



## The assessment procedure for obtaining a doctoral (PhD) degree in the doctoral schools of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, PPCU

### 1. Initiation of the assessment procedure (application for a doctoral degree)

**1.1** The evaluation process starts with the candidate's submission of the request to launch the assessment procedure. It is recommended that the request be submitted at least one year before the expected date of submission of the dissertation for public defence. The first version of the dissertation meant for pre-defence may be handed in either after the submission of, or together with, the application.

**1.2** Both the application and the committees of the doctoral assessment procedure (the pre-defence committee, cf. 3.2, and the public defence committee, cf. 7.2) must be approved by the Doctoral and Habilitation Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (BTDHT) and the University Doctoral and Habilitation Council (EDHT). Note that the EDHT only meets four times a year.

**1.3** Holding a final certificate (absolutorium; the pre-degree certificate about the candidate having completed all required credits) is not a prerequisite for the application to launch the assessment procedure, but proof of compliance with the minimum publication requirements as set out in 4.1 is necessary. The final certificate (absolutorium) must be obtained before the submission of the dissertation for public defence at the latest. The minimum publication requirements for obtaining the doctoral degree are regulated by the curricula (Programme Plans) of the respective degree programmes (cf. 4.2). According to point (1) l) § 59 of the Hungarian national law of higher education, doctoral studies have a maximum duration of 8 active semesters; as a result, the final certificate, including all the credits of the research-and-dissertation phase, must be obtained within 8 enrolled semesters. Candidates not expecting to be able to complete all these credits during the eighth active semester are recommended to take an inactive ('passive') semester instead of enrolling for a final, eighth semester.

**1.4** As part of the application, it must be indicated if the candidate wishes to prepare their dissertation in, or if they wish the evaluation procedure to be conducted in, a language other than the language of the training programme. In the case of foreign-language (non-Hungarian) training programmes, the writing of the dissertation, as well as the evaluation procedure, may be carried out in a foreign language which is identical to the language of the training programme without special permission, based on decision No. 67/2024 (III. 14) of the BTDHT.

In the doctoral schools of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, PPCU:

- *in English-language programmes, the default language of both the dissertation and the assessment procedure is English,*
- *in Hungarian-language programmes, the default language of the dissertation is Hungarian, but permission to write the dissertation in a foreign language may be obtained,*



- *in Hungarian-language programmes, the default language of the evaluation procedure is Hungarian, but permission to have the evaluation procedure conducted in a foreign language may be obtained. The language of the evaluation procedure may be Hungarian even if the dissertation is written in a foreign language.*

Individual requests for the language of the dissertation or the evaluation process are considered by the BTDHT, taking into account, among other criteria, whether the assessment procedure can be realistically carried out in the given language, in a way that keeps to appropriate professional standards.

**1.5** The application form and its annexes can be downloaded from the website of the Doctoral and Habilitation Office (Doctoral Office). One original and one electronic copy of both the application form and the annexes must be submitted. The annexes are:

- a copy of the university degree (in the case of a foreign (non-Hungarian) degree, it has to be accompanied by the application for the recognition of the foreign degree as well as an official translation of the degree itself),
- in the case of a language other than the language of the programme, a request for the assessment procedure to be conducted in that foreign language (not needed for a foreign (non-Hungarian) language identical to the language of the programme),
- the title of the dissertation,
- the abstract of the dissertation, approved and signed by the supervisor,
- documents attesting the candidate's academic record: a list retrieved from the Hungarian Scientific Bibliography Database (MTMT) of publications either already published or accepted for publication, with bibliographic data for each publication (see point 4 for the minimum publication requirements for obtaining the degree); in the case of pre-publication manuscripts, a certificate of acceptance for publication (e.g., in the form of an email from the publisher or editor(s)); and an electronic copy of each of the publications,
- documents attesting the candidate's foreign-language skills (language certificate, university diploma), or a declaration of the acceptance of other proof of language proficiency (in the case of a second foreign language) issued by the council of the respective doctoral school,
- a detailed academic CV,
- a proposal for the prospective membership of the pre-defence and public defence committees, signed by the supervisor, cf. 3.2 and 7.2 (the form can be downloaded from the website; one copy is sufficient, but it must also be submitted in Word format; the affiliation, position and e-mail address of each external member, and the e-mail address of each other member should be provided);
- forms declaring the acceptance of committee membership, one signed by each prospective committee member (downloadable from the website).

