



## Decision Regarding the Organisation of the Doctoral Training Programme at Vrije Universiteit Brussel

In consideration of the Decree of 12 June 1991 regarding universities in the Flemish Community, as modified, hereinafter referred to as 'Universiteitendecreet';

In consideration of the Decree of 4 April 2003 restructuring higher education in Flanders, as modified, hereinafter referred to as 'Structuurdecreet';

In consideration of the Decree of 30 April 2004 regarding the flexible organisation of higher education and urgent high education measures, as modified, hereinafter referred to as 'Flexibiliseringsdecreet';

In consideration of the Special Decree of 19 March 2004 regarding participation in higher education, the integration of certain departments of higher education for social advancement into university colleges, the co-ordination of the higher education regulations and the modernisation of regulations on Flemish autonomous university colleges, as modified;

In consideration of the Decree of 16 June 2006 towards the introduction of several restructuring and flexibility measures in higher education in Flanders, hereinafter referred to as 'Minidecreet';

In consideration of the Central Regulations regarding the Conferment of PhD degrees of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, approved by the Board of Directors on 17 May 2005.

In consideration of the Doctoral Schools Regulations approved by the Board of Directors on 11 December 2007;

In consideration of the consequences for the PhD programme admission policy at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel following from the modified statute of the predoctoral programme and the doctoral training programme in the context of the Doctoral Schools;

# DECISION

## **Article 1: subject**

At each of its 8 faculties the Vrije Universiteit Brussel shall institute the ***Doctoral Training Programme Vrije Universiteit Brussel***. The Doctoral Training Programme Vrije Universiteit Brussel shall be organised by the Doctoral Schools.

In Dutch the programme shall be referred to as: ***Doctoraatsopleiding Vrije Universiteit Brussel***

## **Article 2: language of instruction and communication**

English shall, in principle, be the language of instruction and communication for educational and other activities as part of the Doctoral Training Programme Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Exceptions to this rule may be granted by any one of the Doctoral Schools (e.g. for activities which have another language as their subject, for activities where all the participating students use Dutch as their language of communication or activities where the nature of the subject precludes the use of English, etc.).

## **Article 3: admission requirements and registration – compulsory part of the Doctoral Training Programme**

Each student who has been admitted for enrolment as a PhD student, in accordance with the Central Regulations for the Conferment of PhD Degrees, shall be automatically assigned to one of the Doctoral Schools upon enrolment as stipulated in article 9 of the Doctoral Schools Regulations, thus gaining the right to attend 60 credits' worth of courses at the Doctoral Training Programme. To be admitted as a PhD student automatically means one is admitted for the Doctoral Training Programme and enrolment for one of the Doctoral Schools takes place at the same time as the enrolment as PhD student.

For certain students, groups of students or for certain PhD titles the Doctoral Training Programme or a part thereof may be made compulsory, i.e. a PhD student must be able to demonstrate that he/she has passed the relevant part of the Doctoral Training Programme as an additional condition to be admitted to the second part of the doctoral examination (the public defence of his PhD thesis). Individual faculties may stipulate a maximum term for this section of the Doctoral Training Programme to be completed successfully. The faculties shall state unequivocally and by objective criteria in their supplementary faculty exam regulations for which graduates or with regard to which PhD titles this requirement applies. Upon admission for enrolment this additional compulsory part is imposed by the Faculty Council (in Dutch: Faculteitsraad) on those PhD students for whom it applies in accordance with the supplementary faculty regulations.

PhD students shall attend the Doctoral Training Programme Vrije Universiteit Brussel at one of the three Doctoral Schools. The organisation of the Doctoral Training Programme and the supervision of PhD students in the framework of this programme shall be in the hands of the concerned Doctoral School. Enrolment for the Doctoral Training Programme shall not be possible by means of a credit or exam contract.

## **Article 4: Doctoral Training Programme Certificate**

Completion of the Doctoral Training Programme Vrije Universiteit Brussel shall be awarded with the programme Certificate signed by the Rector.

The Certificate shall be issued solely to PhD students who have successfully completed the entire course of the Doctoral Training Programme amounting to 60 credits.

The Certificate shall state that the PhD student has 'successfully' completed the Doctoral Training Programme Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

PhD students who have not attended the entire course of the Doctoral Training Programme Vrije Universiteit Brussel amounting to 60 credits may apply for an Attestation listing the course units, workshops and other activities attended as part of the Doctoral Training Programme.

**Article 5: transition procedure**

For those whose enrolment as a PhD student predates the 2008-2009 academic year a transition rule applies. Having obtained faculty approval PhD students may enrol for one of the Doctoral Schools. This means that the regulations regarding Doctoral Schools and the Doctoral Training Programme apply.

**Article 6: date of commencement**

The present decision shall come into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2008.

