

Doctoral School of Innovation Management
Strategic Plan (2026-2030)

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategic objective of the Innovation Management Doctoral School (IMDS) is to become one of the leading doctoral programs in innovation management in Hungary and Central Europe by 2030.

The School intends to operate as a scientific center that simultaneously serves academic excellence, the practical utilization of innovation, and the development of the next generation of researchers.

The long-term vision of the IMDS is to become one of the leading innovation management research think tanks in the region, shaping innovation discourse not only at the academic level, but also in economic and public policy contexts.

The strategy is based on the principle that the IMDS should follow a gradual and sustainable development trajectory. Accordingly, 2026 will be the year of organizational development, baseline data establishment, creation of institutional mechanisms, and pilot interventions. Actual performance targets will appear from 2027 onwards.

The strategy is built on five pillars:

1. Scientific excellence and publication performance
2. Development of research workshops and thematic research groups
3. Student success and career support
4. Internationalization and mobility
5. Measurable, sustainable, and impact-oriented institutional operation

2. MISSION AND VISION

2.1 Mission

The aim of the IMDS is to create an interdisciplinary doctoral and research environment in the field of innovation management that is capable of connecting approaches from business sciences, social sciences, technology, and public policy.

The Doctoral School educates researchers and professionals who are able to contribute to the management of innovation with scientific rigor and practical relevance.

2.2 Vision 2030 (Base Year: 2026)

| Strategic Area | SMART Objective | KPI Indicator | Baseline Value (2026) | Target Value (2030) | Deadline | Responsible |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Active Research Community | Increase the number of scientifically active supervisors in order to strengthen human capacity | Number of active researchers | 19 persons | 25 persons | 31.12. 2030 | Head of Doctoral School |
| Research Community | Establish staff stability through continuous professional support | Staff retention rate | – | 80% | Annual measurement | Doctoral Council |
| Increase Scientific Performance among Students | Increase the number of Scopus/WoS indexed publications | Annual number of publications | 15 (2025) | 20/year | 31.12. 2030 | Deputy Head |
| Increase Scientific Performance among Students | Increase the proportion of high-prestige publications | Number of D1/Q1/Q2 articles | 11 (2025) | 15/year | 31.12. 2030 | Deputy Head |
| Internationalization | Increase the share of internationally co-authored research | Ratio of internationally co-authored publications | % | 10% | 31.12. 2030 | Deputy Head |
| Partnerships | Expand the number of active strategic partners | Number of partner institutions | 28 | 30 | 31.12. 2030 | Head |
| Partnerships | Increase joint research projects | Number of joint projects | 0 | 3/year | 31.12. 2030 | Deputy Head |
| Student Success | Establish a comprehensive mentoring system | Ratio of students participating in mentoring program | 0% | 50% | 31.12. 2028 | Secretary |
| Student Success | Reduce dropout | Dropout rate | 11% | Below 8% | 31.12. 2030 | Head |
| Student Success | Improve degree completion efficiency | Ratio completing degree on time | – | 80% | 31.12. 2030 | Deputy Head |
| Professional Visibility of Students | Strengthen professional presence of the institution | Number of conference presentations | 33 | 40/year | 31.12. 2030 | Deputy Head |

2.3 Monitoring Framework

- Annual review: every January
- Mid-term evaluation: 2028
- Final evaluation: 2030
- Reporting forum: Doctoral School Council

3. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The importance of innovation management continues to grow as technological and economic transformations create new challenges in research, organization, and leadership.

Priority areas of increasing significance include:

- digitalization,
- artificial intelligence,
- agri-food innovations,
- health industry technologies,
- creative industries,
- sustainable and resource-efficient economy,

- energy and climate transition,
- advanced service systems, and
- frontier technologies, including developments in the space industry.

These priorities are aligned with the designated focus areas of Hungary's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3), and also fit the strategic directions of Óbuda University, particularly in the development of artificial intelligence and health informatics, strengthening the investor university model, and expanding industrial and academic cooperation within the framework of third mission activities.

Accordingly, doctoral education in innovation management has the important task of training experts and producing scientific results capable of supporting the social and economic utilization of technological progress, as well as enhancing competitiveness at national and international level.

In Hungary and Central Europe, there is an increasing need for doctoral programs that interpret innovation not exclusively as a technological issue, but as an organizational, economic, social, and regulatory process.

The IMDS intends to respond to these needs.

