

Quality Assurance of the Doctoral Schools – self-Assessment BRIEFLY

ESG 1.1 Policy for Quality Assurance

The DS's operational framework, academic autonomy, remit and responsibilities are clearly defined. The relationship between the DS and the institution in terms of decision-making and remit is unambiguous, as is the framework governing the quality assurance processes of the institution and the DS.

In accordance with the university's organisational structure, doctoral schools operate separately from the faculties in terms of quality assurance; their supervisory and supreme governing body is the University Doctoral and Habilitation Council (UDHC). The core members of the doctoral school are approved by the UDHC. The UDHC reports to the University Council (UT) on the annual operations of the doctoral schools. Pursuant to Section 7(b) of the University's Doctoral Rules (UDR), the head of the doctoral school is responsible for the quality of the training provided within the doctoral school; however, in accordance with Section 24(2) of the UDR, the quality assurance system covers the entirety of doctoral training, and therefore, like the faculties, the doctoral schools also have quality assurance committees that provide opinions and advice. Section 12 of the PPKE Quality Assurance Regulations (QAR) sets out the role of the doctoral council for the relevant scientific field or discipline, whilst Section 13 outlines the duties and powers of the head of the doctoral school in the area of quality assurance for doctoral programmes. Under Section 14(1), a quality assurance committee operates as an advisory and consultative body for the doctoral schools.

The DS has fixed (written) objectives covering a 3–5-year period. Some of these objectives relate to quality improvement in doctoral education (quality objectives). The strategy is discussed by the Doctoral School Council (DSC) and other stakeholders. The strategy is made available to stakeholders.

At the initiative of the heads of the doctoral schools, the DS-s have drawn up three-year quality improvement strategies. The three-year strategies were discussed by the (Doctoral School Quality Committees (DSQC). The sources of the doctoral schools' quality objectives are multifaceted: on the one hand, they reflect the development objectives set by the doctoral school for the given year; on the other hand, they relate to the institutional strategy and quality objectives; and thirdly – where relevant – they implement the strategic objectives of the relevant scientific discipline. The three-year strategies also build on this principle, focusing on individual development activities. It is worth noting, as an example of previous good practice, that the shared Quality Committee also set common objectives for the doctoral schools. The introduction of the three-year strategies continues to allow scope for the doctoral schools' annual objectives, whilst, as a guiding document, it specifically sets out the directions for short-term strategic developments.

The objectives of the DS are linked to the institution's quality policy and its institutional (research/doctoral) strategy.

The objectives of the doctoral schools are primarily linked to the medium-term institutional strategy set out in the 'Strategic Guidelines and Objectives 2021–2030', but the system of objectives set out in PPCU's Quality Policy is also evident in the activities of each school, as is the implementation of PPCU's Research Plan as an academic strategy. Within the institution, the role of the research strategy is fulfilled by the Research Plan, which is reflected in the activities of the doctoral schools and to which the schools can also align their quality objectives.

The key areas of the DS's operations are governed by regulations, which are regularly updated. The regulations are in line with current practice.

The doctoral schools of the PPCU have operational regulations, a quality assurance plan and a training plan; where international students are also enrolled on the programmes, the above documents are also available in English. Of the institutional regulations, the University Quality Assurance Regulations (QAR) and the University Doctoral Regulations (UDR) apply to students of the schools; however, all of the institution's student regulations also apply in a supplementary capacity. The DS reviews its operational documents (operating regulations, programme plan, quality assurance plan) annually to ensure they remain up to date in light of legislative changes, staff changes and the curriculum; where necessary, it updates its programme plan each academic year. Every five years, it carries out a comprehensive review with the involvement of doctoral students.

The DS implements the institution's quality assurance system and has its own quality plan, which it also implements.

