

CENTRAL REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE CONFERRING OF THE ACADEMIC PhD DEGREE

Dutch version approved by the Board of Governors on

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Translation note: Only the Dutch version is considered legally binding.

Preamble

Supplementary faculty rules

Throughout this text, the male pronoun is used to cover references to both male and female for the sake of brevity and convenience. No gender preference is intended in these provisions for (applicant) doctoral students.

These regulations are complemented by the *Doctoral Schools Regulations of the VUB* and the *Decision concerning the establishment of the PhD programme at the VUB* (Besluit inzake het inrichten van de Doctoraatsopleiding van de VUB).

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

- Dean (decaan): the dean of the faculty in which the PhD student registers;
- Doctoral Training Programme (doctoraatsopleiding): the educational framework organised within every faculty by the Doctoral Schools, as stated in the *Decision concerning the establishment of the PhD course* at the VUB;
- PhD students within the joint PhD framework (doctorandi in het kader van een gezamenlijk doctoraat): incoming and outgoing PhD students;
- Joint PhD (gezamenlijk doctoraat): a PhD thesis written and defended under the joint responsibility of the VUB and one or more partner institution(s). This method leads to a “double” PhD degree or “joint” PhD degree, in which the requirements of art. 94 §4 of the decree of April 4th 2003 concerning the restructuring of higher education in Flanders, are met;
- Incoming PhD student (inkomende doctorandus): a PhD student preparing a joint PhD for which the VUB is the host institution;
- Interdisciplinary PhD (interdisciplinair doctoraat): a PhD thesis that exceeds various fields of expertise, which means the PhD student can be linked to several faculties;
- Outgoing PhD student (uitgaande doctorandus): a PhD student preparing a joint PhD for which the VUB is the home institution;
- VUB: Vrije Universiteit Brussel

References to persons and functions in these regulations can refer to either men or women.

I. Purpose and Scope

Article 1

These regulations establish the general requirements and the procedure governing the acquisition of an academic PhD degree at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). The Faculty Council may supplement the general stipulations contained in this document by supplementary faculty regulations which, following advice by the Educational Board (Onderwijsraad), are subject to approval by the Board of Governors (Raad van Bestuur).

Article 2

The VUB awards academic PhD degrees in disciplines mentioned in Appendix I of these regulations.

The Faculty Council may modify and supplement Appendix I of these regulations following advice by the Educational Board (Onderwijsraad). These modifications and supplements are subject to approval by the Board of Governors (Raad van Bestuur). Appendix I can be subject to change at all times.

An academic PhD degree can only be awarded by the VUB in the fields of expertise, or parts of the fields of expertise in which the University has the authority to offer training programmes leading to a master's degree, by virtue of art. 31 of the decree of April 4th 2003 concerning the restructuring of higher education in Flanders (decreet van 4 april 2003 betreffende de herstructurering van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen). Where the VUB can offer only bachelor programmes in certain fields of expertise or parts of fields of expertise, the PhD degree in or about these fields of expertise can be awarded only on condition that the public defence of the PhD thesis takes place before a inter-University jury composed in consultation with a university that has the authority to offer master programmes in these specific fields of expertise as provided by the decree of April 4th 2003 concerning the restructuring of higher education in Flanders (decreet van 4 april 2003 betreffende de herstructurering van het hoger onderwijs in Vlaanderen).

II. Conditions of Admission

Article 3

Once the PhD student has received official permission to prepare the academic PhD examination in accordance with article 17 of these regulations, the candidate must register as a PhD student at the VUB without delay. In the case of a joint PhD the same rule applies; the PhD candidate must register as a PhD student at the VUB.

Registration as a PhD student is possible at any time during the academic year. The tuition fee that is due is mentioned on the WebPages of the VUB Registrar's Office (Dienst Inschrijvingen): <http://www.vub.ac.be/downloads/studiegelden.pdf>

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.

Upon first registration the PhD student will automatically be assigned to one of the Doctoral Schools as stipulated in art. 9 of the *Doctoral School Regulations of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel* (Doctoral Schools reglement Vrije Universiteit Brussel). This gives the PhD student the right to follow the Doctoral Training Programme to the tune of 60 ECTS study points, in accordance with art. 3 of the "*Decision concerning the establishment of the PhD course*" (Besluit inzake het inrichten van de Doctoraatsopleiding Vrije Universiteit Brussel). The supplementary faculty regulations stipulate when and in which cases participation in the Doctoral Training Programme (or parts of it) is compulsory and possibly within which period of time this programme (or parts of it) needs to be successfully completed.

Supplementary faculty rules

Specific provisions applying to PhDs in the Arts: the PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (*Commissie voor Doctoraatsopvolging - CDO*) may grant permission to draw up a thesis for a PhD in the Arts dependent on the applicant following a doctoral programme.

Article 4

To be admitted to the preparation of the PhD thesis, candidates must:

1. Hold one of the following qualifications:
 - 1.1 A master's degree or, as stipulated in of the decree of April 4th 2003 concerning the restructuring of higher education in Flanders, a degree of equal value, including a Polytechnic Civil Engineering degree or a master's degree awarded by the Royal Military School in Brussels (Koninklijke Militaire School).

- 1.2 A degree obtained outside the Flemish Community (Vlaamse Gemeenschap), which is considered equivalent to a master's degree in accordance with the stipulations of the decree of April 4th 2003 concerning the restructuring of higher education in Flanders.
 - 1.3 A master's degree obtained from the French Community (Franse Gemeenschap) 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.
 - 1.4 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 decree or the application of the European Directive 89/48 of the Council of December 21st 1988 concerning a general scheme of recognition of higher-education degrees that complete vocational training courses of at least three years which is considered equivalent under a bilateral agreement.
2. Have a supervisor (promoter) and have finalised their choice of subject.
 3. Have obtained permission to prepare the PhD thesis in accordance with art. 17 of these regulations.

