

**THE CONTENT AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMPLEX EXAM CONDUCTED IN THE DOCTORAL  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, ELTE**

**PREAMBLE**

The content and proceedings of the Complex Exam conducted in the Doctoral School of Education, ELTE is based on the following:

- (1) Paragraph 72 (5) of Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, (annex 1);
- (2) Government decree No. 387/2012 (XII.19) on Doctoral Schools, doctoral proceedings and habilitation), in force since 1 November 2016;
- (3) the provision of Hungarian Doctoral Council on the general principles and rules of complex exams (annex 3)
- (4) Doctoral Rules in annex 6 of the Student Regulation, 2nd volume of the Organisational and Operational Rules of ELTE; and
- (5) its annex6/4: Doctoral Rules of the Faculty of Education and Psychology.

**THE AIM OF THE COMPLEX EXAM**

The aim of the complex exam is to assess the theoretical preparedness and the scientific progress of the candidate.

**PROCEDURE AND LANGUAGE OF TAKING THE COMPLEX EXAM**

The exam is public, conducted in front of a Committee in Hungarian or English language.

**THE EXAM COMMITTEE**

The Council of the Doctoral School (CDS) decides – based on the recommendation of the given programme –on the composition of the committee, approved by the Doctoral Council of the Faculty of Education and Psychology. The committee shall consist of at least three members and at least a third of the members is not employed by ELTE. The committee chair is a university professor or a Professor Emeritus or a lecturer, researcher or a habil. associate professor. All members of the committee have scientific degrees. The two opponents of the candidate's (previously submitted and evaluated) research plan cannot be members of the committee, although their presence is recommended. The candidate's supervisor cannot be a member of the committee, but can be present. An alternate shall be nominated.

The Committee receives the following documents at least a week prior to the exam:

- if the exam is based on a list of theses, two set of topics selected by the examinee for the theoretical part and the connected literature;
- the examinee's research plan;
- evaluations of the research plan

**THE REVIEWERS OF THE RESEARCH PLAN**

The research plan is evaluated by - besides the supervisor - two reviewers asked by the head of the research methodology module, following negotiations with the head of the doctoral programmes, one of whom is not employed by ELTE, if possible.

## THE AIM AND MAIN CRITERIA OF THE EVALUATION OF THE RESEARCH PLAN

The aim of the evaluation is to ensure that the researches of the Doctoral School are of high quality both from a theoretical and a research methodological point of view and competitive with international research. In addition, the aim is to prevent methodological problems that might question its rationale or results. Accordingly, the reviewers prepare a written assessment based on the criteria below.

- general impression (the research plan is clear/unambiguous, it is feasible, etc),
- the relevance of the research topic (gaps in the research are clearly presented, there are novelties in it),
- the aim of research (the research aim is clearly and precisely articulated, is focused, etc.)
- theoretical background (definition of core notions, all areas relevant for the topic and aims of the research are represented, the research topic is well justified),
- research questions (they are in accordance with the aims of research, concise and exact),
- the methodological background of research (the chosen research paradigm and methods are in line with the research aims, the research is presented in enough detail; reliability, validity and repeatability are ensured, etc.),
- the composition of the research plan (scientific requirements are followed, it is structured logically, etc.),
- referencing system (it follows the requirements of the Doctoral School and the doctoral programme concerned),
- the language of the research plan,
- feasibility in time,
- summary, that clearly sets out the outcome of the evaluation: accepted without modifications/accepted with minor modifications/major modifications are required/not accepted by the Doctoral School.

More information on the research plan can be found in the document „the Process of Preparation and Approval of the Research Plan).

Special rules of doctoral procedure apply for candidates of earlier PhD programmes or other doctoral schools (see university and faculty Doctoral Regulations and the Operational Rules of the Doctoral School).

## PARTS OF THE COMPLEX EXAM

The complex exam has two parts (theoretical part and dissertation part) and is of one hour duration. The prerequisite of the Complex Exam is the positive evaluation of the majority of the evaluators of the research plan. (The below timeline is just a suggestion, other timing is also possible).

### *1. Theoretical part* (appr. 30 minutes)

In the first part the committee measures the theoretical knowledge of the examinee. The examinee takes the **oral exam** in **two subjects**. The two subjects (one theoretical and one research-methodological) are determined by the CDS. These two subject areas cannot be identical with the research topic of the candidate (this is evaluated in the second part of the exam) and might be based on a list of theses (in this case a short time for preparation is

recommended). The list of topics is provided by the CDS. Besides the general requirements in the individual programmes specific requirements might be stipulated. Heads of programmes inform the CDS and the PhD students about programme-specific requirements half year prior to the exam period.

## **2. *Dissertation part*** (appr. 30 minutes)

In the second part of the complex exam the examinee presents the progress made and his/her competences in his/her research area (eg. competence in making a scientific presentation, ability to plan reliable and authentic research), on the basis of the research plan submitted (and evaluated) previously.

First the candidate presents his/her research plan (the topic, the relevance and novelty of the research from the perspective of national and international scientific results, the theoretical/literature background, research questions, hypotheses, methodology, expected outcomes and the timing of the preparation and publication) in a presentation (approximately 10 minutes, in the form of ppt or handout), and then answers the questions and critical remarks raised in the evaluation. The candidate might use his/her notes for the answers. The members of the Committee and the evaluators can make further questions or comments when deemed necessary, connected to the research or to the answers of the examinee, which again have to be answered by the examinee. As a final step the evaluators announce the acceptance or refusal of the answers.

