



Internal Evaluation Report

envisaging the accreditation of doctoral studies in theology

at the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca

2025

Cluj-Napoca

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I. General information

This internal evaluation report has been prepared according to [the external](#) evaluation guide for doctoral fields of study (2025), following the standards and performance indicators in the Visit Sheet (External Evaluation Report), respectively [Annex 1](#) of the mentioned Guide.



1. General description of the higher education institution and the institution organising doctoral studies (IOSUD)

The Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca (hereinafter: PTI), located at [13 Avram Iancu Square in Cluj-Napoca](#), is a higher education institution established by four Protestant churches (5 Church Districts) in Romania for the purpose of training ministers for the Reformed Church District of Transylvania, the Reformed Church District of Piatra Craiului, the Hungarian Unitarian Church, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Romania (Hungarian speaking), and the Evangelical-Lutheran Church C.A. (German speaking). The PTI was established by the above-mentioned Founding Churches by the Decision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs No. 42.898 of **November 13, 1948**. The theological institute confers the law “university degree”, mentioning that “the duration of studies for the bachelor’s degree will be 4 years, and *for the doctorate it will be another three years*” (see [Anexa_001](#) – Art. 16 b), a brief history of the institution see below [this link](#)).

[The current academic portfolio](#) of the Institute includes, at the bachelor’s level, a program of Protestant Pastoral Theology (240 ECTS), and at the master’s level, a program of Applied Protestant Pastoral Theology (120 ECTS). Both programs hold full ARACIS accreditation, confirming alignment with national and European standards. Benefiting from the recognition of the pre-1989 academic continuity, PTI has completely and successfully completed all the stages of (re)legitimation imposed by the transition of the Romanian university system.

Rating Type	Year of accreditation	Result
Institutional	1996	recognition of accreditation (institution in operation before 22 December 1989)
institutional + bachelor's degree	2009	Accredited
masters	2011	Accredited
International evaluation (EULA)	2014	Accredited
institutional + bachelor's degree	2016	accredited ("trusted")
masters	2020	Accredited
institutional + bachelor's degree	2021	accredited ("highly trusted") - online
masters	2025	accredited - online

(For a brief history of the main administrative transitions, useful in contextualising the current situation, see [Anexa_002](#).)

In particular, the period 2020-2024 represented a stage of strategic institutional consolidation, in which PTI went through the following preparatory steps: academic consolidation with institutional (re)accreditation and bachelor's and master's degree programs, modernisation of infrastructure (investments of 15 million lei), as well as human resource development (empowerment of 4 new professors as potential doctoral supervisors), intensifying the publication activity, promoting scientific activity among talented students (in the period 2020-2024, 42 student publications appeared, and special programs were organised for talented students, potential doctoral candidates – for details see the data in the report below).

PTI consulted with the Founding Churches, which ensured the institution of their full support regarding the relaunch of doctoral studies. Surveys were conducted among graduates, which show a clear interest in pursuing doctoral studies. The teachers involved in the preparation of the opportunity report also used Erasmus mobilities to collect data on good practices from higher education institutions abroad on the organisation of doctoral programs. The results of the training were condensed in an *Opportunity Report* regarding the relaunching/reestablishment of the Institution for Doctoral Studies (IOSUD) with a Doctoral School in the field of theology (see [Anexa_003](#)).

Finally, in the meeting of February 14, 2025, the Senate of the Protestant Theological Institute adopted the Decision no. 3-1/14.02.2025 on the approval of the Opportunity Report for the establishment of Institution for Doctoral Studies (IOSUD), the establishment of the Council of the Institution for Doctoral Studies (CSUD) and the creation of the Doctoral School of Theology and Religious Studies, mandating the institutional management to start the ARACIS authorisation procedures ([Annex_004](#)).

According to the Senate's decision, the composition of the CSUD is as follows (all members having the right to supervise doctorates):

Name and surname	Specialisation	1 2	The institution where the supervisor obtained his doctorate Institution of habilitation / doctoral supervision rights
Prof. BALOGH Csaba	Biblical Theology	1 2	Netherlands, Theological University Kampen (2009) Hungary, University of Reformed Theology Debrecen (2024)
prof. univ. dr. KISS Jenő	Practical Theology	1 2	Netherlands, Utrecht University (2003) Hungary, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest (2016)
prof. univ. dr. KOLUMBÁN Vilmos József	Church History	1 2	Hungary, University of Reformed Theology Debrecen (2005) Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca – Faculty of Reformed Theology and Music (2023)
prof. univ. dr. KOVÁCS Sándor	Church History	1 2	Hungary, University of Szeged (2002) Hungary, University of Reformed Theology Debrecen (2022)
prof. univ. dr. VISKY Sándor Béla	Systematic Theology	1 1 2	Hungary, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest (2004) Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj Napoca - Faculty of History and Philosophy (2014) Hungary, University of Reformed Theology Debrecen (2017)

After the accreditation and official launch of IOSUD and the doctoral school (hopefully 2026), the composition of the Council of the Institution for Doctoral Studies (CSUD) will be completed with two representatives of doctoral students. Student members will be selected from among the admitted candidates, in accordance with the provisions of the IOSUD Regulation on student representation.

The provisory leadership (until the accreditation procedure is completed) of CSUD is ensured by the Director Prof. Dr. Csaba Balogh, appointed following the secret ballot expressed by the sitting members of the CSUD, and approved by the PTI Senate ([Anexa_004](#)).

The process of re-establishing the doctoral program follows Law no. 199/2023 on higher education, Order no. 3020/2024 (Framework Regulation on Doctoral Studies), the ARACIS Standards for the field of Humanities and Theology, respectively the CNATDCU Minimum Standards for PhD supervisors, as well as other related national and institutional legislative documents.

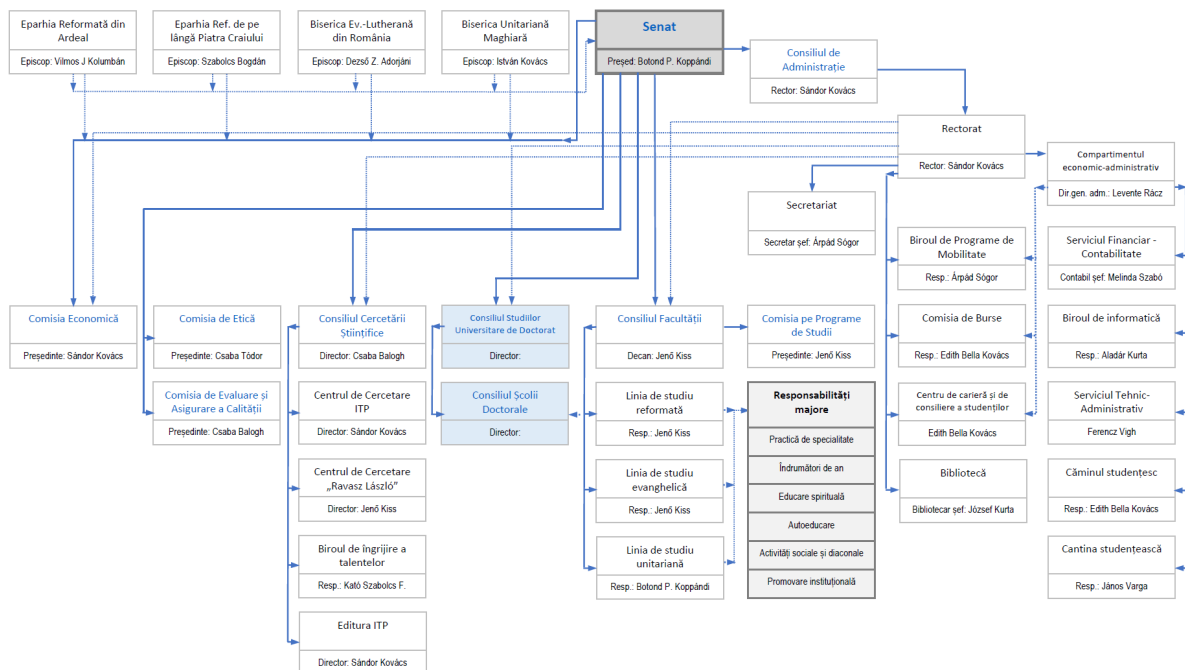
2. General description of the organisational component for the field of doctoral studies

The Protestant Theological Institute (PTI) is a small higher education institution, an aspect also highlighted by the data summarised in the table below:

Type of institution according to the law	confessional-private
Number of faculties	1 (Faculty of Theology)
Existing study cycles in PTI	bachelor (BA) masters (MA)
Total number of enrolled students (2024/2025)	Bachelor's degree: 66 Master's degree: 50
Number of study programs offered	Bachelor's degree: 1 (Protestant pastoral theology) Master's degree: 1 (Applied Protestant pastoral theology)
Number of ECTS	Bachelor's degree: 240 Master's degree: 120
Number of full-time teachers (2024/2025)	15
Language of Instruction in BA and MA Study Programs	Hungarian

The re-established doctoral school will be part of the PTI-IOSUD structure and will operate within the Faculty of Theology – the only faculty within the institution – according to the organisational chart presented in the **Anexa 005**.

Organigrama Institutului Teologic Protestant – 2025 / 2026



The Protestant Theological Institute is headed by *the Senate*, the supreme decision-making body of the institution, in which the bishops are also present, as representatives of the founding and supporting churches. The executive management is ensured by the *rector*, as the legal

representative of PTI, including IOSUD-PTI, supported by a *vice-rector*. The Faculty of Theology (the only faculty in PTI) is represented by the *dean*, assisted in turn by a *vice-dean*.

In accordance with the strategic analysis presented and the available institutional capital, the Protestant Theological Institute proposes the operationalisation of the doctoral field in theology by establishing *the Doctoral School of Theology and Religious Studies* (in English: Doctoral School of Theology and Religious Studies, in Hungarian: Teológia és Vallástudományok Doktori Iskola, in German: Doktoratsschule für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft, in French: École Doctorale de Théologie et Sciences Religieuses). The deliberate choice for a title that transcends explicit confessional delimitation – although the institution fully retains its Protestant identity – is based on strategic academic considerations:

(1) Academic openness: The proposed name projects an epistemological neutrality that, without compromising the confessional identity of the institution, signals the readiness for cross-confessional academic dialogue. This approach facilitates the attraction of researchers interested in comparative studies, religious phenomenology or interdisciplinary approaches, thus expanding the circle of potential doctoral students beyond strictly denominational limits.

(2) Alignment with European academic standards: The formula “Theology and Religious Studies” (Theologie und Religionswissenschaft / Théologie et sciences religieuses) represents the *de facto* standard in the European academic space, reflecting the dual vocation of the field: theological rigor and scientific analysis of the religious phenomenon. The adoption of this paradigm positions the doctoral school in the international academic network with an immediately recognisable identity.

(3) Amplified interdisciplinary potential: A comprehensive designation catalyses transdisciplinary collaborations with departments of history, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, psychology, philosophy, philology, or cultural studies. This openness facilitates access to interdisciplinary research funds, the development of international collaborative projects, integration into diverse academic consortia, attracting co-tutors from related fields.

The proposed name therefore represents an academic positioning strategy, not an identity dilution. The Protestant identity constitutes the ontological substratum of the doctoral school, articulated on two complementary dimensions:

(a) At the epistemological level, it manifests itself through adherence to the fundamental values of the Protestant academic tradition: philological rigor in relation to primary sources, critical examination of textual authority, and academic freedom in the exploration of truth – principles that have defined Protestant scholarship since *sola scriptura* and *ad fontes*.

(b) At the structural level, this identity is embodied in the curricular architecture, the priority research vectors and the intellectual profile of the doctoral supervisors, trained in the tradition of Protestant theology.

The Council of the Doctoral School (CSD) consists of 3 doctoral supervisors and one doctoral student (after accreditation and admission).

Name and surname	Specialisation	1. The institution where the supervisor obtained his doctorate 2. Habilitation/Doctoral Supervision Institution
prof. univ. dr. KISS Jenő	Practical Theology	1. The Netherlands, Utrecht University (2003) 2. Hungary, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest (2016)
prof. univ. dr. KOVÁCS Sándor	Church History	1. Hungary, University of Szeged (2002) 2. Hungary, Debrecen University of Reformed Theology (2022)
prof. univ. dr. VISKY Sándor Béla	Systematic Theology	1. Hungary, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest (2004) 2. Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj Napoca - Faculty of History and Philosophy (2014) 3. Hungary, Debrecen University of Reformed Theology (2017)

The director of the doctoral school, elected by secret ballot of the doctoral supervisors of the doctoral school is Prof. Dr. Jenő Kiss ([Anexa 004](#)).