The supplementary faculty regulations determine which degree gives access to which academic PhD degree as determined in Appendix I.

Supplementary faculty rules

The Faculty of Philosophy and Letters makes an academic Master's diploma a basic prerequisite for access to a PhD.

The PhD is, in principle, in the same discipline as the Master's diploma. If the applicant wants to obtain a PhD in another discipline, the department concerned will put together a mandatory course to prepare for the doctoral programme to be followed by the applicant. The applicant may enrol for the PhD, but must successfully complete the mandatory preparatory course for the doctoral programme within three years in order to be admitted to the examination for the academic grade of doctor.

Specific provisions applying to PhDs in the Arts:

Those holding a Master's diploma resulting from a programme in the audio-visual and visual arts, music and the performing arts, architecture or literature disciplines have access to a PhD in the Arts directly.

Applicants who do not have a Master's diploma in one of these disciplines can access this PhD provided that:

- a) an aptitude inquiry into previously acquired competencies conducted by the Faculty PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (as set out in Article 7) shows that competencies in the field of the Arts exist in a general way at Master's diploma level.
- b) examinations were successfully passed in those parts of the academic and/or artistic programme

determined by the thesis supervisor, potentially in conjunction with the co-supervisors and the applicant, subject to the approval by the Department of the Arts and Archaeology and the Faculty PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (as laid down in Article 7) if one of the supervisors belongs to the teaching staff of the Erasmushogeschool (EhB) university college, the Committee will also ask for the opinion of the departmental councils for the Rijksinstituut voor Cultuurspreiding (RITS) college for audio-visual and performing arts or the Royal Conservatory of Music, which will be based on the proposals put forward by the relevant Erasmushogeschool educational committees.

These same conditions apply for admission to the PhD examination, a supplementary condition being that the degree that grants admission to the PhD examination must have been obtained at least two years prior to admission. Moreover, before PhD students are allowed to participate in the PhD examination, they will need to show they are able to conduct independent academic research.

Article 5

The Faculty Council may, if they consider it necessary, insist on an additional review of the candidate's file in order to assess the candidate's suitability to carry out academic research in the discipline concerned and to express the research results in a PhD thesis, even if the candidate has obtained the necessary master's degree or a degree equivalent to the master's degree.

The Faculty Council may choose to grant permission to the candidate to prepare a PhD thesis if they find the candidate suitable, even though the candidate does not hold the necessary master's degree or a degree equivalent to the master's degree. This permission may however be made dependent on an investigation concerning the suitability of the PhD candidate to perform academic research in the concerned discipline and to express the research results in a PhD thesis. Admission can also be made dependent on the successful participation in an examination set up by the faculty. The supplementary faculty PhD regulations further describe the organisation of this examination.

Supplementary faculty rules

See the supplementary Faculty rules in Article 6.3.

Article 6

Holders of a diploma awarded by a foreign university or foreign academic institution may be exempted from the entry requirements as specified under article 4, 1.2 & 1.4 and can therefore be granted admission to the preparation of a PhD thesis and/or examination.

When the Faculty Council considers that the foreign qualification cannot be deemed equivalent to a master's degree, admission can be made dependent on the investigation concerning the suitability of the PhD candidate to perform scientific research in the concerned discipline and to express the research results in a PhD thesis. Admission can also be made dependent on the successful participation in an examination set up by the faculty. The supplementary faculty PhD regulations contain the further organisation of this examination.

Supplementary faculty rules

The power to grant an exemption from the conditions for entry laid down in Articles 4.3 and 5 of the Central Regulations concerning the conferring of the academic PhD is allocated to an *ad hoc* committee, namely the Research Committee, potentially supplemented with specialists.

For rejected students who still wish to enrol, the Committee establishes a mandatory course to prepare for a PhD. The applicant must successfully complete the mandatory preparatory course for the doctoral programme within three years in order to be admitted to the examination for the academic grade of doctor.

Article 7

Every faculty sets up one PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (Commissie voor de Doctoraatsopleiding or CDO), including a minimum of five professors (members of the Senior Academic Staff - "*Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel*" or ZAP), supplemented by at least one teaching assistant ("*Assisterend Academisch Personeel*" or AAP) acting as an observer. The supplementary faculty PhD regulations precisely stipulate the composition and working of the Commission.

Supplementary faculty rules

The PhD Progress Monitoring Commission consists of:

- a) 1 member of the Senior Academic Staff from each department (5 members in total);
- b) 1 doctoral researcher or 1 post-doctoral researcher linked to the Faculty, plus a substitute satisfying the same criteria.

Specific provisions applying to PhDs in the Arts:

In the case of PhDs in the Arts, the PhD Progress Monitoring Commission monitors progress with and the outcome of the preparatory course. If necessary, it can call on the services of external specialists to this end. If one of the thesis supervisors belongs to the teaching staff of the Erasmushogeschool (EhB) university college, the Commission will also ask for the opinion of the departmental councils for the Rijksinstituut voor Cultuurspreiding (RITS) college for audio-visual and performing arts or the Royal Conservatory of Music, which will be based on the proposals put forward by the relevant Erasmushogeschool educational committees.

The Ombudsman for PhD students must not be a member of the PhD Progress Monitoring Commission.

