

PhD in Cognitive Science
Central European University

Program Specification

August 2013
amended December 2016

The program

- was established in 2011,
- is accredited by the New York State Education Department,
- is run by the Department of Cognitive Science,
- governed by a Doctoral Committee led by a Program Director, and
- awards the degree of "PhD in Cognitive Science".

The duration of the program is 36 to 72 months, starting September each year, and it requires students to accrue 90 CEU credits (equivalent to 180 ECTS credits) altogether. The Program Director is the Head of the Doctoral Committee, Professor Gergely Csibra (csibrag@ceu.edu).

Learning Outcomes

The doctoral program trains students to conduct research in some area of cognitive science, including, but not restricted to, the study of social cognitive processes, cognitive development, perception, and learning. To attain the degree of PhD in Cognitive Science, students have to demonstrate their ability to lead an independent research program, which involves

- up-to-date knowledge of research findings in the field,
- conceiving novel research questions,
- finding and employing appropriate research methods,
- mastery of data analysis techniques, and
- writing research reports to peer-reviewed journals.

Dissertation

A doctoral dissertation, which (1) is based on the student's own research, (2) is judged to constitute an original contribution to the knowledge in any area of Cognitive Science, and (3) is successfully defended in front of independent experts of the field, is the primary way to prove eligibility to the doctoral degree. Students attaining this degree

should be able to conduct research at academic institutions, private companies, non-governmental organizations, or in government, on how information and knowledge is acquired, shared, distributed, and utilized by individuals and social groups.

Admission

Applicants to the program are expected to hold an internationally recognized Master's or comparable degree in the disciplines that constitute cognitive science. A comparable degree in social sciences, humanities, or other disciplines will also be considered in case of an excellent academic record. In exceptional cases, students who only hold a Bachelor degree could also be admitted to the program. Admission to the program is decided on the basis of the academic record of the applicant, a written research proposal, and interviews with at least two faculty members.

Structure

In the first year, students attend core, elected, research and individual study courses and prepare their research proposal. Core courses (Topics in Cognitive Science and Statistics for Experimental Research) are mandatory courses, which provide foundations and basic skills for conducting research in the field. Research Courses (Infant Cognition, Joint Action, Visual Cognition, and Decision Making) introduce students to the research conducted by the faculty members. Elective courses address advanced research topics in various fields, and vary across years. The Individual Study Course processes the literature specific to the student's chosen research topic.

By the beginning of the second term of the first year, all students are assigned a supervisor, with whom they develop a detailed research proposal to be defended at the comprehensive exam in the Spring term.

Having successfully defended this proposal, students spend most of their time with working on their research, usually, but not exclusively, in one of the labs or centers of the department. In the second and third year they are required to take further elective courses and present their findings at conferences.

Further information about the program can be found at <http://cognitivescience.ceu.hu>.