4. SWOT ANALYSIS

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|--|
| Modern, future-oriented scientific profile focused on innovation management | Limited domestic and international brand recognition |
| Interdisciplinary operation integrating engineering, business, and management fields | Number of internationally outstanding leading researchers should be further strengthened |
| Joint presence of engineering and management perspectives provides unique positioning | Need to further increase the proportion of high-quality (Q1/Q2) publications |
| Strong alignment with the technological and innovation focus of Óbuda University | Lack of formalized student, alumni, and career support systems |
| Good cooperation potential with corporate, industrial, and public sector actors | Formal policy and corporate advisory network requires development |
| Practice-oriented and applied research approach | Difficult coordination between doctoral participation of practitioners and industrial experience of full-time students |
| Flexible and rapidly adaptable research agenda | Limited international recruitment capacity and foreign-language teaching capacity |
| Opportunities | Risks |
| EU and national RDI programs (Horizon Europe, NKFIH, EIT) | Increasing international competition in doctoral education |
| Development of Óbuda University's innovation ecosystem (technology parks, tech transfer, spin-offs, OUVC) | Funding uncertainty and cyclical nature of grant sources |
| Strengthening investor university model and third mission role | Student dropout and talent drain |
| Growing demand for executive / industrial PhD programs | Limited innovation intensity of domestic industry |
| Development of AI, healthtech, agrifood tech, climate tech, advanced manufacturing, and space tech | Low corporate openness toward industrial-academic doctoral cooperation |
| Expansion of international innovation governance and technology policy research | Rapid obsolescence of certain research focuses due to technological change |
| Strengthening regional innovation knowledge hub role in Central Europe | Declining general interest in doctoral studies in certain fields |

Based on the SWOT analysis, the most important foundations of the development of the IMDS Doctoral School are its modern innovation management profile, interdisciplinary approach, and close connection to the technological and innovation environment of Óbuda University.

These characteristics create the opportunity for the Doctoral School to become a nationally significant and internationally visible knowledge center.

Key priorities for the next strategic period:

1. Strengthening international visibility and brand building
2. Involving outstanding researchers and international supervisors
3. Increasing Q1/Q2 publication performance
4. Building corporate, industrial, and policy advisory networks
5. Creating flexible executive and industrial PhD models
6. Institutional utilization of the advantages of the university innovation ecosystem

A particularly important strategic task is to establish a doctoral operating model capable of connecting practical innovation management experience with scientific excellence.

In the long run, this may become one of the IMDS’s most important competitive advantages both domestically and internationally.

5. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2026–2030

5.1 SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE AND INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY

The IMDS aims to increase the annual number of Scopus/WoS indexed publications by at least 25% between 2026 and 2030, and to achieve a minimum of 15 D1/Q1/Q2 journal articles annually.

In 2026, publication baseline data will be recorded, research priorities will be designated, and a performance incentive system will be introduced.

Regarding scientific performance, a realistic objective is that from 2027 onward a gradual but clear qualitative improvement will be achieved in the proportion of prestigious international publications, while the number of internationally co-authored publications will also progressively increase.

The Doctoral School encourages doctoral students’ publication activity, joint papers with supervisors, and publications prepared with foreign co-authors.

| Indicator | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|---|-------------|------|------|------|------|
| Publication baseline assessment | completed | – | – | – | – |
| Ratio of D1–Q1–Q2 publications | baseline | 10% | 15% | 20% | 25% |
| Ratio of internationally co-authored publications | baseline | 3% | 5% | 7% | 10% |
| Number of international joint publications | preparation | 1–2 | 2–3 | 3–4 | 4–5 |

5.2 DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH WORKSHOPS AND RESEARCH GROUPS

The key to the professional identity of the Doctoral School is the establishment of thematic research groups.

Planned focus areas:

- SME innovation and smile-curve upgrading
- RDI ecosystem and collaborations
- Technology foresight and forecasting
- Niche technologies: artificial intelligence, healthcare innovation, climate industry technologies

During the development of research group performance, the principle of gradualism should be applied.

In the initial period, it should already be considered an achievement if the groups conduct regular professional workshops, prepare joint research plans, and begin publication and dissemination activities.

For sustainable operation, research groups should function within formal organizational frameworks. Each research group should have:

- a designated name and research profile
- a responsible leader
- annual work plan and objectives
- defined funding background (faculty, institutional, or project sources)
- performance indicators
- annual professional reporting obligation

In the medium term, it is advisable that each research group should include at least 2–3 supervisors and 4–6 doctoral students, ensuring critical mass and continuous scientific output.

| Indicator | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Pilot research groups | 2–3 | – | – | – | – |
| Stable active research groups | – | at least 3 | at least 3 | 3–4 | 3–4 |
| Prestigious publications per group | pilot | 1 | 1–2 | 2 | 2–3 |
| Public IMDS Research Day | preparation | annually 1 | annually 1 | annually 1 | annually 1 |

This approach enables research groups to evolve into genuine professional collaborations.

5.3 STUDENT SUCCESS AND CAREER SUPPORT

A key objective of the Doctoral School is student retention, support for degree completion, and reduction of dropout.

For this purpose, the IMDS will introduce:

- mentor–tutor system
- regular progress reporting
- exploration of dropout causes
- psychological, administrative, and financial support schemes
- student wellbeing program

| Indicator | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Mentor–tutor system | design | full introduction | operational | operational | operational |
| Student reporting system | pilot | full-scale | operational | operational | operational |
| Dropout rate | baseline measurement | 11% | 10% | 8% | 8% |
| Degree completion | – | (2023 foundation year considered baseline) | 50% | 70% | 80% |

Improving degree completion rates and reducing dropout cannot be achieved in a short time; therefore, realistic step-by-step development targets must be defined.

The objective is not merely administrative monitoring, but the creation of a supportive environment where doctoral students can find a retaining professional, human, and institutional community.