If the PhD is of an interdisciplinary nature and exceeds the competence of the faculty, monitoring will be guaranteed by an Interdisciplinary PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (Interdisciplinaire Commissie voor de Doctoraatsopvolging or ICDO), including the three Doctoral School Directors, the Vice-Rector for Education and the Vice-Rector for Research, supplemented by a minimum of one teaching assistant (AAP) as an observer. The authority to judge whether or not PhD research work is interdisciplinary lies with the Interdisciplinary PhD Progress Monitoring Commission.

It is the task of each PhD Progress Monitoring Commission to monitor the progress of all PhD research conducted in the faculty. It is the task of the Interdisciplinary PhD Progress Monitoring Commission to monitor the progress of all interdisciplinary PhDs that exceed the competence of the faculty. PhD students who work within the framework of a joint PhD also need to be monitored by the relevant Commissions. In their monitoring activities the Commissions will use the principles laid down in the "Profile of a good supervisor (promotor)", which is annexed to these regulations in Appendix II. The Commissions evaluate the annual progress made by all PhD students in their faculties, as stipulated in articles 24 and 25 of these regulations. The same evaluation procedure is used by the Interdisciplinary PhD Progress Monitoring Commission to evaluate the progress made by PhD students who are working on an interdisciplinary PhD that exceeds the competence of the faculty.

Article 8

The PhD examination comprises the submission and public defence of an original thesis which meets the requirements specified in article 9.

Article 9

The PhD examination demonstrates the PhD student's capacity to independently contribute to the development and growth of academic knowledge, as well as his/her ability to report about their contribution both orally and in writing. The PhD thesis has to reflect the ability to create new academic knowledge in a certain field of expertise or across fields of expertise based on independent academic research, including the arts, and has to be able to lead to academic publications. The thesis needs to be shaped in the form allowed by the supplementary faculty PhD regulations (for example a completely unpublished text, or a body of publications).

Supplementary faculty rules

The thesis must be original but may contain scientific articles published elsewhere. It may not, however, consist solely of earlier publications. The articles must be supplemented and incorporated into a coherent new whole. The thesis must have clear added value in comparison with those articles. Whether that added value is, in fact, present will be assessed by the supervisor and the jury.

To assist with that assessment, reproductions of artistic creations and the original articles must be appended to the thesis.

Specific provisions applying to PhDs in the Arts

In the case of PhDs in the Arts, the thesis forms a whole, consisting of two component elements which must be fully taken into account:

- a) a written part that provides the student's scientific grounds and arguments specific to the discipline in terms of contents and formal methodology, and an adequate reflection on one's own artistic approach and skills;
- b) a portfolio part consisting specifically of: the complete and documented corpus of artistic creations and any sources for the thesis.

These two components must provide the original thesis referred to above. This provision consequently also applies to the items in the portfolio section of the thesis.

For PhDs in the Arts, the thesis, consisting of the written part and portfolio section, must be submitted in such a way that the whole and its components can be verified and reproduced.

At least one paper version of the written part must be submitted. The paper and electronic copies submitted must be completely identical.

The only exception allowed is if the material cannot be submitted entirely on paper. Where this is the case, the doctoral student must submit:

- a) eight completely identical copies on a non-paper medium; and
- b) at least one extensive paper version that meets the usual requirements for scientific research at doctoral level.

III. Ombudsperson for PhD students

Article 10

Every year the VUB appoints an Ombudsperson for PhD students in order to ensure high-quality support. Details concerning the functions of the Ombudsperson can be found in article 11 of these regulations.

Article 11

The Board of Governors appoints, at the proposal of the Rector and before the beginning of each academic year, an Ombudsperson for PhD students. The Ombudsperson for PhD students is a full-time Senior Academic Staff member (Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel or ZAP) with preferably the title of Full Professor (gewoon hoogleraar). At the same time and as part of the same procedure, a substitute Ombudsperson is appointed from a different faculty. The mandate of the Ombudsperson for PhD students and of the substitute Ombudsperson can in principle not be combined with another function in a central or faculty body.

The name of the Ombudsperson for PhD students and his/her substitute as well as information on how they can be reached will also be made available to PhD students in print and on a yearly basis.

Article 12

PhD students' remarks and complaints relating to difficulties involving the supervisor(s) or (Interdisciplinary) PhD Monitoring Commission during the preparation and the execution of their PhD research can be addressed to the Ombudsperson for PhD students.

At the request of the PhD student, the Ombudsperson for PhD students may operate as a mediator between the PhD student and the supervisor(s), chair person of the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission, the Dean and members of the academic staff. The goal of the Ombudsperson is to arrive at a friendly settlement of complaints.

Article 13

All remarks and complaints are recorded by the Ombudsperson for PhD students in a confidential file.

The Ombudsperson for PhD students decides, in consultation with the PhD student, how they will proceed after the first meeting initiated by the student. 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.

In the case of a written complaint concerning article 12, §1, the ombudsperson for PhD students will, within three weeks, propose a friendly settlement to the Dean, notwithstanding the possible application of article 26 of these regulations. The PhD student and the Ombudsperson are informed immediately, and in writing, of the solution proposed by the Dean.

Article 14

The Ombudsperson for PhD students has the following rights that enable him/her to carry out his/her function:

- The right to participate in the meetings of the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission;
- The right to consult all documents concerning the stipulations of article 12, §1;

The ombudsperson for PhD students is bound to secrecy and discretion.

