

## **Quality Assurance Plan for the Doctoral School of Theology**

### **Preamble**

The quality assurance plan of the Doctoral School of Theology fits within the unified institutional and regulatory framework of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary. The university's Organizational and Operational Regulations (OOR) establish the university-level decision-making, oversight, and quality assurance structures that ensure the institutional integration of the doctoral program, as well as the powers of the Senate and the University Doctoral and Habilitation Council.

The theoretical and strategic framework for quality assurance is defined by the university's Quality Policy and Quality Development Strategy, which—in accordance with the ESG 2015 standards—views quality assurance not merely as a monitoring mechanism, but as a continuous improvement process. The strategy considers an approach based on the plan-do-check-act cycle to be the guiding principle, a framework that is well-suited to the unique, research-oriented nature of doctoral education.

The university's Quality Assurance Regulation explicitly states that the quality of doctoral education—in accordance with the university's quality assurance principles – is ensured by the university's Doctoral Regulation and the doctoral schools' own quality assurance procedures (the Rules of Operation of the Doctoral School of Theology; and this Quality Assurance Plan) (see Article 1 (3) of the Rules of Operation). Based on this authorization, this document defines the specific workflows, chain of responsibility, and feedback mechanisms for quality assurance in doctoral education and the degree conferral process, tailored to the operations of the Doctoral School of Theology.

The purpose of this quality assurance plan is not to replicate university-level regulations, but rather to elaborate on them in a way that is specific to the doctoral school and closely aligned with its operations, in order to ensure the quality of the educational and research processes organized throughout the students' academic journey.

### **I. The Purpose and Organizational Framework of Quality Assurance**

The quality assurance system of the Doctoral School of Theology is based on the fundamental principle that the quality of doctoral education and the awarding of doctoral degrees cannot be assessed solely by output indicators, but must be understood as the sum of the professional, academic, and pedagogical considerations that apply throughout the entire educational process. The goal of quality assurance is therefore to ensure that decisions made at every stage of doctoral education are transparent, verifiable, and professionally justified.

The Theological Doctoral and Habilitation Council (TDHC) is the institutional body responsible for quality assurance; it monitors and evaluates the doctoral school's educational and degree-granting activities in accordance with current university and doctoral regulations. At the operational level of quality assurance, the Doctoral Quality Assurance Committee, as well as the committees operating at various stages of the doctoral program and the thesis supervisors, play a key role.

The separation and cooperation of levels of responsibility ensure that quality assurance is not based on the assessment of a single party, but is carried out under multi-level professional oversight, in accordance with the organizational and jurisdictional provisions of the university's Quality Assurance Regulation (Article 2 of the Quality Assurance Regulation).

## **II. A Process-Oriented Approach to Quality Assurance**

The quality assurance plan of the Doctoral School of Theology is based on work processes related to the main stages of the student's academic journey. Every key stage—from the admissions process to the awarding of the degree—is associated with a specific regulatory framework, timeline, form of monitoring, and area of responsibility.

In this sense, quality assurance is not an ex post check, but rather a process integrated into the operation of the doctoral program. The evaluation and decision points assigned to the workflows make it possible to continuously monitor student progress and to make any necessary adjustments in a timely manner.

## **III. Evaluation, Feedback, and Correction**

A central element of the quality assurance system is continuous evaluation and feedback. The tools used for evaluation include, in particular, reports from thesis advisors, committee opinions and recommendations, documentation of doctoral students' research and publication activities, and reviews prepared during the doctoral procedures.

If a student's progress or a particular work process deviates from expectations, the quality assurance system applies corrective measures. The purpose of these corrections is not to impose sanctions, but to ensure realistic conditions for earning a degree while maintaining academic standards. The possible forms of corrective action are defined in the doctoral regulations and the doctoral school's internal procedures, in accordance with the principles set forth in the University's Quality Assurance Regulation.

## **IV. Compliance with the ESG 2015 Principles**

The quality assurance system of the Doctoral School of Theology complies with the ESG 2015 standards, particularly in the following areas:

ESG 1.1 – Quality Assurance Policy:

The doctoral school's quality assurance plan aligns with the University's public quality policy and quality improvement strategy and represents its implementation, adapted to the doctoral level.