Quality assurance in doctoral schools forms an integral part of the institution's quality assurance system; within this, it operates as a separate subsystem in accordance with the fundamental rules of the institution's quality assurance system, whilst taking into account the specific characteristics of doctoral education. Each DS has its own quality assurance plan, which sets out the DS's quality assurance responsibilities and the rules for the regular review of strategic, training and quality assurance documents and regulations (with comprehensive reviews taking place annually and every five years, involving both external and internal stakeholders). The DS's also provide a detailed account of the results of the most recent reviews as supporting evidence.

ESG 1.2 and 1.9 Design and Approval and On-going Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes

The DS involves external and internal stakeholders in the design of the training programme.

To design the training programme, the DSs gather the opinions and suggestions of external stakeholders (alumni) via the new doctoral programme-type questionnaire. Feedback from

internal stakeholders is gathered via student forums, the Doctoral Student Needs and Satisfaction Survey, and the Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) questionnaire.

The views of internal stakeholders are sought through the doctoral student needs and satisfaction survey and the SET surveys; in addition, the student forum provides an opportunity to assess student needs, which are then incorporated during the review of the plan. The head of the DS and the programme directors report on the changes made at the student forum, thereby providing feedback to the students. User feedback is also incorporated through the DS's teaching staff and an external member of the doctoral council.

The training programme includes descriptions of learning outcomes in line with Level 8 of the Hungarian National Qualifications Framework (HNQF or MKKR in Hungarian). The programme makes a conscious effort to achieve these learning objectives.

In accordance with the quality assurance plans, the doctoral schools review their course descriptions prior to each intake and annually review the alignment of their training programmes with the requirements of Level 8 of the Hungarian Qualifications Framework (MKKR). During the most recent review, the doctoral schools also drew up their own competence matrices, modelled on the institution's Learning or Learning Outcomes (LLO or KKK in Hungarian) competence mapping practice. Building on the competences most frequently appearing in the competence matrices, they formulated the learning outcomes expected of students upon completion of the programme and incorporated these into their training programmes. The MKKR Level 8 descriptors are included in all the doctoral schools' course descriptions.

The review, evaluation and development of training programmes are carried out with the involvement of internal and external stakeholders.

Doctoral schools regularly collect and analyse data on the curriculum and teaching staff through satisfaction surveys and the SET framework, as well as via doctoral student forums and informal channels; they then provide feedback on this in the annual quality assurance report and at subsequent doctoral student forums. Through the Student Union representative, the student forum, the Graduate Career Track survey (taking into account the views of alumni as external stakeholders), and informal feedback, we pay particular attention to incorporating students' comments.

The GCT surveys are evaluated by the DSQC, which, where necessary, incorporates feedback and actions into the action plan or makes recommendations to the DC regarding the formulation of quality objectives.

In other respects, the provisions outlined in the previous point and those relating to the design of study programmes also apply to the review of study programmes.

ESG 1.3 Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

The criteria for a doctoral student's individual performance are clear.

The requirements placed on doctoral students are clearly defined at the stage when the admission criteria are established. Their academic progress is governed by the Training Plan and the Regulations on Studies and Examinations. The requirements for doctoral students are clearly set out in the (Doctoral School's Regulation) DSR and the Programme Plan (PP). The requirements for the comprehensive examination are clear in the regulations, and the number of credits required for the absolutorium and the publication requirements are specifically defined.

Procedures are in place for handling doctoral students' complaints and appeals. The complaints handling and appeals forum is operational.

The process for handling student complaints at institutional level is set out in the PPCU's Student Appeals Regulations, which also apply to doctoral students. One forum for handling complaints is the student forum; alternatively, students may approach the Head of the Doctoral Programme regarding difficulties relating to their studies or even issues concerning their supervisor. This can be done either directly or via a doctoral student representative. The evaluation of supervisors is also based on this feedback. Another forum for complaint handling is the student and supervisor forum, at which students can submit their questions or complaints anonymously via a student representative, or raise them themselves. The Head of the Doctoral School is authorised to take action and implement the necessary measures. In student redress procedures, we act in accordance with Section 5(11) of the UDR; with regard to doctoral students' requests for redress, the provisions of the Student Redress Regulations apply. Students may address their complaints to their supervisor, the head of the doctoral school, or the head of the Doctoral Office/Secretariat.

