



CENTRAL REGULATIONS FOR THE CONFERRAL OF THE ACADEMIC TITLE OF DOCTOR

VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL

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PREAMBLE

These regulations are complemented by the *Doctoral Schools Regulations of the VUB*, the *Decision concerning the establishment of the PhD programme at the VUB* and the applicable supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

The following terms used in these regulations are defined as follows:

- Liaison Officer for Scientific Integrity: in the first line, this liaison officer can provide information about the procedure to be followed in the event of scientific misconduct. The liaison officer is the official contact point for reporting scientific misconduct and will carry out the preliminary investigation.
- CDO: PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (*Commissie voor de Doctoraatsopvolging*)
- Commission on disputes concerning doctoral progress: a permanent advisory body in the context of disputes relating to continuation of doctoral thesis. This advisory body will issue a binding opinion to the Academic Council, and is made up of a delegation of members from the Academic Council.
- Dean: The dean of the faculty in which the PhD candidate registers or of the faculty with which the Independent Academic Staff (ZAP) supervisor is primarily affiliated.
- PhD Training Programme: The training for PhD candidates organised within each faculty by the Doctoral Schools, as set out in the *Decision concerning the establishment of the PhD programme at the VUB* (11/12/2007).
- PhD candidates within the joint PhD framework: the incoming and outgoing doctoral candidates.
- The competent faculty body: the relevant or statutory competent board within the faculty
- EhB: Erasmushogeschool Brussel.
- EVC: previously acquired competence (*eerder verworven competentie*).
- FRE: Framework for Research Ethics
- Joint PhD: a PhD thesis that is being written and defended under the joint responsibility of the VUB and one or more partner institution(s), leading to a double PhD degree or a joint PhD degree with the title of doctor, in which the conditions laid down in Article II.172 of the Higher Education Codex of 20 December 2013 are met.
- Main institution: The main institution shall be determined in the context of a joint PhD based on one or more of the following elements: a) Financing: institution that finances (the largest part of) the PhD research or the institution to which the supervisor belongs, at which the application for external financing was made; b) Presence: institution where the majority of the doctoral research takes place, where the PhD candidate will be most present; c) Start: institution where the PhD candidate started his doctoral research, where the PhD candidate is the first registered. If these criteria are insufficient to distinguish between the two partners, an institution shall be designated as the main institution by mutual agreement.
- ICDO: Interdisciplinary PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (*Interdisciplinaire Commissie voor Doctoraatsopvolging*)
- Incoming PhD candidate: a PhD candidate preparing a joint PhD for which the VUB is the host institution.
- Interdisciplinary PhD: a PhD that extends over various fields of expertise, which means that the PhD candidate can be linked to several faculties.

- KCB: Royal Conservatory of Brussels (*Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel*).
- OWSA: Education and Student Administration (*Onderwijs- en Studenten Administratie*)
- OZR: the Research Council (*Onderzoeksraad*).
- Supervisor-spokesperson: is responsible for the budgets of the PhD candidate(s) to be supervised
- RITCS: Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound
- Outgoing PhD candidate: a PhD candidate preparing a joint PhD for which the VUB is the home institution.
- VUB: the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.
- ZAP: Independent Academic Staff (*Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel*)

All references to persons and functions in these regulations can refer to either men or women. Only the Dutch versions of these regulations are considered legally binding..

Section I. Area of application

Article 1 - General information

§1. These regulations establish the requirements and the procedure governing the acquisition of the degree of Doctor at the VUB. To the extent to which it is explicitly authorised in these regulations, the competent faculty body can further develop the provisions of these regulations in an additional faculty doctoral regulation, which will be subject to approval by the Education Council (*Onderwijsraad*).

§2. In the event of a joint PhD, derogations may be granted from the provisions included in these Regulations and in the Supplementary PhD Regulations for the faculty to which the joint PhD relates, provided that they do not conflict with prevailing legislation and regulations and that the approval of the relevant competent faculty body is obtained for each derogation in each particular case.

Article 2 - The academic title of doctor

§1. The VUB awards doctoral degrees in the disciplines mentioned in Appendix I of these regulations.

Appendix I can be modified and supplemented following a justified proposal from the competent faculty body to the Educational Board. The Appendix can be subject to change at all times.

§2. An academic PhD degree can only be awarded by the VUB in or across the fields of study, or parts of the fields of study for which the university has the authority to offer course programmes leading to a master's degree by virtue of Article II.82 of the Codex Higher Education of 20th December 2013 (*Codex Hoger Onderwijs*). Where the VUB can offer only bachelor programmes in certain fields of study or parts of fields of study, the PhD degree in or about these fields of study can only be awarded on condition that the public defence of the PhD thesis takes place before a jury consisting of delegates from multiple universities that has been composed in consultation with a university that has the authority to offer master programmes in these specific fields of study under Article.II.82 of the Codex Higher Education of 20th December 2013.

Section II Conditions of admission

Article 3 - Registration

§1. After admission to the preparation of the doctoral thesis for the academic title of doctor in accordance with Article 17 of these regulations, the doctoral candidate must register as a PhD candidate the VUB without delay. In case the doctoral candidate pursues a joint PhD, he must also register as a doctoral candidate at the VUB.

§2. Enrolment as a PhD candidate is possible at any time during the academic year. The tuition fee that is due is indicated on the web pages of the Education and Student Administration of the VUB.

§3. The registration needs to be repeated every academic year in which the PhD is being prepared, including the academic year in which the PhD examination takes place.

§4. PhD candidates who are not resident in Belgium at the time of their enrolment may request permission for remote enrolment in a letter of motivation addressed to the Vice-Rector for Educational and Student Affairs. If this enrolment is permitted, the PhD candidate shall provide a certified copy of his/her diploma and passport/identity card to the Education and Student Administration (OWSA) in advance.

§5. Upon first registration, the PhD candidate will automatically be assigned to one of the Doctoral Schools as stipulated in Article 9 of the *Doctoral School Regulations VUB*. This gives the PhD candidate the right to follow the Doctoral Course to the amount of 60 ECTS credits, in accordance with Article 3 of the *Decision concerning the establishment of the Doctoral Training Programme at the VUB*. The supplementary faculty PhD regulations stipulate when and in which cases participation in the Training Programme (or parts thereof) is compulsory and, if applicable, within which period of time this programme (or parts thereof) needs to be successfully completed. Where this is the case, finishing the mandatory Training Programme will be a prerequisite for permission to defend a PhD thesis.

§6. The Interdisciplinary PhD Progress Monitoring Committee (ICDO) may, on the advice of the competent faculty body, designate a part or all of the Doctoral Training Programme as mandatory on the basis of the application by the candidate for admission to a PhD in the Arts or in Interdisciplinary Studies. Where this is the case, finishing the mandatory Training Programme will be a prerequisite for permission to defend a PhD thesis. The ICDO consists of the three Doctoral School directors, the Vice-Rector for Education and Student Affairs and the Vice-Rector for Research Policy, supplemented with at least one member of the Other Academic Personnel, who serves as an acting member, and can provide a maximum term within which this Training Programme must be taken.

Article 4 - Diplomas, supervisor and admission application

§1. Admission to the preparation of the PhD thesis is permitted to all persons who:

1° have obtained one of the following degrees:

- a. a master's degree or, as stipulated in the Codex Higher Education of 20th December 2013, a degree of equal value within the Flemish Community, including, among others, a Polytechnic Civil Engineering degree or a master's degree awarded by the Royal Military School in Brussels;
- b. A degree obtained outside the Flemish Community that is considered equivalent to a master's degree in accordance with the stipulations of the Codex Higher Education of 20th December 2013;
- c. a master's degree obtained within the French Community, or a degree considered equivalent in accordance with the decree of the French Community and which is equivalent to a master's degree obtained within the Flemish Community;
- d. a foreign degree obtained upon successful completion of a course of study of minimum 240 ECTS study points and which is equivalent to a master's degree in accordance with a Belgian decree, a European Guideline or a bilateral agreement.

2° have a supervisor and have finalised their choice of subject;

3° have obtained permission to prepare the PhD thesis in accordance with Article 17 of these regulations.

§2. With the exception of the PhDs in the Arts and in Interdisciplinary Studies, the Supplementary Faculty Doctorate Regulations determine which diploma gives access to which academic PhD as specified in Appendix 1.

§3. In order to be permitted to the preparation of a **doctoral thesis in the arts**, the candidate must, in principle, be the holder of a master's diploma in the disciplines of the audio-visual arts, music, performing arts, literature, architecture or visual arts.

In this regard, a non-binding opinion may be obtained from the Brussels Arts Platform with regard to PhDs falling within the common research framework established by the VUB and the EhB (*Erasmushogeschool Brussel*) School of Arts, the KCB (*Royal Conservatory of Brussels (Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel)*) and the RITCS (*Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound*). Applicants not holding a master's diploma (or the equivalent) in one of the above fields of study may be admitted to the PhD programme if an examination by the ICDO (*Interdisciplinary PhD Progress Monitoring Committee*), on the advice of the competent faculty body, of the applicants' previously acquired competencies (*EVC*) confirms that those competencies are, overall, at a level equivalent to a master's diploma in the field of the arts.