### **THE EVALUATION OF THE COMPLEX EXAM**

The Committee evaluates the theoretical and dissertation parts of the exam separately (on a scale from 1 to 5). The examinee receives separate grades for the theoretical and research-methodological part and the dissertation part; all-in-all maximum 15 points can be obtained. Should any of the grades be 1, the whole exam is deemed invalid. The final grade should be transferred into a two-scale qualification (passed or failed), so if the percentage of the scores is 60% or above, it qualifies as passed (between 3-8: failed, between 9-15 passed). A protocol is made during the Complex Exam, containing a written assessment of the exam. The written assessments of the research plan are also attached to the protocol.

The result of the exam shall be published on the day of the oral exam. The complex exam is successful if the majority of the Committee members deem it successful. If the theoretical part is unsuccessful, the examinee can repeat the exam from the topic(s) not accomplished once more during the given exam period. If the dissertation part is unsuccessful, it cannot be repeated in the given exam period. The complex exam cannot be repeated more than once.

Although the supervisor is not a member of the Committee, he/she should be provided the opportunity to give a prior written assessment or evaluate the examinee during the exam.

## ANNEXES

**Annex 1.:** Paragraph 72 (5) of Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education, (annex 1);

(5)<sup>1</sup> The Hungarian Doctoral Council is a body composed of the heads of the doctoral councils of higher education institutions and shall adopt an opinion on issues concerning the doctoral programmes, the doctoral procedure and – in consultation with the National Association of Doctoral Students – shall determine the principles of organising the complex exam. The Hungarian Doctoral Council determines the principles of distribution of student numbers for state scholarship among higher education institutions based on quality and performance.

### **Annex 2: Government decree No. 387/2012 (XII.19) on Doctoral Schools, doctoral proceedings and habilitation**

12/A. §15 (1) The organisation of the Complex Exam – in accordance with Paragraph 72 (5) of Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education – should be based on the principles determined by the Hungarian Doctoral Council. The requirements of the complex exam – in accordance with the regulations of the Operational Rules of the doctoral school – should be published when the doctoral programme is announced.

(2) The exam is public, conducted in front of a Committee. The committee shall consist of at least three members. and at least a third of the members is not employed by ELTE, except in case of the doctoral schools of theology. The committee chair is a university professor or a Professor Emeritus or a lecturer, researcher of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The candidate's supervisor cannot be a member of the committee.

(3) The complex exam has two parts: a) the theoretical part, during which the examinee proves his/her expertise in the relevant scientific/artistic literature and about his/her theoretical and methodological knowledge and b) the dissertation part, in which he/she presents the progress made in the given scientific/artistic domain.

(4) The candidate might repeat an unsuccessful complex exam once, in the same exam period.

(5) A protocol shall be made of the complex exam. The result of the exam shall be announce on the day of the last exam part. The evaluation is done in a pass/fail grading system.

### **Annex 3.: Document approved on the session of 12 February 2016 of the Hungarian Doctoral Council and modified on its session of 15 April 2016**

#### General principles and rules of the complex exam

The prerequisite of the complex exam is to obtain at least 90 credits during the first four semesters of the PhD and the minimum course credits specified in the academic plan of the doctoral school. In the case of individual PhD students, who have not yet been enrolled in the doctoral school, their doctoral candidate status is created by the act of registering to the complex exam and its acceptance.

The complex exam must be passed publicly, in front of a committee. The committee shall consist of at least three members. and at least a third of the members is not employed by the institute where the doctoral school operates. The committee chair is a university professor or a Professor Emeritus or a lecturer, researcher of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences All

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<sup>1</sup> Declared in: Act CCVI of 2015, §29. In force since: 1 November 2016.

members of the committee have scientific degrees. The candidate's supervisor cannot be a member of the committee.

In the theoretical part of the complex exam the examinee will prepare from two subject areas; the list of themes/topics are to be found in the academic plan of the doctoral school. A written component can be part of the theoretical exam. In the second part of the complex exam the examinee makes a presentation on the reviewed literature, the research plan and the timing of the preparation of the dissertation and the publications. The supervisor shall have the opportunity to evaluate the examinee in writing, prior to the exam and/or during the exam.

The exam committee shall evaluate the theoretical and dissertation part of the exam separately. A protocol shall be made containing written evaluation of the exam. The result of the exam shall be announced on the day of the oral exam. The complex exam is successful if the majority of the exam committee deem both exam parts successful. If the theoretical part is unsuccessful, the examinee can repeat the exam from the topic(s) not accomplished once more during the given exam period. If the dissertation part is unsuccessful, it cannot be repeated in the given exam period.

The possibility of an evaluation by a scale of 1-5 or verbal assessment (summa cum laude, cum laude, rite, failed) is laid down in the doctoral rules and regulations of the Faculty. The evaluation of the complex exam or part of it might be part of the evaluation of the doctoral degree.

Special rules for the participants of DLA programmes are to be laid down in the doctoral regulation of the institutions concerned.