Are all these processes evaluated?

The continuous evaluation of the relationship between students and supervisors is the responsibility of the Head of the DS. The school collects feedback through student forums. Feedback is exchanged between students and supervisors at the student-supervisor forum once a year. The annual evaluation of supervisors is the responsibility of the Head of the DS.

ESG 1.4 Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

The admissions procedure is regulated. The admissions criteria and the assessment process are transparent and unambiguous.

Pursuant to Section 5 of the Admissions Regulations, the University's doctoral schools regularly announce admissions in accordance with their respective study programmes, based on the recommendation of the relevant disciplinary doctoral council. An exception to this applies to study programmes in certain areas of theology and canon law that have been approved by the Holy See, as these are deemed to be advertised every year. Pursuant to paragraph (2), information on admissions – including admission quotas, places for scholarship students and self-funded students, admission fees, the method of the entrance examination and the ranking criteria applied – shall be published in the Doctoral Admissions Guide (doktori.hu), on the University's website. The operating regulations of the doctoral schools set out the marking schemes and procedures for the admissions process.

Students' progress is regulated; the DS monitors their progress and takes the necessary action.

Throughout the programme, doctoral students' progress is continuously monitored by their supervisors and the Doctoral and Habilitation Office/Secrétariat's doctoral and habilitation officers: this includes the completion of courses, the accumulation of credits, and research and publication activities. An important milestone in the programme is the comprehensive examination, which marks the end of this stage of the programme. There is ongoing consultation between supervisors and students throughout the degree award process, taking into account the submission deadline. In exceptional circumstances, the DS Council may grant a one-year extension for the submission of the dissertation on a one-off basis.

The comprehensive examination and the degree award procedure are regulated, transparent and comply with the provisions of the relevant legislation. The requirements are clear and lend themselves to objective assessment.

The comprehensive examination marks the completion of the training phase and is a prerequisite for commencing the research phase. The examination process is set out as a well-documented procedure in the DS's rules of procedure and is also available in the form of an information sheet on the school's website.

The DS applies and reviews the regulations governing student admission, progression, the recognition of their studies and the awarding of qualifications, and provides feedback on the results of its reviews.

The DS's apply the University's Admissions Regulations in their admissions procedures, the Doctoral Regulations in all general and programme-related matters affecting every DS, and their own Operating Regulations, Programme Plan and Quality Assurance Plan in their own institutional decisions. The DS reviews its regulatory documents regularly on an annual basis and comprehensively every five years in accordance with the Quality Assurance Plan. The results of these reviews are presented at its board meetings and reported at forums for students and supervisors.

ESG 1.5 Teaching Staff

The institution/relevant organisational unit has a human resources plan in place to maintain and develop the standard of teaching and research staff at the doctoral school. Regular measures taken to implement the human resources plan can be identified.

Institutional doctoral schools do not manage their own human resources; their staffing depends on the teaching staff at institutional and faculty level. At the same time, each doctoral school has drawn up its own human resources plan (HR plan), which serves primarily to ensure the recruitment of new core staff, to monitor the suitability of teaching staff, and to guarantee the maintenance of doctoral programmes and workshops. Typically, measures linked to HR plans include appointments to the ranks of associate professor and full professor, as well as the requirement for further training for teaching staff. The HR plans are managed by the

organisational units administering the doctoral schools: Doctoral Secretariats and the Doctoral and Habilitation Office.

The roles of those involved in doctoral programmes (programme director, lecturer, supervisor, co-supervisor, mentor, committee member, secretary, etc.) and the competence requirements for these roles are regulated. The DS consistently applies the competence requirements set by the institution and/or regulated by it. These regulated requirements ensure that duties are performed to a high standard.