§4. The competent faculty body or, as the case may be, the ICDO if the competent faculty body so desires the advice of the ICDO, will assess each application for admission to a **PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies** against the diploma requirements in accordance with Articles 5 and 6.

§5. In order to be **admitted to the doctoral examination**, the same diploma requirements apply as stipulated in paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4, with the **additional condition** that the diploma granting access to the doctoral exam must have been **obtained at least two years earlier**. Moreover, in order to be admitted to the doctoral examination, the doctoral candidate must demonstrate the ability to independently conduct academic work.

Article 5 - Derogations

§1. Even if the candidate has obtained the necessary master's degree or a degree equivalent to the master's degree, the competent faculty body may, if considered necessary, insist on an additional individual review to assess the candidate's suitability to carry out academic research in the discipline concerned and to express the research results in a doctoral thesis. Where applicable, the faculty doctoral regulations regulate the further organisation of this examination.

§2. If the candidate does not hold the necessary master's degree or a degree equivalent to the master's degree, the competent faculty body may choose to grant permission to the candidate to enrol for the preparation of a doctoral thesis if the competent faculty body considers the candidate competent. This permission may, however, be made dependent on an investigation regarding the suitability of the Ph candidate to perform academic research in the concerned discipline and to express the research results in a PhD thesis, or on the successful completion of an examination set up by the competent faculty body. The supplementary faculty Doctoral regulations further describe the organisation of this examination.

§3. In the case of an application for admission to a Doctoral programme in the Arts, the ICDO can, on the advice of the competent faculty body, carry out the role of the competent faculty body, as set out in this article.

Article 6 - Foreign final diploma

§1. The holder of a final diploma from a foreign university or a foreign institution of academic education other than those mentioned in Article 4, d, can still be admitted to the preparation of a doctoral thesis and/or the examination by the competent faculty body, notwithstanding the absence of the required diploma.

§2. If the competent faculty body believes that the foreign diploma cannot be considered equivalent to a master's degree, this permission can be made dependent on an investigation regarding the suitability of the Doctoral candidate to perform academic research in the concerned discipline and to express the research results in a Doctoral thesis, or on the successful completion of an examination set up by the competent faculty body. The supplementary faculty Doctoral regulations further describe the organisation of this examination.

§3. In the case of an application for admission to a Doctoral programme in the Arts, the ICDO can, on the advice of the competent faculty body, fulfil the role of the competent faculty body, as set out in this article.

Article 7 - Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission

§1. Each faculty sets up one Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission (CDO). This will consist of at least three members of the Independent Academic Staff (ZAP), supplemented with at least one member of the Other Academic Personnel, who serves as an acting member. The Supplementary Faculty Doctoral Regulations may stipulate the composition and rules of procedure of this Commission in more detail.

§2. If the Doctorate is of an interdisciplinary nature that exceeds the competence of the faculty, or is a Doctor of the Arts, the monitoring of its progress will be ensured by the ICDO. For the monitoring of doctoral candidates in the arts, the ICDO will be supplemented by the Chairman of the Brussels Arts Platform, who will serve in an advisory capacity.

The authority to judge whether a Doctoral thesis is of an interdisciplinary nature or not lies with the ICDO.

§3. It is the task of each CDO to monitor the progress of all doctoral candidates in its faculty. The task of the ICDO is to monitor the progress of all interdisciplinary doctoral candidates that go beyond the competence of the faculty and the Doctoral programmes in the arts.

§4. Doctoral candidates who work within the framework of a joint PhD also need to be monitored by the relevant commissions.

§5. As a guideline for this monitoring, the principles as laid down in "the charter of the researcher", which is added as Appendix II to these regulations, will be applied. The Commissions shall

annually evaluate the progress of all doctoral candidates in their faculty, as stipulated in Articles 24 and 25 of these regulations. The progress of doctoral candidates who are working on an interdisciplinary doctorate across the faculty boundaries and of doctoral candidates who are preparing a doctorate in the arts will be evaluated by the ICDO in accordance with the same procedure.

Article 8 - Doctoral exam

The doctoral examination comprises the submission and public defence of a thesis that meets the requirements specified in Article 9.

For joint PhDs, the contract that is to be concluded with regard to joint doctorates can deviate with regard to the organisation of an internal defence, as this is not part of the doctoral exam. Where applicable, the faculty doctoral regulations determine the conditions under which these exceptions are permitted, without the explicit approval of the competent faculty body being required. Other deviations from these regulations that are included in the contract regarding joint doctorates must always be approved by the relevant faculty board.

Article 9 - Learning outcomes

§1. The doctoral examination demonstrates the Doctoral candidate's capacity to independently contribute to the development and growth of academic knowledge, and to report about his/her contribution both orally and in writing. The Doctoral thesis should show the ability to create new scientific knowledge in a particular field or across fields of expertise on the basis of independent academic research, including the arts, and must be able to lead to academic publications. The thesis should be prepared in the form allowed by the supplementary faculty Doctoral regulations (for example, a completely unpublished text or a body of articles).

§2. In the case of a Doctorate in the Arts, the thesis is a single whole consisting of two components, each of which must be taken fully into account:

- 1° - an artistic part, consisting of a series of artistic outcomes that arose during the research and that are presented in a manner specific to the artistic process concerned;
- 2° - a discursive part, that consists of a relevant and academically sound consideration of the specific artistic process and of the methods and skills used, taking into account the specific features of the artistic research conducted.

These two component elements must result in an original thesis as referred to earlier in this article. This provision also applies to the works produced in the artistic part of the thesis. Insofar as the artistic research permits, the thesis, consisting of the artistic and discursive parts, must be presented in a manner that makes it possible to check and reproduce its component parts.

Section III Ombudsperson for Doctoral candidates

Article 10 - General information

In order to ensure high-quality guidance of the Doctoral candidates, the VUB will appoint an Ombudsperson for Doctoral candidates every year, with the powers defined below.

Article 11 - Appointment of an Ombudsperson

§1. On the proposal of the Research Council, and before the beginning of each academic year, the Academic Council shall appoint a tenured member of the Independent Academic Staff (ZAP), preferably with the title of full professor, or emeritus with an assignment after retirement, as the Ombudsperson for Doctoral candidates. At the same time and as part of the same procedure, a deputy Ombudsperson is appointed from a different faculty. The mandate of the Ombudsperson and that of deputy Ombudsperson cannot, in principle, be combined with another function in any central or faculty body.

§2. The name of the Ombudsperson for Doctoral candidates and his/her substitute, as well as information on how they can be reached, will be published in an annual circular that will be addressed, among others, to all Doctoral candidates.

Article 12 - Duties of an Ombudsperson

§1. The Ombudsperson for Doctoral candidates receives comments and complaints from Doctoral candidates, which may cover difficulties in relations with the supervisor(s) or the (I)CDO in the preparation and implementation of the doctoral research.

§2. At the request of the Doctoral candidates, the Ombudsperson for Doctoral candidates may act as a mediator between the Doctoral candidates and the supervisor(s), the Chairman of the (I)CDO, the Dean, the chairman of the doctoral panel, and the members of the academic staff and the Administrative Secretary with the aim of arriving at an amicable settlement of the complaints.

Article 13 - Operational procedures of the Ombudsperson

§1. The Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates records all received comments and complaints in a confidential file. The Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates is bound to secrecy and has a duty of discretion.

§2. The Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates decides, in consultation with the doctoral candidate concerned, how they will proceed after a first meeting initiated by the candidate. After the first meeting, the necessity of a further procedure will be considered. When a complaint is confirmed in writing, there will always be a written follow-up.

§3. In the case of a written complaint regarding article 12, §1, and notwithstanding the possible application of Article 25 of these regulations, the Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates will generally propose an amicable settlement as soon as possible. The doctoral candidate will be immediately informed, in writing, of the proposed solution.

Article 14 - Ombudsperson's right of inspection

The Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates has the following rights to enable him/her to carry out his/her function:

- 1° the right to participate in the meetings of the (I)CDO
- 2° the right to consult all documents with regard to the stipulations of Article 12, §1

Article 15 - Reporting

Every year, before 15 November, the Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates is required to report to the Academic Council about his/her activities during the previous year. This report is submitted to the Research Council beforehand. This report provides a statistical overview of all contacts on the one hand, and, on the other, all cases where mediation was actually carried out, without violating the obligation of confidentiality.

Article 16 - Conflict of interest

If the Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates is mainly affiliated with the same faculty as the PhD candidate who has appealed to the Ombudsman, or there is too close a tie between the Ombudsperson and the PhD candidate, the deputy Ombudsperson for PhD candidates shall take action instead. An exception to this rule is possible if the Ombudsman or the deputy acts as a contact person on another campus and is solely linked to the same faculty as the PhD candidate in that capacity.