Article 15

Every year, before November 15th, the Ombudsperson for PhD students is required to report to the Rector on the previous year's occurrences. This report consists of a statistical overview of all contacts and of all cases in which actual mediation took place; care should be taken not to breach confidentiality.

The report of the Ombudsperson for PhD students will be discussed by the Research Council (Onderzoeksraad) in their upcoming meeting.

The Rector reports to the Board of Governors on the activities of the Ombudsperson for PhD students and the subsequent discussion in the Research Council (Onderzoeksraad) before the beginning of the second semester.

Article 16

If the Ombudsperson for PhD students is a member of the same faculty as the PhD student who has made a remark or filed a complaint or if there is too close a tie between the Ombudsperson and the PhD student, it is, in principle, the substitute Ombudsperson for PhD students who will take action. An exception to this rule is possible if the Ombudsperson or his/her substitute is located as contact person at the other campus and is therefore connected to the same faculty as the PhD student.

IV. Procedure for the Preparation of a Doctoral Thesis

Article 17

Those who wish to obtain a PhD degree at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (including incoming and outgoing PhD students), are required to get permission to prepare the PhD Thesis. The PhD candidate with a degree awarded by a recognised Belgian institution is required to send a written request for admission to the Dean of the relevant faculty. PhD candidates with a degree awarded by a recognised foreign institution are required to send the same written admission request to the Vice-Rector for Student Policy. The Vice-Rector forwards the request to the Dean of the relevant faculty after confirming the documents are complete. The written request specifies the subject of the thesis, the name(s) of the supervisor(s) and the discipline(s) to which the proposed PhD project belongs, a curriculum vitae, a research plan, a description of the material means and framework available for the intended research (written by the supervisor) and the choice of Doctoral School. The application must include a sworn copy of the degree, except for PhD candidates who have a degree awarded by a recognised Belgian institution. These

students present, upon registering, the original version of their degree when they have been accepted for the preparation of the PhD Thesis.

Supplementary faculty rules

Specific provisions applying to PhDs in the Arts:

In the case of PhDs in the Arts, the PhD Progress Monitoring Commission first asks for the opinion of the Brussels University Association doctoral platform for the Arts.

Within three months after the date of receipt, the Faculty Council decides on the application. Once the Faculty Council has decided positively on an application, the Council ratifies the candidate's choice of Doctoral School. Following the decision of the Faculty Council, the file will be sent to the Vice-Rector for Student Policy for approval. The latter does not apply to PhD candidates with a degree awarded by a recognised Belgian institution; in this case the file only needs to be approved by the Faculty Council.

A positive decision by the Faculty Council and possibly by the Vice-Rector for Student Policy may only count as admission to the preparation of the PhD thesis providing the PhD student registers in accordance with article 3, §1, §2, §3 of these regulations.

Article 18

The registered PhD student can rely on the guidance arrangements described under articles 19 to 21 and article 27 of these regulations.

Article 19

The PhD thesis is written under the guidance and responsibility of at least one member of the Senior Academic Staff (ZAP), the ZAP-supervisor, who may be assisted by:

- An external supervisor who is a member of the Senior Academic Staff (ZAP) not affiliated with the Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- A supervisor who is an emeritus member of the Senior Academic Staff (ZAP) of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- A supervisor who is not a member of the Senior Academic Staff (ZAP) and holds a PhD title.

This may be further specified in the supplementary faculty regulations.

Supplementary faculty rules

At least one supervisor must be a member of the senior academic staff of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters.

Specific provisions applying to PhDs in the Arts:

In the case of PhDs in the Arts, there must always be a supervisor to provide artistic guidance in addition to the VUB supervisor who is a senior academic staff member.

In the case of a joint PhD, the PhD thesis may also be written under the additional guidance and responsibility of a member of the Senior Academic Staff (ZAP) of the partner institution, who may be assisted.

Article 20

Each PhD student may be supported by an Advisory Commission consisting of the ZAP-supervisor and at least two other members (possibly not affiliated with the VUB or external) who in principle are PhD degree holders.

Supplementary faculty rules

For the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, there is a mandatory requirement for guidance from a supervisory committee. This committee is established by the Faculty on proposal by the supervisor before the first re-enrolment date following the first progress monitoring report. In the case of PhDs in the Arts, there is an exemption from the requirement for a thesis-based doctorate for just one member of the supervisory committee.

Article 21

The supervisor(s) is (are) obliged to counsel and stimulate the PhD student as he/she prepares the PhD thesis. In doing so, the supervisor(s) need(s) to observe the principles described in the "Profile of a good supervisor", which are annexed to these regulations in Appendix II.

The PhD student is required to inform his/her supervisor regularly of the progress made on his/her PhD thesis.

Article 22

Should either the PhD student or the supervisor(s) neglect their respective obligations as stipulated under article 21 then either party may notify the Dean and/or the Ombudsperson for PhD students.

Article 23

The PhD student needs to refrain from committing any form of academic misbehaviour, including plagiarism, as it is defined below:

Plagiarism can be defined as the use of the formulations of others, whether or not literally, without precise source indication. It is a form of fraud and a violation of academic integrity.

Established academic misbehaviour by the PhD student in his/her filed thesis needs to be reported to the Dean immediately and in writing. This established scientific misbehaviour can lead to one of the following disciplinary sanctions:

- the obligation to rework the doctoral dissertation in such a manner that no plagiarism can be established anymore;
- the rejection of the doctoral dissertation, the PhD student is not allowed to deliver or defend a doctoral dissertation on the same or a related subject;
- the rejection of the PhD project and the exclusion of the PhD student: the PhD student is not allowed to deliver or defend a doctoral dissertation on the same or a related subject and is prohibited to register again at our university for a number of academic years determined by the disciplinary decision.