3. General description of the field of doctoral studies

3.1. Opportunity to (re)launch the doctoral studies program

Capitalising on a long academic tradition and the trust confirmed by the evaluations of experts in higher education, the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca proposes the (re)establishment/(re)launch of doctoral studies in the field of theology, in order to meet the need for advanced training of specialists in theology and religious studies in general, with a focus on Protestant theology. This proposal is based on an *Opportunity Report*, prepared by PTI and approved by the Senate on February 14, 2025 (see [Anexa 003](#)). According to this report:

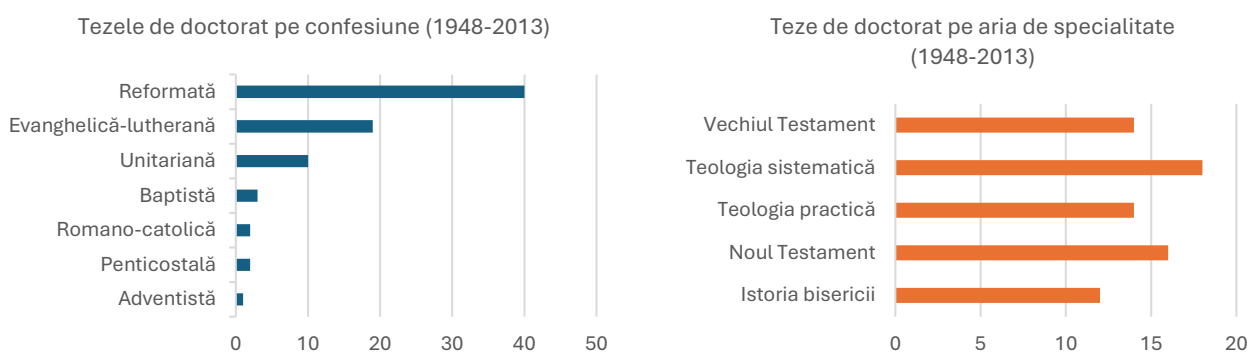
The Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca builds its proposal to establish the program for doctoral studies on an academic tradition of over 75 years in higher education and 130 years of academic theological presence in the current location. The institutional convergence, derived from the merger of four educational institutions with major theological traditions (Reformed theology, Hungarian Evangelical-Lutheran theology, German Evangelical-Lutheran theology, Unitarian theology), imposed by the communist government at the time (1948), created a unique academic space, characterised by confessional diversity, inter-Protestant dialogue and theological richness, positioning the Institute as an ideal platform for comparative and interdisciplinary doctoral studies. PTI has an institutional capacity strengthened through those 75 years of uninterrupted operation, has qualified human resources and has adequate infrastructure, adapted to the contemporary requirements of theological research.

A distinctive aspect of the Protestant Theological Institute is its ability to transcend traditional confessional boundaries. Although founded in 1948 on the four historical Protestant traditions, PTI has become a centre for the entire Protestant spectrum in Romania. In recent decades, the Institute has attracted students and collaborators from Protestant churches of more recent

tradition (neo-Protestants): the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Christian Baptist Church, the Pentecostal Church ([Anexa 006](#)).

In addition to the cross-confessional and flexible aspect, a competitive advantage of the Protestant Theological Institute is its ability to offer study programs in the Hungarian language. This openness creates additional opportunities both in relation to other Hungarian-speaking churches in Romania (Roman Catholics) and to the Hungarian-speaking community throughout the Carpathian Basin (Hungary, Slovakia, Serbia, Ukraine), positioning PTI as an important regional academic centre.

An essential element that supports the current proposal is the *doctoral experience* of the Institute. Between 1948 and 2013, PTI functioned with its own doctoral school, having, according to institutional statistics, more than 100 doctoral students enrolled, and 78 graduates (see [Anexa 006](#)), forming generations of doctors of theology who today occupy leading positions in the academic and ecclesial environment in Romania and abroad.



In 2013, in the context of the national reform of doctoral studies and the new accreditation standards, the doctoral school ceased its activity. The reorganisation period from 2013 onwards was *constructively capitalised* to strengthen the institutional foundations, such as: institutional reaccreditation and study programs, empowerment of teachers, modernisation of research infrastructure, promotion of scientific research and publication among teaching staff and students, implementation of support programs for talented students, development of international partnerships, preparation of re-establishment of doctoral studies.

Last but not least, the establishment of the field of doctoral studies at PTI represents the institutional response to a *need identified and supported over time by external evaluators*. During the institutional evaluation and the master's programs accreditation visits, ARACIS experts have repeatedly recommended the development of the third cycle (PhD) of university studies, considering that the institution has the academic potential and infrastructure necessary for the organisation of doctoral studies. This consistent recommendation reflects the external recognition of the academic maturity achieved by PTI and its ability to contribute to the formation of researchers in the field of theology.

3.2. Mission of the doctoral program

The mission of the doctoral program is to train a new generation of researchers and academic leaders in religious studies in general and Protestant theology in particular, capable of contributing to the scientific development of the field, ensuring continuity in the academic process of PTI, serving ecclesial communities and facilitating intercultural and interreligious dialogue in contemporary society.

3.3. Priority research directions

- Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics (Old and New Testaments)
- Systematic Theology and Ethics
- Practical and Applied Theology
- Protestant history and heritage

See the main subdomains (main research topics) on <https://proteo.cj.edu.ro/ro/academia/programe/doctorat>.

II. Elaboration of the internal evaluation report

By the Rector's Decision no. 74/17.02.2025, issued on the basis of the Senate Decision no. 3-1/14.02.2025, the commission for the elaboration of the Internal Evaluation Report for the field of doctoral studies in Theology was constituted, with the following composition:

- Prof. Csaba Balogh – responsible for general coordination (specifically areas A4, B1, B2, B5, B7, and C3 program structure, performance and compliance indicators);
- Prof. Sándor Kovács (especially Area A – Institutional Capacity, Human Resources and Development);
- prof. dr. Kiss Jenő (especially fields B1, B3, B4 – educational effectiveness).

The work of the drafting team was supplemented by the support of PTI's Chief Secretary, Árpád Sógor (data centralisation, administrative documentation) and the General Director, Levente Zoltán Rácz (financial analysis and sustainability).

The team operated through regular meetings for coordination and validation, through online consultations, exchange of information via email, and consultations with teachers and church representatives. The organisation of the process generally followed the calendar with the following main stages:

- 24-02-2025 – After the adoption of the *Opportunity Report* by the PTI Senate in February, an initiation and planning phase followed in which individual responsibilities were established, a draft work calendar was developed, with the identification of the necessary documents and steps to be taken.
- 10-03-2025 – Presentation of the ARACIS methodology, analysis of specific guidelines and performance indicators, internal communication to the academic community. Preparation of the initial version of the Regulation for the organisation and conduct of doctoral studies.

- 03-04-2025 – Debate and adoption of the IOSUD-Regulation in the Senate.
- 14-04-2025 – Preparation of the Doctoral School Regulations. Preparation of drafts of procedures on admission, thesis defense, plagiarism checking. Validation of CVs and lists of publications of potential PhD coordinators, confirmation of availability for guidance.
- 28-04-2025 – Presentation of scientific results analysis, publication statistics 2020-2024. Commission begins work on specific procedures and forms regarding the following and evaluation of doctoral studies' activities.
- 19-05-2025 – Debate in the evaluation report preparation committee on the procedures regarding admission, thesis defense.
- 02-06-2025 – Debate on the Methodology for the elaboration of the doctoral thesis, presentation of the draft version of the Regulation of the Doctoral School. Discussions about infrastructure developments (creation of additional spaces for doctoral students, financial evaluation).
- 25-06-2025 – Adoption of the Methodology for the elaboration of the doctoral thesis and of the Regulation of the Doctoral School in the Senate. The centralisation of data begins in order to develop a preliminary version of the Internal Evaluation Report.
- 08-07-2025 – Consultation with church representatives, including on the progress on the preparation of the accreditation of the doctoral school, validation of the strategic vision, confirmation of institutional commitments, financial and logistical support (joint meeting at Ilieni).
- 13-08-2025 – Debate on the first version of the Internal Evaluation Report.
- 25-08-2025 – Internal review and harmonisation debate, completion of annexes.
- 08-09-2025 – Presentation of the report to the Board of Directors.
- 09-09-2025 – Presentation of the report in the CSUD.
- 11-09-2025 – Presentation of the report in the Senate and final approval.

The process of developing the documentation for the doctoral field went through a complex operational period, overlapping temporally with the ARACIS evaluation visit for the re-accreditation of PTI's master's program (April 2025). This overlap has generated an exceptional institutional demand, imposing an intensified pace of work on the management team and academic staff and an increased capacity to manage priorities simultaneously.

Despite this operational pressure, the Protestant Theological Institute has demonstrated organisational resilience, successfully completing the first preparatory stage for the authorisation of the doctoral field, thus confirming the institution's ability to efficiently manage complex accreditation processes in parallel.

III. Degree of compliance with the ARACIS standards and performance indicators

1. DOMAIN A. Institutional capacity

3.1.1. Criterion A.1. Managerial and administrative institutional structures and processes, involving students and other stakeholders

S.A.1.1. Organisational components and institutional processes

Organisational components. The Protestant Theological Institute constituted, by Senate Decision no. 3-1/14.02.2025 ([Anexa 004](#)), an integrated organisational structure for the administration of the field of doctoral studies in theology, and ensuring an effective management system, hierarchically configured as follows:

(1) Strategic level – The Institution for Doctoral Studies (IOSUD-PTI) represents the general institutional framework, having the following governance structure:

1. PTI Senate – supreme decision-making body for strategic decisions on the doctorate, approval of regulations and methodologies, validation of budgets and resources.
2. Rector – legal representative of IOSUD for the implementation of Senate decisions, signing of contracts and partnerships, general supervision.
3. Vice-Rector – operational coordinator, CSUD director, coordination of the self-evaluation process, implementation monitoring, reporting to management.

(2) Tactical level – Council for Doctoral Studies

The Council for Doctoral Studies (CSUD) is the operational management body established by Senate Decision no. 3-1/14.02.2025:

Composition	Member	Main duties
Director CSUD	Prof. dr. BALOGH Csaba	Strategic coordination, representation
PhD supervisor	Prof. dr. BALOGH Csaba	Evaluation, quality, procedures, digitalisation
PhD supervisor	Prof. dr. KISS Jenő	Curriculum, research
PhD supervisor	Prof. dr. KOLUMBÁN Vilmos J.	Resources, infrastructure
PhD supervisor	Prof. dr. KOVÁCS Sándor	Academic policies, partnerships
PhD supervisor	Prof. dr. VISKY S. Béla	Organisation of scientific events
PhD student 1	(to be elected in 2026)	Student representation
PhD student 1	(to be elected in 2026)	Student representation

(3) Operational level – Doctoral School

The Doctoral School of Theology and Religious Studies is a direct operational unit:

1. Director of the Doctoral School: Prof. Dr. Jenő Kiss
2. 2 PhD supervisors: Prof. Dr. Sándor Kovács, Prof. Dr. S. Béla Visky

3. 1 student representative (to be elected in 2026)
4. Secretary: Administration and Support

Management system. PTI has developed an appropriate normative corpus for the administration of doctoral studies and related processes, structured on three levels:

(1) Fundamental regulations:

- Institutional Regulation for the organisation and functioning of doctoral studies (IO-SUD-Regulation) – ([Anexa 007 A.1.1](#));
- Regulations for the organisation and functioning of the Doctoral School of Theology and Religious Studies ([Anexa 008 A.1.1](#)).

(2) Specific methodologies:

- Methodology for admission to doctoral studies ([Anexa 009 A.1.1](#));
- Methodology for evaluating the academic progress of doctoral students ([Anexa 010 A.1.1](#));
- Methodology and standards for the elaboration and evaluation of the doctoral thesis ([Anexa 011 A.1.1](#)).

(3) Operational procedures ([Anexa 012 A.1.1](#)):

- Procedure for initiation of new field/doctoral program (PO-CSUD-101);
- Procedure for curriculum review (PO-CSUD-102);
- Procedure for performance evaluation for doctoral supervisors (PO-CSUD-201);
- Procedure for admission for doctoral studies (PO-CSUD-301);
- Procedure for monitoring the progress of doctoral students (PO-CSUD-302);
- Procedure for solving appeals regarding the evaluation of doctoral students (PO-CSUD-303);
- Procedure for the analysis of similarities for doctoral theses (PO-CSUD-304);
- Procedure for initiating the public defense of the doctoral thesis (PO-CSUD-305);
- Procedure for annual internal audit (PO-CSUD-501);
- Procedure for international benchmarking (PO-CSUD-502);
- Procedure for monitoring quality indicators (PO-CSUD-503).