**Article 7: implementation**

This decision is subject to an appeal to the Flemish Government by the relevant government commissioner. Upon expiry of the term established for appealing against the decision or, prior to expiry of the term and following an announcement that no appeal shall be lodged, the Rector shall be responsible for implementing this decision.

# A P P E N D I X

## Explanatory Memorandum with the Doctoral Training Programme Vrije Universiteit Brussel

### **Preliminary observations**

- This Explanatory Memorandum is in addition to the Doctoral Schools Regulations.
- All references to people and positions in these regulations should be taken to refer to both genders.

### **General**

1. This Explanatory Memorandum describes the ways in which the Doctoral Training Programme may be interpreted and is in addition to the Doctoral Schools Regulations approved by the Board of Directors (in Dutch: Raad van Bestuur) on December 11, 2007. The programme structure of the Doctoral Training Programme shall be the same for all PhD students in the Doctoral Schools of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, whereas the practical completion shall be done on an individual basis.
2. Each PhD student is entitled to participate in the Doctoral Training Programme amounting to 60 credits.
3. The faculties have competence over admitting students to PhD programmes. Following an aptitude inquiry and provided that full grounds are stated they may decide to make the Doctoral Training Programme or a part thereof compulsory for individual students. In such a case admission to the defence of one's PhD thesis (second part of the doctoral examination) shall be conditional upon the compulsory course package. More details may be found in the supplementary faculty PhD regulations. The faculties may stipulate a maximum term for the course package to be completed.
4. PhD students who have attended the entire Doctoral Training Programme and pass their doctoral examination shall be issued the Doctoral Training Programme Certificate (in Dutch: Getuigschrift van de Doctoraatsopleiding). Students who have attended only part of the Doctoral Training Programme and/or have not successfully passed their defence shall – upon request – be issued an Attestation (in Dutch: Attest van gevolgde activiteiten) listing the activities attended as part of the Doctoral Training Programme.
5. Only credits obtained after the PhD student has taken the degree providing access to a PhD programme may be considered for exemptions within the Doctoral Training Programme. An exception applies to credits obtained in an initial Master's programme with a research orientation – in accordance with the Education Minister's resolution of May 2005 regarding the study load associated with a Master's programme. Granting exemptions is a competence that lies with the relevant Doctoral School.
6. The Doctoral Schools Steering Committee (in Dutch: Stuurgroep) shall have an advisory role in determining the content of the Doctoral Training Programme.

## Programme Structure

The Doctoral Training Programme constitutes a flexible course package comprising two components.

Course package	Credits
I. Regular course units from:  1.1. Bachelor's, Master's or Advanced Master's programmes of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Ghent University (free of charge; exceptions apply for courses incurring increased tuition fees) or other institutions  1.2. Specialised courses organised by a Doctoral School of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel or Ghent University  1.3. Specialised course units organised by another Belgian or foreign university or an Institution for Lifelong Learning  1.4. Doctoral Seminars aimed at the training of specific skills (transferable or generic skills, specialised knowledge)  1.5. Research-related activities by PhD students	30
II. PhD thesis defence	30

- For each regular course, the PhD student may request an alternative evaluation method. The decision lies with the Doctoral School director who consults with the supervisor and the teaching professor of said course.
- PhD students are not subjected to the existing pre- or co-requisites for regular courses at the VUB.

## Forms of assessment

1. The method of evaluation for regular course units is determined by the relevant lecturer. The evaluation can consist of a written or an oral exam, a portfolio, a project, a practicum, a paper, an internship, etc... The method of evaluation for activities organised by the Doctoral Schools is stated in the announcement of the activity.
2. Doctoral Seminars may require active participation or a positive assessment by the lecturer concerned in order for credits to be awarded. The conditions for credits to be awarded, a possible assessment system and the number of credits that can be obtained are announced when details of the seminars are communicated.
3. In general, active participation is required in order to obtain credits for research related activities. The number of credits to obtain can lie between the minima and maxima determined by the Doctoral School.

## **Procedure**

Registration for course units, doctoral seminars and other activities organised by the Doctoral Schools which require prior enrolment, takes place through the Doctoral Schools and as soon as this is operational, through the new Campus Management System of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel according to the Doctoral Schools procedure.

## **Faculty involvement**

The Faculty Deans shall decide which of the following three Doctoral Schools their faculty will join.

1. Doctoral School of Human Sciences;
2. Doctoral School of Natural Sciences and (Bioscience) Engineering;
3. Doctoral School of Life Sciences and Medicine.

*This Doctoral Training Programme shall take effect from the start of the 2012-2013 academic year.*

***Only the Dutch version of this document ("Besluit inzake het inrichten van de Doctoraatsopleiding Vrije Universiteit Brussel") is legally valid.***