



**THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN OF
“MARTON GÉZA” DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF LEGAL STUDIES**

I. The basic principles of quality assurance at “Marton Géza” Doctoral School of Legal Studies

1. The coordination of the quality assurance tasks of doctoral education are provided by the head of the Doctoral School, with the support of the head of the programme and the secretary of the Doctoral School.
- 2.. Quality assurance tasks of the doctoral education are performed partly through the work of the teachers, researchers and dissertation supervisors providing the professional tasks, as well as the work of the head and the secretary of the Doctoral School and the head of the doctoral programme. The administrative tasks, the organization of the education, as well as certain aspects of the management of the students’ affairs are performed by the secretary of the Doctoral School, with help provided by the administrative staff, as well as the secretary and the rapporteur of the Doctoral Council of Social Sciences.
3. The situation and the tasks of quality assurance are reviewed and evaluated each year by the Council of the Doctoral School. With respect to the education, its structure, as well as the individual conditions of receiving the doctoral degree, the Council of the Doctoral School regularly puts the relevant issues on its agenda, and the head and the secretary of the Doctoral School, as well as the head of the programme conducts professional consultation on important issues on a monthly basis. The above three persons engage in detailed discussions in preparation for the meetings of the Council of the Doctoral School. After such discussions, the preparation of the council meetings is the task of the secretary of the Doctoral School.
4. In the course of the operation of its quality management system, the “Marton Géza” Doctoral School of Legal Studies of the University of Debrecen strives to enforce the following principles:
 - a. the principle of publicity, transparency and continuous documentation: the documentation of all decision points in the doctoral education, informing the public in a comprehensive in connection with each step of the quality management system;
 - b. the principle of professional control and providing feedback: the evaluation of the work of the teachers, researchers and dissertation supervisors, providing continuous feedback and improving the quality of the activities;
 - c. the principle of quality focus and the enforcement of the requirements of science ethics: important tasks include the continuous improvement of the activities of the students and teachers, the development of commitment toward quality, efforts to fulfil the expectations of science ethics;
 - d. the principle of practical applicability: it is our fundamental aim that the choice of dissertation topics and the result of the research should contribute to the formulation of answers to social-economic questions.



II. The main elements and areas of the quality management system

1. *Admission to the Doctoral School.* In connection with admission to the Doctoral School we have defined requirements that create safeguards concerning the quality work of the doctoral students admitted. We require proficiency in a foreign language in accordance with the regulations of the university, a law degree of at least *cum laude* qualification (an exemption from this requirement can only be given in case of applicants who graduated more than 5 years ago, provided that they can submit proof of significant professional-academic work), or a degree earned in another, related area, corresponding in its level to a master’s degree, as well as a well-conceived research proposal. In the course of the admission procedure, the Council of the Doctoral School also examines the academic, research and publication history of the applicant. Admission to the doctoral programme is only possible after a successful professional interview taken before an admissions committee consisting of core members of the Doctoral School and/or members of the Council of the Doctoral School.
2. *The continuous renewal of the themes covered in the programme and the content of the courses*
 - a. The continuous maintenance of the themes addressed in the doctoral programme, the presentation of the latest results of the discipline of legal and political studies.
 - b. The regular renewal of the content of the subjects.
 - c. The continuous involvement of the teachers concerned by the individual themes of the subjects into the education also other than members of the council and core members of the Doctoral School, in both the Hungarian and English-language programme.
 - d. The regular evaluation of the content and updating of the themes and course materials by the Council of the Doctoral School every two years.
3. *Keeping doctoral students informed on a continuous basis.* The Doctoral School shall operate a website on which all relevant, up-to-date information related to the doctoral programme is available to the students. The head and the secretary of the Doctoral School, as well as occasionally the head of the doctoral programme, regularly calls the attention of the students to publication opportunities, to professional events where the participation of the doctoral students is recommended or expected, as well as to internal and external grant and scholarship opportunities, deadlines, and generally all important circumstances.

