

**Operational Regulations of the Theoretical Medicine of Doctoral School, at the
University of Szeged**

February 13, 2024

These rules are based on Act CCIV of 2011 on doctoral schools, doctoral procedures and habilitation, Government Decree 387/2012. (XII. 19.) on doctoral schools, doctoral procedures and habilitation, and the Regulations on Doctoral Training and Doctoral Degree Acquisition at the University of Szeged (March 27, 2023 <https://u-szeged.hu/download.php?docID=141156>).

The Doctoral School of Theoretical Medical Sciences (hereinafter referred to as the Doctoral School) is a functional educational unit operating at the Albert Szent-Györgyi Faculty of Medicine of the University of Szeged with the approval of the MAB, which provides training for the award of a PhD degree in the field of theoretical medical sciences.

These regulations have been drawn up in accordance with the relevant laws and other legal regulations in force, the resolution on the establishment and operation of doctoral schools contained in Annex 4 to the MAB SzMSz, and the Doctoral Regulations of the University of Szeged (hereinafter referred to as EDSZ). It primarily contains regulations that are more detailed than the aforementioned provisions in relation to certain issues. In cases not mentioned in these regulations, the provisions of the EDSZ shall apply.

**CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THEORETICAL
MEDICAL SCIENCES (EODI):**

University of Szeged, SZAOK-TTIK, Institute of Medical Physics and Medical Informatics
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Introduction

These regulations have been drawn up in accordance with higher-level regulations; in most cases, they merely supplement those regulations. The Doctoral School operates a website from which the aforementioned higher-level regulations can be easily accessed. These higher-level regulations currently include

- the National Higher Education Act (abbreviated to Nft; more precisely, Act CCIV of 2011 with amendments effective from September 1, 2016)
- the Government Decree (more precisely, Government Decree 387/2012. (XII. 19.) on doctoral schools, doctoral procedures, and habilitation)
- Regulations of the University of Szeged on Doctoral Training and Doctoral Degrees (27 March 2023)

1. Head of the Doctoral School

- The head of the DI receives his or her leadership mandate in accordance with the University Doctoral Regulations and for a fixed term.

Current head: Prof. Dr. Ferenc Bari, university professor

- Deputy head: Prof. Dr. Antal Nógrádi, associate professor

2. Research subprograms of the Doctoral School and their current heads

2.1. Neuroendocrinology Subprogram

Head: Dr. habil. Zsolt Bagosi, associate professor, SZTE SZAOK Institute of Pathophysiology

2.2. Neuroscience Subprogram

Head: Prof. Dr. Gábor Jancsó, university professor, SZTE SZAOK Institute of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology

2.3. Gastroenterology Subprogram

Head: Prof. Dr. László Czakó, university professor, SZTE SZAOK Department of Internal Medicine

2.4. Regulation, Measurement and Analysis of Life Processes

Head: Prof. Dr. Ferenc Bari, university professor, SZTE SZAOK-TTIK Institute of Medical Physics and Informatics

The research topics announced in each program are published on the EODI website (...) and on the website of the National Doctoral Council (www.doktori.hu).

3. Structure and governing body of the Doctoral School of Theoretical Medical Sciences

3.1. The work of the EODI is coordinated and directed by the Doctoral School Council (hereinafter referred to as EODIT).

The members of the EODIT are:

- Current chair: Prof. Dr. Ferenc Bari, university professor
- Deputy chair: Prof. Dr. Antal Nógrádi, university professor
- Secretary: Prof. Dr. Zoltán Rakonczay, university professor
- External member: Prof. Dr. István Krizbai, scientific advisor

The members of the Extended DT also include the subprogram leaders and the student representative.

Members of the Extended Council with voting rights:

- The head of EODI, subprogram leader, and chair of EODIT
- The deputy head of EODI, who is the deputy chair of EODIT, elected on the recommendation of the head of EODI
- The secretary of EODI
- The external member of EODI
- The other subprogram leaders of EODI

Members with advisory rights:

- The representative of PhD students
- The administrator of EODI

The term of office of the elected members of EODIT is five years. In case of impediment, EODIT members may appoint a substitute with voting rights.

