

SEMMELWEIS UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL SCHOOL TRAINING PLAN

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Doctoral School Training Plan

1. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE TRAINING PLAN

The comprehensive training plan of the Doctoral School of Semmelweis University establishes a unified institutional framework for doctoral training and the awarding of doctoral degrees, covering the entire process from admission to the conferral of the doctoral degree.

The objectives of the training plan are to:

- provide a transparent presentation of the structure and logic of doctoral training;
- ensure a uniform interpretation of structured doctoral training and individual degree awarding;
- support the academic and research progress of doctoral candidates;
- ensure compliance with the internal quality assurance standards of the ESG;
- establish the PLAN–DO phases of the quality assurance system (PDCA).

The training plan is not a regulation but a framework document that supports the practical interpretation of the provisions set out in the doctoral regulations.

Doctoral training at Semmelweis University operates as a uniformly regulated, transparent, and publicly accessible process at the institutional level. Essential information related to doctoral training—particularly the admission procedure, training structure, degree requirements, as well as the relevant regulations and deadlines—is **published on the University's official, publicly accessible doctoral website**:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/>

The operation and development of doctoral training are implemented in line with the principles of the quality management system, following the logic of the PDCA (Plan–Do–Check–Act) cycle. The planning, implementation, monitoring, and continuous improvement of the training process consist of interrelated, documented steps that ensure the academic quality, traceability, and accountability of the training.

The PDCA based approach enables the doctoral training process to develop dynamically in alignment with legal, accreditation, and institutional requirements, while also responding to feedback from doctoral candidates and supervisors.

2. PRINCIPLES AND ESG FRAMEWORK

The training plan is based on the following principles:

- student centred learning and research (ESG 1.3);
- learning outcomes based approach (ESG 1.2);
- transparent, documented processes (ESG 1.1);
- continuous improvement based on PDCA logic (ESG 1.9);
- scientific and ethical integrity.

The training plan is closely linked to the Quality Assurance Plan of the Doctoral School, which details the CHECK–ACT phases.

3. FORMS OF DOCTORAL TRAINING

3.1 STRUCTURED DOCTORAL TRAINING

Structured doctoral training consists of two consecutive and interrelated phases:

I. Training and Research Phase

- structured academic activities;
- implementation of the research plan;
- completion of courses;
- development of teaching and scientific skills.

Comprehensive Examination – Interim Milestone

- theoretical component;

- dissertation component (assessment of research progress).

II. Research and Dissertation Phase

- independent research;
- publication activities;
- preparation and submission of the dissertation.

3.2 INDIVIDUAL DEGREE AWARDING

Individual degree awarding provides the opportunity to obtain a doctoral degree without participation in structured doctoral training, subject to the fulfilment of the conditions laid down in the doctoral regulations.

Within the training plan, individual degree awarding is presented with:

- competence requirements comparable to those of structured doctoral training;
- unified procedural and evaluation frameworks.

3.3 SPECIAL ADMISSION AND TRAINING PATHWAY

Pathway for Exceptionally Talented Students and the MD–PhD Programme:

Exceptionally talented students may be admitted to doctoral training on the basis of Section 40 (6a) of the Act on National Higher Education and Section 47 of Act XIII of 2024.

Accordingly, at Semmelweis University, students enrolled in MSc or undivided programmes who are engaged in scientific student activities and are in the penultimate or final academic year of their undergraduate studies may apply, provided that they demonstrate outstanding academic, scientific, and language performance.

Students participating in the programme also hold doctoral student status. The MD–PhD pathway is a special form of doctoral training, the degree requirements of which are identical

to those of traditional PhD training, with the exception that publication requirements prescribe a higher level of performance.

In the case of MD–PhD students, at least one original scientific publication classified as Q1 according to the MTMT classification must be accepted prior to passing the comprehensive doctoral examination. This requirement may be fulfilled as first author or co author. During the degree awarding procedure, the requirement regarding the cumulative impact factor of publications is set at one and a half times that required in traditional PhD training.