Within five calendar days following the establishment of academic misbehaviour, all persons involved are heard by the Dean. It is the Dean who judges whether or not the claim of academic misbehaviour is founded. The Dean also decides on the sanction that needs to be applied. After hearing all the parties involved, the Dean makes a decision without delay and communicates the decision to the PhD student through means of a registered letter; the student may also retrieve notification of the decision from the faculty secretariat where he/she will have to sign a receipt form in return. The Dean also communicates his/her decision to the chairperson of the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission.

The PhD student may file an appeal with the chairperson of the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission, within five calendar days (starting the day after the PhD student has officially been informed of the decision). When the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission acts as the body of appeal, it also includes in an advisory capacity: the Ombudsperson for PhD students and a representative of the Rector with thorough knowledge of the course and examination regulations. The PhD student will be heard by the Commission. The internal appeal procedure can lead to:

- A motivated rejection of the appeal by the chairperson of the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission on the basis of it being ungrounded;
- A motivated decision by the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission, taken in a special session, which confirms or reconsiders the original decision.

In the case of an appeal, the decision by the Dean, as stipulated in §4 of this article, is suspended until the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission gathering in appeal arrives at a decision on the established academic misbehaviour.

The decision, as established in §5 of this article, must be announced to the PhD student within 15 calendar days, starting on the day after the appeal is filed. The decision will be communicated to the Rector and the Ombudsperson for PhD students.

The PhD student may be legally assisted during this procedure.

If academic misbehaviour is established after the public defence of a PhD thesis, the rector will, at his own initiative or per written and motivated request by the Dean of the faculty to which the PhD researcher was connected, convene a commission ad hoc to start an investigation. This commission will be chaired by the vicerector for Research and will consist of minimum five members, all of which are a member of the Senior Academic Staff (ZAP – Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel) and were not members of the original examination jury of the thesis:

- minimum three specialists in the concerned discipline who, together, form a majority within the commission;
- minimum one legal expert;
- any other specialist deemed necessary.

Establishing scientific misconduct after the public defense of a doctoral dissertation can lead to the revocation of the PhD title.

The commission can also invoke disciplinary sanctions as described in section 3.

The gravity of the misconduct and the punishment will be assessed by following elements:

- nature and extent of the plagiarism
- the intention to plagiarize

In the case of established academic misbehaviour, the Order and Discipline Regulations (Orde- en Tuchtreglement) will be applied. If the PhD student is also a member of the VUB staff, the Academic Staff (AP)-Regulations will be applied.

Article 24

Before the end of each academic year, every PhD student will compile a progress report outlining the progress made on his/her PhD research project. Before May 1st at the latest, he/she will provide his/her

supervisor(s), the Dean and the Chairperson of the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission with a copy of the progress report, and the Chairperson of the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission will ensure that all Commission members receive a copy. The annual progress report will comprise a minimum of four sections:

- The PhD student's activities over the previous year (including a list of publications)
- The PhD student's plans for the year ahead
- An overview of the problems encountered
- A report by the supervisor assessing the PhD student's achievements

The required and concrete content of the progress report can be further determined by the supplementary faculty regulations. Also, the faculties may decide, in the supplementary faculty regulations, to further extend the four sections mentioned above. Such an extension will also count for the progress report of an outgoing PhD student. The progress report of an incoming PhD student only needs to comprise the original four sections.

Supplementary faculty rules

The progress report must detail at least one annual progress meeting between the doctoral student and the supervisor at which the supervision by the supervisor (see profile for a good supervisor) and the research activities, planning and progress of the doctoral student were discussed, problems with the work were raised and areas for improvement were suggested. The doctoral student may ask for one or more of the senior academic staff on the PhD Progress Monitoring Commission or an outside person with a(n) (in)direct connection with the doctoral research to be present during the discussion. The report sets out the conclusions of that discussion of the progress achieved with the doctoral thesis, the planning schedule proposed for the next year and the feasibility of meeting that schedule and completing the doctoral thesis. The doctoral student must provide a copy of the progress report to all members of the supervisory committee.

The form approved by the Faculty must be used to draw up the progress monitoring report (available at: www.vub.ac.be/LW/).

The doctoral student must provide a copy of the report to the supervisor and the Dean.

Article 25

Every year, before June 30th, the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission will discuss the progress made on the PhD thesis projects.

Should the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission note lack of progress, the PhD student and the supervisor(s) will be heard at a subsequent Commission meeting. The PhD student can ask the Ombudsperson for PhD students to attend this hearing.

The (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission will report its findings to the Research Council (Onderzoeksraad) before September 1st. In its report, the Commission may give the Research Council motivated advice to deny a PhD student further registration for the PhD programme.

Article 26

Should a dispute arise during the preparation of a PhD thesis between the supervisor(s) and the PhD student or between the supervisor(s)/PhD student and the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission, the following actions will be taken:

- The Dean and /or the Ombudsperson for PhD students will intervene to mediate.
- If their mediation fails to produce results, the Council of Rectors (Rectorencollege) – acting at the request of the supervisor or the PhD student and having heard both sides – will decide whether and under which conditions work on the thesis is to be continued.

Article 27

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel has taken the following steps to support the PhD student:

- a) The setting up of a personal online documentation system for the research process:
The University provides the PhD student with an access to an electronic portfolio system (personal documentation system for the research process) allowing him/her:
 - to gather all necessary data online for the annual progress report that will be submitted to the PhD Progress Monitoring Commission;
 - to record optional data online regarding personal achievements in the margin of the student's research project, which benefit the University and academia in general;
 - to create a dossier of the PhD process, which may be used in presentations for future employers.