3.2. EODIT meets as necessary, but at least once per semester. Minutes are taken of the meetings.

3.3. EODIT decisions are made by majority vote in the absence of a numerical vote. In the event of a tie, the chair has the casting vote. An exception to this is the voting procedure for the degree awarding process (see below, under the rules for the degree awarding process). EODIT shall have a quorum if the majority of its voting members participate in the vote.

3.4. EODIT shall generally make its decisions by open vote, except in matters concerning personnel. In justified cases, any member may request a secret ballot, or the chair may order one.

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3.5. At the suggestion of the EODIT chair, EODIT may also make decisions electronically (by email) when justified.

3.6. The materials necessary for the agenda items requiring a decision at EODIT meetings must be made available to members at least two working days before the meeting, which may also be done electronically. The date of the meetings and the agenda must be communicated to the members at least 5 working days before the meeting.

3.7. EODIT shall decide on the following matters concerning EODI:

- approval of the persons acting as supervisors and the topics announced for doctoral students
- determining the subjects announced for doctoral training for a given semester
- accepting the annual reports of doctoral students participating in organized training
- authorizing study trips
- determining the educational tasks of students in agreement with the management of the relevant Institute/Department, and
- managing EODI revenues in accordance with University regulations.

3.8. EODIT makes proposals on the following matters concerning EODI:

- initiating degree award procedures,
- initiating the public part of the procedure,
- compiling the subjects for the comprehensive examination,
- appointing members of the comprehensive examination committees and the evaluation committees for public defenses,
- granting permission to defer studies,
- awarding doctoral degrees,
- appointing members of the admissions committee,
- electing new core members,
- electing a new doctoral school director or re-electing the existing director
- determining the internal structure of the EODI, and
- filling the admission quota allocated to the School by the Faculty.

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3.9. The administrative affairs of the EODI are handled by the EODIT secretary with the assistance of the EODI administrator and under the supervision of the head of the EODI or his or her deputy. The tasks supervised by the secretary are:

- collecting doctoral topics,
- preparing the material necessary for the EODIT's decision,
- collecting courses planned for the given semester,
- collecting and preliminary evaluation of students' annual reports,
- maintaining EODI data on the website of the National Doctoral Council (www.doktori.hu)
- operating the doctoral school's website (<http://>)
- preparing DI matters requiring TDT decisions for TDT meetings
- compiling statistics
- preparing quality assurance reports
- completing questionnaires concerning the operation of the DI
- preparing reports requested on SH students
- convening student forums and compiling their materials
- student feedback
- Student follow-up.

3.10. The procedure for handling student complaints, appeals, and legal remedies is as follows: the EODI administrator is responsible for documenting student complaints and questions, who then forwards the cases to the EODI chair, who in turn submits them to the EODIT. The appeal protocol against the decision is as follows: first level: TDT, second level: EDT, third level: Rector. In matters concerning student legal status, EODIT is the deciding body, with the above-mentioned appeal options.

4. Doctoral students' studies

4.1. Students may apply for topics announced on the EODI ODT website (www.doktori.hu) based on prior consultation with their chosen supervisor.

4.2. Supervisors are appointed by EODIT, and the topics announced are approved by EODIT. Only instructors with a doctoral degree who have scientific achievements beyond those required for obtaining a doctoral degree in the announced topic and who have the necessary infrastructure and financial conditions for research work can be supervisors.

4.3. Applicants participate in an admission interview. The DI offers admission three times a year. The admission committee awards a maximum of 100 points based on the interview,

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previous academic work, degree classification, and language exams, on the basis of which the committee establishes the admission ranking. DI requires applicants to have at least an intermediate level English language exam at the time of application, but in the case of otherwise excellent students, it grants a deferral for obtaining the language exam until the start of the evaluation process. EODIT and the Admissions Committee make recommendations for students eligible for state scholarships in accordance with the quotas available to EODI, while other applicants who meet the minimum requirements can participate in the program as fee-paying students.