5.4 INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION AND MOBILITY

The IMDS aims to gradually expand its international presence and establish cooperation with internationally recognized institutions and researchers in innovation management and innovation theory.

By 2030, the objective is to conclude at least five international cooperation agreements with institutions recognized in the field of innovation management, in order to facilitate joint research projects and joint high-quality publications (minimum three occasions annually).

This includes:

- involvement of foreign guest lecturers
- appointment of co-supervisors
- international partnership agreements
- partial studies abroad and study visits
- expansion of foreign-language course offerings

| Indicator | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| New partners | relationship building | 1–2 | 1–2 | 2 | 2 |
| Participation of foreign lecturers | preparation | appears | expands | stable | strengthens |
| Foreign-language courses | baseline | slight growth | further growth | gradual expansion | significant expansion |
| Mobility programs | planning | minimum 2 students | minimum 4 students | minimum 4 students | minimum 5 students |

In the field of internationalization, the strategy is also based on gradual development: first creating durable relations and forms of cooperation, then institutionalizing them in education and research.

5.5 SCIENTIFIC PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND IMPACT-ORIENTED EVALUATION

The IMDS aims to create an evaluation model that, beyond traditional metrics applied in STEM fields, also considers achievements in social sciences, business and management sciences, organizational sciences, and public policy performance.

In this area, 2026 will focus on prototype and indicator development, pilot operation may begin in 2027, and afterwards the system may gradually be integrated into the operation of the Doctoral School.

This may include:

- policy impact
- public policy studies
- accessible science communication
- corporate utilization
- dissemination activity

| Indicator | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|----------|
| Prototype system | completed | – | – | – | – |
| Pilot operation | – | launched | operational | – | – |
| Annual performance report | preparation | first report | annually | annually | annually |
| Integrated operation | – | – | partial | stable | full |

This strategic objective may contribute to creating a modern and fair performance evaluation model tailored to the specific profile of the IMDS.

6. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The implementation of the strategic objectives will take place in several phases.

The year 2026 will primarily be dedicated to preparation, the establishment of organizational frameworks, the launch of pilot programs, and baseline assessments.

The period of 2027–2028 will serve the stabilization of operating models and the emergence of the first measurable results.

During 2029–2030, the focus will be placed on consolidating systems, evaluation, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

| Area | 2026 | 2027–2028 | 2029–2030 |
|----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Research groups | establishment, pilot phase | stable operation | evaluation, sustainability |
| Student support | system development | operation and improvement | impact measurement |
| Internationalization | partner building | expansion of mobility | network-based operation |
| Publications | incentive system | qualitative growth | stable excellence |
| Evaluation system | indicator development | pilot phase | integration |

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The implementation of the strategic plan shall follow the PDCA principle (Plan–Do–Check–Act), ensuring continuous improvement and results-oriented operation.

- Plan: definition of strategic goals, annual work plans, and KPIs
- Do: implementation of measures and development programs
- Check: preparation of annual reports and biennial impact assessments
- Act: adoption of corrective measures, target modifications, and development interventions

The implementation of the strategic plan shall be evaluated through annual monitoring reports and comprehensive impact assessments every two years.

An annual report shall be prepared for the Doctoral Council (DIT).

The objective of the monitoring system is not merely control, but the support of a learning institutional model.

Annual reports provide an opportunity for the IMDS to continuously review its own operation and, where necessary, implement corrective actions.

Responsible Units

| Responsible Unit | Main Task |
|---|---|
| Head of Doctoral School | Strategic governance, supervision of implementation of objectives |
| Doctoral School Council | Decision preparation, approval, professional oversight |
| Secretary of Doctoral School | Operational execution, coordination of action plans |
| Research Monitoring Committee (Chair: Deputy Head) | Scientific performance evaluation, KPI monitoring |
| Supervisors | Student progress, support of research output |
| Administration | Data collection, reporting, registry management |

8. SUSTAINABILITY AND PROFESSIONAL INTEGRATION

A prerequisite for the long-term success of the IMDS is that it should function not only as an educational unit, but also as a broader innovation knowledge center.

For this purpose, it is important to ensure researcher succession, strengthen links with master's programs, support the practical utilization of research results, and establish and expand the domestic innovation management network.

From a sustainability perspective, it is crucial that the Doctoral School be able to ensure the following conditions:

- provision of researcher pipeline
- one-stop quality assurance support for the university's innovation-related educational programs
- launch of innovation specialization within master's education
- practical utilization of research results (policy briefs, professional studies)
- establishment and expansion of the national innovation management network
- building an active alumni community

9. CLOSING REMARKS

The strategic plan of the IMDS defines a realistic and gradual development path that simultaneously builds on scientific excellence, institutional stability, and practical innovation impact.

The strategy is based not on excessive short-term commitments, but on conscious institution-building.

Accordingly, 2026 is not the year of achieving target values, but the period of creating operational foundations.

The real results will begin to emerge gradually from 2027 onward, and by 2030 they will outline the image of a stable, visible, and professionally recognized doctoral school.

As a result, by 2030 the IMDS may become one of the leading doctoral research communities in innovation studies in Hungary and the wider region.