



UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED
DEPARTMENT OF
CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Doctoral Program
in Contemporary and Comparative History
(The post-1914 period)

Guide

For Doctoral Students and Applicants to the Program

July 30, 2021

1. The Outline and Rationale of the Doctoral Program

Research on contemporary history – by which we mean the post-1914 period, in accordance with Central European historiographical traditions – is a unique, and fully institutionalized sphere of Hungarian and international history. Besides scholars, the public has also shown great interest in twentieth-century history, and this interest has only grown as time has passed. There are a variety of yet to be clarified, but heavily debated periods and problems related to twentieth-century history in Hungary – issues that are important for social cohesion, the development of national identity, and even the successful integration of Hungarian society into the broader European environment, which need more modern, professional attention.

Over the past three decades, research into the twentieth century in Hungary has gone through great changes which have been favourable to its development. While there have been some negative phenomena – such as political attempts to intervene in research – the overall direction of these changes has been positive: access to sources on modern history has expanded, research has become more professional, and important international trends have been adapted in historical narratives.

Writing on contemporary international history has long been dominated by political history, but recently this has become less and less the case. Accordingly, contemporary history, though it does have its own methodology, is defined chronologically in this doctoral school rather than as a methodological or thematic direction. The program accepts doctoral students researching the period from the First World War to our days, or rather with individual periods within this longer period, and not merely in political history, but in social and economic history, as well as the history of ideas and other fields.

In addition to the research into contemporary history, the program focuses on historical comparison and, accordingly, we encourage doctoral students to use comparative methodologies. Comparison is an important tool of contemporary history writing. It enables researchers to examine numerous issues in less ethnocentric ways. The use of comparisons strengthens theoretical underpinnings, and balances approaches that would otherwise be of an overly descriptive nature. Additionally, comparisons can play a great role in the correction of ideological descriptions, which are a particular fault of contemporary history narrative. Experience shows that comparative research demands as well as advances international collaboration. This has a positive effect on the quality of historical studies in Hungary as well.

Accordingly, the program encourages applications from doctoral students who, after discussion with their supervisor, wish to deal with twentieth-century Hungarian and world history from a variety of perspectives and methodologies. We also welcome research proposals from more experienced candidates who want to improve their professional skills through individualized effort leading to a higher degree. The program offers students broad theoretical and methodological preparation, while allowing space

for individual research through a personal selection of courses. In addition to colleagues from Szeged, other Hungarian and international experts offer courses and supervision in our program.

Educational goals

The aim of the program is to enable students to acquire reliable knowledge of twentieth-century Hungarian and universal history, as well as of the historical processes of previous periods. Students will become acquainted with the most recent trends and results of Hungarian and international history writing, especially in connection with the East-Central European region and their chosen topic. They will master the most important historical research methods, including the comparative method. Another objective is to help students develop skills they can use in research and in other areas of their lives: critical thinking, and a mastery of methods to establish correlations and to examine and explain historical and social phenomena. Moreover, when they leave the program, students should be well-versed in presentation techniques, able to read and use literature in foreign languages, to participate in scholarly debates, and to master other forms of professional communication. Our students will be prepared for effective source criticism and for the qualitative as well as quantitative analysis. They will be expected to produce high-quality academic texts. By the end of their research they will be capable of planning and realising comprehensive research projects, designing course syllabi and teaching at the university level. Finally, they should be aware that history plays a central role in social life – that it can serve humanistic goals, but that the past can be distorted, too, and that history can be abused for political or other purposes.

Studies

Training in the Doctoral Program in Contemporary and Comparative History takes four years, and is comprised of two parts (2+2 years). In the first two years, doctoral students complete courses which, on par with the conventional system of leading research universities internationally, are designed to help them achieve the above mentioned, comprehensive objectives. Also, in the first year students finalize their research topics. In the second year, doctoral students are expected to produce concrete research results. At the end of the second year, students take a complex exam, the requirements of which will be discussed below. If they pass the complex exam, students enter the second two-year part of the program. In this period students have no formal classroom requirements, but primarily do research and work on their dissertations.

2. The structure and requirements of the doctoral training

Admission to the Doctoral Program

Admission to the Doctoral Program in Contemporary and Comparative History can be gained by applying for and passing the entrance exam of the Doctoral School of History at the University of Szeged. For the details, see the webpage of the Doctoral School (<http://hist.bibl.u-szeged.hu>). We strongly suggest that the candidate choose a supervisor from the list of the Doctoral Program's instructors before the entrance exam, and personally seek out the head of the Doctoral Program. This will enable instructors to become acquainted with candidates, and give them some advice on how to prepare a research plan that can enhance their chances of admission. Tips on how to write the research plan can be found on the webpage of the Department of Contemporary History. Those who are interested in the Program should contact the secretary first.