Section IV. Procedure for the Preparation of the doctoral Thesis

Article 17 - Written application for admission

§1. Anyone who wishes to obtain the academic title of doctor at the VUB (including incoming and outgoing doctoral candidates) must be admitted to the preparation of the doctoral thesis. Candidates must therefore submit an application for admission. The complete dossier has to be approved by the competent faculty body. The authenticity of the diploma and other submitted documents is checked by OWSA.

This written request includes a statement of the subject of the thesis, the name of the supervisor(s) and the discipline(s) to which the Doctoral thesis belongs, a curriculum vitae, a research plan, a declaration from the supervisor(s) in which the supervision of the candidate is accepted, a declaration by the supervisor of the material resources and framework available for the intended research, and the choice of Doctoral School. The supplementary faculty regulations determine how the various components of the written application must be completed.

Each application must include a sworn copy of the degree, except for PhD candidates who have a degree awarded by a recognised Belgian institution. The latter, if admitted, shall show the original version of the relevant diploma at the time of enrolment.

§2. Within a reasonable period after receipt of the application, the competent faculty body or the ICDO will decide on the application, if the competent faculty body so advises. In the case of a decision for admission by the competent faculty body or the ICDO, the latter will confirm the choice of Doctoral School of the PhD candidate. In the case of a PhD in the Arts in conjunction with the EhB, the competent faculty body will obtain the prior opinion of the Brussels Arts Platform.

§3. In the case of a PhD programme across the faculty boundaries, and at the latest at the time of the decision regarding the acceptance of the application, the competent faculty body of the supervisor-spokesperson must record in writing how the further progress of the doctorate will be followed up over the faculty boundaries.

§4. Following the decision of the competent faculty body or the ICDO, the file will be sent to the Vice-Rector for Education and Student Policy for approval. The latter does not apply, however, to PhD candidates with a degree from a Belgian institution, whose file only needs to be approved by the competent faculty body or the ICDO.

§5. A positive decision by the competent faculty body or the ICDO and, if applicable, the Vice-Rector for Education and Student Policy is only valid as an admission to the preparation of the PhD thesis, providing that the PhD candidate registers in accordance with Article 3, first to third paragraph of these regulations.

Article 18 - Guidance and responsibility for the PhD thesis

§1. The PhD thesis is prepared under the guidance and responsibility of at least one member of the Independent Academic Staff (ZAP), who is (are) his/her ZAP supervisor(s), possibly assisted by:

- 1° an external ZAP supervisor at the VUB;
- 2° a ZAP emeritus supervisor at the VUB;
- 3° A non-ZAP supervisor with a PhD.

If a PhD is supervised by several supervisors, it will be determined who will take on the role of supervisor-spokesperson.

The above may be further specified in the supplementary faculty PhD regulations.

§2. In the case of a PhD in the Arts, there is always a supervisor who provides artistic guidance, in addition to a VUB ZAP supervisor(s). This artistic supervisor is exempt from the requirement to hold a PhD.

§3. In the case of a joint PhD, the PhD thesis must also be prepared under the guidance and responsibility of a member of the ZAP of the partner institution, who may be assisted.

Article 19 - Changes to the guidance and responsibility for the PhD thesis

In exceptional circumstances, the PhD candidate can address a written request to the Dean of the faculty for a change in the guidance and responsibility for the thesis. If this is possible within the financing agreements and after consultation with the supervisor and potential new supervisor, the Dean may proceed to designate a new supervisor.

In the case in which the change is not requested by a PhD candidate, the PhD candidate will be heard and will be immediately informed of any changes.

Article 20 - Advisory committee

§1. Each PhD candidate is also supervised by an advisory committee, consisting of the supervisor(s) as defined in Article 19 and at least one other member who in principle, holds the title of PhD and preferably comes from outside the department/research group/VUB.

§2. The advisory committee shall be convened on the initiative of the supervisor(s) by the competent faculty body, and, in the case of a PhD in the arts or an interdisciplinary PhD beyond the expertise of the faculty itself, the composition of the advisory committee can be confirmed by the ICDO. In any case, the supervisory committee shall be composed within 18 months of the first registration of the PhD candidate. The supplementary faculty PhD regulations may set out the composition and rules of procedure for the advisory committee in greater detail.

§3. The CDO will examine the composition of the advisory committee during the annual review of progress, as described in Article 25. If it has not yet been convened, the CDO will encourage the supervisor to convene it. If the supervisor refrains from convening the supervisory committee within the period provided for in §2, the Chairman of the Commission for doctoral monitoring shall add this to the agenda of the Research Council, which may take measures.

Article 21 - The Charter for the Researcher

§1. The supervisor(s) is(are) obliged to supervise / provide guidance and to stimulate the PhD candidate in the preparation of the PhD thesis.

The supervisor(s) must thereby comply with the principles set out in the "The Charter for the Researcher", which is appended to this regulation as Appendix II.

§2: The PhD candidate is required to regularly inform his/her supervisor(s) of the progress made on his/her PhD thesis.

§3. The PhD candidate or the supervisor(s) concerned can report any failure to comply with the requirements of the Charter for Researchers to the Dean and/or the Ombudsperson for PhD candidates.

Article 22 - Breach of scientific integrity

§1. The PhD candidate must refrain from committing any form of infringement of scientific integrity.

§2. In the case of suspicion of an infringement of scientific integrity, this must be reported to the point of contact for scientific integrity, and the regulations of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel regarding breaches of the scientific integrity will apply (Appendix III).

§3. In the event of the establishment by the Scientific Integrity Committee of an infringement of the scientific integrity by the PhD candidate during the preparation of or in the submitted thesis, this infringement may give rise to one of following examination-related disciplinary sanctions:

- 1° The obligation to rework the doctoral thesis in such a way that the thesis no longer contains infringements of scientific integrity;
- 2° The rejection of the PhD thesis: the PhD candidate is not permitted to submit or defend a thesis on the same or a closely-related subject;
- 3° The rejection of the doctoral project and the exclusion of the PhD candidate: the PhD candidate is not permitted to submit or defend a thesis on the same or a closely-related subject, and is prohibited from enrolling again at the university for a period of a number of academic years to be determined.

§4. The determination of an infringement of scientific integrity following the public defence of a doctoral thesis may lead to the revocation of the awarded title of Doctor and the imposition of the examination sanctions referred to in paragraph 3.

§5. If the PhD candidate is also a staff member of the VUB, the regulations for order and discipline and the relevant personnel regulations will apply.

Article 23 - Progress report

§1. Each PhD candidate shall annually draw up a progress report on the state of affairs regarding his/her PhD thesis. By 30 April of each academic year at the latest, he/she shall provide a copy to his/her supervisor(s), the Dean and the chairman of the (I)CDO, who shall in turn provide it to all the members of the Commission. The faculty doctoral regulation may bring this date forward.

§2. The complete progress report consists of two parts:

- 1° The PhD candidate's section contains:
 - a. The activities of the past year (including a list of publications), including mention of having followed the introductory course of the Doctoral Schools, which is obligatory for PhD candidates enrolled from academic year 2017-2018, or a justification of the non-participation;
 - b. planning for the following year;
 - c. Any indications of problems;
- 2° The supervisor's section:
 - a. information about the activities of the PhD candidate
 - b. Any indications of problems;
 - c. The composition and report of the supervisory committee.

§3. The required concrete content of the progress report can be further determined in the supplementary faculty PhD regulations. The faculties may also impose an extension of the above two sections in the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

§4. PhD candidates who are working on a joint PhD with another institution should also submit a progress report that complies with the aforementioned rules, thereby including any extension under §3. If VUB is not a main institution, it will suffice to submit the completed template of the other institution.

Article 24 - Evaluation of the progress

§1. Every academic year, the (I)CDO discusses the progress of the PhD thesis projects. Should the (I)CDO establish an apparent lack of progress, or a major discrepancy between the supervisor's part and that of the PhD candidate, it will hear the PhD candidate and the supervisor(s), possibly – at the request of the PhD candidate – in the presence of the Ombudsperson for PhD candidates.

§2. The Commission shall report on this to the Research Council before the 25th of May, and shall forward the progress reports and advice to the supervisor/Dean and the PhD candidate. In this report, the Commission shall formulate an opinion on the re-registration of the PhD candidates in a motivated and detailed manner. This opinion may be positive, negative or postponed.

§3. The (I)CDO has until 31 August to submit a new opinion to the Research Council on the cases submitted to it earlier.

§4. The Research Council's decision on whether or not to allow a PhD candidate to re-register is based on the report from the (I)CDO.

Article 25 - PhD programme

Within the framework of the supervision of the PhD candidate, the VUB offers a doctoral training programme (see also Doctoral Schools Regulation). This study programme is non-obligatory, except with regard to the Introductory Day for PhD candidates who have registered from the academic year 2017-2018 onwards. Exceptions are possible, see Doctoral School Regulations. Furthermore, it is possible that the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations pursuant to Article 3§4 impose additional obligations.