III. Exit requirements constituting the basis of quality assurance

1. *The educational and research plan.* An educational and research plan for each student is drawn up in consultation with the dissertation supervisor, in an individually customised way, even before application for admission. The drawing up and drafting of this plan takes places in alignment with the chosen topic, with a view to the successful defence of the dissertation. Part of the plan is the proper scheduling and the regular checking of the status of the research activities, which is the task of the dissertation supervisor, the head of the Doctoral School, as well as the head of the programme, with preparatory work provided by the secretary of the Doctoral School.



2. *The dissertation supervisor.* The Doctoral School places special emphasis on close cooperation between the dissertation supervisor and the doctoral student. It is the task of the dissertation supervisor to facilitate the development of the students under his/her supervision, to supervise their activities, and advance their academic and research relationships. The elements of this cooperation that are important from a quality assurance point of view:

(a) We consider it as an important quality criterion for dissertation supervisors that they shall be teachers with an academic degree, who have uploaded his/her list of publications into the Hungarian National Scientific Bibliography (MTMT), and has at least 10 reviewed and refereed professional publications, with at least five of these published in the past five years. Assistant professors may be included on the list of dissertation supervisors only exceptionally, in case of significant professional and academic performance.

(b) The selected dissertation supervisor shall be present at the admissions interview of the applicant, in the course of which he/she shall provide a substantial evaluation of the candidate, as well as provide a preliminary written declaration to the effect of undertaking serve as the candidate’s dissertation supervisor.

(c) The dissertation supervisor shall participate at the research forum, prior to which he/she shall provide a detailed, written opinion on the professional progress made by the doctoral student in each active semester, also including the professional activities of the dissertation supervisor in the interest of the progress of the doctoral student.

(d) The dissertation supervisor shall provide a detailed, written opinion on the student prior to the complex examination, and may also be present at and contribute to the part of the complex examination where the dissertation is discussed.

(e) The dissertation supervisor shall provide a detailed, professional opinion on the dissertation both before the closed and the public debate. The dissertation may only be submitted to the closed and subsequently to the public debate with the support of the dissertation supervisor.

3. *The assessments of the student during the programme.* Among the assessments used during the programme, an important role is played by papers written by the student outside the classroom, based on the themes discussed in the framework of the course and requiring substantial academic research activities, i.e. essays that ensure that the student’s ability to interpret the specialist literature, as well as his/her written skills of analysis, evaluation, modelling and expression satisfy the requirements for the PhD degree. The topics of such papers shall be assigned in consultation with the teacher of the given course, and the dissertation supervisor shall assist the doctoral student also in connection with these. If possible, the topics elaborated in the framework of these essays shall be such that they align with the student’s doctoral research and/or dissertation in terms of the content or the methodology used.

4. *Planning the progress to be made during the semester.* In the first half of each semester (by 20 October or 20 March the latest), doctoral students shall be required to submit a research plan, drawn up in consultation with their dissertation supervisors, in which they outline what professional activities they plan to carry out in the given semester (also including publication plans). In this plan, doctoral students shall summarise their planned activities in the semester, primarily the expected results of their research activities.



5. *The progress report and the research forum.* During the doctoral programme, at the end of each semester, doctoral students shall participate at a research forum, where in the presence of their dissertation supervisors they report on the professional activities performed during the semester. The absence of a student from this forum is only possible in exceptional, justified cases, on the basis of the decision of the head of the Doctoral School. In such a case, the student who is not in attendance may give his or her report using some device of telecommunication, or an additional written task, such as the submission of a manuscript in a condition ready for publication or actually published in the research topic, may be prescribed for the student. The research forum provides an opportunity for the continuous discussion and evaluation of the results of the research. The basis of the report given at the research forum is the progress report to be submitted at the end of each semester, in which the doctoral student gives a detailed account of the professional activities performed during the semester, the progress made in the field of the research, and encloses certificates of all professional activities that can be evaluated with a credit point (conference papers, publications, teaching).