ESG 1.3 – Student-centred learning and research:

The doctoral program is based on the primacy of individual research paths, while ensuring regular professional feedback and the ability to monitor research progress.

ESG 1.9 – Continuous Monitoring and Improvement:

The TDHC's annual evaluation activities, along with the Doctoral Quality Assurance Committee's role in making recommendations and providing feedback, ensure the systematic analysis of experiences in doctoral education and the development of the quality assurance system.

ESG 1.10 – Engagement with external and internal stakeholders:

In quality assurance processes, the participants in doctoral programs—thesis supervisors, committees, and students—play distinct yet complementary roles, in line with the vertical structure of the university's quality assurance system.

## V. Quality Assurance Process Map of the Doctoral School of Theology

The phase of students' academic journey	Workflow relevant from a quality assurance perspective	The workflow's key implementation elements	Legal and Procedural Framework	Due date	Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism (←)	Responsible and Participating Organizational Units
<b>1. before admission</b>	1. choice of topic	topic announcement	TDHC decision ODT	January February	TDHC review DQC review ← rejection of irrelevant topic announcements, return them for revision	r: TDHC p: DQC
		training program	training plan		annual review← training program amendment	r: TDHC
	2. Fulfilment of admission requirements	publication	Rules of Operation of the DST 16-19. §		admission procedure ← Request for additional information; recommendation for further publication prior to submission	r: TDHC p: appointed thesis supervisor; admission evaluation subcommittee ; administrator
		preparing a research plan	Rules of Operation of the DST 16-19. §		admission procedure ← Return of the research plan for revision	r: admission committee
	3. application	application	Rules of Operation 16-19. §		admission procedure ← Request to correct deficiencies	r: admission committee; p: administrator
	4. choosing a thesis supervisor	choosing thesis supervisors	Rules of Operation of the DST 8.§ (3); 10.§	February –June	admission procedure / TDHC's annual meeting ← change of thesis supervisor or appointment of a co-thesis supervisor	r: TDHC p: thesis supervisor

<b>2. admission</b>	1. admission procedure	organizing the procedure	Rules of Operation of the DST 14. § (3)	April– May	DQC supervision ← appeal process; admissions	f: HDHT k: DMB; administrator
---------------------	------------------------	--------------------------	---	------------	--	-------------------------------------

The phase of students' academic journey	<i>Workflow relevant from a quality assurance perspective</i>	<i>The workflow's key implementation elements</i>	<i>Legal and Procedural Framework</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism (←)</i>	<i>Responsible and Participating Organizational Units</i>
					amendment to the procedure	
		ranking of applicants	Rules of Operation of the DST 16-17. §	June	evaluation DQC's review ← Proposal to amend the rules of the admissions procedure	r: admission committee p: DQC

The phase of students' academic journey	<i>Workflow relevant from a quality assurance perspective</i>	<i>The workflow's key implementation elements</i>	<i>Legal and Procedural Framework</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism (←)</i>	<i>Responsible and Participating Organizational Units</i>
<b>3. training phase</b>	1. student administration	enrolment / registration	Rules of Operation of the DST 21. §	September/ February	student satisfaction survey and← DQC report	r: head of the doctoral school p: administrator or DQC
		student information			student satisfaction survey and← DQC report	r head of the doctoral school p: administrator or DQC
		work program	Rules of Operation of the DST 10. § (4); 21. § (4)	September/ February	student semester report ← Feedback from the thesis supervisor and the head of the subprogram; proposal for modification	r: thesis supervisor DQC TDHC
		course registration	Rules of Operation of the DST 22. §	September/ February		r: student p: thesis supervisor; administrator

2. training	lecture / seminar / tutorial classes	Rules of Operation of the DST 22-23. §; Rules of Operation of the DST 27. § (2)	September – December/ February– May	Performance evaluation: student feedback (OMHV information on (student feedback on the performance of the teaching / informal)	f: lecturer; head of subprogram; head of the doctoral school
-------------	--------------------------------------	---	-------------------------------------	--	--