IOSUD has also developed *the model forms* related to the operational procedures (see the annexes to [Anexa 012 A.1.1](#)) which will be implemented in electronic format in the doctoral studies management platform.

Strategic development plan. The management cycle applied within the development of doctoral studies includes, in addition to the established structures, the regulations and operating procedures and a strategic development plan for the years 2026-2030 ([Anexa 013 A.1.1](#)).

Integrated information system. The digitisation of institutional processes stands as a key strength of PTI, supported by a well-established digital ecosystem that efficiently manages both educational and administrative activities:

- the Neptun online platform has been used since 2007 in the educational process for the administration of studies in general (contracting subjects, examination, grades – the Neptun system is adopted by about 90% of the universities in Hungary);
- *Google Workspace for Education* is used as the collaboration and communication platform for subjects (GoogleClassroom, GoogleMeet, etc.);
- *Repo* (<https://repo.proteo.hu>) is the platform that serves as an institutional repository for archiving theses and publications (since 2013);
- the online platform *Mob* (<https://mob.proteo.hu>) is used to manage academic mobility, including subject assessments (since 2014);
- the online platform *Studium* (<https://studium.proteo.hu>) is used for the academic management, especially of the activities in the university practice (grades, attendance, evaluations, internships) (since 2017);
- *Sistemantiplagiat.ro* is the similitude-checker, recognised by the competent authorities in Romania, used to verify the originality of academic works;
- *Office* (<https://office.proteo.hu>) is the online portal for the administration of administrative processes (institutional structures, administration of meetings, minutes, regulations, registry, etc.) (since 2014);
- The *eCorvina portal* (<https://ecorvina.proteo.hu>) is the platform for managing the book fund in the PTI library (electronic catalogue).

The strategic plan includes the development of a distinct platform and a website dedicated to IOSUD.

S.A.1.2. Stakeholder engagement

PTI has carried out a systematic analysis of the views of stakeholders relevant to the doctoral program.

Thus, the governing bodies of the founding churches *were consulted* on the opportunity of relaunching and financing doctoral studies. 5 strategic meetings were organised in the period 2020-2025, which also addressed the topic of relaunching the doctoral program ([2020](#), [2021](#), [2023](#), [2024](#), 2025).

Surveys *were conducted among graduates* in relation to their interests for doctoral studies ([2019](#), [2024](#)). In the latest 2024 graduate survey, more than 21% of respondents expressed their intention to pursue doctoral studies.

The teachers involved in the preparation of the opportunity report also used Erasmus mobilities to collect data on good practice from higher education institutions on the organisation of doctoral programs.

The *decision-making bodies* (Senate, Board of Directors, Faculty Council) were consulted on the organisation and conduct of the planned doctoral study program.

The Protestant Theological Institute demonstrates compliance with the standards and indicators of Criterion A.1 by developing a complete and functional organisational structure for doctoral studies, by implementing an integrated management system with clear processes, by the existence of a comprehensive normative framework, by involving stakeholders in all decision-making processes.

3.1.2. Criterion A.2. Material base and optimisation of its use

S.A.2.1. Material Base



The Protestant Theological Institute has immovable and movable property suitable for the organization of doctoral studies in Theology.

The main building. The Protestant Theological Institute operates in the historical monument building located in 13 Avram Iancu

Square, Cluj-Napoca, with a total area of 5,007 m², used on the basis of a bailment contract concluded with the Reformed Church District of Transylvania (owner), valid for an indefinite period for the entire period of operation of the institution ([Anexa 014 A.2.1](#)).

Classrooms and seminars. PTI has the following spaces for organising courses and seminars (see [Anexa 015 A.2.1](#)).

Name of space	Surface	Capacity	Facilities
Aula Magna	230.98 m ²	150 seats	Video projector, sound system
„Bethlen Gábor” Room	111.94 m ²	60 seats	Video projector, sound system
„Apafi Mihály” Hall	252.5 m ²	100 seats	Video projector, screen, sound system
Course room 1	40.59 m ²	15 seats	Video projector, sound system
Course room 2	41.17 m ²	15 seats	Video projector, sound system
Course room 3	41.17 m ²	15 seats	Video projector, sound system
Course room 4	40.91 m ²	15 seats	Projector
Course room 5	78.59 m ²	30 seats	Projector
Course room 6	86.32 m ²	30 seats	Projector
Council Room	64.05 m ²	25 seats	Dedicated to meetings, exams and project presentations

Total simultaneous classroom capacity: 300+ seats (without the Aula). Estimated m²/doctoral student ratio for lecture halls and seminars: 15 m²/doctoral student (for 20 doctoral students).

Research spaces

Name of space	Surface	Capacity	Facilities
Reading Room	49.56 m ²	20 seats	Specialised books
Room 1 (Library)	15.31 m ²	1 place	Specialist books, individual workstations
Room 2 (Library)	32.05 m ²	1 place	Specialist books, individual workstations
Room 3 (Library)	32.16 m ²	1 place	Specialist books, individual workstations
Room 4 (Library)	34.04 m ²	1 place	Specialist books, individual workstations
Room 133	21.41 m ²	1 place	Specialist books, individual workstations
Room 137	20.92 m ²	1 place	Specialist books, individual workstations
Room 138	26.49 m ²	1 place	Specialty Books (Church History), Individual Workstations
Room 223	26.44 m ²	1 place	Specialised Books (Practical Theology)
„Luther” Hall	27.09 m ²	8 seats	Specialist books, individual workstations
Room 235	50.75 m ²	10 seats	Individual workstations (within 3-5 years depending on the number of PhD students)

Outside these spaces within the PTI central building, through the collaboration contract with the church archives (since 2009), the institution offers research spaces and offices within *the church archives* (in the immediate vicinity, at 14 Avram Iancu Square) ([Anexa_016_A.2.1](#)).

Administrative spaces and services for doctoral students

Service	Location	Surface	Program	Personal
Doctoral Secretariat	1st Floor	11.73 m ²	9:00-16:00	1 person
CSUD Office	Floor 1 / 131	25.76 m ²	9:00-16:00	Directory
IT Support	Floor 1 / 130	10.19 m ²	9:00-16:00	1 specialist
Counselling	Floor 2 / 105	12.95 m ²	By appointment	1 advisor

Student Services

PhD students have at their disposal [dormitory rooms](#), shared kitchens, fitness rooms, sports field, chapel, prayer room, library, canteen, laundry rooms, parking, medical office. (See image gallery [here](#).)

S.A.2.2. Material Base Management

The organisational components optimally and sustainably manage the real estate and movable assets that are used for the field of doctoral studies.

The material base is managed and maintained by the Founding Churches. Between 2015 and 2020, a complete rehabilitation (worth 15 million lei from church and European funds) of the

main building took place. In 2024, the canteen and kitchen were modernised (an investment of approx. 500,000 lei). In the period 2024-2025, the technical infrastructure was modernised (two new servers were purchased, 4 video projectors, 6 computers/laptops were replaced, about 80,000 lei).

The 2023-2028 development plan includes the purchase of photovoltaic panels to make energy expenditures more efficient, which await allocations of national/European funds (ca. 100,000 euros). For the 5 year budget plan of the doctoral institute, see [Anexa_000](#).

The institution has the appropriate staff to manage the material base. PTI has a general manager responsible for the management of the material base, a head of technical service, an IT and communications specialist, general maintenance staff, kitchen staff, security staff. PTI has a total of 31 full-time employees responsible for non-educational or research services.

The Protestant Theological Institute has a central location in the city of Cluj-Napoca, in a completely rehabilitated, modernised historical monument building. PTI demonstrates compliance with Criterion A.2 standards through continuous and strategically planned investments, adequate infrastructure, sufficient spaces for doctoral activities, library facilities (with 100,000+ volumes and access to databases), IT facilities, professional management of maintenance facilities. The capacity of the current infrastructure allows for the comfortable support of 30 PhD students simultaneously, with the potential to expand to 40+ through planned optimisations.

3.1.3. Criterion A.3. Adequate human resources and transparent procedures for the recruitment of personnel, developed in accordance with the law

S.A.3.1. Human Resources

The Protestant Theological Institute has the necessary human resources for the organisation and conduct of the field of doctoral studies in Theology, the potential doctoral supervisors obtaining this right in the field (theology) and subfield related to the program/field of university studies evaluated.

The current situation of doctoral supervisors, with the related qualifications:

Name and surname	Specialisation	1. The institution where supervisor obtained his doctorate 2. Habilitation/Doctoral Supervision Institution
Prof. BALOGH Csaba	Biblical Theology	1. The Netherlands, Theological University Kampen (2009) 2. Hungary, Debrecen University of Reformed Theology (2024)
Prof. KISS Jenő	Practical Theology	1. The Netherlands, Utrecht University (2003) 2. Hungary, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest (2016)
Prof. KOLUMBÁN Vilmos József	History of the Church	1. Hungary, Debrecen University of Reformed Theology (2005) 2. Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca – Faculty of Reformed Theology and Music (2023)
Prof. KOVÁCS Sándor	History of the Church	1. Hungary, University of Szeged (2002)

		2. Hungary, Debrecen University of Reformed Theology (2022)
Prof. VISKY Sándor Béla	Systematic Theology	1. Hungary, Károli Gáspár Reformed University, Budapest (2004) 2. Babeş-Bolyai University Cluj-Napoca - Faculty of History and Philosophy (2014) 3. Hungary, Debrecen University of Reformed Theology (2017)

Academic profile. The academic profile of the doctoral supervisors shows a distribution by areas of expertise as follows (see also [Anexa 017 A.3.1](#)): biblical theology: 1 supervisor (20%); systematic theology: 1 supervisor (20%); practical theology: 1 supervisor (20%); church history: 2 supervisors (40%), one with specialisation in Unitarian church history, the other one in Reformed church history. As far as international training is concerned, all doctorates and almost all doctoral supervisor qualifications (habilitations) have been acquired abroad (the Netherlands and Hungary).

[Anexa 017 A.3.1](#) presents a detailed picture of professional qualifications and experience through the following components: Resumé with professional background, Certificate of habilitation / Doctoral supervisor qualifications, Summary of scientific activity, List of publications, Presentations at conferences, Research projects, Teaching activity of each doctoral supervisor.

Leader	ISI/ERIH	BDI	Books		Chapters	H-index	Citations
			Author / Co-author	Edited / Translated			
Balogh Csaba	8	40	3	3	10	5	148
Kiss Jenő	2 / 1	35	2	2 / 3	19	3	42
Kolumbán Vilmos József	-	35	3 / 6	9	37	4	121
Kovács Sándor	-	45	3 / 4	1	28	6	128
Visky Sándor Béla	- / 2	46	7	4 / 9	30	3	40
TOTAL	10 / 3	201	19 / 10	19 / 12	124	21	479

Ability to mentor and previous experience in coordination. [Anexa 018 A.3.1](#) presents data regarding the experience and potential ability to guide doctoral students, based on previous experience in coordinating research projects carried out by doctoral students (including in co-supervision, where they exist), membership in doctoral examination committees (in other institutions), the coordination of master's and bachelor's theses in the past, involvement in other scientific activities of the students.

Based on the data collected up to and including 2024, the situation of the previous experience in coordination can be summarised as follows:

Leader	BA Theses	MA Theses	Other theses	PhD co-supervisor	Member of Ph.D. committees
Balogh Csaba	12	8	8	-	2
Kiss Jenő	15	33	5	3	8
Kolumbán Vilmos József	63	29	5	-	22
Kovács Sándor	36	3	4	-	9
Visky Sándor Béla	15	16	2	3	10
TOTAL	141	89	24	6	

Regarding the planned distribution of doctoral students, it is anticipated that 6 doctoral students will be allocated for each supervisor (with a maximum of 8 according to the Romanian legislation in force). For the first three years, an average of 3–4 doctoral students/supervisor is estimated, which is equivalent to a total capacity of approximately 30 doctoral students.

In order to set up the guidance committees, following Romanian regulations, in the short term, the following teachers from within the university are considered:

- Assoc. Prof. Dr. KATÓ Szabolcs Ferencz (habilitation in progress)
area of expertise: Bible studies / Old Testament (see [CV](#), [list of works](#))
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. KOPPÁNDI Botond Péter
area of expertise: Practical Theology (see [CV](#), [list of works](#))
- Lect. dr. PAPP György
area of expertise: Systematic Theology (see [CV](#), [list of works](#))
- Lect. dr. ÓSZ Sándor Előd (habilitation in progress)
area of expertise: Church history (see [CV](#), [list of works](#))

Professional development of staff. (It is not mandatory at the first evaluation). The PTI demonstrates the following practices regarding the professional development of the staff:

- covering expenses related to participation in national and international conferences (included in the annual budget, respectively through the Makovecz projects);
- (partial) coverage of expenditure on book publications (included in the annual budget);
- grants for publications in ISI journals (through Makovecz-projects, depending on the rank of the publication);
- free access to international databases;
- allocating software licenses for free (Office 365, Google Workspace, Logos).

