

Central European University PhD Program in Cognitive Science

Program Regulations

Adopted by the Doctoral Program Committee

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Probationary period

In their first year, between the date of enrollment and the successful passing of the Comprehensive Examination, students have the status of Probationary PhD Candidates. Probationary PhD Candidates have to reside in Budapest for the duration of the academic year, participate in the life of the department and earn the required number of credits.

First year coursework

Probationary PhD candidates have to attend three types of courses. Core courses and Research courses are mandatory, Elective courses can be selected from the offers of the Department of Cognitive Science, or from other departments with the permission of the doctoral committee.

Probationary PhD candidates have to attend regularly the Departmental Colloquia and the Journal/Research Clubs organized for students. One credit per term is awarded for attendance of each of these.

First year work with supervisor

The Doctoral Program committee assigns an advisor to each student at the start of the first year. Fall term courses have to be selected with the agreement of the advisor. In case of disagreement, the Director of the Doctoral Program decides on the courses to be selected by the student. Students are expected to approach eligible faculty members of the department to discuss potential research topics, and should submit a request to the Doctoral Committee for a preferred supervisor by the end of the Fall term. The Doctoral Committee assigns primary supervisors for each student before the start of the Winter term. The assignment of supervisors is subject to approval by the University Doctoral Committee.

Research Proposal

During the second semester, probationary PhD candidates are required to write a research proposal of approximately 5,000 words with the help of their supervisor. The proposal will form the basis of the research to be performed during the doctoral studies. The proposal includes a

preliminary hypothesis and the research question, description of the methodology or theoretical framework, and a two-year research plan. The proposal is to be defended at the Comprehensive Examination.

Summary of credits to be earned in the first year

Core courses	4 credits (graded)
Research courses	4 credits (graded)
Elective courses	4 credits (graded)
Individual Study	4 credits (graded)
Research proposal	8 credits (graded)
Colloquia / Journal Club	6 credits (Pass/Fail)
Altogether	30 credits

The Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated from the grades received for coursework during the first year. Students with a GPA lower than 3.33 cannot take the Comprehensive Examination, and their student status will be terminated. (Grade-to-point conversion methods are specified in the "Student Rights, Rules, and Academic Regulations" document.)

Comprehensive Examination

Probationary PhD candidates who completed their coursework, submitted their Research Proposal, and have a GPA of 3.33 or higher, can take the Comprehensive Examination. During the examination, students have to present their Research Proposal and defend it in front of the examination committee. The examination committee may allow the resubmission of research proposals that fail at the exam, in which case they must be defended again at a retaken examination within 4 months of the first exam. The Comprehensive Examination can be retaken only once.

Candidacy Period

After students pass the Comprehensive Examination, they have the status of Doctoral Candidates. While receiving the stipend, doctoral candidates shall reside in Budapest and attend the University on a regular basis. Doctoral candidates shall participate in the academic life of the department and attend seminars, programs and lectures. With the prior permission of the Doctoral Committee, a doctoral candidate may spend specified periods during the doctoral candidacy period out of residence in Budapest. The permission can be given for maximum of one year at a time. It is the responsibility of the Candidate to make sure that s/he provides adequate contact information during her/his absence.

Supervisors

The supervisor supervises the work of the candidate according to the directions specified in the university doctoral regulations, and prepares a report about the candidate's progress at the end of each academic year. Supervisors are expected to have regular meetings with, and to provide regular feedback to, their students. If either the supervisor or the student feels that their collaboration does not reach the expected standard, they should turn to the Program Director for guidance.

Candidates may request in writing a change of their supervisor or associate supervisor (substantiating such a request). The Doctoral Committee is required to address the request within 15 days, and forward its decision on any change in the supervisor's status to the University Doctoral Committee for approval. Under special circumstances, the Doctoral Committee can also propose a change in supervisor to the University Doctoral Committee.

In addition to their supervisor, PhD candidates can benefit from supervision from an associate supervisor and an advisor, who are appointed by the doctoral committee.