In the application form, the exact date of the complex (comprehensive) examination and that of the final certificate are to be filled in by the Doctoral Office.



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## Doctoral and Habilitation Office

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H-1088 Budapest, Mikszáth Kálmán tér 1.

### 2. Submission of the dissertation for pre-defence

**2.1** Before the public defence can take place, the dissertation must be submitted to the respective doctoral school for pre-defence evaluation. The pre-defence is organised by the doctoral school on behalf of the BTDHT.

**2.2** A statement from the supervisor that the dissertation is eligible for pre-defence must be attached.

**2.3** The pre-defence version of the dissertation may only be submitted after, or at the same time as, the application for the degree. It is recommended that it is submitted at least six months before the expected date of submission for the public defence, in order to ensure the proper scheduling of the doctoral assessment procedure. (If the pre-defence version is submitted later than this, there is no guarantee that the opponents (referees) and other committee members will have sufficient time to review the dissertation and prepare their assessments, and that the candidate will have sufficient time to prepare the final version of the dissertation for the public defence based on the pre-defence.)

### 3. The pre-defence

**3.1** The pre-defence aims to give the candidate preliminary feedback on the submitted version of their dissertation, which is usually a preliminary version that still needs revision. The pre-defence session is expected to verify that

- the dissertation discusses a scientifically adequate topic,
- it contains authentic data,
- the results it presents are the results of the candidate's own research, and
- it meets the formal requirements of PhD dissertations.

Minutes shall be taken of the discussion, listing the names of committee members present and placing on record the pre-defence committee's brief evaluation concerning the points above, the opinions expressed and, in particular, whether or not the committee recommends the dissertation for submission for public defence, potentially with revisions, based on the comments made at the pre-defence.

**3.2** The chairperson of the pre-defence committee must be a full professor of PPCU, and must not be the candidate's supervisor. The committee shall comprise at least two further members, who have to be the two opponents. The pre-defence committee normally consists of five members.

### 4. Minimum publication requirements

**4.1** Candidates must have at least three scientific publications – registered in the MTMT database and affiliated to the doctoral school – at the time of application for the evaluation procedure. Of this minimum of three publications, no more than one may be a (book) review, and all three must be already published or verifiably accepted for publication.



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**4.2** Prior to the submission of the dissertation for public defence, the candidate must have obtained the minimum number of research publication credits, as required for the final certificate by the curricula (Programme Plans) of the respective degree programmes. These credits, too, must be acquired during the 8 semesters of enrolment (cf. 1.3).

### 5. Submission of the dissertation for public defence

**5.1** The final version of the dissertation must be submitted for public defence within three academic years of the date of the complex examination. Any semesters taken off during this period as an unenrolled ('passive') semester shall be included in this period. During the assessment procedure, the maximum number of unenrolled semesters is two.

(In view of the COVID-related emergency situation, candidates who completed the complex examination between 1 February 2018 and 31 August 2021 may submit their dissertations for public debate within *four*, rather than three, academic years of the date of the complex examination. In this case, the maximum interruption of student status during the evaluation procedure, i.e., the maximum inactive period, is four semesters.)

In special cases, a request for an extension of up to one year may be submitted to the BTDHT.

**5.2** The final certificate (absolutorium) is a prerequisite for the submission of the dissertation for public defence. For the final certificate, the publication credits required by the curricula (Programme Plans) of the respective degree programmes must have been obtained (cf. 4.2).

**5.3** A statement from the supervisor that the dissertation is eligible for public defence must be attached.

**5.4** The opponents of the public defence shall prepare their written evaluations of the dissertation within a total of two months after accepting the invitation. Any time not falling within a teaching period does not count towards this maximum of two months. The opponents shall state whether or not they recommend that the dissertation be admitted for public defence. If the recommendation of any one of the opponents is negative, a new third opponent, who will also become a member of the committee, shall be invited. In the case of two negative reviews, the dissertation shall be rejected, the procedure shall be concluded, and the candidate's student status shall be terminated. In the case of two favourable reviews, the dissertation shall be submitted for public defence to be held within two months of the date of receipt of the reviews. Any time not falling within a teaching period does not count towards this maximum of two months.