S.A.3.2. Recruitment procedures

Regarding the transparency and legality of the recruitment procedures, the PTI has developed the institutional regulatory frameworks. Thus, the institution has the following methodologies and procedures:

- [Methodology for recruiting on teaching and research positions](#) (revised 2025),
- [Procedure for fixed-term employment of associated teaching and research staff](#) (revised 2024);

- [Methodology on the automatic recognition of teaching functions in university education obtained in accredited university education institutions abroad](#) (revised 2024);
- [Methodology for the automatic recognition of the quality of doctoral supervisor and/or habilitation obtained abroad](#) (revised 2024).

The methodologies have been updated in accordance with the Higher Education Law no. 199/2023 and the CNATDCU minimum standards.

The standards for filling the positions follow the criteria established by the CNATDCU (according to CNATDCU - Commission 15 Theology, approved by OMEN 6129/2016 up to and including the academic year 2025/2026 and OMEC 3019/13.01.2025 starting with the academic year 2026/2027).

The recruitment process follows the standard procedural stages, with transparent publication of all vacancies in the Romanian Official Gazette (Monitorul Oficial), on the official website of PTI (see <https://proteo.cj.edu.ro/ro/actualitati/posturi> for positions announced in the past), on the <https://jobs.edu.ro>, complying with the legal requirements regarding the procedure, deadlines, composition of the competition commissions, conduct of the competition, and validation of results.

The Protestant Theological Institute demonstrates complete compliance with the standards of Criterion A.3 through the existence of 5 doctoral supervisors with acquired rights and diversified expertise, scientific production in accordance with CNATDCU standards, transparent, legal and verified recruitment procedures. The current human resources capacity allows the immediate start of the doctoral program with the perspective of sustainable development up to 30-40 doctoral students in 5 years.

Planned developments: recruitment of doctoral scientific secretary (following accreditation), 2 new habilitations by 2027, training program for doctoral supervision (2026), extension of collaboration with external partners in order to guide and organise programs in the form of co-supervision.

3.1.4. Criterion A.4. Digitisation of institutional processes

S.A.4.1. Digital transformation

1. PTI's integrated digital ecosystem

Since 2007, the Protestant Theological Institute has developed a comprehensive digital ecosystem that integrates several specialised platforms, fully covering educational, administrative and research processes:

(a) Educational processes

- General Platforms:
 - *Google Workspace for Education* (2016), with the implementation of Google Classroom (2020) for collaboration and e-learning, Google Meet for online

meetings and consultations, personalised institutional email via Gmail and Google Drive (1TB/user).

- *MS Office 365* – the complete Office suite and associated services (OneDrive 1TB/user, Teams, etc.), available free of charge for teachers and at a low cost for students as well.
- Proteo (<https://proteo.cj.edu.ro> or <https://proteo.hu>) the main portal of the institution (news, events, information about the institution, programs, staff, surveys, etc.), available in Hungarian, Romanian and English (the Hungarian version being the most comprehensive). The provisional sublink for the doctoral program is: <https://proteo.cj.edu.ro/ro/academia/programe/doctorat>.
- Neptune – <https://neptun.proteo.hu> (2007) – educational management system widely used, especially in Hungarian universities (subject contracting, exams, educational reports).
- Studium – <https://studium.proteo.hu> (2017) – platform for managing internships.
- Sistemantiplagiat.ro (2023) – BA/MA/PhD Theses originality checker
- Logos (<https://logos.com>) – software specialising in biblical research – PTI has continuously acquired licenses for students (30+ licenses as of 2023).

(b) Administrative processes

- Office – <https://office.proteo.hu> (2014) – platform for institutional management (meetings, minutes, regulations, registry).
- Mob – <https://mob.proteo.hu> (2014) – mobility management (Erasmus, Makovecz).
- Webform – <https://webform.proteo.hu> (2023) – Online forms for different opinion polls, or event registrations
- Dedicated software: SagaC (accounting), HMenu and HSalar (payroll).

(c) Research processes

- Repo – <https://repo.proteo.hu> (2018) – Institutional digital repository (bachelor's theses, master's theses, other scientific papers, teachers' publications, Transylvanian Protestant theological literature).
- <https://reformatusszemle.ro> (2020) – platform dedicated to the specialised theology journal edited within PTI.
- eCorvina – <https://ecorvina.proteo.hu> (2013) – electronic library catalogue

2. Planned developments

New platforms are currently being developed to modernise and complement the existing digital infrastructure:

- a **full online payment system** (<https://pay.proteo.hu>) for all services offered by PTI (accommodation, meals, administrative expenses, study expenses, organised events, sales of publications, etc.);
- a **distinct platform for IOSUD** and the processes of the doctoral program (monitoring the doctoral process, the individual research program with monitoring of the academic

progress, consultations, portfolios of publications and conferences, reporting automation, quality assurance processes, etc.);

- a system for the independent administration of **scientific activity** at institutional level (events: organisational management, call-for-papers, peer review, registrations, reporting, certification generation; scientific activity of staff: conference participations, scientific activity, citations, report generation; management of research projects and research grants; interconnection with internal platforms [Studium, Repo] and external platforms [relevant databases MTMT, Crossref, ERIH, ORCID, GoogleScholar]);
- a distinct platform for the administration and tracking of PTI graduates (<https://alumni.proteo.hu>).

PTI is also considering *the integration of artificial intelligence technologies* into existing platforms, in particular for the optimisation of administrative processes, preliminary analysis of documents and reports, automated translations and research support.

To support this digitisation process, in 2025 the institution invested in two high-performance servers, which constitute the technical basis of the digital ecosystem.

We believe that the digital maturity of PTI provides a solid foundation for the launch and efficient administration of doctoral studies, ensuring modern and accessible services for all participants, and the planned developments will ensure an even more advanced level of digitalisation, including regarding the doctoral program.

2. DOMAIN B. Educational effectiveness

For the first accreditation, self-assessment is required regarding the fulfilment of criteria B.1, B.2, B.3 (1), B.4, B.5, B.7.

3.2.1. Criterion B.1. Content and relevance of study programs

S.B.1.1. Content of the study program

The study program is based on a curriculum that aims to achieve the expected learning outcomes for students.

1. Structuring the program based on learning outcomes and transferable credits

Individual study and research plan. The architecture of the doctoral program includes, in accordance with the legislation in force and institutional regulations, a training component *based on advanced studies* and an *individual scientific research program*. The advanced study-based training program includes 4 compulsory subjects (including research ethics) and two optional/elective subjects, allowing the accumulation of min. 240 compulsory credits over 4 years (8 semesters).

The form of organisation of studies is *on a full-time basis*, in accordance with the Higher Education Law 199/2023 and OM no. 3020/2024 (Art. 8 – scientific doctorates). The details

regarding interruptions and possible extensions are regulated in the IOSUD-Regulation– ([Anexa 007 A.1.1](#)) and the Regulation of the Doctoral School ([Anexa 008 A.1.1](#)).

The schedule of doctoral studies is presented in the form of an *individual research plan* in more details in [Anexa 019 B.1.1](#), having the following general structure:

Year/ Semester	Main activity	Sem.	Description (ECTS)	Total ECTS / Sem Year
Year 1	Advanced training + research start	1	Courses: [Compulsory:] <i>Methodology of Advanced Theological Research</i> (5), <i>Academic Ethics and Integrity in Theological Research</i> (3), <i>Advanced Specialisation Seminar in the Field of Doctoral</i> (15). [Optional:] <i>Interdisciplinary Theological Research Seminar</i> (5). Activities: Individual consultations (2), Initial research activities, bibliographic study (3), Participation in scientific events (2),	30 + 5 60
		2	Courses: [Compulsory:] <i>Advanced seminar on the topic of the doctoral thesis</i> (10). [Optional:] <i>Writing and Academic Presentation Workshop</i> (5). Activities: Individual consultations (3), Research project development (7), Short international mobility (3), Participation in scientific events (2), Publication writing (1-2 critical reviews) (5).	30 + 5
Year 2	Applied Research + Publication	3	Activities: Consultations with the PhD supervisor (3), Data collection/primary source study (10), Short international mobility (5), Conference presentation (7), Writing a BDI article - Article 1 (5)	30 60
		4	Activities: Consultations with the PhD supervisor (4), Writing 2 chapters (15), Participating in scientific events (3), Publishing a BDI article - Article 1 (8).	30
Year 3	Thesis writing	5	Activities: Consultations with the PhD supervisor (3), Short international mobility (5), Critical analysis workshop with colleagues (5), Presentation at the conference (7), Writing a BDI/ERIH article - Article 2 (10).	30 60
		6	Activities: Consultations with the doctoral supervisor (4), Writing 2 chapters (15), Participation in scientific events (3), Publication of a BDI/ERIH article - Article (8).	30
Year 4	Completion and thesis defense	7	Activities: Consultations with the PhD supervisor (4), Research Completion, Review and Proofreading (15), Pre-defense (5), Conference Presentation (International) (6).	30 60
		8	Activities: Consultations for preparation (4), Official thesis submission (16), Public defense (10).	30

As can be seen from the table above, in addition to the research activity closely related to the writing of the doctoral thesis (consultations, thesis writing, study and/or research mobility), the doctoral student's training path also includes a progressive scientific activity. This takes the form of gradual participation in academic events – initially as an auditor, then as an active presenter – and by publishing scientific contributions, from short reviews in the early stages of

the program to the development of at least two specialist studies during the course of the studies.

Learning outcomes. The expected learning outcomes for the field of doctoral studies (CNC 8) are defined at the level of IOSUD, in correlation with the professional and transversal competences provided for in art. 7 para. (9) and para. (10) of the Framework Regulation on Doctoral Studies (OM no. 3020/2024). The correlation between these provisions and the IOSUD-PTI doctoral program is reflected in the following elements:

A. Professional competences

A.1. Knowledge

CP 1. Advanced Theological Expertise:

- mastery of knowledge at the highest level in the field of theology and religious studies (Biblical Theology, Systematic Theology, Practical Theology, Church History);
- in-depth understanding of specifically theological methodological paradigms: advanced biblical exegesis, textual criticism, theological hermeneutics, the specificity of practical theology in correlation with the social sciences, ecclesiastical historical research;
- knowledge of contemporary epistemological debates and international trends in theological research.

CP 2. Interdisciplinary skills:

- knowledge at the interface between theology and related fields: history, archaeology, philosophy, philology, sociology, ethnography, psychology, pedagogy;
- the ability to integrate methodologies from the various humanities into theological research;
- understanding the interdisciplinary implications in addressing complex theological problems.

CP 3. Methodological and digital skills:

- mastery of advanced methods of biblical, historical, systematic and pastoral research
- skills in the use of specialised academic databases (IndexTheologicus, ATLA, EBAF);
- the ability to responsibly use AI tools for text analysis, bibliography management and research support.

A.2 Skills

CP 4. Research and innovation:

- the ability to identify, formulate and creatively solve complex theological research problems;
- the ability to apply research methods appropriate to specific theological questions;
- the competence of synthesis and critical evaluation for solving research problems and for original contributions to the field.

CP 5. Critical analysis and interpretation:

- the capacity for critical analysis of specialised literature and contemporary theological paradigms;

- the ability to evaluate and interpret primary sources (biblical, patristic, historical texts, contemporary ethical contexts);
- the competence to formulate original perspectives and contextualise research in current academic debates.

B. Transversal competences

B.1. Responsibility and autonomy

CT 1. Academic Autonomy and Scientific Integrity:

- demonstrating a high level of authority, innovation and autonomy in research;
- respect for the principles of academic ethics and scientific integrity in all aspects of the activity;
- the ability to effectively manage long-term research projects (4 years of PhD);

CT 2. Leadership and professional development:

- competence of supervision and guidance in research;
- the capacity to develop and implement innovative research strategies;
- ability to contribute to the development of the field through publications and dissemination activities.

B.2 Communication and collaboration

CT 3. Advanced academic communication:

- superior written and oral scientific communication skills;
- the ability to present research results to diverse academic and public audiences;
- writing competence to international standards for publications in indexed journals.

CT 4. Intercultural and linguistic competences:

- advanced language knowledge and skills in international languages relevant to theology;
- ability to work effectively in diverse cultural and academic contexts;
- competence of intercultural mediation and interreligious dialogue.