Section V. Procedure for the PhD Examination

Article 26 - Submission

§1. When the PhD candidate wishes to take the PhD examination, he/she shall submit an application with the agreement of the supervisor(s). The faculties must further determine the modalities for submission in the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

§2. PhD candidates preparing a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies or in the Arts must submit their application in writing to the Dean of the faculty to which the ZAP supervisor is primarily attached.

§3. Together with the request, the PhD candidate will submit at least one copy of his/her thesis to the faculty secretariat. The faculty may increase the number of copies in the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations. The PhD candidate will in any case also deliver an electronic version of his/her PhD thesis with the request, as explained further in Article 28 below.

§4. The obligations mentioned above are equally binding for PhD candidates in the context of a joint PhD who wish to publicly defend their PhD at the VUB. The requirement to submit the PhD thesis in electronic form is also mandatory for all PhD candidates with a joint PhD, irrespective of where the public defence takes place.

§5. In the cases where the supplementary faculty regulations make it compulsory to follow the Doctoral Study Programme (or parts of the Doctoral Study Programme), PhD candidates need to have successfully completed the (parts of the) Doctoral Study Programme before they can publicly defend their PhD thesis.

§6. The PhD candidate is only granted permission to the internal, if applicable, and public defence of his/her PhD thesis after a compulsory plagiarism screening. The introduction in the plagiarism software is carried out by the responsible person of the faculty, after which the chairman of the doctoral panel will interpret the results document of the plagiarism software. If the chairman of the doctoral panel does not indicate any particularities, the PhD candidate can be admitted to the internal defence.

In the case of a PhD based on articles, self-plagiarism is disregarded.

Article 27 - Intellectual property rights

§1. The PhD candidate holds all copyrights that relate to his/her doctoral thesis.

§2. The PhD candidate grants irrevocable and non-exclusive permission to the VUB to reproduce and publish the PhD thesis, in the version it was submitted, in accordance with aforementioned Article 27 for the public defence, in its whole and unaltered form, unless explicitly stipulated otherwise, in the following forms:

1° on paper:

The thesis may be made available on paper within the premises of the university library of the VUB, so that researchers can consult it on site.

2° in electronic form:

- a. For preservation in the electronic archives of the university library of the VUB.
- b. For consultation via special terminals in the premises of the VUB university library.
 - i. The VUB undertakes to take all necessary and reasonable efforts to provide adequate technical protection for the thesis against any downloading, printing and/or transmission to third parties.
 - ii. The thesis may also be reproduced for the purposes of indexing the full text and making it searchable, even if the full text has not been made available.
- c. Availability to the online public.

When submitting the PhD thesis, the PhD candidate has the **choice** to immediately make the thesis available, in whole or part, through a publicly accessible network (via Internet). The modalities of this availability will be

indicated by the PhD candidate on the form that he/she signed on enrolment. However, the bibliographical description of the thesis (such as title, author, year, executive summary or abstract if available, etc.) will always be immediately included in the (online) library catalogue of the university library of the VUB.

The PhD candidate shall have two years from the date of his/her public defence to exploit the thesis commercially or otherwise, and to reproduce (or allow it to be reproduced) in an edited, unedited or reworked form and publish it (or allow it to be published). If the thesis has not been published within this period of two years (whether commercially or not), the VUB has the right to reproduce it in its entirety and to make it available (non-profitable) via an open network (such as the Internet). This deadline may be extended if the PhD candidate can submit due grounds for this (for example, by submitting a signed publication contract in which, in accordance with the customary industry practices, a reasonable period of time is set for the agreed number of copies of the thesis to be produced and distributed, even if publication has not yet taken place).

§3. The use of the thesis in electronic form in accordance with this article means that it can be reproduced on all possible digital media, so that it can be used in accordance with best practices. Depending on technological developments, the thesis may be reproduced in any way and reworked technically to ensure that the techniques used for the use permitted in this article are the most appropriate.

§4. This non-exclusive licence applies worldwide and for the entire period of the copyright protection and of all other intellectual and commercial property rights applying to the thesis.

§5. The PhD candidate will receive no compensation for any of the aforementioned user rights granted to the VUB.

§6. The PhD candidate warrants that he/she will not or has not granted any exploitation rights to third parties that are incompatible with the usage rights he/she has granted to the VUB.

§7. The PhD candidate guarantees that he/she is the author of the thesis and that, where necessary, he/she had received any authorisation that may be required to include copyrighted materials belonging to third parties (for example, texts, charts, pictures, recordings, etc.) in the thesis and to grant the aforementioned usage rights to the VUB.

§8. The PhD candidate shall indemnify the VUB without limitation against all possible claims by third parties (for example, for breach of intellectual property rights, personal rights, etc.).

§9. The artistic part of the PhD thesis in the Arts is exempt from the requirement laid down in this article to provide non-exclusive permission to reproduce and publish the PhD thesis. It is recommended that this permission be granted, but this is not mandatory.

§ 10. The other intellectual property rights on the doctorate thesis are subject to the provisions of the Valorisation Regulations of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (*VUB*).

Article 28 - Conservation of the doctoral thesis

§1. One copy of the PhD thesis will remain at the secretariat of the faculty concerned, where it will be available to the members of the Independent Academic Staff (ZAP). Following the public defence, and provided the PhD candidate has been awarded the title of Doctor, one copy of the PhD thesis will be deposited in the university library by the faculty secretariat. This copy is published under the same conditions as specified in Article 28. If the PhD candidate is not awarded the title of Doctor, the copy of the PhD thesis intended for the library will be filed in the faculty archives.

§2. The aforementioned is also applicable in the case of a joint PhD, irrespective of where the public defence takes place.

Article 29 - Language use

§1. The PhD thesis will be written and defended in Dutch or in English. If the thesis has another language as its subject, it may be written in this language.

§2. The defence of the thesis will take place in Dutch or English.

§3. The PhD candidate can ask for the PhD thesis to be written and defended in a language other than Dutch or English. This can only be done after due permission has been granted by the competent faculty body.

§4. A joint PhD will be written and defended in the language stipulated in the contract regarding the joint PhD and signed by all parties

§5. If the joint PhD has been written in a language other than Dutch, the PhD candidate must provide an abstract in Dutch if the PhD candidate has obtained a basic bachelor's or master's degree in Dutch. The abstract may be in English if the doctoral thesis is also written in a language other than English. This summary will be available to the general public.

Article 30 - Doctoral defence committee

§1. On the proposal of the supervisor(s), and at the latest before the submission of the doctorate thesis, the competent faculty body will set up a doctoral defence committee. In the case of a PhD in the Arts undertaken in conjunction with the EhB (*Erasmus University College Brussels*), this proposal must be accompanied by a non-binding opinion of the Brussels Arts Platform.

§2. The doctoral defence committee consists of at least three members of the Independent Academic Staff (ZAP) of the VUB, and at least two external members. In principle, the jury must be constituted so that at least two persons of the opposite sex are included. Any departures from this must be justified.

§3. In principle, all members shall be holders of the title of doctor with thesis. Any departures from this must be justified.

§4. The doctoral defence committee must consist of no more than eight voting members. The supervisory committee may not constitute the majority of the voting members in the PhD jury. The supervisor(s) form(s) part of the jury, and where there is more than one supervisor, the supervisors as a whole shall have a single vote. The votes of VUB members must always account for the majority of the votes cast. Written opinions are not included in the voting.

§5. The chair appointed among the members of the doctoral defence committee by the competent faculty body will under no circumstances be the supervisor of the PhD candidate.

§6. If the PhD thesis under scrutiny has an interdisciplinary character that transgresses the borders of a faculty, each faculty needs to be represented in the doctoral defence committee by a minimum of one member of the Independent Academic Staff (ZAP).

§7. The doctoral defence committee set up for a joint PhD will consist of the supervisors and a minimum of four other members. Each partner institution will be represented on the defence committee by a minimum of two members, including the supervisor. If there are several supervisors per partner institution, these supervisors will together have one vote. In addition, at least two external members who are not connected to either of the partner institutions will have a seat on the defence committee. The members connected to the VUB will be appointed by the competent faculty body. The Chair and the external members of this PhD jury will be appointed in accordance with the stipulations of the contract regarding the joint PhD. The supervisory committee may not constitute the majority of the voting members in the doctoral defence committee. Written opinions are not included in the voting. Paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6 and 8 are also applicable to joint PhD's.

§8. If it can be shown that there are serious conflicts of interest with respect to one of the defence committee members, the competent faculty body may submit a reasoned request for that member's replacement.

Article 31 - Deadline for the assessment of the PhD thesis

§1. The doctoral defence committee has two full months from the submission in accordance with Article 26 to examine the submitted PhD thesis and to reach a decision.

§2. By unanimous vote, the doctoral defence committee can shorten this period by a maximum of one month or, with the explicit consent of the doctoral candidate, extend it by a maximum of one month. This extension must always be substantiated.

§3. The PhD candidate and the members of the defence committee shall be informed by the chairman of any holiday periods that could extend the assessment period by more than one month. The defence committee and the PhD candidate must expressly agree with this extension.

