**Appendix III.3. - 2.**

Semmelweis University

*Institutional ID code: FI 62576*

**The Protocol of the PhD Thesis Defence**

The aim of the PhD thesis defence is to evaluate the scientific readiness and activity of the candidate, which he/she presents both through outlining his/her theses and publications in writing and in the form of a short lecture.

The evaluation covers the results of the scientific work, how "the candidate possesses” it, that is, how clearly he/she can formulate the objectives of the research in writing and orally, detailing the problems, the ways to their solution, exhibiting how logical his /her thinking is in evaluating the results, conclusions, and possibly in designating the further paths of research. The answers to the questions during the thesis defence provide an opportunity to demonstrate the candidate's up-to-date readiness in scientific literature and methodology, as well as in communication and debate skills. PhD students with or without formal PhD training starting their PhD studies after 1 September 2020 must defend their thesis in English on a public defence. Defence in Hungarian is possible at the prior written request of the PhD candidate and his/her supervisor, with the support of the Departmental Doctoral School (DI) and the permission of the University Doctoral Council (EDT).

* 1. **Administrative and Other Appurtenances**

The head of the Departmental Doctoral School must provide:

* At least 1 copy of the PhD thesis,
* The form recording the PhD thesis defence (minutes),
* The protocol of the PhD thesis defence,
* The reviewers’ opinion and the PhD candidate’s answers (in written form),
* The candidate’s scientific Curriculum Vitae,
* lecture theatre, technical support (i.e. assurance of overhead projector for displaying the PhD candidate’s slides)
  1. **Schedule of the PhD Defence**

1. Half an hour (cca.) before the defence the thesis defence panel will have a closed meeting where the president of the committee makes a last check of the formal conditions of the defence (including the submitted reviews and comments and the occurrent incompatibilities). The members briefly evaluate the PhD thesis during which they do formulate common questions for the PhD candidate from the behalf of the defence committee.
2. It is required that at least three members of the defence committee and one of the reviewers/opponents must be (!) present. If one of the reviewers is absent, his/her scientific review/opinion will be delineated by one of the members of the board. If the PhD thesis has been evaluated by 3 specialist reviewers/opponents due to the fact that one of the first two reviewers had not approved it, then the presence of the opponent providing a negative opinion can only be dispensed with for compelling reasons, and his opinion must be presented by a committee member.
3. The president of the defence committee opens the scientific meeting, greets the audience, introduces the members of the defence board and the reviewers and asks the candidate whether (s)he has any objections against the evaluating board or the reviewers.
4. The chair shall invite the candidate's supervisor to make a brief presentation of the candidate. In the absence of the supervisor, the secretary of the committee shall read out the candidate's scientific biography.
5. The chair invites the candidate to present the main results of his/her thesis in a short presentation (approximately 20-25 minutes without any intervening questions and answers). If necessary, the members of the committee may ask the candidate questions during the presentation, to which the candidate will answer immediately.
6. The President shall invite opponents to summarize their views briefly and to make their critical remarks in an order of points (their opinion shall not exceed 10 minutes).
7. The President shall invite the candidate to respond in free speech (i.e. without any accompanying written text) to the critical remarks of the opponents.
8. The President shall invite opponents to pose their questions, which the candidate shall answer one by one immediately. To answer more complex questions, the candidate may request a 10-minute preparation time. The chairman asks the members of the committee and then the audience if they have any questions for the candidate (the questions should be recorded in the minutes). Furthermore, (s)he asks them whether they have further observations or comments. The essence of these comments, the name of the participants in the debate, the opinion and evaluation of both the reviewers and of the defence panel must be recorded. The candidate answers the questions, comments and comments immediately. It is desirable (!) that a genuine scientific debate should evolve during the thesis defence, in which committee members should take the initiative. All of this would serve the purpose of measuring the candidate and his /her PhD thesis in the true ‘crossfire’ of a scientific debate and instead of a polite but boring proceeding restricting itself to delivering papers.
9. The president asks the reviewers and the ones who asked questions whether they can accept the answers. If the answer is positive, the president suspends the scientific debate and the evaluating board together with the reviewers continue their work in a closed meeting. If the answers are not satisfactory, the president closes the debate after the clarification of different points of view.
10. In a closed meeting, the defence committee evaluates the PhD thesis, and the answers given by the candidate, and the PhD candidate’s abilities in scientific debate. Finally, the members of the defence panel express their opinion by giving a mark (1-5). Both the members of the board and the reviewers/opponents participate in the ballot. The defence committee records the result and some of the important statements of the PhD thesis in the minutes. The minutes form will be filled in and signed by the evaluating board and the reviewers.

**The candidate must achieve 67 % out of the total points which is the accepted level for the PhD thesis and its defence.**

1. The president re-opens the scientific meeting, asks the audience to stand up, and then (s)he presents the evaluating opinion of the defence committee expressed in numbers.

- (S)he asks the audience to sit down, and then one of the board members explains the background factors of the decision made by the board.

- In the case of sufficient amount of points the president conveys the proposal of the board members; i.e. the PhD degree should be granted to the candidate by the University Doctoral Council (EDT).

If the points are insufficient, the president reads paragraph 20. § point 34. of the Regulation: ‘In the event of (…) an unsuccessful thesis defence, a PhD candidate may initiate once more a new PhD award procedure in the same program only after two years with the same PhD topic’.

1. The president closes the meeting.
2. The minutes of the defence should be sent to the Doctoral Office by the head of the Departmental Doctoral School which will be authenticated by the head of the University Doctoral Council (EDT); the University Doctoral Council (EDT) awards the PhD degree to the candidate.

It is emphasised here as well that ‘catering’ before and during the defence is absolutely forbidden. However, the ‘celebration’ after the thesis defence cannot be discouraged.