- b) The organisation of discipline-dependent and discipline-independent workshops, seminars, etc. which support the research process and train generic skills, bringing these to the attention of the PhD student, both within the framework of the Doctoral Schools as well as outside this framework.

- c) The identification and announcement of a selection of workshops, seminars, etc. which support the research process and train generic skills.
- d) The issuing of certificates and the “Certificate of the Doctoral Training Programme”:
- With the “Certificate of the Doctoral Training Programme”, the successful completion of the 60-credit VUB Doctoral Training Programme, is established, in accordance with article 4 of the *Decision regarding the Organisation of the Doctoral Training Programme at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel*. This document is signed by the Rector of the VUB. The certificate includes an overview of the PhD student’s activities carried out as part of the research or in the margin of the research, within the framework of the Doctoral Training Programme. This overview will be based on the personal documentation system of which the inserted activities are approved yearly by the supervisor via the progress report.
 - PhD students who did not complete the entire Doctoral Training Programme of 60 credits, receive, at their request and after (early) termination of the PhD process, an attestation including an overview of the PhD student’s activities carried out as part of the research or in the margin of the research. This overview will be based on the personal documentation system of which the inserted activities are approved yearly by the supervisor via the progress report.
 - Participation in the central VUB-activities, which support the research process and train generic skills, will be ratified through means of a certificate that can be used for the yearly progress report for the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission. The organisers of the activity will award the corresponding certificate to anyone who meets the previously stipulated and publicised criteria.

V. Procedure for the Doctoral (PhD) Examination

Article 28

When the PhD student wishes to take the PhD examination, he/she will send a written request to the Dean co-signed by the supervisor(s). This request will state the title of the PhD thesis.

The PhD student will enclose, together with the request, a number of copies of his/her thesis equal to the number of members of the doctoral jury plus three additional copies to be handed in at the faculty secretariat. The PhD student will also deliver an electronic version of his/her PhD thesis, as further explained in article 29 below.

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

When the supplementary faculty regulations make it compulsory to follow the Doctoral Training Programme (or parts of the Doctoral Training Programme), PhD students need to have successfully completed the (parts of the) Doctoral Training Programme before he/she can publicly defend his/her PhD thesis.

The PhD student is only granted permission to publicly defend his/her PhD thesis when he/she has signed a declaration form in accordance with previous paragraphs of which a prototype is included in appendix III of these regulations. Under the terms of article 29, the PhD student grants user rights to the University over the doctoral thesis which he/she has been granted permission to defend publicly.

Article 29

The PhD student preserves all copyrights of his/her doctoral thesis.

The PhD student grants irrevocable and non-exclusive permission to the VUB to reproduce and publish the PhD thesis, as it was submitted, in accordance with aforementioned article 28, in its whole and unaltered form, unless explicitly stipulated otherwise. According to this permission, the PhD thesis can be reproduced and published as follows:

Supplementary faculty rules

There is a waiver for the portfolio for PhDs in the Arts from the requirement laid down in Article 29 for non-exclusive permission for the doctoral thesis to be reproduced and published. The grant of this permission is desirable but not mandatory.

- On paper:

The thesis may be made available at the VUB university library for possible consultation by visitors;

- In electronic form:

- For preservation in the electronic archives of the VUB university library;
- For consultation through special terminals at the VUB university library;

The VUB pledges to take all necessary and reasonable measures to provide the PhD thesis with adequate technological protection against downloading, printing and/or sending the thesis to third parties. The PhD thesis may be reproduced in order to index the full text and facilitate searching the text, even when the complete text is not made available.

- Availability to the online public;

The PhD student has the choice, upon handing in the PhD thesis, to immediately make the thesis available, in its whole or partly, through a publicly accessible network (internet). The modalities of this availability will be indicated by the PhD student on the form referred to in article 28. The bibliographical description of the thesis (title, author, year, abstract, etc.) will always immediately be included in the (online) library catalogue of the university library of the VUB. The PhD student has two years to exploit the PhD thesis, commercially or otherwise, and to reproduce and publish it in its original or reworked form at the time of the public defence. If the thesis is not (commercially) published within this two-year term, the VUB has the right to reproduce and publish the thesis in full (without profit purpose) by making it available to the public via an open network (for example the internet). This two-year term can be extended if the PhD student can offer a founded reason for the extension (for example the negotiations concerning a signed publishing contract in which a reasonable term is provided to produce and distribute the agreed number of copies of the thesis, even though publishing has not yet been achieved).

The use of the PhD thesis in electronic form, in accordance with this article, implies that it can be reproduced on all possible digital carriers so it can be used in accordance with best practices. In the context of current technological evolutions, the PhD thesis may be reproduced and technically altered in any way, in order to ensure the most suitable techniques are used as provided for in this article.

This non-exclusive licence has worldwide authority for the whole protection term of the copyright and all other intellectual and commercial owner rights inherent to the PhD thesis.

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

The PhD student guarantees that he/she will not (or has not) grant(ed) any exploitation rights to third parties which are irreconcilable with the user right he/she has granted the VUB.

The PhD student guarantees that he/she is the author of the PhD thesis and that he/she has received the authorization to use protected third-party material (for example text, graphics, illustrations, recordings, etc) in his/her PhD thesis and to grant the VUB the aforementioned user rights over these materials.

