

# **Quality Assurance Plan of the Doctoral School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Szeged**

Doctoral School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Szeged (GYTDI)

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## **1. The principles of the Quality Assurance Plan of the Doctoral School of Pharmaceutical Sciences**

The quality assurance of the educational work, the scientific activities and the procedures of obtaining a doctoral degree at the Doctoral School of Pharmaceutical Sciences (GYTD) is based on the commissions of Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, on the Government Decree 387/2012 (XII.19.) on Doctoral Schools, Doctoral Procedure and Habilitation, and on the regulations of the University of Szeged. The Doctoral Regulations and the Quality Assurance Regulations at the University of Szeged contain the quality assurance criteria of the doctoral training and the awarding of doctoral degree, and the values that shall be created by following them.

Based on these criteria, the quality assurance of our doctoral school sets principles taking account of the quality assurance recommendations of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee, ensuring that the quality of our training programmes and the scientific achievements of our doctoral students are equivalent to that of the most prestigious national and international pharmaceutical scientific centres.

### **The principles of the quality assurance system of the Doctoral School**

1. Involving highly qualified, successful supervisors with experience in the given scientific field and committed, motivated students with the required qualification, who, together, operate a highly professional and technically advanced scientific workplace.
2. Ensuring the control of the national and international professional scientific community over the entirety of the doctoral training and the awarding of the doctoral degree.
3. Keeping abreast of the scientific achievements of national and international doctoral schools with a similar scientific profile.
4. Implementing the resolutions and other science ethics requirements of the Science Ethics Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in our quality assurance process.
5. Making the quality assurance recommendations publicly available for the professional and scientific community.
6. Strengthening lecturers and students' quality-centric attitude.
7. Thoroughly implementing the regulations protecting intellectual property in the

doctoral training and the awarding of the doctoral degree.

8. Accurately documenting the procedures of the doctoral training.

### **1.1. Quality assurance requirements of the GYTDI regarding the management/organisation**

a) The Doctoral Council of the GYTDI (DIT) shall revise the training program and the quality assurance plan by 31 January of each year, ensuring the annual implementation of the necessary changes.

b) The annual report of the GYTDI shall be discussed and accepted by the DIT.

c) Achievements and changes from the previous year (achievements of PhD students and supervisors, defences, dropout rate, supervisor changes) shall be published on the website of the GYTDI, on which the DIT, programme directors, supervisors, topic announcers and doctoral students may deliver an opinion. They may deliver their opinion to the leaders of the Doctoral School in oral or written form, and propose changes. The programme directors and the DIT shall discuss these opinions and make efforts to change the contested processes, incorporating the changes into the modified training and quality assurance plan.

d) The GYTDI shall publish the quality assurance report of the previous year and, if necessary, the renewed training and quality assurance plan on their website by 15 February of each year. Reports shall be archived digitally and retained for 10 years.

### **1.2. Quality assurance referent of the Doctoral School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, and disclosure of the quality assurance plan**

#### **1.2. a) Name of the quality assurance referent**

The Doctoral Council of the GYTDI assigned Professor Dr. Zsolt Szakonyi (Institute of Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Szeged) as the quality assurance referent responsible for the quality assurance of the GYTDI.

#### **1.2. b) Disclosure of the quality assurance plan**

Official Hungarian and English documentations of the Doctoral School (training program, quality assurance plan, forms) are disclosed on the official website of the GYTDI

(<http://www.pharm.u-szeged.hu/english/doctoral-training/regulations/regulations>)

and on the website of the Hungarian Doctoral Council ([https://doktori.hu/index.php?menuid=191&di\\_ID=141&lang=EN](https://doktori.hu/index.php?menuid=191&di_ID=141&lang=EN)).

#### **1.3. a) Complaint options for students**

The GYTDI provides the opportunity for students to make a complaint about the doctoral training. Students shall submit their complaints to the head of the Doctoral School in

written form or inform the head of the Doctoral School in person. The Council of the GYTDI shall act within 30 days and answer the students in written form.