The administration of the Doctoral Program

Administrative issues of the Doctoral Program are managed by its secretary. Information on how to contact the secretary can be found on the webpage of the Doctoral School, and the secretary's office hours are posted on the Institute of History's noticeboard. Regarding any issues related to their studies or the operation of the Program, students in the Doctoral Program should contact the Registrar's Office, the office of the Institute of History, and finally their supervisors, and if these inquiries did not yield any results, then they should seek out the program's secretary. The Program's director and the director of the Doctoral School are not competent in student affairs, and should be contacted only as a last resort. Their contact details can be found on the webpage of the Doctoral School.

The requirements of obtaining a doctoral degree

In order to obtain a doctoral degree, three major requirements must be met, which are the following:

- a) passing the complex exam at the end of the second year;
- b) earning an adequate number of credits, getting the leaving certificate (absolutorium);
- c) the defence of the dissertation.

The program syllabus for doctoral training can be found on the webpage of the Doctoral School.

Supervision

Every doctoral student needs to have a supervisor, who can be chosen from the list of colleagues approved by the Doctoral School. The supervisor is regularly an instructor of the Institute of History at the University of Szeged, but in some cases, he or she can be an external supervisor. Furthermore, co-supervision can also be arranged. It is very

important that the doctoral student and the supervisor should be able to cooperate smoothly in order to successfully continue the candidate's studies and to write the dissertation. The supervisor is pre-eminently the expert who follows the academic work of the student and helps the student pose his/her research questions as well as design his or her research plan. The supervisor also informs the student about the requirements of the exams and other assignments related to the candidate's studies. Additionally, the supervisor introduces the student to academic work and to the scientific community. Therefore, it is important that the doctoral student should regularly consult with his or her supervisor. Also, the student should be aware that the supervisor may request regular reports on the progress of the candidate's research.

Obligations of doctoral students

Beyond study requirements, doctoral students must consult with their supervisors on a regular basis and participate in the educational and other professional work of the Department of Contemporary History. An example of participating in the work of the program is attendance at dissertation defences organised by the Doctoral Program. The experience gained on these occasions can help students in their own attempts to obtain a doctoral degree.

Achievement registration form

Students' work and performance are recorded in an achievement registration form, which is distributed to the students by the secretary of the Program.

Annual reports

Every academic year, doctoral students write a report on the work they have accomplished thus far (between 6000 and 12,000 characters including spaces) which (signed by the supervisor) they submit to the head of the Doctoral Program by May 31.

Regulations of the University of Szeged and the Doctoral School of History

Students attending the Doctoral Program must comply with the relevant regulations of the University of Szeged and the Doctoral School of History during their studies.

3. The complex exam

At the end of the second year of studies, doctoral students take a complex exam. On this occasion, students have to prove that they are in possession of the comprehensive skills and knowledge necessary for pursuing their profession as a historian. They must also demonstrate that their research has progressed in accordance with their status, in a

manner that will enable them to submit their dissertations in the fourth year of their studies or later.

Research report

Students must send a summary of their research topic and the progress of their research to the secretary of the Doctoral Program in an electronic format one month before the complex exam (40,000–50,000 characters) by May 31. The text must be written in accordance with the formal requirements set down in this guide's section on the *thesis booklet*.

Historiography chapter

Students must submit a literature review (between 30–40,000 characters) to the secretary of the Doctoral Program in an electronic format by May 31. This can be a chapter of their dissertation in progress, which must be structured individually after having consulted with the supervisor.

The course of the complex exam

The exam committee consists of two internal members and one external examiner. The exam is oral, but the chair of the committee may request that certain parts of the exam be taken in writing. A bibliography and a list of topics compiled by the Doctoral Program help prepare for the exam. The bibliography can be obtained from the secretary of the Program after January 31, every year. The student should study all the items on the reading list to prepare for the exam.

The exam consists of the following major parts:

1. Questions are posed on the basis of the list of topics and readings; the examinee ought to independently and comprehensively present his/her knowledge pertaining to the topic, touching upon the most important relevant research trends, and methodological aspects of research as well;
2. As the subsidiary subject of the complex exam, further questions (generally requiring shorter answers) are asked on the basis of the list of topics and readings prepared in advance by the Doctoral Program;
3. A 10-minute presentation by the student on the current stage of his/her research, the dissertation, further research plans, tasks related to his/her dissertation, and then the questions of the committee.
4. The student is expected to present a progress report on his or her research, and to respond to the committee's questions related to this report.
5. Finally, questions are posed in relation to the historiography chapter submitted earlier.

