DOCTORAL TRAINING QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN

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Institution: Semmelweis University

Scope: The entire process of doctoral education and doctoral degree acquisition (from admission to the awarding of the degree)

Objective: To operate an ESG-based, ISO 9001:2015 logic-driven, MAB-compatible quality assurance system that ensures the transparent, consistent, and development-oriented functioning of doctoral education.

1. QUALITY POLICY AND BASIC PRINCIPLES

1.1 QUALITY POLICY

Quality assurance of doctoral education at Semmelweis University operates as part of the University's Integrated Management System (IMS). The quality policy of doctoral education is aligned with the University's overall quality policy, in accordance with:

- **the internal quality assurance standards of the ESG (2015),**
- **the accreditation requirements of the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB),**
- the process-based approach and PDCA logic of the **ISO 9001:2015** standard, and
- the applicable University- and doctoral-level regulations.

The objective of the quality policy is to ensure that doctoral education:

- supports internationally competitive scientific performance,
- provides student-centred and ethical operation,
- is measurable, verifiable, and subject to continuous improvement.

The quality assurance system of doctoral education is not solely intended to ensure compliance with legal and accreditation requirements, but also serves as a strategic tool for the development of doctoral education. The system supports the strengthening of the scientific workforce

pipeline, the improvement of the efficiency of doctoral degree acquisition, and the enhancement of the University's international scientific visibility.

1.2 BASIC PRINCIPLES

Quality assurance in doctoral education is based on the following principles:

- a process-based approach and PDCA logic;
- student-centredness and the support of well-being;
- scientific and ethical integrity;
- transparency and documentation;
- responsibility and accountability;
- continuous improvement with a non-punitive approach.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE ORGANIZATIONAL AND RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM

2.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Participant	**Quality Assurance Role**
University Doctoral Council (UDC)	Approval of the quality assurance framework for doctoral education and university-level oversight
Doctoral School	Operational management of quality assurance, self-assessment, and feedback
Doctoral Divisions	Discipline-specific requirements and operational implementation
Supervisors	Professional supervision of individual research activities and regular evaluation
Doctoral Candidates	Documentation of their own academic progress and reporting
University Quality Management	System-level alignment, auditing, and management review

Quality assurance is not a centralized control system, but an operation based on cooperation and divided across defined levels of responsibility.

3. DOCTORAL TRAINING PROCESS BASED ON PDCA LOGIC

3.1 PLAN – PLANNING

The objective of the planning phase is to clearly define the framework and expectations of doctoral education.

Planning element	ESG	ISO 9001	Responsible party	Documented output
Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes	1.2	6.2	DI, EDT	Description of the doctoral programme, MKKR 8
Admission Requirements	1.4	6.1	EDT, DI	Admission guidelines and scoring system
Research Topics and Supervisory Capacity	1.5	7.2	Tagozatok	List of announced research topics
Resource and Infrastructure Planning	1.6	7.1	Egyetem, DI	Resource description at the level of organisational units

Quality Focus: predefined requirements and risk identification.

During the planning phase, the Doctoral School applies a risk-based approach, with particular attention to the risk of doctoral candidate attrition, delays in degree completion, and the balanced workload of supervisory capacities.

3.2 DO – IMPLEMENTATION

During the implementation phase, doctoral education operates within the framework defined by the applicable regulations.

Implementation element	ESG	ISO 9001	Responsible party	Proof
Conducting the admission procedure	1.4	8.1	DI, Division	Report, ranking
Training and research phase	1.3	8.5	Supervisor	Semester evaluation
Complex exam	1.4	8.6	DI, Committee	Report
Research and dissertation phase	1.3	8.5	Doctoral candidate, supervisor	Publication results
Student support, mentoring	1.6	7.1	DI, supervisor	KMMCS mentoring evidence

3.3 CHECK – MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The purpose of the audit is to objectively assess the operation of the system.

Audit area	ESG	ISO 9001	Responsible	Indicator
Doctoral student progress	1.3	9.1	Doctoral School	Annual reports
Effectiveness of the comprehensive examination	1.4	9.1	Doctoral School	Success rate
Publication performance	1.7	9.1	Doctoral School	MTMT data

3.4 ACT – DEVELOPMENT AND INTERVENTION

Based on the results of the evaluations, development measures are defined.

Type of action	ESG	ISO 9001	Responsible	Document
Modification of training content	1.9	10.2	Doctoral School	Revised programme
Management of supervisor workload	1.5	10.1	Programme / Division	Action plan
Strengthening student support	1.6	10.1	Supervisor, Doctoral School	Evidence of support
Review of regulations	1.1	10.2	Doctoral School	Updated regulations

The ACT steps are incorporated into the annual self-evaluation of the Doctoral School and into the university-level management review.

Good practices identified at programme level—particularly in the areas of doctoral student support, publication mentoring, and research organization—are shared and adapted at the level of the Doctoral School.

4. INDICATOR SYSTEM AND FEEDBACK

Key indicators:

- degree completion rate;
- success rate of the comprehensive examination;
- number and quality of publications;
- average duration of studies;
- student feedback.

Data sources of the indicators: Neptun system, MTMT, doctoral records.

Indicator – risk

Process	Indicator	Typical risk	Treatment / feedback
Admission	Ratio of applicants to admitted students	Other (Hungarian or international) PhD training opportunities / difficulties with the entry of international students (visa issues)	Student forums / informational materials about the training, activities supporting international student mobility and entry
Training phase	Approval of annual reports	Early student attrition	Strengthening mentoring support
Comprehensive examination	Success rate	Difficulties in meeting academic requirements	Supervisor support
Research phase	Publication progress	The prolonged acceptance of publications	Individual scheduling and corrective measures
Degree completion	Average duration of studies	Student overload	Operation of support services and counselling systems
Output	Degree completion rate	Non-fulfilment of KFSZ indicators	Development of scholarship/support programs

5. DOCUMENTATION, PUBLICITY AND REVIEW

The quality assurance system is based on documented, traceable, and publicly available elements:

- regulations and procedures;
- aggregated evaluations;
- self-evaluations and development plans.

The quality assurance plan is regularly reviewed by the Doctoral School, with particular attention to changes in MAB evaluations and ESG requirements.