

Central European University PhD Program in Cognitive Science

Program Regulations

Adopted by the Doctoral Program Committee

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This document contains the regulations specific to the Cognitive Science PhD program at Central European University. Doctoral students should also consult the University Doctoral Regulations, which contain additional information on Statement of Responsibility, Extensions, Temporary Withdrawal and more. In case of disagreement between the program regulations and university regulations, the university regulations will apply.

The doctoral program is steered by the Doctoral Program Committee (DPC), which is constituted of all resident faculty members of the Department of Cognitive Science and is headed by the Director of the Doctoral Program. At the beginning of each academic year, the doctoral students of the program elect a student representative, who is invited to the meetings of the DPC to represent the views and interests of the students.

1. Requirements of the Program

During their studies, students must obtain 240 ECTS credits through three types of activities:

- Coursework (32 ECTS)
- Academic activities (76 ECTS):
 - attending the departmental colloquium,
 - participating in research clubs and journal clubs,
 - presenting their work at the yearly research progress workshops, and
 - participating in international conferences.
- Research milestones (132 ECTS):
 - research proposal,
 - chapters of the PhD thesis, and
 - defended dissertation.

2. The Structure of the Program

2.1. 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 are expected to reside in Vienna for the duration of the academic year, participate in the life of the department and earn the required number of credits.

2.1.1. 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 DPC. Probationary PhD candidates have to attend regularly the Departmental Colloquia and the Journal/Research Clubs organized for students. 2 ECTS credits per term are awarded for attendance of each of these.

2.1.2. Advisors and supervisors

The Doctoral Program Committee assigns an advisor to each student at the start of the first year. Fall term courses have to be selected in consultation with 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 DPC for a preferred supervisor by the end of the Fall term. The DPC assigns a primary supervisor for each student before the start of the Winter term and an associate (secondary) supervisor by the end of the Winter term. Primary supervisors must be faculty members of the Department of Cognitive Science, while associate supervisors can be appointed from outside the department or the university. The associate supervisors are occasionally consulted on specific questions related to the candidate's work, but cannot be expected to offer full guidance in the way the primary supervisor is. The assignment of supervisors is subject to approval by the University Doctoral Committee (UDC).

2.1.3. Research Proposal

During the Winter term, probationary PhD candidates are required to write a literature review paper on their selected topic (Individual Study course), and then develop a research proposal, which 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 three-year research plan. The proposal should not exceed 6000 words (without references) and should be submitted to the DPC by the last Friday of May. The proposal is to be

defended at the Comprehensive Examination.

2.1.4. Grade Point Average (GPA)

The 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.

2.1.5. 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 Comprehensive Exam Committee, which has the same composition as the DPC. In case of Comprehensive Examination fail, students can retake the exam by submitting a revised research proposal within 4 months. The Comprehensive Examination can be retaken only once. Failing the repeated Comprehensive Examination leads to immediate termination of student status.

2.1.6. Summary of ECTS credits to be earned in the first year

Core courses	8 credits (graded)
Research courses	8 credits (Pass/Fail)
Elective courses	8 credits (graded)
Individual Study	8 credits (graded)
Departmental Colloquia	6 credits (Pass/Fail)
Journal/Research Clubs	6 credits (Pass/Fail)
Research Proposal	16 credits (Pass/Fail) [to be awarded at the Comprehensive Exam]
Altogether	60 credits

2.2. Candidacy Period

Once students have passed the Comprehensive Examination, they have the status of Doctoral Candidates. While receiving the stipend, doctoral candidates are expected to reside in Vienna and spend time at 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 DPC, a doctoral candidate may spend specified periods during the doctoral candidacy period out of residence in Vienna. The permission can be given for a 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.

2.2.1. Supervision

The primary 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 Director of the Doctoral Program for guidance.

Candidates may request in writing a change of their supervisor or associate supervisor from the DPC. The DPC is required to address the request within 15 days, and forward its decision on any change in the supervisor's status to the UDC for approval. Under special circumstances, the DPC can also propose a change in supervisor to the UDC. Upon request, an additional advisor can be appointed by the DPC 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.