4. The procedure of submitting and defending the PhD dissertation

Overview

1. The supervisor approves the manuscript of the dissertation, which is then submitted to the secretary of the Doctoral Program in both printed and electronic forms.
2. The supervisor sends his/her approval of submission in an email to the head of the Doctoral Program.
3. The Doctoral Program surveys the dissertation (~ 1 month), and makes suggestions on how to improve the manuscript.
4. After the student corrects the manuscript based on the program's suggestions, he or she re-submits it in three printed copies and in an electronic form.
5. Opponents for the home defence are selected and are sent copies of the dissertation (opponents have two months to write their evaluations).
6. The candidate prepares responses to the evaluations.
7. The candidate updates his or her MTMT2 page.
8. Home defence.
9. The candidate reworks the dissertation in line with the opponents' suggestions (at least two months).
10. The candidate seeks out the colleague in charge of the administration of doctoral issues at the Dean's Office, who helps interpret current regulations and explains in detail the tasks related to submitting the dissertation. Those students who started their studies after 2016 must fill in an application form. The person who earns the degree must submit copies of documents (required as supplements by the application form) to the doctoral administrator, but only the copies of those documents whose data are not available in the Neptun system.
11. Submitting the printed dissertation, application form and other, necessary documents to the Dean's Office; uploading the dissertation, the thesis booklet and the abstract into the University of Szeged's Repository of Dissertations (to be uploaded by the student; the date of uploading is important as this is the official date of submitting the dissertation).
12. Deciding on the opponents and the other committee members of the public defence as well as the time of the defence (they have to be accepted by both the Council of the Doctoral School and the Disciplinary Doctoral Council; moreover, it has to be taken into account that these councils meet only once monthly or bimonthly in a semester).
13. The opponents compile their evaluations (max. 2 months), which are then answered by the candidate in writing.
14. Public defence (on this in detail, see: the Rules of Functioning of the Doctoral School of History, University of Szeged).

The whole procedure takes 8–9 months altogether. In the 2+2(+1)-year program, the dissertation must be submitted in the fifth year at the latest, but the defence procedure needs not end then.

The conditions of the dissertation's admission to the public defence

- It is a precondition of the public defence that the candidate's MTMT2 profile and records should be up-to-date.
- The public defence is preceded by a **home defence**. The home defence must precede the public defence **by at least 2 months**. The dissertation, written in accordance with the formal and content-related requirements and prepared for the home defence, should be submitted in one spiral-bound copy as well as in PDF format to the secretary of the doctoral school.
- The candidate is not obliged to send a reply to the opponents' evaluations in advance in the case of the home defence, but he/she has to submit it in a written form for the defence minutes.
- At the home defence, the candidate must summarize his/her dissertation in a 10-minute presentation.
- The foreign-language abstract and the thesis booklet need not be completed by the time of the home defence.

Regulations of the university and the faculty pertaining to the PhD dissertation

Compulsory elements of the contents of the dissertation

- setting out the aims
- introduction of new scientific results
- literature review
- review of research methods

Requirements in terms of structure

- second title page: author, title, name of the supervisor, place and time of publication, name of the doctoral school
- signed declaration on plagiarism
- table of contents
- summary in English or in another foreign language specified and approved by the program
- bibliography
- appendix (e.g.: collection of photographs, documents, etc.)

Length

- The dissertation must be within the **range of minimum nine and maximum twelve author's sheets** (1 sheet = 40,000 characters, spaces and notes included). Supplements

are not included in the length. In the case of source publications, the total length depends on the nature of the source.

- The length of the thesis booklet: 0.5–1 sheet. The thesis booklet must be printed on two-sides in an A/5 format, and it must be bound as a booklet.

Number of copies

- PhD dissertation: the candidate must submit **1 leather-bound and 1 spiral-bound** copies of the dissertation which have to be printed single-sided.
- Thesis booklet: **one copy** of the thesis booklet in Hungarian printed double-sided. The candidate must attach his/her list of publication in two sections (1. publications related to the topic of the dissertation, 2. other publications) at the end of the thesis booklet.
- Abstract: **one** abstract in a foreign language that does not exceed 2000 characters (attached in a separate file, because it must be uploaded in the Repository to an individual upload slot).

Printed copies of the dissertation must be submitted to the doctoral administrator (Dean's Office) personally or as a post mail by the candidate. If more than one members of the candidate's 5-member defence committee requested a printed and a spiralled copy of the dissertation, then the doctoral administrator promptly informs the candidate, and in this case, the candidate must send the required number of printed copies to him/her by return of mail.