### **1.3. b) Cases concerning student status**

The dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Szeged shall act in cases concerning student status. Student status is monitored by the officer of the Doctoral School, based on the Neptun system of the university.

## **2. Quality assurance requirements of the GYTDI regarding lecturers**

### **2.1.1. Scientific/educational requirements regarding lecturers and supervisors**

Supervisors and lecturers of the GYTDI shall meet the scientific and educational requirements set up by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee and the University of Szeged in the Regulations Governing the Doctoral Training Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree. Information can be found on the website of the Hungarian Doctoral Council (<https://doktori.hu/index.php?menuid=351&cid=247&lang=EN>).

### **2.2. a) 1. Revision of core members and lecturers**

On the website of the Hungarian Doctoral Council, the GYTDI shall revise the scientific and supervising activity of its core members, supervisors and lecturers annually, and propose adjustments if necessary.

### **2.2. a) 2. Admission requirements for new supervisors**

Prior to their admission as supervisor/lecturer of the GYTDI, the Council of the GYTDI shall assess the professional experience of the applicants (lecturers/researchers with a scientific degree), and decide on their admission as lecturer/supervisor based on that. Admission is approved by the Committee of Medical and Pharmaceutical Sciences Doctoral Programme (TDT) at the University of Szeged. Since 7 January 2020, the Council of the GYTDI requires lecturers and researchers applying as supervisors to meet double the publication requirements of obtaining a PhD degree. The number of publications not taken into account for their doctoral degree shall be at least:

- 4 Q1 original publications, and the applicant has to be the first author of at least 2 of them, or
- 2 Q1 original publications and 2 publication of impact factor in English, and the applicant has to be the first author or corresponding author of one of them, as well as 2 other scientific paper, or
- The number of publications has to be at least 6, and the applicant has to be the first author or corresponding author of at least 2 of them. The minimum total of impact factors of the publications is 6.0.

Independent supervision is only allowed after the applicant acted as co-supervisor of at least one PhD candidate who successfully obtained a doctoral degree.

#### **2.2 b) Termination of supervisor assignment**

Supervisor assignment is automatically over when the PhD student/candidate obtains a doctoral degree. If supervisors employed by the university retire or their employment is terminated, in case of a mutual agreement between supervisor and PhD candidate, and with the approval of the programme director and the TDT, supervision may be delegated to another supervisor. Co-supervising as an external supervisor is also an option in case of further contribution. In this case, an internal co-supervisor shall be assigned. A professor emeritus may also be supervisor or co-supervisor.

#### **2.2 c) Terms of an external supervisor's involvement in supervision**

In justified cases, with the approval of the programme director, external supervisors may be involved in the dissertation process. However, in this case, a supervisor familiar with the given scientific field shall also be assigned from within the institute. The external supervisor shall have adequate scientific competence and experience in the chosen topic. Based on the written request of the student, assignment of an external supervisor shall be decided by the programme director. The requested external supervisor's CV and publication list shall be attached to the request with a consent form containing the supervisor's declaration of undertaking the task and knowing the professional requirements of the institution.

#### **2.2 d) Disclosure and consideration of students' opinion about lecturers in quality assurance**

Students may give their opinions about education and research. Opinions shall be submitted in written form in the Neptun system. Depending on the nature of the opinion, immediate measures may be taken or the problem may be fixed during the annual quality assurance revision. Opinions shall be submitted at the end of the semesters. However, students may deliver their opinion in written form anytime during the semester, to the Representative of PhD Students, the Head of the Doctoral School or their programme director.

### **2.3. Developing the educational environment and supporting the lecturers in learning new skills and methodologies - quality assurance**

2.3. a) The Council of the GYTDI shall choose supervisors, lecturers and core members of the Doctoral School to ensure the appropriate educational environment, the conditions for experimental research and further development.