Article 32 - Consultation and assessment procedure

§1. If the term defined in the previous article expires, the defence committee members will initiate a two-phase consultation and assessment procedure:

- 1° phase 1: the defence committee members consult among themselves. This can take place orally or in writing.
- 2° phase 2: The supplementary faculty regulations determine how the internal defence takes place: this procedure will include at least one moment in which the PhD candidate can defend his/her thesis and can answer the questions of the members of the defence committee.

§2. The doctoral defence committee then makes a decision and informs the doctoral candidate of the result of its findings:

- 1° Should the doctoral defence committee decide that the PhD thesis can be publicly defended, the chair of the doctoral defence committee will determine the day on which this public defence is to take place, and he/she will take all necessary measures to publicise the date of the defence.
- 2° Should the doctoral defence committee decide that the PhD thesis needs to be reworked, the procedure will be suspended, and it will be handled in accordance with Article 31 from the moment that the revised thesis is submitted.
- 3° Should the doctoral defence committee decide to permit the doctoral candidate to proceed to the public defence, but the latter has to make certain verifiable revisions to the doctoral thesis that are determined beforehand, the chairman of the doctoral defence committee will determine in writing the conditions with which this revision must comply, as well as the modalities concerning the reassessment of the thesis in phase 2. The chairman will also determine the day on which the public defence will take place, and will take the measures necessary to publicise this date. The further modalities of this revision will be elaborated in the additional faculty regulations.
- 4° Should the examination defence committee decide that the thesis may not be defended, the procedure laid out in this article will be discontinued. In that case, the doctoral defence committee may request the (I)CDO to advise the OZR to refuse re-enrolment in accordance with the provisions of Article 24.

§3. In the event of a tied vote, the decision will be made in favour of the PhD candidate.

§4. In all cases, the chairman of the doctoral defence committee will inform the doctoral candidate in writing of the report of its findings and of the applicable provision regarding the outcome of the internal defence in accordance with §2.

Article 33 - Quorum requirements

In order for the doctoral defence committee to validly convene for the internal defence and to deliberate on whether or not to allow the public defence, at least half of the voting members must be present or take part via interactive electronic means of communication, such as chat, teleconferencing, and/or must have submitted a written recommendation to the other members.

Article 34 – Date of public defence

The day on which the public defence will take place is within one month of the decision to allow a public defence.

In the case of a revision as provided in Article 32 §2, 3°, the chair of the defence committee will determine the day on which this public defence is to take place, and he/she will take all necessary measures to publicise the date of the defence.

Article 35 - Announcement

§1. The faculty secretariat will ensure that an announcement of the public defence is published on the VUB website. Each faculty is free to provide additional methods for organising the announcement of public defences in their supplementary faculty PhD regulations.

§2. The announcement, which will be made at least eight days before the public defence, will include the name of the PhD candidate, the title of his/her PhD thesis, and the date, time and place of the public defence.

§3. The PhD candidate must also draw up a brief, non-specialist popular, scientific abstract of the PhD thesis in English, or in accordance with Article 30 in Dutch, approved by the supervisor. This 200-500-word text must be provided to the Science Communications Expertise Unit before the public defence. This text may be used for press releases and notices, and will be accessible to the general public.

Article 36 - Venue for the public defence

§1. In principle, the public defence will take place in the premises of the VUB. Exceptions to this need to be approved by the competent faculty body.

§2. The defence of a joint PhD takes place on the premises of the home institution of the PhD candidate, unless otherwise decided in the contract establishing the joint PhD.

Article 37 - Public defence content and proceedings

§1. The public defence lasts at least one hour and no more than two hours. It will include at least a brief summary of the PhD thesis intended for the examination defence committee and the lay audience, followed by a discussion.

§2. In the case of a PhD in the Arts, presentations forming part of the PhD examination are not governed by the time restrictions specified above.

§3. Both the doctoral defence committee and the public have the right to question the PhD candidate. The latter must defend himself/herself against the reservations.

Section VI. Deliberation and proclamation

Article 38 - Quorum requirement

The doctoral defence committee may only validly deliberate on whether or not a PhD candidate has been successful and on any award of a PhD if at least half of the voting members are present or take part in the internal defence via interactive electronic means of communication, such as chat, teleconferencing, or have submitted a written recommendation. A maximum of one written recommendation may be taken into account for the calculation of the attendance quorum.

Article 39 - Deliberations

Immediately following a public PhD thesis defence, the doctoral defence committee will leave the room to proceed in private to the deliberation on awarding the PhD and, if so stipulated by the supplementary faculty regulations, will decide on the grade to be awarded.

Article 40 - Assessment

The doctoral defence committee declares by majority vote whether or not the PhD candidate has passed or not, taking into account the substantive academic value of the PhD thesis and the manner in which the PhD defended himself/herself. In the event of a tie, the decision will be made in favour of the PhD candidate. Written opinions are not included in the voting.

Article 41 - Grades

If the PhD candidate has been declared to have passed by the doctoral jury, no doctoral grade will be awarded unless otherwise provided for in the supplementary faculty regulations. In this case, the jury shall announce whether the PhD candidate has passed with satisfaction, with distinction, with high distinction or with the highest distinction.

Article 42 - Proclamation

The chairperson of the doctoral defence committee makes the proclamation immediately after the deliberation. He/she shall publicly declare that all the relevant rules and regulations have been observed.

Article 43 – Diploma

The doctoral degree is preferably handed over to the doctoral candidate at the proclamation, or no later than two months afterwards.

Section VII. Appeal possibilities

Art. 44 - Professional opportunities

If a material error is established in a study progress decision, this will be formally reported to the Dean within 10 calendar days of the day on which it was taken.

A mistake that does not lead to a less favourable decision with regard to the PhD candidate will be corrected by the Dean. The correction is communicated to the PhD candidate and will be adequately documented within the faculty.

If the determined error leads to a less favourable decision with regard to the PhD candidate, the error must be corrected by the body that made the original decision. If necessary, this body will be convened as soon as possible by the Dean. The correction is communicated to the PhD candidate and will be adequately documented within the faculty.

Art. 45 - Decisions against which an appeal can be made

An internal and external appeal may be launched against decisions as described in Articles 24, § 4 and 32, § 2.

Art. 46 - Composition of the internal appeals body

For each faculty or study programme, an appeals body shall be set up that is empowered to take note of all internal appeals brought against the study progress decisions referred to in Article 46 within the relevant faculty or study programme.

The appeal instance consists of at least 3 ZAP members. A chairperson shall be appointed from among the members of the appeal body. A member of the Central PhD Office, who acts as the secretary of the appeal body, is added with an advisory vote. The following are also invited with an advisory voice: the Ombudsperson for PhD candidates and a lawyer from Research and Data Management.

The composition of the appeal body shall be elaborated in the supplementary faculty regulations.

Art. 47 - Internal appeal procedure with exclusion of a decision for a reasonable adaptation

§1. An appeal can be launched against a decision, such as described in Article 45, in which the PhD candidate or the person to whom the decision relates considers that this is affected by a breach of the law. The appeal must be lodged within a limitation period of seven calendar days. This limitation period commences on the day after announcement of the decision.

The PhD candidate must factually substantiate his/her complaint within the seven calendar days after the limitation period. If he/she fails to do so, his/her appeal shall be automatically considered inadmissible, to the extent that there are no other grievances and that there was no factual description of the invoked objection.

The appeal is lodged by means of a signed and dated petition that is submitted by registered letter to the Chairman of the appeal body concerned, and this on penalty of the inadmissibility of the appeal.

As a minimum, the identity of the candidate concerned, the disputed decision(s) and a factual description and reasons for the invoked objections will be included in the petition. At the same time, the PhD candidate shall send an identical electronic version of the petition by e-mail to the e-mail address indicated in the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations, for information purposes. The date of the appeal is the date of the postmark of the registered mail.

§2. The appeal leads to:

- 1° the reasoned rejection of the appeal by the Chairman of the relevant appeal body on the grounds of inadmissibility;
- 2° a decision of the appeal body that will confirm the original decision in a substantiated manner, or will revise it.

The PhD candidate or the person to whom the decision relates is entitled to be heard by the appeal body.

§3. The decision in application of §2 shall be notified to the PhD candidate or to the person to whom the decision relates within 20 calendar days, which period begins the day following that on which the appeal is lodged. The decisions taken in application of §2 are communicated to the Ombudsperson for PhD candidates by the Dean.

§4. Against the decision taken in application of §2 an appeal to the Council for disputes regarding study progress decisions is possible.

Art. 48 - Internal appeal procedure for reasonable amendment

§1. Within a limitation period of seven calendar days, starting on the day after the decision has been notified, the PhD candidate can lodge an internal appeal with the dean against a decision to refuse reasonable adjustments for PhD candidates with disabilities, whereby a PhD candidate believes that he/she has been affected by a violation of the law. The Ombudsperson for PhD candidates as well as a lawyer from Research and Data Management can thereby be present.

§2. The internal appeal procedure leads to a substantiated decision that is binding on everyone within the institution. The PhD candidate has the right to be heard.

