and as a prerequisite for beginning the research-and-dissertation phase, the doctoral candidate must pass a comprehensive examination that measures and evaluates academic and research progress.

To ensure the comprehensive examination fulfills its function — i.e., to measure the doctoral candidate's academic and research progress — the Doctoral School prescribes the following conditions for eligibility to sit the comprehensive examination:

- a) acquisition of at least 100 credits by the end of the teaching period of the fourth semester, of which at least 60 credits must be from the training module and at least 40 credits from the research module;
- b) at least 30% of the doctoral candidate's planned doctoral dissertation, but at minimum the equivalent of 3 author's sheet pages of research results in the candidate's doctoral topic, submitted at least in manuscript form;
- c) the doctoral candidate's publication value index, calculated according to the method specified in Annex 2 of the Doctoral Regulations, reaches 8 points.

The first condition focuses on completion of training obligations as the main function of the training-and-research phase. The second requirement measures whether the doctoral candidate has produced scientific results in the research topic, which is an objective standard enabling determination whether the candidate is likely to submit the doctoral dissertation within three years following a successful comprehensive examination. Finally, the third criterion evaluates the candidate's publication activity, which is an indispensable condition for the scientific degree.

The theoretical part of the comprehensive examination consists of two subjects:

- a) theoretical and methodological knowledge related to the discipline and the doctoral candidate's subprogram; and
- b) literature knowledge relevant to the doctoral candidate's dissertation topic.

The oral scientific progress report of the comprehensive examination consists of two parts:

- a) presentation of the doctoral candidate's research results to date in the dissertation topic,

especially the research methodology and hypotheses, the topicality and problem statement of the research, and its theoretical and substantive legal background; and

b) presentation of the doctoral candidate's research plan for the research-and-dissertation phase.

Up-to-date information about the Doctoral School's current training program, subjects and instructors is regularly published on the Doctoral School's website.

## **V. Evaluation of the Doctoral Candidate's Research Work**

Under the master-apprentice (so-called Doktor-Vater) relationship, the supervisor establishes and certifies the credit values of the student's performance each semester. The semester report to be submitted contains aggregated indicators of study and research results (including publications produced within the research topic, conference and seminar presentations, etc.).

In addition, the Doctoral Council separately monitors those elements of doctoral candidates' scientific performance that will be necessary for initiating the degree awarding procedure.

A key tool of quality assurance is that doctoral candidates must possess an adequate number and quality of publications by the time of the defense. The doctoral candidate primarily reports the results of their research in scientific publications related to the doctoral topic. Eligibility for defense requires publication of a prescribed number of studies related to the topic. Publication in a foreign-language, especially an international journal, is advantageous. It is important that the scientific results of the doctoral research appear in a significant domestic professional periodical or publication. The suitability of publications as a precondition for defense is evaluated in each case by the Doctoral Council.

The Doctoral School places great emphasis on gaining professional experience, for which it provides financial support (contributions to travel costs and participation fees) to attend domestic and international conferences.

## **VI. Requirements for the Absolutorium**

Defining the conditions for awarding the absolutorium in the system introduced after the start of the 2016/2017 academic year is crucial, since obtaining the absolutorium is the condition for submission of the doctoral dissertation as the final elements of the doctoral training and degree awarding process.

The higher education institution issues a final certificate (absolutorium) to the doctoral candidate who has acquired the prescribed credits in the doctoral training.

Conditions for issuance of the absolutorium:

a) acquisition of the prescribed credits in the doctoral training in the proportion required

by the Doctoral Regulations;

b) successful workshop discussion (műhelyvita).

## **VII. The Degree Awarding Procedure**

In both the doctoral training systems before and after the start of the 2016/2017 academic year, the doctoral dissertation must be subjected to an internal workplace review before submission.

### **6. The Workshop Discussion**

#### **6.1. The function of the workshop discussion**

Prior to the public defense, the doctoral candidate presents the dissertation at a workshop discussion organized by the faculty department responsible for the subject. The Doctoral Council invites the faculty's teaching staff to the discussion and, if possible, external experts working on the topic.

At the discussion it must be verified that the dissertation:

- a) has a scientifically assessable topic;
- b) contains authentic data and results;
- c) the scientific results presented originate from the doctoral candidate;
- d) meets formal requirements; and
- e) based on its academic standard, is suitable to be submitted to the public defense.

#### **6.2. Workshop discussion in the new system**

In the doctoral system introduced after the start of the 2016/2017 academic year, the conditions for being submitted to the workshop discussion are:

- a) acquisition of the prescribed credits in the doctoral training in the proportion required by the Doctoral Regulations;
- b) the doctoral candidate's publication value index, calculated according to the method set out in Annex 2 of the Doctoral Regulations, reaches 20 points;
- c) the doctoral dissertation is 90% complete as certified by the supervisor.

## 7. The doctoral dissertation and the evaluation committee

The doctoral dissertation is a summary of the doctoral candidate's scientific research results of a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 author's sheets in length.

To ensure impartiality and the scientific standard of the public defense, the Chair of the evaluation committee is to be appointed from among the full-time professors or emeritus professors of the Faculty, and the members are to be appointed from researchers in the field who hold scientific degrees. Both reviewers and committee members must be persons who are not employed by the Faculty of Law.

When the public defense is announced, the dissertation and the thesis booklet become publicly available on the websites of the Doctoral School and the National Doctoral Council.

Following the public defense, based on the supporting opinion of the evaluation committee, the Doctoral Council shall submit a recommendation to the University Doctoral Committee for the award of the doctoral (PhD) degree.

## 8. The public defense

The dissertation may only be submitted to the Doctoral Council for public defense with the supervisor's approval.

To ensure appropriate professional representation, the supervisor, any reviewer who provided a rejecting opinion, distinguished representatives of the discipline—particularly the Faculty's teachers holding scientific degrees—and representatives of partner departments at other law faculties must be invited to the defense.

## 9. Guarantees of degree awarding

### 9.1. Impartiality of the degree awarding

The impartiality of the degree awarding procedure is ensured by the following conflict-of-interest rules:

Those excluded from the doctoral procedure and not permitted to participate in substantive administration include:

- a) anyone who would have to perform procedural actions in their own case;
- b) the doctoral candidate's supervisor;
- c) the doctoral candidate's relative;

d) the doctoral candidate's workplace superior or subordinate.

In addition, the person who served as chair or member of the comprehensive or final examination committee may not serve as the chair or member of the evaluation committee. An official reviewer may not act if they served as chair or member of the doctoral comprehensive or final examination committee, or if an objective position in the matter cannot be expected from them.

## 9.2. Regularity of degree awarding

The Doctoral Council supervises the lawful and professional conduct of the entire procedure, including the public defense, and only recommends to the University Doctoral Council the awarding of the doctoral degree based on procedures conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and on a positive recommendation from the evaluation committee.

Dated: Pécs, March 30, 2019

Prof. Dr. habil László Kecskés CSc., DSc.

Corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, University Professor

Head of the Doctoral School, Faculty of Law, University of Pécs