The PhD student will protect the VUB without any restrictions against all possible third-party claims (for example for breaches of intellectual owner rights, personality rights, etc.).

Article 30

One copy of the PhD thesis will remain at the secretariat of the faculty concerned; it will be available for the benefit of the Senior Academic Staff (ZAP-Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel). Following the public defence, and provided the PhD student has been awarded the degree of Doctor, one copy of the PhD thesis will be put on file in the university library and a further copy in the department where the research was conducted. If the PhD student is not awarded the degree of Doctor, the copy of the PhD thesis intended for the library will be filed in the Faculty archives.

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

Article 31

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 the language concerned.

The defence of the thesis will be in Dutch or in English.

The PhD student can ask for the PhD thesis to be written and defended in another language than Dutch or English. This can only be done after due permission has been granted by the Faculty Council.

The joint PhD will be written and defended in the language stipulated in the contract concerning the joint PhD and signed by all parties.

If the joint PhD is written and defended in another language than Dutch, an abstract in Dutch is required.

Article 32

The Faculty Council will set up an examination jury with at least three Senior Academic Staff members (ZAP – Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel) of the VUB and a minimum of two external members. In principle, all members will hold a PhD. The supervisor(s) is/are part of the examination jury, and when there is more than one supervisor, supervisors have one vote jointly. The votes cast by the VUB members of the doctoral jury need always to represent the majority of all votes cast.

External members need not be doctoral degree holders in the case of a PhD in the Arts. Their presence as members of the examination jury needs to be justified clearly and explicitly in accordance with the relevant stipulations of the supplementary faculty regulations of the faculty of Arts and Philosophy.

Supplementary faculty rules

Specific provisions applying to PhDs in the Arts:

For PhDs in the Arts, the Examinations Board will consist of at least three members of VUB senior academic staff, who in principle hold a thesis-based doctoral diploma, and at least 2 external members. The 2 external members need not have a thesis-based doctorate but their inclusion in the Examinations Board must be clearly and explicitly justified.

The supervisor, and any co-supervisor(s), must submit a substantiated proposal for an Examinations Board to the Faculty Council. This proposal must be accompanied by the opinion of the Brussels University Association Platform for the Arts.

The examination jury cannot consist of more than eight members. The possible Advisory Commission will not represent the majority of the examination jury.

The chair of the examination jury appointed by the Faculty Council will under no circumstances be supervisor or co-supervisor of the PhD student.

If the PhD thesis under scrutiny has an interdisciplinary character, transgressing the borders of a faculty, each faculty needs to be represented on the examination jury by minimum one member of the Senior Academic Staff (ZAP - Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel).

The examination jury 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 jury by a minimum of two members, including the supervisor. Additionally, two external members who are not connected to either of the partner institutions will have a seat on the jury. The members connected to the VUB will be appointed by the Faculty Council. The Chair and the external members of the examination jury will be appointed in accordance with the stipulations of the contract establishing the joint PhD.

Article 33

The examination jury has two full months to examine the submitted PhD thesis and reach a decision.

If unanimous, the board may reduce this period by a maximum of one month or – provided the PhD student agrees – extend the period by a maximum of one month. An extension will always be substantiated.

Article 34

When the term, as defined in the previous article, expires, the jury members will initiate a two-phase negotiation and assessment procedure:

- Phase 1: the jury members enter into closed (internal) negotiations, orally and/or in writing.
- Phase 2: the internal defence of the thesis. The jury members hear the PhD student, who may defend him/herself. The use of interactive electronic means of communication (chat, teleconferencing, etc.) is allowed.

Subsequently, the examination jury will reach a decision and announce its decision to the PhD student:

- Should the jury decide to allow the candidate to publicly defend his/her PhD thesis, the chair of the examination jury will determine when the public defence is to take place and he/she will take all necessary measures to publicize the date of the defence. The public defence will take place no later than one month following the decision to allow the PhD student to defend his/her thesis.
- Should the examination jury decide that the PhD thesis needs to be reworked, the procedure will be suspended. From the moment the revised thesis is submitted, the provisions of article 33 apply.
- Should the examination jury decide that the thesis may not be defended, the procedure will be terminated. In this case, the examination jury can request the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission to advise the Rector to refuse re-enrolment in accordance with the stipulations of article 25, §3 of these regulations.

In any case, the examination jury will inform the PhD student in writing of the evaluation by its members, of the report on its findings and of its decision.

Article 35

At least half the members of the examination jury need to be present in order to meet and deliberate validly. Members who have submitted their recommendations in writing will be taken into account for the required quorum.

Article 36

At the request of the Chair of the examination jury, the Rector will ensure that an announcement of the public defence is published on the VUB-website. Each faculty is free to provide additional methods to announce public defences in their supplementary faculty regulations.

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

The public defence usually takes place on VUB premises. Exceptions need to be approved by the Faculty Council or the (Interdisciplinary) PhD Progress Monitoring Commission in case of an interdisciplinary PhD that crosses faculty borders.

The public defence of a joint PhD takes place on the premises of the home-institution of the PhD student, unless otherwise decided in the contract establishing the joint PhD.

Article 37

Following the announcement as specified in article 36, the PhD student will submit a brief written abstract of his/her doctoral thesis, meant for broad circulation, in Dutch and in English, approved by the supervisor, at the Rector's office, at the latest three weeks before the public defence. This text can be used for press or other announcements.

Article 38

A public defence will take no less than one hour and no more than two hours. It will include a brief summary of the PhD thesis intended for the examination jury and the lay audience, followed by a discussion.

Both the examination jury and the audience may question the PhD student, who will then proceed to defend his/her PhD thesis.