The UDR sets out in detail the main duties of those involved in the operation of the DS (programme directors, lecturers and supervisors) and the requirements necessary to fulfil these roles. Building on this, the doctoral schools' rules of procedure and quality assurance plans set out the duties of lecturers, supervisors and programme directors, supplemented by DS-specific requirements and tasks. They also set out the duties and powers of the head of the doctoral school and the secretary (where applicable). The Operating Regulations of the doctoral schools set out the duties of lecturers, supervisors, the head of the doctoral school and the secretary. The regulations also clearly set out the duties of those playing a role within the school and the associated competence requirements.

The DS regularly reviews the suitability of the composition of its core members, lecturers and researchers (their numbers, their academic achievements, and the alignment of their activities with doctoral programmes).

The DS's Rules of Procedure set out the professional requirements for core members and thesis supervisors; these are clearly defined. The head of the doctoral school reviews the suitability of core members, lecturers and thesis supervisors annually. Programme directors report annually on the professional progress of non-Hungarian lecturers. The head of the DS carries out an annual assessment of lecturers and supervisors.

The DS management reviews the adequacy of the number of core members and their academic activities annually and prepares a written summary of this. The relevant data are also included in the DS's annual quality assurance report.

The DS regularly evaluates the work of the lecturers and researchers involved in its operations. It provides feedback on the results of these evaluations to those concerned and takes them into account in its decision-making. The DS identifies the areas for development in the competencies of lecturers and researchers.

Generally speaking, Part VI of the DS's quality assurance plans sets out the procedures by which the DI collects data on the academic performance of supervisors and lecturers (based on the MTMT system). Internal evaluation serves to ensure and strengthen an excellent teaching staff. The relevance and standard of their academic work, their publication record, and their workload ensure that doctoral students' academic activities receive appropriate support.

The Head of the Doctoral School evaluates the collected data once a year. The Head of the Doctoral School also discusses the results individually with each academic staff member. The Head of the Doctoral School prepares a management summary based on the collected data.

ESG 1.6 Learning Resources and Student Support

The DS has documented procedures governing the rules for the regular assessment of doctoral students' needs; these are applied in practice, and arrangements are made to verify the results.

The procedures for institutional assessments are set out in the Quality Management Procedures for Measurement, Analysis and Development, specifically in the sections on the Doctoral Student Needs and Satisfaction Survey and the Doctoral GCT-style survey. The University publishes the schedule for these surveys in its annual survey plans. The Doctoral Student Satisfaction Survey takes place in the autumn semester of each year, whilst the Doctoral GCT Survey is conducted every two years at the end of the spring semester. The Quality Assurance Office prepares reports on the survey results for the doctoral schools, identifying areas for improvement and highlighting the doctoral school's activities that have achieved high satisfaction ratings. In its report, the doctoral school reflects on the implementation of the improvements recommended in the reports. The head of the doctoral school presents the results of the surveys to the Doctoral School Council, and the recommendations are discussed at meetings of the quality assurance committee. The results are also presented to doctoral students at student forums, and their suggestions for improvements are sought.

The library collection (with particular regard to Q1 and Q2 journals in the relevant academic fields) and the range of services provided adequately support the DS's teaching activities and the needs of PhD students. The institution is responsible for their development.

The libraries currently operate within the faculties at the institution. Access to electronic databases and journals is primarily procured and provided centrally by the University within the framework of the Electronic Information Service (EIS).

They ensure that PhD students have access to up-to-date information in the languages of the doctoral programmes.

The school's website provides up-to-date information for international students on English-language programmes and academic matters (regulations, applications, information leaflets). The DS website is available in both Hungarian and English.

The rules of procedure of the institutional doctoral student council ensure that the interests of the DS's doctoral students are represented within the institution. The DS's regulations guarantee the participation of doctoral students in the institution's decision-preparation and decision-making processes.

In accordance with the UDR, the Doctorate Student Council delegates a member to the UDHC and delegates doctoral students with expertise in specific academic fields or disciplines to the doctoral councils for those fields or disciplines, as well as to their ad hoc committees (doctoral quality assurance committees). The Student Council delegates a doctoral student to the DS Council; it works continuously with the student, regularly attends council meetings, and assists in organising the student–supervisor forum.

The institution/DS is able to secure the necessary resources to support doctoral students' research and publication activities.

