

Rules of Procedure of the Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences Doctoral School University of Szeged

04 May 2023

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 (27 March 2023, <https://u-szeged.hu/download.php?docID=141156>).

The Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences Doctoral School (hereinafter referred to as the doctoral school, DI) is a functional educational organisational unit operating at the Albert Szent-Györgyi Faculty of Medicine of the University of Szeged with the approval of the MAB (the Hungarian Accreditation Committee), 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 Rules of Organization and Operation of the MAB), 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 with regard to certain issues. In cases not mentioned in these regulations, the provisions of the EDSZ can be applied.

Contact details of the Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences Doctoral School (IODI):

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

1. The head of the doctoral school

- The head of the DI receives his or her appointment in accordance with the University Doctoral Regulations and for a fixed term.
Current head: Prof. Dr. Márta Széll, university professor
- Deputy head: Prof. Dr. Edit Paulik, university professor

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

2.1. Medical Microbiology and Antimicrobial Immunity Subprogram

- Head: Prof. Dr. Katalin Burián, university professor, SZTE SZAOK Institute of Medical Microbiology, Teaching and Research Centre

2.2. Preventive Medicine Subprogram

- Head: Prof. Dr. Edit Paulik, university professor, SZTE SZAOK Institute of Public Health

2.3. Medical Genetics and Genomics Subprogram

- Head: Prof. Dr. Márta Széll, university professor, SZTE SZAOK Institute of Medical Genetics

The research topics announced in each programme are published on the IODI website (<http://doktori.med.u-szeged.hu>) and the National Doctoral Council website (www.doktori.hu).

3. Structure and governing body of the Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences Doctoral School (IODI)

3.1. The work of the IODI is coordinated and directed by the Doctoral School Council (hereinafter referred to as IODIT). The voting members of the Council are:

- head of IODIT, also president of IODI, subprogram leader,
- the other subprogram leaders,

- the representative of DI core members,
- the representative of the supervisors,
- the representative of PhD students, if possible, the latter three members should be elected from different subprograms,
- the IODI administrator as a member with advisory rights.

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

3.2. The IODIT meet as necessary, but at least twice per semester. Minutes are taken of the meetings.

3.3. IODIT decisions are made by majority vote, unless otherwise specified. In the event of a tie, the chairperson has the casting vote. An exception to this is the voting procedure for degree awarding (see below, under the rules for degree awarding). The IODIT have a quorum if the majority of its members with voting rights participate in the vote.

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

3.5. At the suggestion of the IODIT chairperson, IODIT may also make decisions electronically (by e-mail) in justified cases.

3.6. The materials necessary for the agenda items requiring a decision at IODIT meetings are made available to members at least two working days before the meeting, which may also be done electronically. The date of the meetings, together with the agenda, is communicated to the members at least five working days before the meeting.

3.7. IODIT decide on the following matters concerning IODI:

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

3.8. The IODIT makes proposals on the following matters concerning the IODI:

- initiating degree award procedures,
- initiation of the public part of the procedure,
- compiling the subjects for the comprehensive examination,
- appointing members of the complex examination committees and the evaluation committee for public defences,
- granting permission to defer studies,
- awarding doctoral degrees,

- appointment of members of the admissions committee,
- electing new core members,
- determining the internal structure of the IODI, and
- filling the admission quota allocated to the School by the Faculty.

3.9. The administrative affairs of the IODI are handled by the secretary of the IODIT under the supervision of the head of the IODI or his/her deputy. The tasks supervised by the secretary include:

- collecting doctoral topics,
- preparing the materials necessary for IODIT's decision,
- collecting the courses planned for the given semester,
- preparing the materials necessary for the IODIT decision,
- collecting and preliminary evaluation of students' annual reports,
- maintaining IODI data on the National Doctoral Council's website (www.doktori.hu)
- operating the doctoral school's website
- preparing DI matters requiring TDT (Doctoral Council of the Scientific Field) decisions for TDT meetings
- preparing statistics
- preparing quality assurance reports
- completing questionnaires concerning the operation of the DI
- preparing reports requested about Stipendium Hungaricum (SH) students
- convening student forums and compiling materials
- student feedback
- student follow-up.