CT 5. Academic collaboration and networking:

- the ability to work collaboratively in interdisciplinary research teams;
- competence to develop and maintain international academic networks;
- the ability to integrate into the global academic community through conferences and mobilities.

These general competences of the study program are directly reflected in the work of the doctoral student and are adapted within the disciplines of the training program based on advanced university studies ([Anexa 019 B.1.1](#)).

Disciplines. The study program of the PTI Doctoral School includes the following subjects:

Cod	Discipline	Bloke	Hours	ECTS	Assessment
DD 0101	Advanced seminar of specialisation in the study field	Compulsory	18	15	Written project (presentation)

DD 0102	Advanced seminar on the subdomain of the doctoral thesis	Compulsory	18	10	Written project (presentation)
DD 0103	Interdisciplinary theological research course	Optional	24	5	Written project (reflection paper)
DD 0501	Methodology of advanced theological research	Compulsory	24	5	Written project
DD 0502	Academic ethics and Integrity in theological research	Compulsory	12	3	Examination
DD 0503	Writing and academic presentation workshop	Optional	12	5	Project (essay / presentation)

The subject sheets, with detailed description, are included in [Anexa 020 B.1.1](#). The structure of these disciplines respects both national legislation and practice, which provide for the offering of two disciplines in the area of research methodology and professional ethics, as well as good practices in the European university environment, in particular with regard to advanced seminars dedicated to the field and topic (area) of research. Thus, these advanced seminars facilitate a successive and solid deepening of the content and methodology in the area of the doctoral thesis, support the completion of the doctoral program in the most efficient way, and offer doctoral students the opportunity to formulate and sustain critical reflections on the research activity.

Complementary activities. For an efficient management of the doctoral studies, as well as for facilitating the generation of statistics useful for the evaluation and quality assurance processes of the program, it is proposed to introduce a coding scheme for non-teaching, complementary activities, according to the following model:

Cod	Activity	Bloke	Hours	ECTS	Assessment
DC 0100	Individual consultations with the doctoral supervisor	Compulsory	n	n	Consultation Record Catalog
DC 0200	Thesis preparation and writing activities (research plan, documentation and collection of data / sources, intermediate chapters), pre-defense and official thesis defense	Compulsory	n	n	Research report, chapter teaching, coordinator evaluation, defense report
DC 0400	Academic mobility (internal/international internships)	Compulsory	n	n	Study/Research Plan, Mobility Report
DC 0500	Participation in scientific events (conferences, workshops, symposia)	Compulsory	n	n	Program / certificate of participation, reports
DC 0600	Presentations at scientific events (conferences, workshops, symposia, commissions),	Compulsory	n	n	Program / certificate of participation, reports

	valorisation and dissemination activities (public lectures, scientific popularisation)				
DC 0700	Publishing activities (reviews, articles, chapters)	Compulsory	n	n	Indexed publication / proof
DC 0900	Other activities	Optional	n	n	Activity report

According to the regulation, the doctoral student has the obligation to prepare a Progress Report for each semester and to publish, by the end of the eighth semester, at least 2 scientific reviews and 2 articles in WoS/ERIH/BDI indexed journals or in conference volumes. Also, during the 8 semesters, he will give at least 3 presentations at scientific conferences, of which at least two will be organised by another university or scientific entity. During the studies, the doctoral student will participate in course and seminar activities, as well as in academic mobility carried out through the Erasmus, Makovecz or other similar forms.

The activity of the doctoral student will be continuously monitored and evaluated, in relation to the established benchmarks, according to the individual doctoral research plan and based on the Semester Progress Report (see Methodology for evaluating the academic progress of doctoral students and Procedure for monitoring doctoral students' progress – PO-CSUD-302 and model F-CSUD-302-01 in [Anexa 010 A.1.1](#)). The semester report integrates all aspects of the individual study program, structured in main sections covering: administrative aspects (identification, periods, contacts) and teaching activity (subjects covered with ECTS assessments and credits), research activities (with emphasis on consultations with the supervisor and thesis preparation activities), the academic dimension (through sections dedicated to publications, participation in events, presentations and mobilities academics), evaluation and planning through self-assessment of progress (identification of difficulties, objectives for the next semester and proposals for improvement of the program). The final section is reserved for the doctoral supervisor for evaluation and feedback. The report includes clear tables for quantitative reporting, spaces for qualitative reflections. The current version edited in physical format (F-CSUD-302-01) will be implemented directly as a digital form for a more efficient management of the evaluation and reporting flow. The structure will allow the automatic generation of statistics at the doctoral school level and facilitates the internal and external evaluation processes of the program.

3.2.2. Criterion B.2. Curriculum and qualification consistency

S.B.2.1. Consistency with the level of qualification and competences targeted

The doctoral study program develops knowledge at the most advanced level, specialised research and innovation skills, in addition to complete academic responsibility and autonomy, consistent with the Romanian CNC level 8 standards.

The standard of **knowledge** at the most advanced level in a field of activity or study and at the interface between fields is implemented through the following elements:

- mastery of knowledge at the most advanced level in the field of theology and religious studies (DD 0101, DD 0102, doctoral research);
- developed interdisciplinary competences (e.g. through DD 0103 – Interdisciplinary Theological Research Seminar);
- knowledge at the border between different related fields: history, archaeology, philosophy, philology, sociology, ethnography, psychology, pedagogy (DD 0103 – Interdisciplinary research course);
- critical understanding of contemporary epistemological debates in theology (DD 0101, DD 0102, DD 0103).

The CNC standard on **Specialised problem-solving skills** are implemented in the following aspects:

- the ability to identify, formulate and creatively solve theological research problems (DD 0501 – Methodology of advanced theological research);
- application of advanced research methods (DD 0501 – Methodology of advanced theological research);
- developed synthesis and critical evaluation skills (DD 0101 and DD 0102 – Specialisation seminars);
- academic language skills in languages of international circulation (bibliography studied, participation in lectures);
- integration of digital platforms in theological research (databases, field-specific software, digital platforms for managing administrative processes).

The standard of **responsibility and autonomy**, i.e. the demonstration of a high level of authority, innovation, autonomy, scientific and professional integrity, is reflected in the doctoral program by:

- efficient management of the research project (over a period of 4 years);
- scientific and professional integrity (through DD 0502 – Academic ethics and integrity in theological research);
- development of new ideas through original contributions in the thesis and publications in BDI/ERIH indexed journals;
- autonomy in research progressively developed from intensive tutoring to academic independence.

The curriculum ensures the progressive development from reproduced knowledge (methodologies, principles) to generative and applicative skills (research development, presentation, publication, support), from fundamental training to academic autonomy.

Among the relevant ESCO occupations in group 2 (specialists in intellectual fields) we can identify concrete positions for which the program prepares: theological researchers, university professors, specialists in public policies with a religious dimension, and specialists in religious services.

ESCO Occupation	ESCO competences targeted	Development in the program
2632: Specialists in sociology, anthropology, and related fields	- Research of religious and cultural phenomena - Critical analysis of religious texts and traditions - Consultancy on intercultural and interreligious dialogue issues	- DD 0101, DD 0102, DD 0103: develops societal analysis skills - DC 0100, DC 0200: develop consulting skills - DC 0400, DC 0500: develops intercultural sensitivity
2310: University and Higher Education Teachers	- Teaching and research in the field of theology - Supervising student research - Development of the academic curriculum	- DD 0103 and presentation activities: develop pedagogical competences - Doctoral pathway: develop research competences - DD 0503, DC 0600, DC 0700: develop academic communication competences
2422: Specialists in public administration policies	- Counselling in public policies with a religious dimension - Analysis of the social impact of the religious factor - Mediation in conflicts with a religious dimension	- DD 0103 Interdisciplinary Research: Develop Societal Analysis Skills - DC 0600: develops public communication skills - DD 0502: develops professional ethics
2636: Religious Service Specialists	- Spiritual leadership in religious communities - Advanced pastoral counselling - Development of religious educational programs	- DD 0101, DD 0102 - Specialisation disciplines: develop fundamental theological competences - DC 0600 - Presentation and dissemination activities: develop communication skills - DD 0502 - Integrated Academic Ethics: Develops Ethical Competences

In addition to the main occupations in group 2 ESCO, the doctoral program in theology also prepares graduates for related and secondary occupations relevant to specialists in the humanities and sociological sciences:

ESCO Occupation	Applicability context	ESCO competences targeted	Consistency with the PTI program
2422: Political analyst	Public policies on cults, religious freedom, interreligious dialogue, management of religious diversity	- Critical analysis of the social impact of the religious factor - Evaluation of the effectiveness of policies in the field of religious freedom - Consultancy for decision-makers on issues with a religious dimension - Monitoring the implementation of legislation on religious denominations	- DD 0101, DD 0103: develops societal analysis skills - DC 0600: forms the competences of public communication - DC 0400: provides the comparative perspective on religious politics - Applied research: allows empirical analysis of contemporary religious phenomena

2621: Archivist	Ecclesiastical history, patristic, ecclesiastical archives, manuscript patrimony	- Preservation and cataloguing of historical religious documents- Evaluation of the historical and cultural value of archival materials- Organisation of classification systems for theological documents- Facilitating researchers' access to primary sources	- DD 0501: includes paleographic and codicological analysis techniques - DC 0200: develops expertise in historical manuscripts and documents - Advanced digital skills: for modern archiving solutions - Textual criticism: provides skills for assessing the authenticity of documents
2631: Cultural Heritage Specialist	Cultural-religious heritage, ecclesiastical tourism, preservation of religious traditions	- Identification and evaluation of religious cultural heritage- Development of conservation and valorisation strategies- Mediation between religious communities and public institutions- Education of the public on the importance of religious heritage	- DD 0103: Interdisciplinary competences: understanding the cultural dimension - DC 0600: develops public education skills - Historical research: provides in-depth knowledge of ecclesiastical heritage - DC 0400: International Mobilities: Exposure to Various Forms of Conservation
2641: Editor of specialised publications	Editing theological, academic and religious educational publications	- Evaluation of the scientific quality of theological manuscripts- Coordination of the peer-review process- Adaptation of content for various audiences - Management of complex editorial projects	- DD 0503: develops advanced academic writing - DC 0500: provides experience in the editorial process - DC 0700: mandatory publications: develops critical evaluation skills, familiarity with the editorial process - Language skills: facilitates access to international publishing markets

Employment sectors for graduates of the program include the *academic sector* (university professors in theology and religious sciences, researchers in specialised research institutes, directors of theological studies programs), the *public sector* (experts in public policies with a religious dimension, advisors for intercultural and interreligious dialogue, specialists in cultural-religious heritage) and the *ecclesial, private and civil sector* (spiritual leadership in religious organisations, consultants for international organisations, experts in mediation and interreligious dialogue).

The program ensures the competitiveness of its graduates in the international market through the adopted international academic standards, compliance with good practices and European standards, recognition of ECTS credits at international level and compatibility with the mentioned European qualification systems. The program offers interdisciplinary expertise (especially due to the intersection of theology and humanities), advanced digital skills for contemporary theological research, and international experience gained through compulsory mobilities and participation in international events.

3.2.3. Criterion B.3. Student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment

S.B.3.1. The principle of student-centred learning

The implementation of the principles of student-centred learning is reflected in the following aspects:

1. Personalising the learning path

Each PhD student develops an individualised path according to his/her research interests and objectives. Thus, he/she chooses an area of specialisation from four main subfields: Biblical theology, Systematic theology, Practical theology, and Church history. As mentioned in the Course Sheet ([Anexa 020 B.1.1](#)), the Advanced specialisation seminar in the doctoral field (DD 0101) adapts to the specific subfield of research chosen by the student. The bibliographies and research topics are customised for each specialisation and each student.

When defining the individual research topic, the Advanced seminar on the subdomain of the dissertation (DD 0102) focuses on the general topic chosen by each student. The individual research project is developed through collaborative student-supervisor dialogue, and the methodologies are adapted to the specific nature of each student's research.

As a practical example: a student researching the topic “The Textual History of the Book of Jeremiah chap. 25”, will follow a different path than one that studies aspects related to the radical reform of the 16th century in a region of Eastern Europe, with adapted bibliographies, methodologies and research activities.

The program also includes customised optional subjects, for example, DD 0103 for students interested in interdisciplinary research, or DD 0503, for those who want to improve their communication skills.

2. Gradual development of the doctoral student's autonomy

The program ensures a gradual development of academic autonomy from intensive tutoring to complete independence.

Thus, the first year offers a *structured orientation* in the form of 16–24 hours of consultations/semester with detailed feedback, with fundamental disciplines (DD 0501, DD 0502) that provide the methodological basis, opportunities for guided activities of documentation and initial research.