For many years, EODIT has been offering opportunities for foreign students to study at the university within the framework of the Stipendium Scholarship, accepting one student per semester and per subprogram. Self-funded training is also available. These students take part in an online oral admission procedure in English. They can also earn 100 points. A mandatory entry requirement for them is at least an intermediate level international English language exam, and the committee will assess their actual language skills during the admission process. The evaluation takes into account previous academic work, diploma results, and professional performance demonstrated in the oral exam.

4.4. Students pursue their studies in accordance with the credit system developed and regularly reviewed by EODIT. Students register for their courses in the Neptun system during the first two weeks of the semester. Their courses are evaluated by the instructors responsible for the foundation and compulsory courses, as well as by the EODI administrator for courses supervised by thesis supervisors and for work reports and complex exams involving the DI director. This is done on the basis of the signed performance sheet submitted by the students.

4.5. The DI requires that both full-time and individual students register in the MTMT2 database upon admission and indicate their institute and the DI there. At least one of their published articles must be affiliated with the DI. In addition, it requires that host institutes request an official university or research institute email address for full-time students within one month of enrollment and that students inform the DI of this. Correspondence with the DI will then take place at this email address.

4.6. The student's supervisor is responsible for supervising the student's academic work and studies. The supervisor signs the courses taken by the student in the field of research, teaching, and publication on the semester-by-semester transcript. In the case of individually trained students, in order to reduce the administrative burden, the student must certify the researchwork, publication and teaching activities completed during the period (maximum 4 semesters) at the time of graduation, which the student records in the work report and then certifies by the supervisor. If the student submits their application for graduation immediately after the semester following their enrollment, they do not need to write a work report, as they can achieve the 240 credits based on the comprehensive exam and the published work(s).

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4.7. At the end of the training and research phase of full-time student training, and as a prerequisite for beginning the research and dissertation phase, students must pass a comprehensive exam that measures and evaluates their academic and research progress. The comprehensive exam consists of two main parts: one part assesses the examinee's theoretical knowledge ("theoretical part"), while the other part assesses the examinee's scientific progress ("dissertation part"). In the theoretical part of the comprehensive exam, the examinee takes exams in two medical subjects, which are two of the three compulsory exam subjects related to the subprogram, or, in the case of a high degree of difference from the research area, two specific medical or health science subjects determined by the subprogram leader and the DI leader. In the second part of the comprehensive exam, the examinee gives a PowerPoint presentation consisting of 10-15 slides, in which they demonstrate their knowledge of the literature and their research results, present their research plan for the second phase of their doctoral training, and outline the schedule for the preparation of their dissertation and the publication of their results. The comprehensive exam is graded on a pass/fail basis (see EDSZ Comprehensive Exam, point 6). Full-time EODI students do not receive credits for this exam. For individual training students, 160 credits will be entered into Neptun upon successful completion of the comprehensive exam. Doctoral students may retake the complex exam once during the same exam period if they fail.

4.8. Students in individual training programs enter the doctoral school by taking the complex exam, which also serves as the entrance exam. A prerequisite for this is that they already have advanced research and published work(s). They prepare individually for the designated exam subjects, for which they receive literature and a list of topics. In accordance with the Doctoral Regulations, they have the opportunity to apply for admission to the doctoral school three times a year, during the summer, winter, and supplementary admission periods. They can submit their application through the Module between April 15 and May 15, December 1 and December 31, and August 1 and August 20.

4.9. Doctoral studies for both full-time and individual PhD students end with graduation. Full-time students usually graduate after 8 semesters, at the end of their studies, and as a general rule, both full-time and individual students must graduate within 2 years of passing the comprehensive exam. By this time, they must have accumulated at least 240 credits from compulsory and elective courses. This is verified by the courses completed and recorded in Neptun. Those who wish to apply for graduation earlier than two years must submit a written request to both the EODI and PhD secretariats. This is one of the necessary conditions for the student to start the evaluation process.