6. *Publication requirements during the PhD programme.* An important tool of quality assurance is that candidates shall have publications in a sufficient number and quality by the time of the defence. It is a condition of obtaining the absolutorium that the candidate has at least one publication of at least 1 author's sheet (40,000 characters) in length, in the topic of the dissertation, which appeared or was accepted for publication in a Hungarian academic journal of at least category “B”. The quality of the publications can be guaranteed partly by the cooperation of the candidate with the dissertation supervisor, and partly by the participation of the candidate at the events of the doctoral school and at research forums. In defining the above requirements, the Doctoral School started out from the general assumption that the demanding approach used by more prestigious places of publication can serve as a guarantee for the professional quality of the publications.

7. *Hungarian and international educational, academic and research relations.* The Doctoral School encourages, and – as far as its possibilities permit – also financially supports doctoral students in gaining experiences in Hungary and abroad, participating in Hungarian and international conferences, study trips and study abroad programmes. A higher credit point is given for papers presented at professional conferences abroad (in a differentiated way, depending on the location and the language of the conference). The Doctoral School supports its students in completing one or even more semesters of their studies abroad, in the framework of the Erasmus+ student mobility programme.

8. *Special requirements applicable to correspondence students.* The requirements that apply to correspondence students are identical with those applicable to doctoral students in the full-time programme, with the exception that participation at the lectures for full-time doctoral students is not required of correspondence students. They cannot be exempted, however, from the obligation to participate at the research forum on the basis of their non-full-time student status. The mandatory research methodology courses for correspondence students are taught on one occasions, in 3 x 2 lessons, in the first and second semesters of the programme.

9. *Special requirements applicable to students with individual preparation.* Such persons may be admitted to the doctoral programme with individual preparation in connection with whom, on the basis of their academic performance so far (including, in particular, the quality and quantity of prior



publications), it may be reasonably assumed that within one year from the start of the period of individual preparation they fulfil the conditions of starting the degree-awarding procedure. Students participating with individual preparation are exempted from completing the coursework requirements; however, the other requirements of earning the doctoral degree are identical with the requirements applicable to full-time and correspondence students. According to the practice of the Council of the Doctoral School, it is also a condition of their admission that they shall have fulfilled upon admission at least half of the exit requirements concerning publications, i.e. they shall have at least two category “A” or “B” publications. Those admitted in this arrangement join the doctoral programme with 120 credits being recognized on the basis of their prior academic performance, which will be officially entered upon successfully passing of the doctoral complex examination. Additional credits may also be recognized, but only on the basis of the Doctoral School’s system of requirements. After successfully passing the doctoral complex examination, doctoral students with individual preparation will be given active student status for a minimum of one and a maximum of four semesters, in order to earn the second set of 120 credits and to finalize their doctoral dissertations.

10. Organizing closed debates. The closed debate is an important precondition of submitting a dissertation to the public debate. The Council of the Doctoral School shall request, in advance, at least two experts who are independent from the University of Debrecen and from the candidate, to provide a detailed evaluation of the dissertation at the closed debate (“pre-opponent’s reports”). In addition to their supporting opinions, the positive opinion of at least three additional experts having academic degrees shall be necessary for the closed debate to be declared successful, but in each case the target is for the candidate to have more than the minimum number of positive opinions. Simultaneously with submitting the dissertation to the closed debate our Doctoral School, with the assistance of the librarians at the University and National Library of the University of Debrecen, subject the dissertation to a plagiarism detection analysis, on the result of which the Doctoral School will provide a detailed information to the invited referees, who will then have to make a written declaration as to whether they accept the result and agree that the dissertation may be submitted to the closed debate. In the framework of the closed debate, proper assurances shall be obtained with respect to the following:

- the topic of the doctoral dissertation can be evaluated from an academic point of view;
- the dissertation contains authentic data and results;
- the academic results included in the dissertation are from the candidate;
- the dissertation complies with the formal requirements;
- on the basis of its professional quality, the dissertation is suitable for submission to the public debate.