The second year tends towards partial *autonomy* through 24–32 hours of consultations/semester with emphasis on the development of the own project, applied research with increasing responsibility of the student, and the appearance of the first publication as a result of independent work.

The third year offers *advanced autonomy* through 24–32 hours of consultations/semester with an advisory role of the supervisor, independent writing of thesis chapters and (international) presentations as an expert in the field.

The fourth year aims to reach a *complete autonomy* with 32–48 hours of consultations/semester (for thesis completion and final feedback), the demonstration of expertise through public support and the conclusion of the project through the original contribution to the chosen field of study.

3. Student-centred methods and strategies

The doctoral program provides research-based learning. All compulsory subjects include original research components, and final projects are original contributions, not reproductions of literature. For example: the research methodology (DD 0501) is learned through practical application on the student's topic. Or in the case of the DD 0102 advanced seminar, the student not only studies the literature on his or her topic but develops an original critical contribution that becomes part of the future thesis.

The strategy also includes experiential learning, through academic mobility, guided by the idea that direct experience complements theoretical learning. Mobility is implemented on a mandatory basis (minimum 6 weeks of international mobility), which offers the student chances to participate in research internships at prestigious institutions in the field, and thus to get to know other academic cultures, or to participate in conferences as an active learning experience.

Implemented evaluation mechanisms (progress reports) provide the student with the opportunity for these mechanisms to become learning tools, not just measurement.

4. Systemic and curricular flexibility

The Doctoral School offers the possibility of justified interruptions according to the regulation, justified extensions for complex research and an individualised rhythm in consultations with the supervisor.

The individual doctoral research program offers flexibility in planning several elements, such as setting deadlines for personal consultations, or scheduling and optimising individual research according to individual preferences.

5. Participation of the doctoral student in the evaluation of the program

The reporting process (Progress Report F-CSUD-302-01) of the activity is not only an exercise of academic autonomy but also offers the doctoral student the opportunity to actively contribute, through personal and constructive feedback, to the continuous improvement of the program during its development.

3.2.4. Criterion B.4. Accessibility and efficiency of appropriate learning resources and support services

S.B.4.1. Access to resources and services

1. Information and documentary resources

The Library of the Protestant Theological Institute (PTI) holds a collection of approximately 100,000 specialised volumes in the theological field. The collection has been continuously constituted since 1895, on the initiative of Bishop Domokos Szász, the founder of the library and the promoter of the relocation of the Academy of Theology of the Reformed Church from Aiud to Cluj. The initial fund has been supplemented, over time, by own acquisitions and generous donations offered by prestigious professors from the country and abroad, especially from Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland (including important specialised journals in the field).

The library brings together collections of great value, including old books from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it is constantly updated with volumes of contemporary theology in Hungarian, English, German, and Romanian. Since 2015, through a partnership with the Langham Partnership (UK), PTI has benefited annually from funds for the acquisition of recent theological literature in English. In addition, between 2016 and 2021, through a contract with the Stiftung Hilfswerk der Evang. Kirchen der Schweiz (HEKS, Zürich), the library was enriched with numerous new titles of current international theology.

The library has [its own website](#) providing general information about the available services, it has an [online catalogue](#). Access to all resources is free for PTI students and staff. Readers are expected in modernised reading rooms (2017) and with quality services offered by competent staff. The schedule with the public is from Monday to Friday between 9 am and 4 pm, but students can also request special access outside the mentioned hours.

As far as electronic resources are concerned, PTI has a collaboration contract with the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which enabled the acquisition of important theological and humanistic databases, such as:

- ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials Plus (via [EBSCO](#)) – one of the largest international databases in theology and religious studies;
- Arcanum Digitheca ([ADTplus](#)) – digital resource with over 30 million pages of Hungarian print press and literature;
- [SZAKTARS](#) – database of specialised publications in the field of humanities and social sciences (including theology), from about 25 contemporary academic publishing houses.
- PTI maintains an updated list of open access repositories with quality literature relevant to theological research (see [here](#) and [here](#)).

PTI regularly invests in software licenses dedicated to theological research. Among them, a central role is occupied by *Logos Bible Software*, used especially for biblical studies. As of 2023, the institution has acquired about 20 *Logos Academic Standard licenses*, and in 2025, in

preparation for the accreditation of the doctoral field, another 15 Logos Academic Pro licenses have been added, which also integrate AI-based facilities (see [Anexa 021 B.4.1](#)).

Access to resources varies depending on the research subfield of doctoral students. For those interested in ancient theological manuscripts or church archives, PTI has concluded collaboration agreements with the archives of the founding churches, thus facilitating the consultation of these valuable documentary funds (see [Anexa 016 A.2.1](#)).

2. Mentoring Support for Talented Students

Since 2016, PTI has been running a systematic program to support and promote talented students (“talent management program”). It periodically organizes meetings and conferences dedicated to identifying and supporting students with potential for excellence, as well as promoting quality academic research (more information about the activities organised within this program can be found [here](#)).

PTI also participates in the Scientific Conferences of Hungarian Students, one of the traditional events organised annually in Transylvania and, once every two years, by the Hungarian University Association. PTI’s talented students frequently obtained awards and distinctions at these scientific competitions (see the most recent examples here [\[2025\]](#), here [\[2025\]](#), here [\[2023\]](#), and here [\[2021\]](#)), thus confirming both the quality of students’ academic training and the value of mentoring by teachers. Most of the students who have won prizes in these competitions are currently enrolled in doctoral schools in the country or abroad. It is anticipated that this program will be an important support and a launching pad for their integration into the future doctoral program of the PTI.

Talented students benefit from financial support both from the institution’s own funds and through resources obtained by the PTI (in particular through the Makovecz-program), or mediated by the institution ([Gustav-Adolf](#)-program [studies in universities in Germany], [Collegium Talentum](#)-program, [Márton Áron](#)-program). Thus, during 2023–2025, the PTI provided financial incentives from the Makovecz fund for ([Anexa 022 B.4.1](#)):

- exceptional study results;
- awarding research activity (presentations at scientific events);
- awarding research results (scientific publications);
- support for short research mobilities (1–3 weeks) for the completion of bachelor’s or master’s theses.

3. Support for publication and dissemination

Currently, the PTI has three editorial platforms of specialised / theological journals, indexed in specialised databases (MTMT, CEEOL and others), two of which have long traditions and reputation in the Hungarian theological field:

- [Református Szemle](#) (Journal of Reformed Theology), a scientific publication in the field of theology, edited continuously since 1908;

- [Keresztény Magvető](#) (Christian Sower), founded in 1861, specialising in Unitarian theological studies;
- [Studia Doctorum Theologiae Protestantis](#), published annually since 2011 by the PTI Research Centre.

In addition to these, the institution owns its own [Protestant Theological Institute Publishing House](#), registered with the Romanian National Library, which publishes monographs, studies, source editions and dissertations, both in print and electronic format (e-books). These editorial platforms represent valuable opportunities for future PhD students to disseminate the results of their own research.

The publications produced by the PTI staff and students are also indexed in its own institutional repository ([Repo](#)), which ensures their accessibility to the general public, by facilitating full-text searches, thus promoting the dissemination of theological and academic knowledge.

In view of the launch of the Doctoral School, new developments are also planned, such as the creation of academic profiles dedicated to doctoral students on the PTI websites, respectively the publication of a semi-annual newsletter to present their activities and achievements to the interested public.

4. Access to mobility abroad

The Protestant Theological Institute (PTI) offers students extensive academic mobility opportunities, both short-term and long-term.

Within the Erasmus+ program, PTI benefits from a funding of approximately 300,000 euros, ranking among the best performing institutions in Romania in the field of international mobility, in relation to its institutional dimension ([Anexa_023_B.4.1](#)).

In addition to Erasmus+, PTI also runs a mobility program funded by the Makovecz program, which supports research activities and studies in academic institutions in the Carpathian Basin.

Also, through its ecclesiastical relations, PTI facilitates access to special scholarships within the faculties of theology in Germany, through the [Gustav-Adolf Werk program](#), offering scholarships annually for deepening theological studies in prestigious institutions.

3.2.5. Criterion B.5. Learning outcomes

S.B.5.1. Defining and evaluating learning outcomes

The learning outcomes, i.e. the specific, measurable results, demonstrable by the student at the end of the process, are formulated both at the level of the study program (summatively) and individually in the course sheets.

A. Learning outcomes of the study program

(For course learning outcomes, see section 4 of the course sheets.)

A.1. Outcomes related to research and original contribution

- LO 1. The graduate will *conceive, design and implement* an original research project that makes a substantial contribution to knowledge in the chosen theological field.
- LO 2. The graduate will *critically analyse and systematically evaluate* the literature in the field and topic of research, identifying knowledge gaps and opportunities for innovation.
- LO 3. The graduate will *apply and adapt* advanced research methodologies (biblical, historical, systematic, practical) to the specific problems of their own research.
- LO 4. The graduate will *synthesise and integrate* knowledge from related fields for the formulation of an original interdisciplinary approach in theological research.

A.2. Outcomes related to methodological and digital competences

- LO 5. The graduate will *effectively and responsibly use* advanced digital tools, academic databases, and AI technologies in support of theological research.
- LO 6. The graduate will *demonstrate* the correct application of the norms of academic ethics and scientific integrity at all stages of research and publication.
- LO 7. The graduate will *critically evaluate* the quality and relevance of primary and secondary sources, applying the criteria of authenticity and credibility specific to theological research.

A.3. Outcomes related to communication and dissemination

- LO 8. The graduate will *produce and publish* at least two scientific articles in BDI/ERIH indexed journals, and two critical reviews, demonstrating the ability to communicate academically at international standards.
- LO 9. The graduate will *present and defend* the results of the research in front of specialised academic audiences, demonstrating superior skills in argumentation and scientific dialogue.
- LO 10. The graduate will *adapt and communicate* the results of the research for diverse audiences (academic, pastoral, general public), demonstrating versatility in specialised communication.

A.4. Outcomes related to autonomy and professional development

- LO 11. The graduate will *demonstrate complete autonomy* in the management of doctoral research, from the conceptualisation of the project to the completion and dissemination of the results.
- LO 12. The graduate will *evaluate and critically reflect* on their own academic progress and develop *strategies* for continuous learning and professional development.
- LO 13. The graduate will *build and maintain* an international academic network by participating in a minimum of two scientific conferences and achieving a minimum of 6 weeks of academic mobility.

A.5. Outcomes related to intercultural competences

- LO 14. The graduate will *comparatively analyse* theological approaches from different cultural contexts and *synthesise* diverse perspectives for the enrichment of his/her own research.
- LO 15. The graduate will *demonstrate* advanced language skills through the effective use of primary and secondary sources in the languages relevant to his/her research.

B. Competency matching – learning outcomes

For the defined competences of the program, see Criterion B1 (S.B.1.1.) above.

Competences defined for the program	Appropriate learning outcomes
CP 1 – CP 2 (Expertise and interdisciplinarity)	LO 1, LO 2, LO 4, LO 14
CP 3 (Methodological and Digital)	LO 3, LO 5, LO 6, LO 7
CP 4 – CP 5 (Research and Analysis)	LO 1, LO 2, LO 3, LO 7
CT 1 – CT 2 (Autonomy and leadership)	LO 11, LO 12
CT 3 (Academic Communication)	LO 8, LO 9, LO 10
CT 4 – CT 5 (Intercultural and Collaboration)	LO 13, LO 14, LO 15

There is an obvious correspondence between the learning outcomes of the study program and the individual subjects. The table above and the detailed analysis in [Anexa 024 B.5.1](#) demonstrate that the compulsory subjects systematically cover the fundamental outcomes of the program, while the outcomes related to autonomy, mobility and intercultural competences are achieved through complementary research and academic participation activities (activities in the field of DC 0100 – 0900).

Information on learning outcomes is public and communicated in different forms. Learning outcomes are transparently communicated through the full documentation available at the beginning of the program. *The course sheets* ([Anexa 020 B.1.1](#)) clearly specify the expected results for each subject and measurable assessment criteria. The individual research plan as well as [the online guide](#) details the results across the program and how they relate to the targeted professional competences. *Structured half-yearly reporting* allows for self-assessment of progress against declared results ([Anexa 010 A.1.1](#)), and regular *consultations* with the manager ensure continuous clarification of expectations. Through this approach, each student understands exactly what they need to demonstrate for the successful completion of each stage of the doctoral program. And the process of monitoring and updating learning outcomes involves student feedback, ensuring continued relevance and adaptation to developments in the theological and academic field.