5. Rules of the evaluation procedure

5.1. Both participants in organized training and individual candidates may obtain a PhD degree through the doctoral procedure. The rules of the procedure are contained in the University Doctoral Regulations and in detail in the document "Rules of Procedure for the Evaluation Process at the Albert Szent-Györgyi Faculty of Medicine."

5.2. In order to obtain a PhD degree, the candidate must complete and then submit their doctoral dissertation. The condition for this is to apply for IF and/or D and Q classification certification from the University Library of the University of Szeged only for published publications that form the basis of the PhD dissertation. Before the defense, the dissertation must undergo a plagiarism check, and then, based on the results, the candidate must submit a statement of acceptance, which is also signed by the supervisor. The thesis can then be uploaded to the SZTE Repository. In addition to the requirements described in the EDSZ, the SZAOK Doctoral Schools have the following requirements regarding the dissertation, which also apply to EODI students.

INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC WORK

In the new system, the impact factor-based evaluation system has been replaced by the use of D and Q classifications. From January 1, 2024, candidates may be admitted to defense based on the fulfillment of one of the following requirements:

- They have one D1 publication and no other publications are required. (However, the article cannot be used by a co-author).
- They have one D1 publication and, if part of this publication is used by another student for their thesis, then one additional publication of any classification, but in English, is required, which may also be a co-authorship.
- They have 1 Q1 publication and one publication of any classification, but in English, which may also be co-authored.
- If the candidate does not have a Q1 article, then two Q2 articles (one as first author and one as second author) are also acceptable.
- If the candidate has only one Q2 publication, then at least two publications of any classification, but in English, are also required, which may also be co-authored.
- If the candidate's first-author publication is classified as Q3, then three additional publications of any classification, but in English, are required, which may also be co-authored.

CO-AUTHOR STATEMENT

If the referenced publications have co-authors, the thesis must include a section in which the co-authors (or the first author, if not the doctoral student) refer to the specific thesis point and publication and state which of the jointly published results included in the thesis (and dissertation) are of decisive importance to the candidate, and that they have not used them to obtain an academic degree and will not do so in the future. The statement shall be signed by the co-authors (or the first author). The procedure to be followed in the case of foreign and deceased co-authors shall be regulated by the doctoral school councils. The same copies shall also contain the statement.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SKILLS

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The Doctoral Council of Medicine and Pharmacy at the University of Szeged stipulates English as the foreign language required by law, as English is the primary language of this field of science. Therefore, candidates must have at least an intermediate level state language exam in English by the start of the evaluation process at the latest, i.e., they must submit the document certifying their language exam to the DI and the PhD Secretariat by this date. In accordance with the TDT's position, the EODI does not require a second foreign language as a condition for the evaluation process. In the case of foreign citizens whose native language is not Hungarian, their native language shall be accepted as fulfilling the foreign language requirement, provided that it meets the language requirements of the doctoral school in question. For them, Hungarian is also considered a foreign language.

DISSERTATION

The dissertation must be written in English. Its length, including figures, tables, and graphs, must not exceed 50 pages (the bibliography is not included in this count). The dissertation should be in A4 format, using Times New Roman font, 12 point font size, 1.5 line spacing, normal margins, and single-sided printing. The dissertation must be submitted in one leather-bound copy and electronically. The dissertation must be accompanied by a 10-15 page thesis-like summary in A5 format, in PDF format (no need to print). Thesis booklets must be prepared in both English and Hungarian (for foreign students, only in English). See also the information sheet "Formal requirements for PhD dissertations and thesis booklets at the Albert Szent-Györgyi Faculty of Medicine (2023)".

5.3. Evaluation procedure

5.3.1. EODIT does not require its students to defend their theses internally, but if a student is conducting research at an external, non-university institution, they may participate in the institution's internal defense and use the experience gained there in the actual evaluation procedure.