**5.5** In the case of a dissertation rejection (or an unsuccessful public defence), a new dissertation on the same doctoral topic may only be submitted once, and no sooner than after a period of two years.

**5.6** If the candidate fails to submit the dissertation by the deadline, their student status shall be terminated. In this case, if they already meet the minimum publication requirements, they may reapply for an individual study plan at the doctoral school at a later date. If they are readmitted, they



will be required to repeat the complex examination, and their previous courses and credits may be recognised.

## **6. The dissertation submitted for public defence**

**6.1** The dissertation is a work that presents the candidate's scientific objectives and new findings, demonstrating their knowledge of the literature, presenting their research methods, and discussing their results. It may be written in a language other than the language of the training programme if approved by the BTDHT (cf. 1.4). The dissertation, once submitted, may not be modified or withdrawn.

**6.2** The dissertation must name the author, the supervisor, the doctoral school, the workshop (if any), the place of writing and the year of completion. It should include a table of contents and a references list, as well as a list of the candidate's own publications. It may also contain appendices (e.g., a collection of photographs, tables or other documents, etc). The supervisor's recommendation (a maximum of 3 pages) must be attached.

**6.3** The dissertation must be submitted in three copies printed and bound, as well as in electronic format. The candidate must declare that they do not hold a doctoral degree in the same academic discipline and have not had an unsuccessful doctoral defence within two years.

**6.4** The dissertation must be accompanied by a thesis booklet of up to 20 A/5 pages, typeset in a font size of 10. The thesis booklet must be submitted both in printed form and as an electronic file; the number of print copies shall be negotiated in advance with the Doctoral Office. The thesis booklet shall include:

- a) in Part I, a brief summary of the research objective of the dissertation;
- b) in Part II, a brief description of the work carried out, the research methodology, the methods of data collection or of the experiment(s), as well as the identification of sources and their utilisation;
- c) in Part III, a brief summary of the research results in the form of point-by-point theses (research claims), their application or applicability (a form of application or applicability may be: offering direct or indirect practical applications of the results, making contributions to the development of the respective scientific field, or providing new insight for another one);
- d) in Part IV, a list of the candidate's publications on the broader subject of the dissertation.
- e) In the case of a dissertation that contains the results of collaborative (team) research, the candidate must give a detailed and precise description of their individual contribution to the collaboration. Before submission, the thesis booklet shall be presented to the other members of the collaborative team of authors, who shall declare whether they recognise the results presented in the thesis booklet as the candidate's achievements.

In the case of a thesis booklet written in Hungarian, a translation into English (or another relevant foreign language) must also be prepared.



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### 7. The public defence

**7.1** The doctoral dissertation must be defended in the course of a public defence in front of an evaluation committee. The defence must take place within two months of the date of receipt of the two opponents' positive reviews.

**7.2** The public defence committee normally consists of six, but may consist of more, members including the chairperson. The candidate's supervisor must not be a member of the committee. The chairperson of the committee must be a full professor or a Professor Emeritus of PPCU. Exceptions to this rule may be made only if there is no eligible faculty at the university in the field of the dissertation. At least two other members of the committee are the two opponents. At least one of the opponents and at least one other member of the committee must be an academic who is neither employed or otherwise engaged by PPCU nor a Professor Emeritus of PPCU (i.e., an 'external' member). The committee includes further members, who are typically internal, but may also be external, members. One of the members of the committee (usually an internal member other than the opponent) is the secretary of the committee.

**7.3** The candidate receives the opponents' reviews in writing, and prepares and submits a written response before the public debate. During the public debate, the candidate shall present their dissertation orally, and then respond to the comments and questions from the opponents, the members of the defence committee, and the audience.

**7.4** At the end of the debate, the committee decides in a closed session, by secret ballot, using a 1-2-3-4-5-point scoring system, whether they accept or reject the dissertation. Acceptance requires at least 60% of the possible total score. If the dissertation is rejected by the committee (the score obtained is lower than 60%), then – on condition that it has not been rejected in a previous evaluation procedure – a new dissertation on the same doctoral topic may be submitted no sooner than after a period of two years, but not more than once.

**7.5** In the case of a successful defence, the qualification of the doctoral degree is determined by the average of the scores obtained at the public defence, in the following manner:

- 4.50 and above – *summa cum laude*,
- 3.50–4.49 – *cum laude*,
- 2.00–3.49 – *rite*.