S.B.5.2. Verification of the achievement of learning outcomes

1. Academic progress assessment system

The detailed methodology for evaluating the progress of doctoral students, with the procedures and forms applied, are detailed in [Anexa 010 A.1.1](#).

The evaluation of learning outcomes is carried out *at the level of the courses*, in several forms:

- (a) Evaluations made by the student (formative): weekly feedback in seminars, intermediate drafts for final projects, progress presentations with peer evaluation, self-evaluation of progress in semester reports.
- (b) Summative evaluation: final projects for each subject (60-80% of the grade), oral presentations (20-30% of the grade), active participation (10-20% of the grade).
- (c) Written exams for DD 0502 (Academic ethics).

Example of progressive evaluation: In DD 0101, the student presents the progress of on studying the bibliography (formative evaluation), presents in the middle of the semester a preliminary synthesis (mid-term evaluation), and finishes with a complete project (summative evaluation).

The evaluation *of complementary activities* are of several kinds:

- (a) DC 0100 – Individual consultations: Record of participation in consultations and progress reports, assessment of the leader on the development of autonomy, self-assessment of the student on the learning process.
- (b) DC 0200 – Thesis preparation: Evaluation of chapters as they are completed, feedback on drafts from the supervisor and external experts, pre-defense as a comprehensive mid-term evaluation.
- (c) DC 0400 – Academic mobility: Mobility reports evaluated by the supervisor, possibly feedback from the host institution on performance, integration of experience in own research.
- (d) DC 0500/0600 – Scientific events: Certificates of participation as proof of achievement, participation reports with critical reflections, evaluation of presentations by the audience.
- (e) DC 0700 – Publications: Peer-review process as external evaluation, quality of publication journals (BDI/ERIH indexing), impact assessment through citations and references (medium and long term).

The semestrial reporting of the student is also an evaluation tool, which reflects on several components: progress in disciplines (in relation to the learning outcomes achieved), research advancement (in relation to DC 0200), competence development (contribution to the program), participation in activities (in relation to DC 0500-0600). The evaluation process involves self-evaluation of the student with concrete evidence, evaluation of the leader with constructive feedback, joint discussion on progress and plans, planning the next semester with adjusted objectives.

2. Graduation exams

The pre-defense of the thesis is a form of mid-term evaluation of the completion of studies. The evaluated component includes the quality of the research carried out so far in the evaluation, the coherence and originality of the contribution, the presentation and argumentation skills, the professional preparation for the committee's questions. The exam ends with a concrete, measurable result: recommendation for the final exam or indications for additional additions.

The public defense (the final doctoral exam) is the final demonstration of the achievement of all learning outcomes at the program level. *Cognitive skills* are verified by: the content of the thesis demonstrating mastery of the field, the answers to questions showing critical understanding, the integration of interdisciplinary perspectives in argumentation. The *research and innovation component* is verified by: the originality of the thesis contribution, the methodology applied in the research, the quality of data analysis and interpretation. The aspect of *autonomy and integrity* is verified by: the independence demonstrated in research, compliance with ethical standards in all aspects, the capacity for critical self-evaluation. The communication and dissemination component is verified by: the quality of the public presentation, the publications made during the studies, the clear answers to the committee's questions. And finally, *intercultural competences* are verified by: the use of sources in foreign languages, the mobility experience reflected in the research, the comparative perspective in approaching the topic.

The standards and concrete evaluation criteria for the doctoral final exam are defined in the Regulation of the Doctoral School ([Anexa 008 A.1.1](#)) and the Methodology for the elaboration of the doctoral thesis ([Anexa 011 A.1.1](#)) with the related procedures detailed in [Anexa 012 A.1.1](#) (in particular PO-CSUD-302, 303, 304 and 305). These criteria correspond to the *National minimum standards necessary and mandatory for awarding the doctoral degree* (in addition to which the element of originality and the significance of the contribution has been introduced as independent evaluation criteria). The exam ends with a concrete result: Awarding the title of doctor with differentiated mentions (Summa Laude / Magna Laude / Laude / Rite / Rejected).

3. Linking assessments to learning outcomes

The following table shows the concordance between the results of the program and the forms of evaluation:

Learning outcome	Evaluation along the way	Final Evaluation	Tools used
Cognitive elements	DD 0101, DD 0102 projects	Thesis content + answers	Critical analysis, synthesis
Elements of research and innovation	DD 0501 project, DC 0100-0200 progress	Thesis methodology, thesis originality	Application projects, original research
Elements of autonomy and integrity	DD 0502 exam, DC 0200 semester reports	Public support	Case studies, self-assessment

Elements of communication	DD 0503, DC 0600 presentations	Supporting presentation	Oral presentations, publications
Elements of intercultural competences	DC 0400 mobility reports	Use of foreign sources in the thesis	Reporting, benchmarking

These implementations ensure that each graduate demonstrates the complete achievement of the declared learning outcomes, justifying the granting of the title of Doctor of Theology.

The evaluation system of the doctoral program follows a *logical progression* over the four years of study, adapting to the gradual development of the student's skills. In the first year, the assessment focuses on verifying the acquisition of basic and methodological competences through the fundamental disciplines (DD 0501, DD 0502) and specialisation in the field (DD 0101-0102), ensuring a solid foundation for future research. The second year marks the transition to assessing the practical application of these skills in the student's own research, through the development and implementation of the research project, the first publication and the presentation of the results at scientific events.

The last two years of the program are dedicated to assessing academic autonomy and the quality of the original contribution. The third year verifies the student's ability to work independently by writing thesis chapters and publishing the second scientific article, demonstrating research maturity and dissemination skills. The final year culminates with the comprehensive assessment of the acquired expertise and original contribution through the pre-defense and public defense of the thesis, where the student demonstrates the complete achievement of all the learning outcomes of the program and the ability to function as an independent expert in the chosen theological field.

The quality of the evaluation system is maintained through continuous monitoring and adjustment mechanisms. The periodic analysis of the results of the evaluations identifies the weaknesses in the learning process and allows the evaluation criteria to be updated based on the feedback received from students, doctoral supervisors and other experts present in the process (steering committee, etc.). Regular training of evaluators ensures consistency in the application of criteria and maintenance of high-level quality standards, and exchanges of experience with other similar institutions facilitate the adoption of good practices and the improvement of examination and evaluation methodologies.

In the medium term (5 years), the PTI plans a benchmarking with doctoral programs in theology from other universities in Europe for the eventual calibration of quality standards and identification of opportunities for improvement. This process of continuous evaluation and adjustment will involve stakeholders – students and graduates, doctoral supervisors, external experts and representatives of potential employers – ensuring that the program remains relevant to the contemporary needs of the theological field and the academic labour market.

3.2.6. Criterion B.7. Procedures and practices relating to the admission competition, the course, recognition and equivalence of studies, and the certification of results

S.B.7.1. Admission

The admission procedures and principles ensure access to higher education.

1. Organisational component

The Doctoral School within IOSUD has a detailed *Methodology* for the organisation of admission, accompanied by a clearly defined operational procedure, which also includes the standard forms used in this process (10 forms – see [Anexa 009 A.1.1](#)). The admission methodology is developed in accordance with the national legislation and the applicable internal regulations (IOSUD Regulation and Regulation of the Doctoral School).

The Operational Procedure (PO-CSUD-301) specifies the timing structure of the steps, the administrative actions corresponding to each step and the entities responsible for carrying them out.

(1) The summer session of the admission process follows this calendar:

Period	Activity	Officer
1-15 March	Establishing the number of seats and themes	SDS Council
16-31 March	Publication of admission information	Secretariat
1 April– 15 May	Online registration of applications	Candidates
16-31 May	Checking files and communicating with candidates	Secretariat
1-10 June	Establishment of admission commissions	Director of SDS
15-30 June	Conduct of the contest	Committees
1-5 July	Display of results and management of appeals	Secretariat
10 July	Completion of the process and registration	Secretariat

(2) The autumn session of the admission process follows this calendar:

Period	Activity	Officer
10-15 July	Determining the additional places available	SDS Council
16-31 July	Publication of information for the second session	Secretariat
1 August– 15 August	Online registration of applications	Candidates
16-31 August	Checking Folders	Secretariat
1-10 September	Setting up committees	Director of SDS
15-25 September	Conduct of the contest	Committees
26-30 September	Final results and registration	Secretariat

According to the Methodology of admission, the competition consists of at least three elements:

- Analysis and evaluation of *the academic portfolio* (20% of the score), especially previous preparation based on transcripts, master's thesis, eventual previous scientific activities. The minimum eliminatory grade is 70 points (out of 100).
- *Specialised written test* (50% of the score), based on a theme and bibliography announced at least 6 months in advance; duration is 2 hours, and the minimum eliminatory grade is 70 points (out of 100).
- *Academic interview* (30% of the score), consisting of the presentation of the research project and academic dialogue. The minimum eliminatory grade is 70 points (out of 100).

Depending on the specifics of the sub-field, the Council of the Doctoral School may approve the introduction of *additional eliminatory tests* (e.g. biblical or Latin languages), evaluated as “admitted”/“rejected”.

The admission methodology also establishes *detailed evaluation grids*, designed to ensure objectivity and transparency in the evaluation of the three components of the admission competition (see Annex 2 – Detailed grids in [Anexa 009 A.1.1](#)).

The current digital platform (<https://proteo.cj.edu.ro/ro/admitere/doctorat>) provides basic support for the administration of the admission process (communication, registration, document upload), and a dedicated platform for the integration of the entire administrative flow according to the doctoral process is being developed.

2. Equity and support measures for vulnerable groups

The Protestant Theological Institute (PTI) considers vulnerable categories people with physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities, people in precarious economic situations, as well as those from families without academic tradition. The access of students with disabilities is already integrated into the current educational practice of the institution, which is demonstrated by the presence of visually impaired students at the bachelor's and master's levels. Raising awareness and promoting priority support to these categories are included in the curriculum, through activities such as workshops organised together with the National Association of the Blind and Amblyopic in Hungary and the Faculty of Special Pedagogy „Bárczi Gusztáv” of the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) within the framework of Catechetics courses (BA 3rd year). At the institutional level, PTI has a collaboration contract with the „Cozmuța Flora” Special School in Cluj-Napoca, which allows the practice of catechetical to be carried out with students with special educational needs.

Thus, the institution has experience in working with vulnerable groups, learning methods which can also be adapted, if necessary, in doctoral studies.

PTI also offers [special scholarships](#) for students in precarious economic situations, established on the basis of a socio-economic assessment carried out at the beginning of each academic year. At the same time, the Erasmus mobility program provides additional funding opportunities for first-generation university students, or other vulnerable categories.

Within IOSUD, PTI has integrated into the regulation clear support measures for vulnerable categories (see IOSUD Regulation – Art. 31): full exemption from admission and tuition fees for people orphaned by both parents or with a serious financial situation; partial exemption of 50% for students from families with income below the minimum wage per member; as well as the possibility of granting a personalised rate for special situations.

S.B.7.2. Students' academic progress

1. Applicable regulatory framework

The Protestant Theological Institute applies a complete regulatory framework for the professional activity of doctoral students, structured in the following forms:

- Regulation for the organisation and conduct of doctoral studies / IOSUD Regulation ([Anexa_007_A.1.1](#));
- Regulation of the Doctoral School ([Anexa_008_A.1.1](#));
- Methodology for evaluating the academic progress of doctoral students ([Anexa_010_A.1.1](#)) including all related procedures and forms;
- Doctoral studies contract ([Anexa_025_B.7.2](#)).

The methodology for evaluating the course of studies contains the following major elements:

- Evaluation system on four levels: formative evaluation (continuous consultations), summative evaluation (subjects and semester reports), evaluation along the way (complementary activities DC 0100-0900) and final evaluation (pre-defense and defense of the thesis).
- Specific performance indicators by years: Year I – Methodological foundation and project definition, Year II – Research development and first publication, Year III – Consolidation of results and second publication, Year IV – Thesis completion and defense.
- The assessment tools are standardised by: half-yearly progress reports, mandatory annual presentations to the Steering Committee and a permanently updated electronic academic portfolio.
- Support and remedial measures such as: academic counselling, mentoring, adjustment of the individual plan, clear procedures.
- Clear definition of responsibilities for all parties: student, leader, steering committee and doctoral school.

The methodology for evaluating the academic path of doctoral students fully complies with the IOSUD Regulation (Art. 74) and is based on the structure of the Individual research plan (240 ECTS, DC coding, mandatory minimum requirements).

2. Approval and monitoring procedures

The Doctoral School has detailed operational guidelines and procedures related to the Methodology for the evaluation of the academic path, accompanied by standardised forms and models

for the provided annexes (see also the compendium of procedures related to the doctoral program in [Anexa 012 A.1.1](#)). These include: the model of the semester progress report, the evaluation sheet of the doctoral supervisor, the guide for the annual progress presentation, the minutes of the annual presentation, as well as the procedure for solving appeals, together with the related templates and models (see Annexes to the Methodology for evaluating the academic progress of doctoral students).