2.3. b) The Council of the GYTDI shall continuously motivate lecturers to improve learning materials, participate in trainings on new educational methods and to use these methods in education.

### **3. Quality assurance requirements of the GYTDI regarding scientific requirements**

#### **3.1. a) Monitoring thesis topics**

Monitoring and revision of thesis topics shall occur twice a year, by 15 February of the given year (annual regular admission) and by 15 November in case of Stipendium Hungaricum students.

#### **3.1. b) Quality-oriented student admission to the doctoral training**

The selection protocol of the Doctoral School is in line with the Regulations Governing The Doctoral Training Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree. Regarding qualification, admission requirements are standard for both full-time and individual PhD students. Individual students begin their doctoral training with the comprehensive examination (skipping the ‘training and research’ part, see 5.1.e). The Council of the GYTDI aims to select the best students from the applicants. Based on their entrance exam and their previous scientific achievements, students are given points, ranked and proposed to be admitted or rejected by a committee of at least 3 members assigned by the DIT.

#### **3.1. c) Transfer of theoretical and practical knowledge**

In the programmes of the GYTDI, theoretical knowledge is transferred during compulsory and elective courses announced by excellent lecturers, and practical knowledge is acquired during the research work coordinated by the supervisors. Continuous research in the institutes and active participation in the life of the institute (e.g. coordinating practices and delivering lectures) provide opportunities for the students to apply their knowledge acquired during courses in their professional field actively. Doctoral students’ preparation for practice and seminar coordination is ensured by those in charge of the courses.

### **4. Requirements of the GYTDI regarding the selection procedure for doctoral studies**

#### **4.1. a) Board members**

In case of Hungarian full-time students, members of the selection board are the Head of the GYTDI, the programme directors and the head of the concerned institutes. If they are prevented from attending, the Head of the GYTDI shall appoint appropriate substitutes to represent the members.

#### **4.1. b) Quality assurance of full-time students’ selection procedure: syllabus, scoring system and the objective definition of ranking**

In the 100 points selection system, full-time students must have at least 60 points to reach the threshold score for admission. (See Regulations Governing the Doctoral Training

Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree, Chapter IV, paragraph 17-27, and Doctoral School of Pharmaceutical Sciences Rules of Operation in detail).

#### **4.1. c) Technical details of the selection procedure**

The selection procedure may be in-person or online. In case of foreign students, the language of the procedure is English.

#### **4.1. d) Selection procedure of individual students occurs via the comprehensive examination (see 5.1. e)**

#### **4.2. Recording selection procedure observations**

In its annual report, the Council of the GYTDI shall record selection procedure observations and may propose changes (e.g. regarding exam requirements, organisation) that shall be added as modifications to the training plan and the quality assurance plan.

### **5. Quality assurance requirements of the doctoral training of the GYTDI during the doctoral training**

#### **5.1. a) 1. The GYTDI aims to ensure personnel requirements**

Members, topic announcers and core members shall be selected to ensure personnel requirements necessary for research. The GYTDI shall acquaint its students with the newest learning materials. In case of obligatory courses and elective courses linked to programmes, lecturers are required to give distinguished lectures and ensure online subject materials and an opportunity of online consultation in case of obstruction.

#### **5.1. a) 2. The GYTDI aims to ensure technical conditions**

The Council of the GYTDI shall choose supervisors, lecturers and core members of the Doctoral School to ensure the appropriate educational environment and the conditions for development in the research lab. (See 2.3. a)