The Doctoral Committee normally appoints an associate supervisor for each candidate from the faculty members of the Department. The associate supervisor may also be an external expert of the field of research of the student, and may come from other departments of CEU or another university. The associate supervisor can be occasionally consulted on specific questions related to the candidate's work, but cannot be expected to offer full guidance in the way the supervisor is.

Upon request, an advisor can be appointed by the Doctoral Committee for a candidate. The advisor can be anyone who is competent in the research topic of the candidate and who shall take an important role in the supervision of the candidate.

With respect to the doctoral committee, the responsibility for the good supervision of doctoral candidates is to the main supervisor.

Coursework during the candidacy period

Starting from the second year, students are required to submit a chapter of their forthcoming dissertation and a progress report about their research by May 31 each year, until their dissertation is completed. Normally, the dissertation chapter (5,000 to 10,000 words) includes the report of the studies completed within the year. If there are no sufficient findings to include, this chapter can present a set of null results, a theoretical advance, a literature review, etc., which could all be part of the dissertation. Instead of a chapter, a paper submitted, or accepted, for publication is also acceptable. There is no obligation to include this chapter/paper in the eventual dissertation. The progress report should be brief but informative and specific (no more than two pages in length). It should provide an assessment of the progress according to the working plan specified in the research proposal, and adjustments made to the original plan, if

any. It could be supplemented by additional materials documenting the progress. The report should also contain the student's own assessment of what has been achieved, what kind of scientific problems were encountered during the reporting period and what measures have been taken to surmount these. The report and the dissertation chapter are evaluated by the supervisor(s) and accepted by the Doctoral Committee. Supervisors give written feedback both about the submitted chapter and about the progress of the student by the end of the academic year (July 31).

Attendance at the Departmental Colloquia and Journal/Research Clubs is required throughout the academic year. In the second and third year, one credit per term is awarded for attendance of each of these. Doctoral Candidates have to attend Elective courses worth 4 credits in their second and third year. If the required amount of credits is not earned during the 2nd and 3rd year, they should be acquired during subsequent years before the dissertation is submitted.

Summary of credits to be earned in the second and third year

Elective courses	4 credits / year
Colloquia / Journal Club	6 credits / year
Progress Report	18 credits / year
Conference participation	4 credits (for two conferences over two years)
Altogether	60 credits

Duration

Students are required to submit their dissertation within six years from the date of the original enrollment. Any re-submission, if needed, must be done within two years of the original submission.

Withdrawal & re-enrollment

A candidate may request permission from the Doctoral Committee to withdraw from the Doctoral Program for a period of up to 2 years. A candidate granted leave may seek re-enrollment within the 2 years period from the Doctoral Committee. The time spent prior to withdrawal is counted towards the 6-year period within which a dissertation may be submitted.

Extension

Extensions can be granted by the Rector, upon the recommendation of the University Doctoral Committee, before the termination of the enrollment. If a candidate would like to have an extension, they need to submit a request to the University Doctoral Committee; they can also ask the supervisor and the departmental Doctoral Committee to support the request.

Exemptions, appeals

Doctoral students, who seek an exemption from a requirement, can turn with their request to the Doctoral Committee. This can include exemption from the residency requirement; exemption from the monthly contact with the supervisor; a request for extending a deadline for the coursework, and so on. The requests should be made in writing and sent to the head of the Doctoral Committee. The reason for exemption should be indicated in the request, be it medical, personal or other reason.

Appeal against the decisions of the Doctoral Committee can be lodged with the University Doctoral Committee.

Dissertation

The PhD dissertation is an academic work that provides original contribution to the knowledge in areas of Cognitive Science, and is publishable quality by international standards. The dissertation can be an assembly of published papers of related research material.

Length and format

The dissertation is normally 30,000 to 50,000 words long, but shall not exceed 80,000 words (including tables, graphs and footnotes; excluding bibliography) without prior permission of the Doctoral Committee. The submitted dissertation shall include:

- a title page including the authors name, date of submission, supervisor's name;
- a table of contents;
- an abstract of maximum 500 words;
- a signed statement that the dissertation contains no materials accepted for any other degrees in any other institutions;
- a signed statement that the dissertation contains no materials previously written and/or published by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment is made in the form of bibliographical reference, etc.;
- where the work is based on joint research, disclosure of the respective contribution of the authors.