11. The foreign language and publication requirements of receiving the doctoral degree. The dissertation may be submitted to the public debate if the candidate has a state-recognized or nostrified, “C”-type (oral and written), at least intermediate-level language examination in English, German or French, as well as another state-recognized or nostrified, “C”-type (oral and written), at least intermediate-level language examination in another language necessary for academic purposes. A condition of the appointment of the evaluation committee of the public debate is also that the author must possess:



- at least two international publications of at least 0.5 author's sheet (20,000 characters) in length each, either already published abroad or accepted for publication abroad, in a foreign language, related to the topic of the dissertation, or
- at least one international publication of at least 0.5 author's sheet (20,000 characters) in length, either already published abroad or accepted for publication abroad, in a foreign language, and at least one additional publication of at least 1 author's sheet (40,000 characters) in length, in the topic, published abroad or accepted for publication abroad in a Hungarian academic journal of at least category “B”, both of which are related to the topic of the dissertation, or
- at least four Hungarian publications of at least 1 author's sheet (40,000 characters) in length each, either already published abroad or accepted for publication abroad, in a foreign language, related to the topic of the dissertation, which were published in a Hungarian academic journal or journals of at least category “B”, at least two of which shall be periodicals independent from the University of Debrecen.*

It follows from the above that even though the Doctoral School does not set as a mandatory requirement the publication in a foreign periodical classified by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Department IX, Committee of Legal and Political Studies, it strongly encourages such publications. In the interest of the above, the Doctoral School assigns a higher number of credits for foreign-language publications appearing abroad, and in case of the publication requirements, it gives a preference to foreign-language publications appearing abroad, as described above. Subject to its possibilities, in a grant application system, the Doctoral School also provides significant financial support for participation at conferences abroad, as well as publication activity related to that, generally the publication of articles in foreign languages, especially in periodicals appearing abroad.

The fulfilment of the publication requirements is verified, in all cases, by the Doctoral Council of Social Sciences, at the recommendation of the Council of the Doctoral School. The candidate's list of publications is proven and authenticated by way of the list of publications issued by the University and National Library of the University of Debrecen in Hungarian and English.

12. The composition of the evaluation committee. The evaluation committee of the public debate is appointed by the Council of the Doctoral School, based on the recommendation of the Doctoral Council of Social Sciences, in such a way that the majority of the members of the evaluation committee, and at the same time both official referees should be external experts with academic degrees and not in the employment of the University of Debrecen. An official referee shall be an expert having an academic degree who, on the basis of the doctoral database operated by the National Doctoral Council, has been identified in one of the doctoral schools as a core member, a core emeritus member, a dissertation supervisor or announcer of dissertation topic, or has the title of Doctor of the Academy (D.Sc.) or is a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

* The position of the Doctoral School is that it is not justified to set only category “A” publications as a requirement because the classifications may change from time to time, and further, in the case of journals in the fields of law and political science, the majority of category “B” publications are not less recognized from a professional point of view than periodicals in category “A”. In the majority of cases it does not require less effort from students to publish in a category “B” journal than in a category “A” journal.



13. Public access to and the publication of PhD dissertations. The Doctoral School shall make the text of PhD dissertations submitted to the public debate publicly available on the website of the Doctoral School, also uploading them at the same time to the electronic archive of the University of Debrecen (DEA), the link to which shall be posted in the doktori.hu database when announcing the defence. Subject to its possibilities, the Doctoral School shall also financially support the publication of successfully defended PhD dissertations in the form of monographs.

14. Career tracking of our PhD students. on the basis of the PhD methodology of Educatio Kht. we conduct a professional and labour market-oriented career survey, and ask our former students about their opinions, expectations and suggested changes related to the doctoral programme. To the extent allowed by the relevant provisions of law and of the university regulations, as well as the financial capabilities of the Doctoral School, we take the feedback thus provided into account.