#### **5.1. b) Monitoring students' progress in the doctoral training**

In the Neptun database, the Doctoral School shall monitor students' progress from enrolment to defence, students' requests delivered to the Head of the GYTDI, decisions of the Committee of Medical and Pharmaceutical Sciences Doctoral Programme (TDT) and examination documents. Each semester, the GYTDI inspects subject registrations and completed courses (grades, signature and date). At the end of every second semester, students shall submit an annual report of their academic year, certified by their supervisor. At the end of the fourth semester, the Doctoral School shall decide if the student meets the comprehensive examination requirements based on the Training Plan of the Doctoral School and the Regulations Governing the Doctoral Training Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree. After completing the eighth semester, the Secretariat of the GYTDI shall inspect if the student has at least 240 certified credit points. Students

enrol in the doctoral procedure with the help of the officer of the GYTDI, who prepares the defence board appraised and approved by the Head of the Doctoral School and the necessary documents required by the Doctoral Regulations for the Committee of Medical and Pharmaceutical Sciences Doctoral Programme (TDT). The officer of the GYTDI shall make the details of the defence publicly available on the website of the Hungarian Doctoral Council (“Future or recently accomplished defences”) two weeks before the defence.

#### **5.1. c) The GYTDI supports students’ scientific career**

The Council of the GYTDI – with the help of the supervisors – shall encourage students’ participation in in-person and online conferences, summer schools, part-time trainings and EUGLOH programs (cooperation of 5 European universities). The Council of the GYTDI shall encourage applications for e.g. Richter scholarship, Cooperative Doctoral Programme. The Council of the GYTDI shall rank the applications within their field of responsibility. The Council of the GYTDI shall initiate open access publication of students’ scientific achievements and the financial aid provided by the University of Szeged for these publications.

#### **5.1. d) The GYTDI ensures the storage of students’ publication**

Full-time and individual students shall register to the SZTE Repository of Dissertations website and the MTMT2 database, and specify their institute as affiliation.

#### **5.1. e) The process and requirements of the comprehensive examination; objective definition and regular revision of evaluation criteria; requirements of examination board members**

The Secretariat of the GYTDI shall monitor if full-time students’ meet the requirements of the comprehensive examination (90 credits, completion of obligatory courses). The Council of the GYTDI shall determine the examination subjects and the board for each programmes, considering the Doctoral Regulations (see the Regulations Governing the Doctoral Training Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree, Chapter V, paragraph 1-7). The Head of the GYTDI shall invite experts of the given scientific field to the examination boards. The suggestions shall be approved and accepted by the TDT. Students and supervisors shall meet the examination requirements based on the Doctoral Regulations and the Training Plan of the GYTDI (research report and the supervisor’s assessment of working with the student). The examination board shall receive the obligatory documentations of the exam (official report, student documentation) at least 2 days before the exam. The comprehensive examination consists of 2 parts, and the results count as 50-50% of the final result. The first part is the theoretical part of the comprehensive examination (replacing the previous doctoral finals), where the candidates must prove their competence in the chosen subjects. The second part is the dissertation part, where students must give a presentation about the first 2 years’ research and their research plan for the next 2 years.

### **5.1. f) Individual students enter the doctoral training by passing the comprehensive examination**

Once or twice a year (see the website of the SZTE Doctoral Institute, <https://u-szeged.hu/dokint/hataridok>), candidates who do research in addition to their full-time job (who have at least one relevant publication) may apply for the doctoral training by taking the comprehensive examination. Besides the obligatory courses, examinees must meet the same requirements as full-time students taking the comprehensive examination at the end of their 4th semester.

### **5.1. g) Quality requirements of the comprehensive examination board members**

The comprehensive examination board shall consist of university teachers and researchers who hold a doctoral degree in the given scientific field, do educational work at the university and have no conflict of interest with the examinee (see the Regulations Governing The Doctoral Training Programmes And The Awarding Of The Doctoral Degree, chapter V, paragraph 3). The examinee's performance is assessed by the board members based on the Regulations Governing the Doctoral Training Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree, chapter V, paragraph 6.

### **5.1. h) Monitoring the gathering, processing and use of the data on students' feedback and progress, as well as the implementation of related decisions (especially about dropping out)**

The data on students' feedback and progress (especially dropping out) shall be monitored in line with university regulations.