The phase of students' academic journey	Workflow relevant from a quality assurance perspective	The workflow's key implementation elements	Legal and Procedural Framework	Due date	Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism (←)	Responsible and Participating Organizational Units
					semester reports of students and heads of subprogram ←DQC's proposals for any necessary changes	
		education		September – December/ February– May	student feedback (OMHV / informal) semester evaluation of head of subprograms ←DQC proposals for any necessary changes	r: lecturer head of subprogram k: DQC
		publications	Rules of Operation of the DST 28§		Semester-end reports, portfolios	thesis supervisor; examination board
	3. complex exam	defining topics	Rules of Operation of the DST 3§ (1) m; 8§ (3) 49§ (1) Rules of Operation of the DST Appendix 2	January	Annual TDHC review	r: TDHC
	appointment of the examination committee	Rules of Operation of the DST 3§ (1) d;	May		r: TDHC k: head of the doctoral school	

			30§ (4)			
		application		April	thesis supervisor's evaluation	thesis supervisor
		exam	Rules of Operation of the DST 30§	June	exam DQC evaluation ← retake exam	examination committee DQC
<b>4. degree award procedure / research phase</b>	1. chapter discussion	chapter discussion	Rules of Operation of the DST 31. §	May		r: thesis supervisor; p: administrator

The phase of students' academic journey	<i>Workflow relevant from a quality assurance perspective</i>	<i>The workflow's key implementation elements</i>	<i>Legal and Procedural Framework</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism (←)</i>	<i>Responsible and Participating Organizational Units</i>
		discussion	Rules of Operation of the DST 31. §	August	3 reviews  DQC's evaluation	evaluation committee DQC
	2. language skills		Rules of Operation of the DST 33.§	up to degree acquisition		TDHC; administrator
	3. doctoral dissertation	preparation	Rules of Operation of the DST 34-35§		see workshop discussion / public debate	student / thesis supervisor
		proof of independent scientific work	Rules of Operation of the DST 32.§		publication list in the Hungarian Scientific Bibliography	
		dissertation	Rules of Operation of the DST 34-35. § 41.§		review publication DQC evaluation	evaluation committee, public DQC
	4. workshop discussion	application	Rules of Operation of the DST 36.§		evaluation of the thesis supervisor	thesis supervisor
		organising the discussion	Rules of Operation of the DST 36.§		assessment of whether the conditions are met, inviting reviewers,	r: head of the doctoral school p: head of the

						subprogram
		discussion	Rules of Operation of the DST 36. §		2 pre-review DQC evaluation ← repeated workshop discussion	r: head of the doctoral school p: evaluation committee DQC
5. public debate		submission of a dissertation	Rules of Operation of the DST 37-38. §	min. 30 days after the workshop discussion	assessing the existence of conditions	r: head of the doctoral school
		inviting reviewers	Rules of Operation of the DST 39. §		← the candidate may file an objection.	r: head of the doctoral school
		receipt of reviews	Rules of Operation of the DST 39. § (4)	within 60 days		r: head of the doctoral school
		response to the review	Rules of Operation of the DST 40. § (1)	15 days before the debate		r: head of the doctoral school
		debate	Rules of Operation of the DST 41-42. §		evaluation of the dissertation	r: head of the doctoral school, evaluative committee,
		degree award	Rules of Operation of the DST 43. §			f: HDHT

The phase of students' academic journey	<i>Workflow relevant from a quality assurance perspective</i>	<i>The workflow's key implementation elements</i>	<i>Legal and Procedural Framework</i>	<i>Due date</i>	<i>Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism (←)</i>	<i>Responsible and Participating Organizational Units</i>
<b>5. doctoral conferral</b>	1. issuance of the diploma	issuance	Rules of Operation of the DST 44. §	within 30 days from the award of the degree		r: head of the doctoral school

	2. ceremonial handover	handover	Rules of Operation of the DST 45. §			r: head of the doctoral school
<b>6. carrier tracking</b>	1. Membership in the Collegium of Doctors	application		following the presentation of the diploma		r: Ph.D graduate

Budapest, 2026.02.12.

Prof. Dr. Gergely Hanula (sgd)  
 university professor,  
 chair of the Doctoral Quality  
 Assurance Committee