§3. The decision in application of §2 shall be notified to the PhD candidate within a period of one month, commencing on the day following that on which the appeal is lodged. The decision is communicated to the ombudsperson for doctoral candidates.

Art. 49 - External appeal procedure

§1. Within a limitation period of seven calendar days, starting on the day after the decision made in accordance with Article 48 has been notified, the PhD candidate or the person to whom the decision relates can lodge an appeal with the Council with regard to disputes regarding study progress decisions.

If the seventh day is a Saturday, Sunday or public holiday, the deadline is extended to the next working day on which the postal services are open.

In the absence of a timely decision within 7 calendar days as provided for in Article 48, the appeal shall be lodged with the Council within the limitation period of seven calendar days following the expiry of that period, unless the internal appeal body informs the PhD candidate of the later date on which it will give judgement before the expiry of the time period that is available to it.

§2. The appeals shall be lodged by means of a petition, which shall include at least a factual description and justification of the objections invoked. The petition will be dated and, under penalty of inadmissibility, signed by the applicant or his counsel.

§3. The petition shall state:

- 1° the name and place of residence of the applicant. Where a choice of residence is made at the applicant's counsel, it shall be indicated in the petition;
- 2° the name and seat of the Board;

3° the object of the appeal;

4° a factual description and justification of the objections invoked

§4. The petition is submitted to the Council for Disputes concerning Study Progress Decisions by registered letter. A copy of the petition will be sent to the Board (the Rector or his representative) by registered letter at the same time. The date of the appeal shall be the date of the postmark.

§5. The applicant may add the supporting documents that he/she considers necessary to the petition. The applicant may subsequently only have additional supporting documents added to the dossier if they were not yet known to the applicant at the drafting of the petition. In that case, the applicant shall immediately provide a copy of the additional supporting documents to the board. The supporting documents are bundled together by the applicant and registered on an inventory.

§6. During the appeal period, an inadmissible petition may be replaced by a new petition that expressly confirms the withdrawal of the earlier petition.

§7. The decision of the Council for Disputes relating to Study Progress Decisions shall be delivered within a period of 20 calendar days, starting from the day following that on which the appeal is registered in the register of incoming appeals.

Section VIII. General and final provisions

Article 50 - Publication

On the occasion of the admission to the preparation of the doctoral thesis referred to in Article 17, the PhD candidate will receive a copy of these Central Regulations for the Award of the Academic Title of Doctor, as well as of the applicable supplementary faculty PhD regulations. In addition, the PhD candidate also receives a copy of "the charter of the researcher", which is included as Appendix II with these Regulations, and the valorisation regulations as approved at the Academic Council of 2 June 2016.

Article 51 – Holiday periods

For the calculation of the applicable deadlines in these regulations, academic leave and the period between 15 July and 15 August shall not be included.

Article 52 – Entry into force and transitional provisions

These regulations shall enter into force on 1 January 2018, after approval by the Academic Council.

The competent faculty body may propose specific provisions and criteria as set out in this regulation. These supplementary faculty regulations enter into force after approval by the Education Council.

APPENDIX 1 The academic titles of doctor

The VUB awards the following academic PhD degrees.

	Dutch title	English title
1	Doctor in de wijsbegeerte en de moraalwetenschappen	Doctor of Philosophy and Moral Sciences
2	Doctor in de taalkunde	Doctor of Linguistics
3	Doctor in de letterkunde	Doctor of Literary Studies
4	Doctor in de taal- en letterkunde	Doctor of Linguistics and Literary Studies
5	Doctor in de toegepaste taalkunde	Doctor of Applied Language Studies
6	Doctor in de geschiedenis	Doctor of History
7	Doctor in de kunstwetenschappen en de archeologie	Doctor of Art Studies and Archaeology
8	Doctor in de kunstwetenschappen en de archeologie: cultureel erfgoed studies	Doctor of Art Studies and Archaeology: Cultural Heritage Studies
9	Doctor in de rechten	Doctor of Laws
10	Doctor in het notariaat	Doctor of Notarial Law
11	Doctor in de criminologische wetenschappen	Doctor of Criminology
12	Doctor in de psychologische wetenschappen	Doctor of Psychology
13	Doctor in de pedagogische wetenschappen	Doctor of Educational Sciences
14	Doctor in de pedagogische wetenschappen: agogische wetenschappen	Doctor of Adult Educational Sciences
15	Doctor in de economische wetenschappen	Doctor of Economics
16	Doctor in de toegepaste economische wetenschappen	Doctor of Business Economics
17	Doctor in de toegepaste economische wetenschappen: handelsingenieur	Doctor of Business Economics
18	Doctor in de politieke wetenschappen	Doctor of Political Science
19	Doctor in de sociale wetenschappen: sociologie	Doctor of Sociology
20	Doctor in de media- en communicatiestudies	Doctor of Media and Communication Studies
21	Doctor in de media- en communicatiestudies: journalistieke studies	Doctor of Media and Communication Studies: Journalism Studies
22	Doctor in de bewegings- en sportwetenschappen	Doctor in Movement and Sport Sciences
23	Doctor in de revalidatiewetenschappen en de kinesitherapie	Doctor in Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy
24	Doctor in de wetenschappen	Doctor of Sciences
25	Doctor in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen	Doctor of Bio-Engineering Sciences
26	Doctor in de ingenieurswetenschappen	Doctor of Engineering Sciences
27	Doctor in de industriële ingenieurswetenschappen	Doctor of Engineering Technology

28	Doctor in de medische wetenschappen	Doctor of Medical Sciences
29	Doctor in de biomedische wetenschappen	Doctor of Biomedical Sciences
30	Doctor in de sociale gezondheidswetenschappen	Doctor of Social Health Sciences
31	Doctor in de verpleeg- en vroedkunde	Doctor of Nursing and Obstetrics
32	Doctor in de tandheelkunde	Doctor of Dentistry
33	Doctor in de farmaceutische wetenschappen	Doctor of Pharmaceutical Sciences
34	Doctor in de gerontologie	Doctor of Gerontology
35	Doctor in de menselijke ecologie	Doctor of Human Ecology
36	Doctor in de kunsten	Doctor of Arts
37	Doctor in de interdisciplinaire studies *	Doctor of Interdisciplinary Studies *
38	Doctor in gender en diversiteit	Doctor of Gender and Diversity

*The title / name of the study programme is always supplemented with the exact combination of the study areas that relate to the content of the doctorate.

APPENDIX II THE CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS

BACKGROUND

In December 2005, the VUB adopted the recommendations of the European Commission of 11 March 2005 on the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers.

In 2011, the VUB was awarded the HR Excellence in Research label following further internal implementation of the European Charter for Researchers and the 'Code of Conduct for Researchers' of the EU. The European Charter forms the framework for the VUB's human resources policy for research. The general principles and requirements laid down in the European Charter are also used as the basis for the VUB's good scientific practice and culture.

The VUB's research policy seeks to ensure that the preservation and promotion of good scientific practice is at the forefront at all times. The research policy focuses on raising awareness and prevention, but also incorporates a procedure for handling complaints relating to breaches of scientific integrity.

Another key pillar of the research policy is raising the awareness of researchers through the (PhD) study programme.

The Charter has also been drawn up in accordance with the criteria laid down in Collective Labour Agreement IV (CAO) for the higher education sector, and in particular with a view to:

- the continued raising of awareness, training and accountability of researchers with respect to the correct application of scientific practices;
- the expectations that PhD candidates, supervisors and other stakeholders have of each other in terms of scientific practices in general, and with respect to the doctoral thesis in particular.

This text describes what is meant by "a breach of scientific integrity". In addition, a detailed description is given of what constitutes "good scientific practice".

- Profile of a good researcher
- Profile of a good scientific author
- Profile of a good peer reviewer
- Profile of a good supervisor

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I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

European Charter for Researchers

The European Charter for Researchers enshrines the following principles.

Excerpt from 'The European Charter for Researchers – The Code of Conduct for Recruitment of Researchers' (ISBN 92-894-9311-9):

General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers:

Research freedom

Researchers should focus their research for the good of mankind and for expanding the frontiers of scientific knowledge, while enjoying the freedom of thought and expression, and the freedom to identify methods by which problems are solved, according to recognised ethical principles and practices.

Researchers should, however, recognise the limitations to this freedom that could arise as a result of particular research circumstances (including supervision/guidance/management) or operational constraints, e.g. for budgetary or infrastructural reasons or, especially in the industrial sector, for reasons of intellectual property protection. Such limitations should not, however, contravene recognised ethical principles and practices, to which researchers have to adhere.

Ethical principles

Researchers should adhere to the recognised ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles appropriate to their discipline(s) as well as to ethical standards as documented in the different national, sectoral or institutional codes of ethics.

Professional responsibility

Researchers should make every effort to ensure that their research is relevant to society and does not duplicate research previously carried out elsewhere.