## **5. 2. Revision of the subjects of elective and obligatory courses**

The Council of the GYTDI shall revise the obligatory and elective subjects and their syllabi every 5 years, updating and modifying them with new information, taking students and lecturers' suggestions into consideration. Updates and modifications shall be published on its website. The training plan shall be modified at the same time.

## **6. Quality assurance requirements of the GYTDI regarding the awarding of the doctoral degree**

### **6.1. a) 1. Monitoring the publication requirements of the doctoral procedure**

Publication requirements of the doctoral procedure can be found in the Doctoral School of Pharmaceutical Sciences Rules of Operation. Until 31 December 2023, the GYTDI applies the previous "IF-based" publication requirements and the new classification based on "D and Q ranking" in parallel.

### **6.1. b) Assuring the monitoring of foreign language requirements**



As foreign language, a world language (English, German, Russian, French, Spanish or Italian) is requested by the GYTDI. Students shall be certified by a complex type language examination. The second language requirement was deleted starting from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. However, if the intermediate (B2) language competence is not in English, then a basic level (B1) language exam in English is required. For foreign students, intermediate language knowledge in a world language shall be recognised if they received their secondary or university education in English, and can prove this with an official certificate issued by the secondary school or the university.

#### **6.1. c) Quality assurance of foreign students' doctoral procedure in the GYTDI**

Defence requirements are the same for foreign and Hungarian students, but in case of foreign students, every part of the procedure (dissertation, report, invitation) occurs in English, both in written and oral form.

#### **6.1. d) Using the plagiarism search engine of the Klebelsberg Library in order to inspect dissertations**

The Council of the GYTDI requires using the plagiarism search engine of the Klebelsberg Library in order to inspect dissertations before sending them to the opponents.

#### **6.1. e) Objective evaluation criteria of the public defence process and requirements, frequency of monitoring**

Once a year, the Head of the GYTDI and/or the programme director and the candidate's supervisor shall attend the defences related to the programmes of the Doctoral School in-person or online. This is in line with the requirements of the Regulations Governing the Doctoral Training Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree. Objective assessment shall be ensured by a board of five members assigned by the Council of the GYTDI. The Chair shall be a university professor or a Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and all the other members shall hold a scientific degree. One member and one of the opponents shall be an external professional or not a member of the candidate's external institute. The GYTDI shall revise the procedure, requirements and assessment criteria of obtaining a doctoral degree every 5 years. The defence board is approved and assigned by the TDT, following the rules regarding conflict of interest. The candidate shall not have a joint publication with any member of the board. If one of the assessors have a negative opinion, the TDT shall request the opinion of a third assessor, in line with the regulations. With two supportive assessments, the TDT shall submit the thesis to public disputation within 2 academic months. Those who shall receive a mandatory invitation to the disputation are the head of the GYTDI, the student's supervisor, the board members, the programme director and members of the TDT. Besides them, the student may invite any guest to the public disputation. At the public disputation, the PhD student presents (in an unrestricted way and in 30 minutes at the most) his/her thesis. Then the assessments shall be publicly read. The candidate reacts on the written questions of the assessors and the questions and comments coming from those who are present (in-person

or online) at the disputation. The board – during a closed session and by secret voting – shall decide on a 0-5 level points grading scale whether the defence was successful or not. To be successful, the candidate shall reach at least 60% of all points. A few minutes after the session, the Chair shall publicly announce and justify the outcome. These steps ensure objectivity during the assessment. The Council of the GYTDI accepts the defence, then the TDT delivers its opinion. After that, the University Doctoral Council shall approve the awarding of the doctoral degree. Qualification of the doctoral degree shall be based on the defence results (see Regulations Governing the Doctoral Training Programmes and the Awarding of the Doctoral Degree, chapter 6, paragraph 47). In case of a joint doctoral degree, the doctoral regulations of the other university must also be taken into consideration, unless other conditions are specified in the written agreement between the two universities.

6 June 2023, Szeged



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