5.3.2. The evaluation procedure can only be initiated if the candidate has met all the requirements (publications, language exam, plagiarism screening). The submission of the thesis to official evaluators cannot be refused if the candidate has met the other requirements.

5.3.3. The procedure begins by completing the "Initiation of the evaluation procedure" document, which must be sent by email to the DI and the PhD Secretariat together with the mandatory attachments. In addition, an Excel spreadsheet containing the members of the Review Committee must be sent to the EODI administrator in the document "Initiation of the review procedure_review committee". A one-time degree award procedure fee is charged to self-funded, "individual preparatory" students, which is HUF 110,000 for SZTE employees and HUF 150,000 for "external" students (see the document entitled "Rules of Procedure for the Evaluation Process at the Albert Szent-Györgyi Faculty of Medicine").

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5.3.4. The committee evaluating the doctoral dissertation (work) consists of a chair, two official evaluators (one of whom is an external expert) and two additional members (one of whom is an external expert), for a total of five members. Only individuals with an academic degree may be members of the committee. One of the so-called internal members of the committee also performs secretarial duties. The chair of the examination committee is a university professor with professional competence in the field, or a professor emeritus, or a lecturer or researcher with the title of Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The evaluation committee is finalized by EODIT based on the supervisor's recommendation and appointed by TDT. A person who cannot be expected to judge the case objectively may not participate in the doctoral procedure as an official reviewer or committee member. The candidate may not have any joint publications with any member of the committee.

5.3.5. The review procedure shall be discussed and approved by the next TDT meeting on the basis of the collected and submitted mandatory documents. Official notification of the decision shall be sent by the PhD secretariat.

5.3.6. The PhD Secretariat officially invites the two opponents to review the thesis by sending them the repository link, plagiarism statement, and D/Q articles, so the candidate must first upload their dissertation and thesis booklets to the SZTE Repository. The date of upload to the SZTE Repository is the date of submission of the thesis. In accordance with the EDSZ and the EODI operating rules, the submission must take place within three years of the TDT decision accepting the complex examination. If the doctoral student is unable to submit on time, this deadline may be extended by half a year or one year, based on a decision by the EODIT, provided that a thorough justification is given.

5.3.7. The opponents have two months (the semester) to prepare their reviews (if they are ready earlier, they are not required to wait for the two months). The candidate will receive the questions to be answered by the opponents from the PhD Secretariat. "The submitter of the doctoral dissertation will receive the reviews in advance and will respond to them in writing before the defense and orally during the defense, in the public debate." (Government Decree 387/2012 (XII. 19.)). The date of the defense can be set once two positive reviews have been received (the existence of the responses is not a prerequisite for the announcement); the defense must be opened for public discussion within two months of the start of the semester at the latest. The invitation is prepared by the PhD secretariat and, after approval by the candidate and the supervisor, the defense is announced in two official places: the DI administrator publishes it on the doktori.hu website, and the defense coordinator publishes it in the (SZAOK) Faculty Newsletter. The current committee and TDT members will be notified of the defense by email. One week before the defense, the candidate is required to submit their responses to both reviewers and a written autobiography in the third person to the PhD secretariat, which will be read by the secretary during the defense.

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5.3.8. The discussion may only be held in the presence of the chair, at least one reviewer, and a total of at least four members of the committee. External members of the committee may also participate in the procedure via videoconferencing equipment if necessary. In exceptional circumstances, and subject to individual assessment, the discussion may be held in whole or in part online with the approval of the EODT. The discussion cannot be held if there is a negative review and the reviewer who gave the negative opinion is not present. In this case, the TDT shall set a new date for the discussion, in which case the discussion may be held without the presence of the reviewer who gave the negative opinion.

5.3.9. Following a successful defense, the TDT must first vote on the degree, after which the University Doctoral Council decides on the awarding of the doctoral degree. The PhD title is valid from the date of the University Doctoral Council's decision. Within 30 days of this date, the University of Szeged will issue and deliver the diploma to the eligible candidate. After the EDT's decision, the DI administrator will publish the results of the defense on the EODI doktori.hu website.