They must avoid plagiarism of any kind and abide by the principle of intellectual property and joint data ownership in the case of research carried out in collaboration with a supervisor(s) and/or other researchers. The need to validate new observations by showing that experiments are reproducible should not be interpreted as plagiarism, provided that the data to be confirmed are explicitly quoted.

Researchers should ensure, if any aspect of their work is delegated, that the person to whom it is delegated has the competence to carry it out.

Professional attitude

Researchers should be familiar with the strategic goals governing their research environment and funding mechanisms, and should seek all necessary approvals before starting their research or accessing the resources provided.

They should inform their employers, funders or supervisors when their research project is delayed, redefined or completed, or notify them if it is to be terminated earlier or suspended for whatever reason.

Contractual and legal obligations

Researchers at all levels must be familiar with the national, sectoral or institutional regulations governing training and/or working conditions. This includes intellectual property rights regulations, and the requirements and conditions of any sponsor or funders, independently of the nature of their contract. Researchers should adhere to such regulations by delivering the required results (e.g. thesis, publications, patents, reports, new products development, etc.) as set out in the terms and conditions of the contract or equivalent document.

Accountability

Researchers need to be aware that they are accountable towards their employers, funders or other related public or private bodies as well as, on more ethical grounds, towards society as a whole. In particular, researchers funded by public funds are also accountable for the efficient use of taxpayers' money. Consequently, they should adhere to the principles of sound, transparent and efficient financial management and assist with any authorised audits of their research, whether undertaken by their employers/funders or by ethics committees.

Methods of collection and analysis, the outputs and, where applicable, details of the data should be open to internal and external scrutiny, whenever necessary and as requested by the appropriate authorities.

Good practice in research

Researchers must follow safe working practices at all times, in line with national legislation, including taking the necessary precautionary measures with a view to health and safety and repairing damage in the case of major calamities with regard to information technology, for example, by drawing up the appropriate back-up strategies. They should also be aware of the current national legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality, and take the necessary steps to comply with them at all times.

Dissemination, exploitation of results

All researchers should ensure, in compliance with their contractual arrangements, that the results of their research are disseminated and exploited, e.g. communicated, transferred to other research settings or, if appropriate, commercialised. Senior researchers, in particular, are expected to take a lead in ensuring that research is fruitful and that results are either exploited commercially or made accessible to the public (or both) whenever the opportunity arises.

Public engagement

Researchers should ensure that their research activities are made known to society at large in such a way that they can be understood by non-specialists, thereby improving the public's understanding of science. Direct engagement with the public will help researchers to better understand public interest in priorities for science and technology and also the public's concerns.

Relation with supervisors

Researchers in their training phase should establish a structured and regular relationship with their supervisor(s) and faculty/departmental representative(s) so as to take full advantage of their relationship with them.

This includes keeping records of all work progress and research findings, obtaining feedback by means of reports and seminars, applying such feedback and working to agreed schedules, milestones, deliverables and/or research outputs.

Supervision and managerial duties

Senior researchers should devote particular attention to their multi-faceted role as supervisors, mentors, career advisers, leaders, project coordinators, managers or science communicators. They should perform these tasks to the highest professional standards. With regard to their role as supervisors or mentors of researchers, senior researchers should build up a constructive and positive relationship with the early-stage researchers, in order to set the conditions for efficient transfer of knowledge and for the further successful development of the researchers' careers.

Continuing professional development

Researchers at all career stages should seek to continually improve themselves by regularly updating and expanding their skills and competencies. This may be achieved through a variety of means including, but not limited to, formal training, workshops, conferences and e-learning.

VUB staff regulations

All Academic Staff members must refrain from all behaviour that compromises the dignity of persons, or prevents the University from fulfilling its mission as laid down in the Organic Statute. In particular, a position as a member of the academic staff is not compatible with activities that compromise intellectual integrity or disregard scientific or academic ethical principles.

Research policy

Scientific integrity and a concern for (the inculcation of) an ethically sound research culture are key issues in the 2013-2017 Strategic Policy Plan for Research.

In providing researchers with training and career guidance, particular attention is focused on teaching them about the principles of good publication culture and the importance of scientific integrity.

Ethical publication practices merit special consideration given that it has been established that misconduct frequently involves abuse of copyright and data manipulation.

One priority is raising the awareness of young researchers through training, and the PhD programme therefore includes instruction on the different aspects of ethical research.

The VUB validation regulations lay down the requirements for the ownership of research results.

Finally, reference should be made to the policies of the Ethics Committee for the Humanities, the Committee on the Ethical Use of Laboratory Animals and the Brussels University Hospital's Medical Ethics Committee.

II. Infringement of the scientific integrity

Definition

§1. An infringement of the scientific integrity is described as any act whereby the intellectual property or the contributions of others are unlawfully appropriated, scientific progress is intentionally impeded or whereby scientific reporting may be falsified or the integrity of scientific activities undermined. Three main types of infringement of scientific integrity are distinguished:

- 1° Fabrication of observations or results (fabrication)
Fabricating observations that are not based on the proposed methods or reporting completely imaginary results not based on true observations;
- 2° Misrepresentation or falsification of results, either intentional or through lack of due care (falsification):
 - a. reporting or disclosing incorrect information;
 - b. excluding a fact with the result that incorrect information is provided;
 - c. falsifying observations or results, including changing or presenting observations in a way that impacts on the end results or changing or selecting research results in a scientifically irresponsible manner. Misrepresentation therefore also includes the exclusion of results that are essential for the research findings;
 - d. incorrect application of statistical methods to achieve conclusions differing from those supported by the data;
 - e. misinterpretation of results or conclusions;
 - f. misreporting the results of others.
- 3° Misappropriation, either intentional or through lack of due care (plagiarism):
 - a. adopting an original research idea or intention or an original observation from another researcher without his approval or cooperation;
 - b. claiming that the contentions or ideas of others — in the form of a research plan, manuscript, article or other text - are, in full or in part, one's own, without

- c. the acknowledgement that is customary in the medium concerned (plagiarism). This also includes unjustified claims of (co-)authorship;
- d. use of information in breach of the duty of confidentiality, e.g. in assessing a manuscript or funding request. This also includes breaches of guarantees of anonymity.

2. In addition, an infringement of scientific integrity can also be assessed as:

- 1° Proceeding carelessly when conducting research or having research conducted;
- 2° More subtle dubious research practices, such as the inclusion of authors who have contributed little or nothing, publishing parts of a study more than once (note: data from a PhD manuscript can still be offered for publication), failing to report a conflict of interests, omitting unwanted outcomes and other practices that deviate from the generally accepted standards of scientific practice;
- 3° Deliberate removal of the research-related property of others without permission, its seizure or material damage, including (but not limited to) equipment, reagents, biological materials, writings, data, hardware, software, or other substances or devices used or produced in the course of research.

III. GOOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES

Responsibility for the use of good scientific practices and the prevention of misconduct lies with the:

- researchers themselves, firstly;
- research managers;
- research institutions;
- research organisations and professional associations;
- scientific community.

Researchers must be informed of the institution's guidelines on good scientific practices and must be fully aware of the unacceptability of the violation of scientific integrity, and must also act accordingly.

In addition to the researchers themselves, scientific associations and research institutions have significant responsibility for maintaining and promoting good scientific practices. Promoting good scientific practices is therefore of major importance in all scientific organisations. Scientific integrity is best maintained by developing and disseminating clear behavioural expectations in science, for example, through training and by presenting examples at all stages in scientific development.

A key element is putting quality control systems in place. Peer-review systems - whether in relation to scientific publications, assessment of funding requests or in relation to broader evaluations of research - also always play a role in the prevention of infringement of the scientific integrity and fraud as an important

instrument for quality assurance in general. Quite apart from its own systematic evaluations, an institution may encourage researchers to submit their research to international experts for assessment insofar as possible. In practice, this may mean publishing the research in international newspapers with a referee system or making maximum use of the possibilities of presenting research at international conferences. (Provided due account is taken of the protection of exploitable research, as defined in the VUB validation regulations.)

Training on good scientific practices and ethical research should, in principle, already be included in the academic programmes.

The Framework for Research Ethics (FRE) contains six key principles of ethically responsible research:

Research must be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality

and transparency;

Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose,

methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the

research entails and what risks, if any, are involved;

The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the

anonymity of respondents must be respected;

Research participants must take part voluntarily, without any form of coercion;

Harm to research participants and researchers must be avoided in all instances;

The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit;

The different aspects of 'a good researcher' are clarified below: for researchers, authors, peer reviewers and supervisors.

IV. THE GOOD RESEARCHER

Publication, a moral obligation

Publication of the results is an essential part of research activities. A scientific publication should normally be the mechanism by which new findings are first made known to the public. Before proceeding with publication, it must first be examined whether the exploitable research can be protected (see the VUB Regulation). With regard to research that is covered by contracts with sponsors or financiers, the rules on intellectual property rights must be respected.

Scientific publication as the end point of a given piece of research also marks the start of a process of evaluation, possible correction and further development by the scientific community. Researchers have a moral obligation to allow this process to be played out in full.