PPKE is currently eligible for Erasmus+ funding, which provides significant support for doctoral students. Central and faculty funding is supplemented by research grants secured by supervisors (NKFIH, OTKA, EU-Horizon, HUN-REN). In addition, the funding of doctoral schools is supported by supplementary funding from the faculties.

The DS's management regularly collects information on the monitoring of the DS's objectives and the extent to which they are being achieved.

The DS Board continuously monitors the fulfilment of quality objectives and the action plan. The objectives are reviewed every September and, where necessary, measures are taken to ensure that they are achieved by the deadline or are included in the following year's plan.

ESG 1.7 Information Management

The DS's management regularly collects information on the monitoring of the DS's objectives and the extent to which they are being achieved.

The DS Council continuously monitors the fulfilment of quality objectives and the action plan. The objectives are reviewed every September and, where necessary, measures are taken to ensure that they are achieved by the deadline or are incorporated into the following year's plan. The Quality Assurance Committee carries out its work in accordance with an annual work plan and continuously monitors the implementation of the plan. The committee analyses and evaluates the collected indicators, the results of surveys and information channelled in other forms.

The DS management regularly collects, analyses and utilises information:

Each of the University's doctoral schools maintains its own internal data table on current application figures (on a half-yearly or annual basis, as appropriate), and monitors admission quotas and enrolment numbers. The schools monitor student drop-out rates individually; however, they are also required to upload a report table to a shared SharePoint platform by 30 November each year, containing the following data: number of students admitted, number of comprehensive examinations, number of students who have passed their final examinations, and number of doctoral defences and degrees awarded. Data on teaching and supervision activities are also reported here. With regard to supervisors and core staff, the DS offices maintain statistics on students who have successfully defended their theses.

The DS publishes the results of the analysis and engages in dialogue with lecturers, supervisors, PhD students and external stakeholders.

The DS presents the results to students at the PhD student forum. They engage in dialogue regarding the measures proposed in response to the questionnaires.

The head of the DS discusses the survey results with the DS council, reviews them and, where necessary, takes action. The head of the DS discusses critical issues and significant changes with the students verbally at the next doctoral student forum. An important part of this dialogue is the feedback received directly from student representatives and tutors, which is also incorporated into the DS's plans and decisions. The results are reported at supervisor and student forums. The results of the surveys are also published publicly on the school's website.

ESG 1.8 Public Information

The DS is accessible via the institution's website, which is designed to display relevant information about the DS.

Doctoral School of Theology: <https://ppke.hu/hittudományi-doktori-iskola>

Doctoral School of Literature

<https://btk.ppke.hu/irodalomtudományi-doktori-iskola>

Programmes: <https://btk.ppke.hu/en/phd-programmes>

Doctoral School of Law: <https://ppke.hu/jog-es-allamtudományi-doktori-iskola>

Doctoral School of Linguistics: <https://btk.ppke.hu/nyelvtudományi-doktori-iskola>

Programmes: <https://btk.ppke.hu/en/phd-programmes>

Tamás Roska Doctoral School of Engineering and Natural Sciences: <https://ppke.hu/roska-tamas-muszaki-es-termesztudományi-doktori-iskola> [english site](#)

Doctoral School of History: <https://btk.ppke.hu/tortenelemtudományi-doktori-iskola>

Programmes: <https://btk.ppke.hu/en/phd-programmes>

The DS regularly (at least once per academic year) provides public information on the effectiveness of its activities:

The doctoral schools operating in the field of humanities hold a joint Visitor's Day each year, at which they report on their educational activities; the event offers the opportunity to sit in on lectures, attend a joint information session, and meet with representatives of each doctoral school for a question-and-answer session. The most recent Visitor's Day took place on 20 March 2026 in the Danubianum building. Student-supervisor forums also serve as a means of public information; here, the doctoral school presents the results of various doctoral surveys to its students, and these forums also provide a platform for evaluating teaching methods. The institution's newsletter also provides information on the results of the doctoral surveys.