Preparations for the public defence

- The candidate must submit his/her dissertation, his/her thesis booklet, the foreign language abstract, and the copies of the language exam certificates (but for a prior submission of these certificates, e.g. when initiating the procedure of obtaining the doctoral degree) in an electronic form (via e-mail or on a pen drive) in Word and PDF format, as well as in print. The **list of the candidate's publications relevant to the topic of the dissertation** must be submitted to the Dean's Office in an electronic form in PDF format. If the list is not part of the thesis booklet, then it must also be printed in five copies. If it is part of the booklet, then no separate printed version is needed.
- The candidate must also submit a **brief professional CV** (written in third person singular, within the maximum range of an A/4 sheet), which will be read aloud by the secretary of the defence committee at the beginning of the public defence of the dissertation. All materials must be submitted to the administrator of the Dean's Office.
- The candidate must pay the fee for the procedure in advance. The candidate can gain information on the mode of paying it, the amount of the fee and the deadline of the liability to pay from the Dean's Office.
- The candidate must submit his/her response to the opponents' evaluation in a written form to the administrator of the Dean's Office **at least two weeks** before the public defence takes place (it is sufficient to send the response in e-mail, but the candidate ought to bring a printed and signed version of the response to the defence).

- The candidate must summarise the main points and results of his/her dissertation in a presentation illustrated with PPT slides (maximum **20 minutes**).
- The time and venue of the public defence is organised and coordinated by the secretary of the Doctoral Program, but the reception afterwards (if there is any) is to be organised by the candidate **independently** (room ought to be booked, catering must be organised, possibly with the help of the colleagues of the Office of the Institute of History).

This guide was compiled on the basis of the university regulations valid as of January 2020. Following any future changes in the regulations is the responsibility of the candidate.

For further details on obtaining the degree (language exams, publications) and the scheme of the home and the public defence, see the current university and faculty regulations at: https://doktori.hu/index.php?menuid=191&di_ID=137&lang=EN

The Procedure and Style Guide for the Doctoral Program in Contemporary and Comparative History

1. Formal requirements

- **the manuscript submitted for home defence has to comply with all formal requirements**
- the dissertation must be printed on one side only of each page
- normal margins (2.5 cm everywhere), gutter from the left (2.8 cm)
- main text: 12 pts, Times New Roman letter type, 1.5 space between the lines, lines justified
- footnotes: 10 pts, Times New Roman letter type, simple space between lines, lines justified
- page numbers must be indicated at the bottom of the page, centred in the middle, in Times New Roman letter type
- in the case of tables, graphs, maps and figures, the numbered title should be placed above the table etc., while the indication of the sources below the table etc.
- **footnotes** are to be used (not endnotes)
- a detailed bibliographical description should appear in the footnotes (first mention) and in the bibliography, too
- both source and literature citations must be provided in an abbreviated form in the notes when mentioned for the second time
- if used: make a list of pictures, illustrations, and abbreviations
- the bibliography has to be compartmentalised (separated as: archival sources, published sources, literature), but the literature section should not be divided further (e.g., do not divide monographs from articles)
- the required length of the dissertation does not include the bibliography

2. Citation style sheet

Footnote style

The footnotes in the dissertation must be written in accordance with the formal requirements set down in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

3. Requirements in terms of structure

The contents of the thesis booklet

1. Introduction – the aim of the research, the novelty of the topic
2. A short survey of the historiographical context
3. A theoretical and methodological background
4. Sources
5. Results, summary, further directions of research
6. Publications and conference presentations relevant to the topic of the dissertation

The structure of the dissertation

1. Table of contents
2. Introduction (hypotheses, setting out the aims, justification of the research question – the latter two may follow the section on historiography)
3. Historiographical context (previous research)
4. Theoretical and methodological background
5. Sources (Chapter 4 and 5 are interchangeable, or can be integrated into one chapter)
6. Discussion (main part): analysis
7. Results, summary
8. Bibliography
9. Appendix

Supplements

Supplement 1. Title page of the thesis booklet

Supplement 2. First title page of the dissertation (black leather binding)

Supplement 3. Second title page of the dissertation

Supplement 1

University of Szeged
Doctoral School of History
Doctoral Program in Contemporary and Comparative History (font size 12 pts)

Thesis booklet of the Doctoral (PhD) dissertation (14 pts)

Title (20 pts)

Name (20 pts)

Szeged (14 pts)
2021

Supplement 2

University of Szeged
Doctoral (PhD) dissertation (20 pts)

Title (24 pts)

Name (24 pts)

Szeged (20 pts)
2021

Supplement 3

University of Szeged
Doctoral School of History
Doctoral Program in Contemporary and Comparative History (12 pts)

Title (20 pts)

Doctoral (PhD) dissertation (14 pts)

Author: (14 pts)

Name (20 pts)

Supervisor: Name (14 pts)

Szeged (14 pts)
2021