International screening and visibility

Researchers are recommended to publish their work in international publication media with peer review systems so that:

- putting research to scrutiny by international referee systems can only enhance its quality;
- it is in the interests of the first researcher and of research in general for the research results to be known as widely as possible and international newspapers are the ideal instrument for this;
- publications in international newspapers will not only be read by more colleagues but will also be read more rapidly than other publications.

Researchers are recommended to consult publication databases such as Thomson Reuters 'Web of Science', to which all VUB researchers have access, and to:

- check that their publication data have been entered correctly;
- to check whether newspapers in which they publish their research but which have not yet been entered comply with the requirements for indexation and, if appropriate, suggest to the publisher that a request be submitted to this end.

Patent literature

Researchers are encouraged to also consult patent literature in addition to the more traditional publication media so that they:

- have a full picture of any earlier research;
- avoid identical research;

Check whether the research results obtained can be protected;

Check the extent to which they have a free hand as far as social or economic exploitation of the research results is concerned.

V. PROFILE OF A GOOD RESEARCHER

The good researcher:

- Conducts his research conscientiously and accurately.
- Ensures the data are retained in full.
- Ensures timely scientific publication of new and significant results, thereby contributing to scientific progress.
- Ideally publishes in the leading publication media the content of which is as close as possible to that of the research concerned.
- Undertakes scientific publications that make a significant contribution to the content of the area concerned.
- Takes part in the peer-review process and thereby makes an important contribution to science.
- Bears in mind the ethical aspects linked to the research concerned.
- Ensures that a report is published in non-specialist publication media that presents an accurate picture of the research undertaken and discusses its meaning objectively, albeit in less scientific wording to make it more readily understandable by laymen.

- is not drawn into serious or more minor forms of infringement on the scientific integrity, including those arising from a lack of due care, thus:
 - ensuring that the results of scientific research are not published piecemeal but in publications that each give a full picture of a specific aspect of the general study;
 - ensuring that the same or similar data are not published in different publications.
- as a general rule, does not issue a report on specific research in media targeting the general public before the work undergoes peer review and is published in full, in order to prevent the dissemination of inaccurate or premature conclusions. In any event, no finding may be presented to the public before its experimental, statistical or theoretical foundation is sufficiently strong to ensure its publication in the relevant scientific literature. Where this is the case, the work concerned will be submitted for scientific publication as quickly as possible.
- Does not take up proposals to act as a 'ghost author' and indicates this in the appropriate manner.
- Does not unlawfully appropriate the intellectual property or contributions of others.
- Does not breach any duties of confidentiality, guarantees of anonymity of other agreements on the use of the material.
- Does not impede the research of others.
- Weighs up and discusses possible protection and registration of the research results by applying for the relevant intellectual property rights prior to publication for the purposes of any social or economic validation of the research results.

VI. THE GOOD SCIENTIFIC AUTHOR

With regard to copyright, good scientific practice can be described as follows:

- In terms of public accountability for the appropriate parts, all the authors have adequately taken part in the work by making significant contributions to the design and organisation, the acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data, the drawing up or critical review of the publication.
- All the authors are involved in the final approval of the version to be published, indicating their willingness to support the overall conclusions of the study and to take responsibility for the study.
- The acquisition of funding, collection of data, the general supervision of the research group or provision of administrative assistance do not, *per se*, constitute authorship.
- All persons cited as being an author must comply with the above criteria.
- All persons satisfying the above criteria must be given as an author.
- The order in which authors are cited must be agreed between the authors and may be confirmed by them.
- Persons who are not authors but have contributed to the work must be cited in the acknowledgements section.

VII. PROFILE OF A GOOD SCIENTIFIC AUTHOR

A good scientific author:

- reports accurately the research conducted and discusses its meaning in objective terms;
- identifies the methods, equipment and procedures in sufficient detail to enable other researchers to reproduce the results (the key method for scientific validation of the results);
- describes the statistical methods in sufficient detail for a well informed reader with access to the original data is able to check the accuracy of the results cited;
- provides sufficient substantiation of the claims made;
- makes sufficient reference to the original publications of previous results obtained and ensures that they are correctly interpreted;
- gives due recognition to the work of others and reports it correctly;
- uses or mentions personal data provided (in a conversation, correspondence or discussion with third parties) or confidential information (e.g. as part of peer review procedures) only after obtaining the explicit consent of the researcher concerned;
- pinpoints financial and other conflicts of interest that may affect the work and makes them known;
- appropriately cites the institutions to which he is linked and the school in which the research is (jointly) conducted;
- indicates all financial support for the work as well as other financial and personal interests linked to the work;
- is not drawn into serious or more minor forms of infringement on the scientific integrity, including those arising from a lack of due care; this means that the author:
 - omits no fact that would compromise the accuracy of the work as a whole;
 - formulates no observations that do not follow from the proposed methods and does not report results that are entirely imaginary and are not based on actual observational evidence;
 - makes no changes to data or observations that would affect the end result;
 - does not manipulate the experimental set-up in an unscientific manner;
 - does not change or select the research results in an unscientific manner;
 - does not apply statistical methods incorrectly to achieve conclusions differing from those supported by the data;
- restricts to a minimum quotations from works to which no reference is made in the research reported on (except in the case of a review article).

VIII. PROFILE OF A GOOD PEER REVIEWER

The good peer reviewer:

- only agrees to act as a peer reviewer -whether for a scientific treatise (e.g. an article submitted for publication, an application for a research grant, a clinical research protocol), or a research programme (e.g. during a site visit) - when he is an expert in the field concerned;
- provides his assessment in good time; If this is not possible due to the circumstances, the manuscript is returned immediately to those responsible for the review process or the likely delay is reported and the proposed deadline is reviewed.
- opts not to take part in the review process and returns the material unread if he considers that this would represent a conflict of interests;
- always reports to those in charge of the review process any real or perceived conflict of interest that could arise as a result of a directly competing, cooperative or other closely related relationship to one or more of the authors of the material to be assessed and that might affect his judgement. Whether or not his judgement would actually be affected is of no importance. Those in charge of the review process will, if necessary, interpret the assessment and decide for themselves whether it should be withheld;
- reaches an objective opinion, based solely on scientific evaluation of the material presented that is in the public domain and not based on scientific information that is not publicly available;
- issues and supports that opinion appropriately;
- treats the material presented as confidential information: does not use it for his own benefit unless it was already in the public domain, provides no access to that information unless it is required as part of the review process and, where this the case, reports this to those in charge of the review process, does not copy or save the information unless it is explicitly permitted by those in charge of the review process and the authors.

IX. PROFILE OF A GOOD SUPERVISOR

The good supervisor:

A good researcher only agrees to act as supervisor for a PhD thesis if he can offer the PhD candidate the necessary expertise, infrastructure and support.

expertise, infrastructure and support — The supervisor:

- has built up a reputation in a field that is at least closely related to that in which the PhD candidate will be conducting the research.
- is responsible for the material and intellectual climate in which a PhD candidate develops his research. He ensures that the basic facilities for a PhD candidate are in place, such as easy access to computer infrastructure with an internet connection and office space.
- ensures that the number of PhD candidates is adapted to the support available (among others from postdoctoral researchers).
- is responsible for the quality of a PhD candidate's research plan.

- arranges funding to support the work of his PhD candidates, by applying for external or internal research funds and through the 'Basic Funding' allocated. He informs the PhD candidate of the credits obtained for the doctoral research.
- has a stimulating, coordinating and evaluating role for the entire duration of the doctoral process:

coordination — The supervisor:

- commits sufficient time to speak to the PhD candidate regularly and monitor the research closely.
- helps with the development of and, where appropriate, changes to the research.
- helps the PhD candidate place the research in a wider context.

planning & use of time — The supervisor:

- draws up a proper timetable together with the PhD candidate for his research activities.
- ensures that the teaching mandate and other tasks of the PhD candidate are organised so that there is no risk of the doctorate not being completed within the designated time frame.
- is responsible for the efficient progress of the PhD process, preferably within the designated time frame.

stimulation — The supervisor:

- introduces the PhD candidate to the world of science by putting him in contact with researchers who can help him, by stimulating him to take part in conferences and in doctoral training, by advising him on the development of his scientific project, by encouraging him and making him enthusiastic.

evaluation — The supervisor:

- is generally present when the PhD candidate presents his work to other scientists and provides feedback to the PhD candidate.
- regularly evaluates the progress of the work with the PhD candidate and makes any adjustments so that the doctorate is completed on time.
- has a duty to provide the PhD candidate with information regarding his or her advice in the progress report.

publication — The supervisor:

- makes the PhD candidate aware of the possibilities of publication and helps him prepare publications.
- has significant co-responsibility for the PhD candidate's thesis, but also for the articles and abstracts generated by the doctoral research.
- gives the PhD candidate as many chances as possible to enhance the value of the work delivered as first author in publications.
- ensures that besides the required mention of funding source, the VUB affiliation of the PhD candidate is also mentioned in accordance with internal guidelines.
- deals with any protection of the research results prior to publication