Supplementary faculty rules

Specific provisions applying to PhDs in the Arts:

If the public defence of a doctoral thesis includes a creation or performance, this will not be covered by the time lines given above.

VI. Deliberation and proclamation

Article 39

The examination jury cannot validly consult on the possible awarding of the doctoral degree and the doctoral grade if not at least half the members of the jury are present. Only attending members are taken into account for the quorum.

Article 40

Immediately following a public PhD thesis defence, the examination jury will leave the room to deliberate on awarding the PhD in private and, if so stipulated by the supplementary faculty regulations, decide on awarding a doctoral grade.

Article 41

The examination jury declares the PhD candidate has passed on the strength of a majority of the votes cast, taking into account the intrinsic academic value of the PhD thesis and the manner in which the candidate has conducted his/her defence. If there is no majority, the decision will always be made in favour of the PhD candidate.

Article 42

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

Article 43

Immediately following the deliberation, the chair of the examination jury shall proceed to confer the degree of PhD. He/she shall publicly declare that all the relevant rules and regulations have been observed.

VI. Final and transitional provisions

Article 44

Upon his/her first enrolment for the preparation of the PhD thesis as specified in article 17, the PhD student will receive a copy of the Central Regulations regarding the conferment of PhD degrees as well as the supplementary faculty regulations and the “profile of a good supervisor”, included with these regulations as Appendix II.

Article 45

These regulations become effective as of September 1st 2009.

APPENDIX I

The Vrije Universiteit Brussel awards PhD degrees in the following disciplines:

Doctor in:

- Philosophy and Ethics
- Linguistics
- Literary Studies
- Linguistics and Literary Studies
- Applied Linguistics
- History
- Archaeology and Art Sciences
- Archaeology and Art Sciences: Cultural Heritage Studies
- Law
- Notary Studies
- Criminology
- Psychological Sciences
- Educational Sciences
- Educational Sciences (Adult Education Science)
- Economic Sciences
- Applied Economic Sciences
- Applied Economic Sciences (Management Science)
- Political Sciences
- Social Sciences (Sociology)
- Media and Communication Studies
- Media and Communication Studies: Journalism Studies
- Social Health Science
- Gerontology
- Physical Education and Movement Sciences
- Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy
- Sciences
- Engineering
- Bioscience Engineering
- Medical Sciences
- Biomedical Sciences
- Nursing and Obstetrics
- Dentistry
- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Arts
- Human Ecology
- Interdisciplinary Studies

APPENDIX II

PROFILE OF A GOOD SUPERVISOR

Constituent of the Research Council Regulations (Reglement Onderzoeksraad – OZR)

Based on “De goede promotor”, in: *Onderzoekscultuur & -deontologie*, Nadine Rons, 20.10.2000

Approved by the Board of Governors 28.01.2003 and revised by the Board of Governors 03.10.2006, 12.02.2008

A good supervisor:

A good researcher will only undertake to act as supervisor of a doctoral thesis if he or she is in a position to offer the PhD student the necessary expertise, infrastructure and guidance.

Expertise, infrastructure and guidance — The supervisor:

- has established a reputation in a field of study which is at least closely related to the field in which the PhD student is to conduct his or her research.
- is responsible for the material and intellectual climate in which the PhD student develops his or her research project. He/she ensures that the basic facilities are in place for the PhD student, such as easy access to computer infrastructure, including internet access, and office space.
- ensures that the number of PhD students is proportionate to the number of places available in order that adequate supervision may be guaranteed (partly by post-doctoral researchers).
- vouches for the quality of the PhD student’s research plan.
- provides the funds to support his or her PhD students in their work, by applying for external or internal research funds and by using the allocated grant funds for researchers. The supervisor notifies the PhD student of any grants that were made available for the PhD research project.

The supervisor’s role is one of encouragement, co-ordination and assessment for the duration of the PhD process:

Co-ordination — The supervisor:

- allows sufficient time to have regular contact with the PhD student and to monitor his or her research project closely.
- assists in developing and – if necessary – adjusting the research project.
- helps the PhD student place his or her research in a broader context.

Schedule of planned activities — the supervisor:

- works in conjunction with the PhD student to draw up a thorough schedule of planned activities for the PhD research and training programme.
- ensures that the PhD student's obligations, such as the teaching assignment, are organised in such a way as not to jeopardise completion of the PhD project within the set time.
- is responsible for the progress made during the PhD process, preferably leading to completion within the set time.

Encouragement — The supervisor:

- launches the PhD student in the world of science by introducing him or her to researchers who may be able to provide assistance, by encouraging him or her to take part in conferences and in the Doctoral Training Programme, by offering advice on the development of his or her scientific research project, by providing general encouragement and fostering enthusiasm.

Assessment — The supervisor:

- arranges to be present on a regular basis when the PhD student introduces his or her work to fellow scientists and provides the PhD student with feedback after the event.
- in conjunction with the PhD student regularly assesses the progress that is being made and makes adjustments if necessary in order to keep the project on track.
- is obliged to inform the PhD student of the recommendations that he or she has made in the progress report.

Publication — The supervisor:

- alerts the PhD student to opportunities for publication and helps him or her prepare publications.
- carries significant joint responsibility not only for the PhD student's thesis, but also for the articles and abstracts arising from the PhD research project.
- gives the PhD student who is the first author of a publication maximal opportunities to submit the results of his or her research for technology transfer procedures.
- ensures that mention is made, as required, of the funding source, as well as the PhD student's VUB-affiliation in accordance with internal guidelines.