2.2.2. Academic work 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. (If the dissertation is submitted before the end of the 4th year, it is accepted as fulfilling this requirement.) Normally, the dissertation chapter (5,000 to 10,000 words) is based on 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 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 should also give a brief outline of what the student intends to accomplish during the following year. The report and the dissertation chapter are evaluated by the supervisor(s) and a second reader selected from the Faculty, and has to be accepted by the DPC. 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). Readers provide written feedback about the submitted material unless it is an already published paper.

Attendance at the Departmental Colloquia and Journal/Research Clubs is required throughout all three terms of the academic year and two ECTS credits per term are awarded for attendance of each. The candidates are also requested to participate in the yearly departmental research progress workshop. During this workshop, they present their latest studies and results to an audience made of all the members of the department. They earn four ECTS for each participation. The candidates are expected to participate in at least two international conferences during these years and earn 4 ECTS for each. Finally, the candidates are required to act as Teaching Assistant for at least one course. They earn 8 ECTS for their TA-ship.

If the required amount of credits is not earned during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year, they should be acquired during subsequent years before the dissertation is submitted.

2.2.3. Summary of ECTS credits to be earned in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year

Departmental Colloquia	6 credits per year
Journal/Research Clubs	6 credits per year
Research Progress Workshop	4 credits per year
Progress Report and Dissertation Chapter	24 credits per year
Conference Presentation	8 credits
Teaching Assistantship	8 credits
Dissertation	44 credits
Altogether	180 credits

3. The Duration of the Program

The standard duration of the program is four years. Students are expected to submit their dissertation by the end of this period.

3.1. Extension beyond the 4th year

Up to one year of extension beyond the 4th year may be granted by the DPC. Requests for such an extension must be submitted at least 2 months before the student's enrollment is terminated and the request must be supported by the primary supervisor.

3.2. Extension beyond the 5th year

Students may request an extension beyond the 5th year from the UDC with the support of the supervisor and the DPC.

3.3. Withdrawal & re-enrollment

Doctoral Candidates may request permission to withdraw from the Doctoral Program. Such a permission may be granted by the DPC if the period is shorter than 6 months. Withdrawals for longer than 6 months have to be approved by the UDC.

3.3. Exemptions, appeals

Doctoral students, who seek an exemption from a requirement, can turn with their request to the DPC. 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 Director of the Doctoral Program. Appeal against the decisions of the DPC can be lodged with the UDC.

4. Dissertation and Defense

The PhD dissertation is an academic work that provides original contribution to the knowledge in areas of Cognitive Science, and is of publishable quality by international standards. The dissertation can be an assembly of published papers of related research material with an introduction and general discussion providing a frame around the publications.

4.1. 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 Program Committee. The submitted dissertation shall include:

- a title page including the authors name, date of submission, supervisors' names;
- 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;
- standardized Creative Commons copyright statement that facilitates publishing to an Open Access repository.

The dissertation shall be submitted to the departmental coordinator, who forwards it to the DPC. 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 electronic dissertation database of CEU. 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 DPC.

4.2. Dissertation Committee

Upon the submission of a dissertation, the DPC initiates the dissertation procedure within 2 months. The UDC appoints the Dissertation Committee (DC) upon the recommendation of the DPC. The DC includes two examiners, who are external to CEU, and a member of the DPC, who chairs the DC. The supervisors of the candidate cannot be members of the DC.

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 candidate's 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; and
- e) the format and quality of the writing is satisfactory.

If neither report recommends forwarding the dissertation to public defense, the dissertation is regarded as effectively failed. In this case, the DPC 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 DPC 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.

4.3. Defense

The defense should take place within three months of the receipt of a sufficient number of positive examiners' 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 DC Chair introduces the members of the 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 select their decision 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 option 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 option 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. In this case, another examination is organized upon re-submission with a new Dissertation Committee. Resubmission of the dissertation should take place within 2 years of the first defense, and further resubmissions are not allowed.

Option D) excludes the possibility of resubmission.