Two hard copies of the dissertation shall be submitted to the departmental coordinator, who forwards these to the Doctoral Committee. After the dissertation has been approved by the Dissertation Committee and the required modifications, if any, have been implemented, an additional hard copy shall be submitted to the CEU library, and an electronic version of the dissertation shall be uploaded to the CEU electronic dissertation database. If the Doctoral Student plans to publish the doctoral dissertation, he/she may request an exemption from the

requirement of uploading the doctoral dissertation to the CEU database. The request shall be submitted to the Doctoral Committee.

Dissertation Committee

Upon the submission of a dissertation, the Doctoral Committee initiates the dissertation procedure within 2 months. The Doctoral Committee selects two examiners for the dissertation who are external to CEU. The Doctoral Candidate whose dissertation is examined shall be invited to name individuals whom he/she does not wish appointed as examiners and shall give precise reasons for such exclusions. If the Doctoral Committee does not take these suggestions into account, the candidate may appeal against the decision to the University Doctoral Committee.

The examiners provide a written report of the dissertation within two months of their appointment. Each examiner is asked to indicate in writing whether the dissertation can be submitted for defense. When writing their report, the examiners are asked to consider whether:

- a) the dissertation makes a significant contribution to the knowledge and to the understanding of the subject with which it deals;
- b) the dissertation demonstrates the candidates' capacity to carry out high-quality independent research;
- c) the dissertation contains material worthy of publication;
- d) knowledge of the state of the art in the specific subject is demonstrated;
- e) the format and quality of the writing is satisfactory.

If both reports are negative (defense of the dissertation is not recommended), the dissertation is regarded as effectively failed. In this case, the Doctoral Committee decides whether the Candidate is permitted to submit a new dissertation within a specified time. At the second failure, the student status of the Candidate is terminated without the possibility of resubmission. If one of the reports is negative, the Doctoral Committee decides whether (1) to allow the student to attempt the defense of the dissertation, (2) to ask the student to re-write and resubmit the dissertation, or (3) to appoint a further external examiner.

The Dissertation Committee includes the two examiners and a faculty member of CEU who chairs the committee. The members of the Dissertation Committee are appointed by the University Doctoral Committee on the basis of the recommendation of the departmental Doctoral Committee. The supervisors of the candidate cannot be members of the Dissertation Committee.

Defense

The defense should take place within three months of the receipt of a sufficient number of positive examiner's reports. The defense is open to the public and is advertised at least a month before it takes place. The Candidate receives the reports of the external examiners in advance. The usual procedure of the defense is as follows:

- The Chair introduces the members of the Dissertation Committee (DC).
- The Candidate presents a summary of the dissertation in a talk of no longer than 45 minutes.
- The Chair of the DC opens the examination by asking members of the DC to raise questions or comments about the dissertation. The examination is not limited in scope: examiners can raise any question, including issues that have not been included in their report. The examination is not limited in time either: members of the DC can ask all questions they deem necessary to come to an informed decision about the quality of the Candidate's work.
- After the examination, members of the audience can ask further questions at the discretion of the Chair.
- The Chair announces that the DC is going to retire for adjudication.
- The Chair of the DC announces the decision of the DC.

The DC has to decide by simple majority vote from the following options:

- a) Candidate be awarded the degree without further modification in the dissertation
- b) Candidate be awarded the degree subject to minor modifications in the dissertation
- c) Candidate not yet be awarded the degree but permitted to re-submit the dissertation in a revised form
- d) Candidate not be awarded the degree.

In case b) is chosen, the Candidate should be provided with a list of required corrections as soon as possible, and the DC decides which member(s) of the DC will check whether the appropriate modifications have been carried out. In this case, no further examination is needed. The deadline for submitting the modified dissertation has to be specified by the DC.

In case c) (possibility to resubmit) is chosen, it is at the discretion of the DC to give further guidance (i.e., other than provided in the examiners' report and during the oral defense) for improvement of the dissertation. If c) is chosen, another examination is organized upon re-submission. Resubmission of the dissertation should take place within 2 years of the first defense.