By developing and implementing a detailed methodology for the evaluation of the academic progress of doctoral students, IOSUD – Protestant Theological Institute provides a coherent and transparent framework for monitoring, support and evaluation. Operational procedures, standardised tools and clearly defined responsibilities guarantee both the progressive development of doctoral students' academic and scientific competences and the uniform application of assessment criteria. At the same time, rigorous records and periodic reporting provide the basis for continuous improvement of the process. In this way, the SB 7.2 standard – Students' academic progress and organisational component is met, contributing to strengthening the quality and relevance of doctoral training.

3. DOMAIN C. Quality Management

For the first accreditation of a doctoral field, a self-assessment is required regarding the fulfilment of criteria C.3 and C.8.

3.3.1. Criterion C.3. Procedures for the initiation, monitoring and periodic review of programs and fields of study and activities carried out, involving students, employers and other stakeholders

The Protestant Theological Institute (PTI) has a Commission for Evaluation and Quality Assurance (CEAC), which also includes student representatives, to guarantee their involvement in decision-making processes on academic quality. At the institutional level, quality management is regulated by:

- [Regulation on Quality Assessment and Assurance](#);
- [Rules of Operation of the Commission for Quality Assessment and Assurance](#);
- [Regulation on the initiation, approval, monitoring and periodic evaluation of study programs](#);

Dedicated operational procedures have been developed for doctoral studies, which ensure a systematic and transparent approach ([Anexa 012 A.1.1](#)).

- Procedure for initiation of new field/doctoral program (PO-CSUD-101);
- Procedure for curriculum review (PO-CSUD-102);
- Procedure for performance evaluation for doctoral supervisors (PO-CSUD-201);
- Procedure for admission for doctoral studies (PO-CSUD-301);
- Procedure for monitoring the progress of doctoral students (PO-CSUD-302);

- Procedure for solving appeals regarding the evaluation of doctoral students (PO-CSUD-303);
- Procedure for the analysis of similarities for doctoral theses (PO-CSUD-304);
- Procedure for initiating the public defense of the doctoral thesis (PO-CSUD-305);
- Procedure for annual internal audit (PO-CSUD-501);
- Procedure for international benchmarking (PO-CSUD-502);
- Procedure for monitoring quality indicators (PO-CSUD-503).

These procedures are complemented by the internal evaluation tools (Half-yearly progress reports, Evaluation sheets completed by doctoral supervisors, Annual evaluation minutes), contributing to a continuous, multidimensional and participatory evaluation of the doctoral path.

The involvement of stakeholders – doctoral students, doctoral supervisors, administrative structures, as well as church representatives – reflects the common interest in a transparent doctoral process that is relevant and adapted to the requirements of academia and society.

The summative results of the evaluations will be/are published through dynamic online reports (e.g. evaluation of teaching processes, <https://proteo.cj.edu.ro/ro/evaluation>) or in the form of official reports and releases (<https://office.proteo.hu/ro/communications>).

3.3.2. Criterion C.8. Participation in external evaluation processes, according to the law

Through this self-evaluation report, prepared for the first time for the doctoral study program, the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca submits, in accordance with the legal provisions, to the external quality evaluation process.

IV. SWOT Analysis

1. Internal factors

1.1. Strengths

1. Academic capital and institutional experience

- Academic tradition of 75 years in higher education and 130 years of theological presence in the current location.
- Substantial previous doctoral experience (1948-2013): more than 100 PhD students enrolled, 78 graduates.
- Five doctoral supervisors with acquired rights, trained at prestigious universities (Netherlands, Hungary).
- Solid scientific production: 201 BDI articles, 13 ISI/ERIH, 29 published books, 479 cumulative citations.

2. Infrastructure and material resources

- Historical monument building completely rehabilitated (investments of 15 million lei in 2015-2020)
- Library with a collection of 100,000 volumes, including rare collections from the XVI-XVII centuries
- Access to prestigious international databases (ATLA, SZAKTARS, ARCANUM)
- Specialised software licenses for theological research (Logos Academic Pro)
- Spaces dedicated to research: collective, individual rooms, accessible church archives

3. Mature digital ecosystem

- Functional integrated digital platforms since 2007 (Neptun, Office, Repo, Mob)
- Consolidated experience in the digitisation of educational and administrative processes
- Own institutional repository for the dissemination of research
- Three indexed own scientific journals (Református Szemle, Keresztény Magvető, Studia Doctorum Theologiae Protestantis)

4. Unique Academic Positioning

- Protestant institution with PhD potential in Romania
- Internal confessional diversity (4 Major Protestant Traditions)
- Teaching capacity in Hungarian – regional competitive advantage
- Strong international networks (20+ Erasmus agreements, study/research institutions)

5. Solid regulatory and organisational framework

- Comprehensive regulations and methodologies developed according to standards
- Comprehensive system of operational procedures (15 specific procedures)
- Clearly defined governance structures (IOSUD, CSUD, Doctoral School)
- Quality assurance mechanisms implemented

1.2. Weaknesses

1. Dimensional and structural limitations

- Small institutional size (120 total undergraduate and master's students)
- Discontinuity in doctoral activity (interruption 2013-2025)
- Limited number of full-time teachers (15 people)
- Estimated initial capacity limited (estimated 3-4 PhD students/supervisor in the first years)

2. Resources and development

- Financial dependence on founding churches and external funds
- The need for continued investment in digital infrastructure, including the IOSUD platform

- The need for continuous investments in material infrastructure (spaces for doctoral students)
- Lack of a dedicated doctoral scientific secretary (to be hired)

3. Experience and visibility

- International academic visibility still developing
- Absence of an initial critical mass of doctoral students
- The need for training for supervision according to the new standards

2. External factors

2.1. Opportunities

1. Educational demand and institutional support

- Confirmed interest from graduates (21% want doctoral studies)
- Declared Support and Resources Promised by Founding Churches
- Consistent ARACIS recommendations for the development of cycle III
- Potential to attract students from the regional Hungarian community

2. Strategic positioning and partnerships

- Central location in Cluj-Napoca, major university centre
- Access to the academic community of the Carpathian Basin
- Functioning international partnerships (Erasmus+ 300,000 euro)
- Complementary funding programs (Makovecz, Gustav-Adolf)

3. Academic and societal niches

- Growing need for specialists in interreligious dialogue
- Potential for interdisciplinary theology-social sciences research
- Capitalising on the Protestant heritage in Transylvania
- Development of comparative studies in a multicultural context

4. Favourable trends

- Increased interest in religious studies in the post-pandemic context
- Digitalisation facilitates international collaborations
- European funds available for academic development
- Opening for joint/double degree programs

2.2. Threats

1. Competitive and demographic context

- Intense competition with large universities (Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj, Hungarian universities)

- Downward demographic trend in Romania
- Migration of young people from Protestant communities

2. Sustainability and resources

- Legislative instability and frequent changes to the legal framework
- Vulnerability to financial fluctuations of supporting churches
- Rising costs of maintaining international standards
- Pressure for self-financing in the university system

3. Relevance and legitimacy

- Accelerated secularisation in Romanian society
- Diminished public perception of the relevance of theological studies in Eastern Europe
- Risk of academic isolation without sufficient critical mass

4. Systemic factors

- Excessive bureaucracy in accreditation and evaluation processes
- ARACIS, CNATDCU, etc. standards constantly changing
- Pressures for internationalisation without adequate resources

STRATEGIC CONCLUSIONS:

The SWOT analysis highlights a solid potential for the launch of the doctoral program, with clear competitive advantages (uniqueness, tradition, infrastructure), but also significant challenges related to size and sustainability. Success will depend on smart capitalisation of opportunities (partnerships, funding, academic niches) and proactive threat management through strategic differentiation and gradual consolidation.

V. Main challenges and development directions

(See also SWOT analysis, points 1.2 and 2.2).

1. Challenges identified

The internal analysis highlights three major categories of challenges for the implementation and sustainable development of the doctoral program:

1. Dimensional and structural challenges. The small size of the institution (120 bachelor's and master's students, 15 teaching staff) is the main structural challenge. The discontinuity of doctoral activity (2013-2025) requires, to some extent, the reconstruction of the culture and practices of advanced research, especially in terms of thinking in different structures (BA/MA, independent research) than before. The limited initial capacity (3-4 PhD students/supervisor) and the absence of a critical mass of PhD students in the first years may affect the academic dynamics and financial sustainability of the program.

2. Resource and visibility challenges. Financial dependence on the founding churches creates vulnerability to external economic fluctuations. The intense competition with large universities in Romania and Hungary to attract candidates of excellence, combined with the downward demographic trend and the migration of young people from Protestant communities, pose significant threats to future recruitment.

3. Systemic and societal challenges. Accelerated secularisation reduces public perception of the relevance of theological studies (although, interestingly, upward trends tend to emerge in confessional institutions in Western Europe). Frequent changes to the legislative framework and CNATDCU standards require costly continuous adaptations. Pressures for internationalisation, without adequate systemically allocated resources, create tensions between aspirations and real capacity.

2. Strategic directions of development

In order to transform challenges into opportunities, PTI proposes the following priority directions:

1. Gradual consolidation and strategic differentiation (2026-2028)

- Gradual development from 6 to 18 PhD students in the first 3 years.
- Harnessing the unique competitive advantage: the only Protestant institution with a doctorate in Romania.
- Focus on distinct academic niches: Transylvanian Protestant heritage, studies in Hungarian, inter-Protestant dialogue.

2. Internationalisation and strategic partnerships (2027-2030)

- Intensifying collaborations with universities abroad.
- Development of co-mentorship programs with Erasmus+ partner institutions.
- Creation of a regional centre of excellence in Protestant studies.

3. Financial and operational sustainability (permanent)

- Diversifying funding sources, in particular by attracting funds through external donors (academic and church contacts abroad).
- Implementation of the balanced model: 33% scholarships, 33% free, 33% fee-bearing.
- Cost optimisation through advanced digitalisation and operational efficiency.

4. Development of academic and digital infrastructure (2026-2027)

- Completion of the dedicated digital platform for doctoral management.
- Expanding access to international databases and digital resources.
- Modernisation of individual research spaces for doctoral students.

Success indicators for 2030: 30 active PhD students, 6-8 theses completed annually, 80% completion rate on time, minimum 2 international research projects, positioning as a regional reference centre in Protestant studies.

VI. Annexes

0. [Anexa_000](#) Estimare_buget_IOSUD
1. [Anexa_001](#) Document_de_infiintare_1948
2. [Anexa_002](#) Scurt_istoric_al_tranzițiilor_administrative_importante
3. [Anexa_003](#) Raport_de_oportunitate
4. [Anexa_004](#) Hotarare_infiintare_IOSUD
5. [Anexa_005](#) Organigrama-2025
6. [Anexa_006](#) Doctori_ITP_1948_2013
7. [Anexa_007_A.1.1](#) Regulament_de_organizare_și_desfășurare
8. [Anexa_008_A.1.1](#) Regulament Școala Doctorală
9. [Anexa_009_A.1.1](#) Metodologia_de_admitere_studii_doctorale
10. [Anexa_010_A.1.1](#) Metodologia_de_evaluare_a_parcursului_academic
11. [Anexa_011_A.1.1](#) Metodologia_elaborarii_tezei_de_doctorat
12. [Anexa_012_A.1.1](#) Proceduri_operăționale_sistremul_de_management_al_calitatii
13. [Anexa_013_A.1.1](#) Plan_de_dezvoltare_strategica
14. [Anexa_014_A.2.1](#) Contract-comodat-ITP-ERA
15. [Anexa_015_A.2.1](#) Lista spațiilor-ITP
16. [Anexa_016_A.2.1](#) Acorduri_de_cercetare_arhive_bisericesti
17. [Anexa_017_A.3.1](#) Profilul_academic_conducatori_doctorat
18. [Anexa_018_A.3.1](#) Experiență_profesională_coordonare_teze
19. [Anexa_019_B.1.1](#) Plan_individual_cercetare
20. [Anexa_020_B.1.1](#) Fișele_disciplinelor
21. [Anexa_021_B.4.1](#) Logos_academic_licences
22. [Anexa_022_B.4.1](#) Burse_Makovecz_studenti
23. [Anexa_023_B.4.1](#) Mobility_projects
24. [Anexa_024_B.5.1](#) Corespondența_rezultatele_învățării
25. [Anexa_025_B.7.2](#) Contract_cadru_studii_doctorale