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

4. Doctoral students' studies

- 4.1. Students may apply for topics announced on the IODI website after consultation with their supervisor.
- 4.2. Supervisors are appointed by the IODIT, and the announced topics are approved by the IODIT. Only lecturers with a doctoral degree who have scientific achievements beyond those required for obtaining a doctoral degree in relation to the announced topic and who have the necessary infrastructure and financial conditions for research work may be supervisors.
- 4.3. Applicants take part 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, previous academic work, degree classification and language exams, on the basis of which the committee draws up an admission ranking. DI requires applicants to have at least one 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. The IODIT and the Admissions Committee make recommendations on students eligible for state scholarships in accordance with the quotas available to the IODI, while other applicants who meet the minimum requirements may participate in the programme as fee-paying students.

- 4.4. Students pursue their studies in accordance with the credit system developed and regularly reviewed by IODIT (see Appendix 1). During the first two weeks of the semester, students register for their courses in the Neptun system and, at the same time, enter them in the paper-based Provisional Performance Booklet prepared for the doctoral schools of SZAOK, which is signed by their lecturers and supervisors at the end of each semester. At the end of each academic year, the work report and, at the end of the second academic year, the complex examination course are certified by the signature of the head of the DI.
- 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 email address for full-time students within one month of enrolment 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 in the Provisional Transcript. In the case of individually trained students, in order to reduce the administrative burden, the 4 semesters must be certified upon the student's graduation, and the course signatures must be obtained in the manner described above. If the student submits their application for graduation immediately after the semester following their enrolment, they do not need to fill out a performance booklet.
- 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 examination that measures and evaluates their academic and research progress. The comprehensive examination consists of two main parts: one part assesses the candidate's theoretical knowledge ("theoretical part"), while the other part assesses the candidate's scientific progress ("dissertation part"). In the theoretical part of the comprehensive examination, the candidate takes an examination in two medical subjects, which are two of the three compulsory examination subjects related to the sub-programme, or, in the case of a high degree of difference from the field of research, two specific medical or health science subjects determined by the sub-programme leader and the DI leader. In the second part of the comprehensive examination, the candidates give 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 examination is graded on a pass/fail basis (see EDSZ Comprehensive Examination, point 6). Full-time IODI students do not receive credits for this examination. For students in individual training, 160 credits are entered in the Provisional Performance Book and later in Neptun upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination, which is certified by the

signature of the head of the DI. The doctoral student may retake the comprehensive examination once during the same examination period if they fail.

- 4.8. Students in individual training enter the doctoral school by taking the complex examination, which also serves as the entrance examination. A prerequisite for this is that they already have advanced research. They prepare individually for the designated examination subjects, for which they receive specialist 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 15 April and 15 May, 1 December and 31 December, and 1 August and 20 August.
- 4.9. Doctoral studies for both full-time and individual PhD students are completed upon graduation. Full-time students usually graduate after 8 semesters, at the end of their studies. As a general rule, both full-time and individual students must graduate within 2 years of passing their comprehensive examination. By this time, they must have accumulated at least 240 credits from compulsory and elective courses. This is verified by the grades signed in their transcript. Those who wish to apply for graduation earlier than two years must submit a written request to both the DI and the PhD Secretariat. This is one of the necessary conditions for the student to start the assessment procedure.

5. Rules of the assessment procedure

- 5.1. Both participants in organised training programmes and individual candidates may obtain a PhD degree through a doctoral procedure. The rules of the procedure are set out in the University Doctoral Regulations and in detail in the "Rules of Procedure for the Evaluation Process at the Albert Szent-Györgyi Medical School".
- 5.2. In order to obtain a PhD degree, candidates must complete their studies and then submit their doctoral dissertation. The prerequisite for this is to apply to the University Library of the University of Szeged for an IF and/or D and Q classification certificate only for published publications that form the basis of the PhD dissertation. Before the defence, the dissertation must undergo a plagiarism check, and based on the results, the candidate's supervisor must issue a statement of acceptance, after which the thesis can be uploaded to the SZTE Repository. In addition to the requirements described in the EDSZ, the SZAOK Doctoral Schools have the following requirements, which are also applied to IODI students.

INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC WORK

There are currently two systems in place, the old and the new publication requirements, from 2 July 2019 to 31 December 2023. Until the end of 2023, students can choose which system they want to use to have their publications counted.

Under the old system, the minimum number of publications required is two, one of which must be a first-author article published in a journal with an impact factor, and the total IF in the year of publication must be at least 4.0; in the Preventive Medicine Subprogram, it must be 1.0.

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

- They have 1 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 co-authored.
- The candidate has one 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, two Q2 articles (one as first author and one as second author) are also acceptable.
- If the candidate has only one Q2 publication, at least two additional publications of any classification, but in English, are 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 DECLARATION

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 candidate) refer to the specific thesis point and publication and state which of the jointly published results included in the thesis (and dissertation) are those in which the candidate played a decisive role, and which they have not used to obtain an academic degree and will not use in the future. The statement is 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 also contain the statement.

KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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 the field. Therefore, candidates must have at least one 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 line with the TDT's position, the IODI does not require a second foreign language 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.

THESIS

The language of the dissertation is **English**. Its length, including figures, tables and graphs, does not exceed 50 pages (the bibliography is not included in this). 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 (in English only for foreign students). See also the information sheet "Formal requirements for PhD dissertations and thesis booklets at the Albert Szent-Györgyi Medical School (2023)".

5.3. Assessment procedure

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

5.3.2. The assessment 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 assessors cannot be refused if the candidate has met the other requirements.

5.3.3. The procedure begins by completing the "Initiation of the assessment 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 DI administrator in the document entitled "Initiation of the review procedure_review committee". A one-time degree acquisition 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 Assessment Process at the Albert Szent-Györgyi Faculty of Medicine").

5.3.4. The committee evaluating the doctoral thesis (work) consists of a chairperson, two official opponents (one of them is an external expert) and two additional members (one of them 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, a professor emeritus or a lecturer or researcher with the title of Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The examination committee is finalised by the IODIT based on the supervisor's proposal and appointed by the TDT. Persons who cannot be expected to judge the case objectively may not participate in the doctoral procedure as official examiners or committee members. The candidate may not have any joint publications with any member of the committee.

5.3.5. The review procedure is discussed and approved by the next TDT meeting on the basis of the collected and submitted mandatory documents. The PhD secretariat send the official notification of the decision.

5.3.6. The PhD Secretariat officially invite the two opponents to the assessment by sending them the repository link, plagiarism statement and IF, D/Q certificate, so the candidate must upload their dissertation to the SZTE Repository in advance, together with the thesis booklets. The date of upload to the SZTE Repository is the date of submission of the thesis. In accordance with the EDSZ and the IODI operating rules, the submission must take place within 3 years of the TDT decision accepting the complex examination.

5.3.7. Opponents have 2 months (the academic year) to prepare their reviews (if they are ready earlier, they are not required to wait for the 2 months). The candidate will receive the questions to be answered by the opponents from the PhD Secretariat. "The submitter of the doctoral thesis receives the reviews in advance and responds to them in written form before the defence and orally during the defence in the public debate." (Government Decree 387/2012 (XII. 19.)). The date of the defence can be set once two positive reviews have been received (the existence of responses is not a prerequisite for the announcement); the defence 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 defence is announced in two official places: the DI administrator publishes it on the doktori.hu website, and the defence coordinator publishes it in the (SZAOK) Faculty Newsletter. The current committee and TDT members will be notified of the defence by email. One week before the defence, the candidate is required to submit their responses to both reviewers and a written CV in the third person to the PhD Secretariat, which will be read out by the secretary during the defence.

5.3.8.

The discussion may only be held in the presence of the chair, at least one of the reviewers 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, the discussion may be held in whole or in part online, subject to individual assessment– and the approval of the IODT. 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 defence, firstly the TDT vote on the degree, after which the University Doctoral Council decides on the award 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 certificate to the eligible candidate. After the EDT's decision, the DI administrator will publish the results of the defence on the DI doktori.hu website.

Szeged, 4 May 2023

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