4. THE DOCTORAL TRAINING PROCESS BASED ON PDCA LOGIC

4.1 PLAN – PLANNING (ADMISSION AND TRAINING PLANNING)

Key elements:

- admission requirements and procedures;

Available information: <https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/admission/>

definition of training objectives and learning outcomes;

Available information: <https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/doctoral-divisions/>

- planning of research topics and supervisory capacities;

Available information: <https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/doctoral-divisions/>

The Course Plan and the list of Topics and Supervisors are available among the **Division Documents**.

- preparation of individual research plans.

Competence focus (entry level):

- foundational knowledge in the relevant scientific field;
- basic knowledge of research methodology;
- fundamentals of scientific communication;
- ability for independent learning.

Documented information:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/for-students/>

4.2 DO – IMPLEMENTATION (TRAINING AND RESEARCH)

Key elements:

- completion of courses (minimum of 16 credits);

Documented information on courses and current course offerings:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/courses/>

- conduct of research activities;

publication activity and participation in conferences;

Available information:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/for-students/>

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/documents/>

- regular consultations with the supervisor.

Competence focus (developmental level):

- scientific problem-solving skills;
- application of research methods;
- critical thinking;
- collaboration within a research group.

4.3 CHECK – MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Evaluation points:

- annual progress reports;

Available information:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/dokumentumok/hatarozatok/>

- comprehensive examination;

Available information:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/for-students/english-complex-exam/>

- Publication progress

Available information:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/for-students/thesis-or-dissertation/>

- Supervisor and doctoral division feedback

Competency focus (milestones):

- Integrated theoretical and practical knowledge;
- Research independence;
- Scientific reasoning skills.

4.4 ACT – DEVELOPMENT AND CORRECTIVE ACTION

Development mechanisms:

- Modification of individual study and research pathways;

Available information:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/doctoral-division-regulations/downloadable-forms-for-students/>

- Targeted support measures;

Documented information:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/for-students/>

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/for-students/student-services/>

- Refinement of the course portfolio and training structure;

- Sharing of good practices among doctoral divisions.

5. LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES (EXIT LEVEL)

The exit requirements of the doctoral programme are not limited to the acquisition of scientific knowledge; rather, they aim at the deliberate development of the competencies required for the complex, responsible, and autonomous practice of a research career.

Throughout the programme, the doctoral candidate gradually becomes an independent, active, and credible member of the scientific community—capable of formulating original research questions, seeking methodologically sound answers, critically interpreting research results, and presenting them in a manner that is meaningful and interpretable in an international context.

The awarding of the doctoral degree marks the completion of a learning and development process in which knowledge, skills, attitudes, as well as autonomy and responsibility mutually reinforce one another in shaping the candidate's professional identity. This ensures that the acquired competencies are applicable not only within an academic career but also across a broader range of fields within the knowledge-based society.

Upon obtaining the doctoral degree, the candidate demonstrates the following:

Knowledge

- Possesses advanced, internationally relevant expertise in the given field of study;

Skills

- Is capable of designing and conducting independent research;
- Is able to publish and present scientific results effectively;

Attitudes

- Is committed to scientific integrity and ethical standards;
- Is open to interdisciplinary cooperation;

Autonomy and Responsibility

- Assumes responsibility for their own research-related decisions;
- Is capable of independently leading research projects.

6. APPLICATION AT THE LEVEL OF DOCTORAL DIVISIONS

The doctoral divisions apply the present training plan with discipline-specific content, while maintaining the central principles and processes.

The responsibilities of the doctoral divisions include:

- Development of course curricula;
- Professional supervision and management of research topics;
- Monitoring the academic and research progress of doctoral candidates.

Available information:

<https://semmelweis.hu/phd/en/doctoral-divisions/>

7. LINKAGE TO QUALITY ASSURANCE

The training plan constitutes an integral part of the quality assurance system of the Doctoral School. The training structure and learning outcomes are addressed within the PLAN–DO phases, while evaluations and feedback mechanisms are processed within the CHECK–ACT cycle.

8. SUMMARY

The comprehensive training plan ensures that the doctoral education at Semmelweis University:

- Is transparent, coherent, and development-oriented;
- Complies with the requirements of ESG and the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB);
- Supports the successful academic and research progression of doctoral candidates;
- Establishes a clear and explicit link between education and quality assurance.