**Goal of the program**

The goal of the PE Honours program is to give motivated, promising students a clear view of what it means to be a researcher in an academic context. We want to give these students the chance to:

1) Develop their research competencies.
2) Acquire the necessary knowledge and experience (e.g. writing a proposal) in order to increase their chances of obtaining a doctoral scholarship and the successful completion of this doctorate.

We strive for equal treatment of students between the Psychology and Educational Sciences departments.

**Statute ‘Honours student – Student researcher’**

The research assignments and other tasks that students will perform are not part of the student's regular study trajectory and are not the subject of an evaluation of the student in the context of a course or of the regular study program in which the student is enrolled.

All activities are therefore extra-curricular: taking on this commitment therefore implies a real additional burden for the student. It is therefore important that the student has a good study progress, achieved good study results and has the necessary capacity to make this commitment.

From this point of view, the regular study program therefore prevails and, as a result, participating students cannot rely on facilities with regard to absence during compulsory lessons or the distribution of exams because of the Honours program.

As the PE Honours program is extra-curricular, the study costs for the students will not increase due to these extra credits.

**Remarks:**
- The PE Honours program is unrelated to the VUB Honours Program (possible collaborations will be investigated in the future although they have a slightly
different objective, namely to gain cross-curricular knowledge through reflection and debate).

- The PE Honours program is based on what is called "student researcher". The name Honours program was chosen instead of student-researcher, so that similarities with programs at other universities are clear.

**What will Honours students do?**

With the PE Honours program, we want to involve motivated students in current research at the university and let them perform research related tasks. The program encompasses an equivalent to 12 credits (1 credit = 25 to 30 hours of study time), which corresponds to 45-50 full-time days of approximately 7 hours a day.

Before the start of the program, an Individual Development Plan (i.e. IDP or IOP in Dutch) is developed to determine how much time specific assignments will take and when they will be carried out (see further under selection procedure and agreements). The aim will be to choose a program that is as varied as possible for the student.

The program consists of two parts:

**80% Honours internship**

In this part, students will work in a research group and participate in an ongoing research project at the university. Every year, possible internship topics can be found on the PE website. The following information for each topic is described:

- Research topics and projects
- A summary of specific research aspects the student can work on, such as:
  - Process relevant literature
  - Design a research question
  - Develop a research design
  - Write a research proposal
  - Develop and / or validate stimulus material
  - Conduct a pilot / main experiment
  - Analyse self-obtained or existing data
  - Interpret / present results
  - Write a paper
  - ....
- The work timing of specific research aspects (e.g. data conduction can only be done in the second semester)
- A list of the necessary training the student must / can follow before or during the Honours internship, such as:
  - Use of specific software: Mplus, SPM, ...
  - MRI safety training
  - Academic English
  - Interview-training and coaching
  - Workshop: How to write a scientific paper
  - ...
• The maximum number of students that can enter the program in order to guarantee sufficient guidance and supervision.
• Necessary prior knowledge, in order to determine in which year students should be when they start the Honours internship. When students do not have enough prior knowledge, they can still choose the internship if they can acquire this knowledge through training and this is taken into account in their IDP (see further under selection procedure and agreements).
• The language used during the internship.

20% other tasks
The Honours students will develop general skills by organizing and participating in intervision days. It is estimated to organize 2 intervision days per semester (students will not organize a day when they just started the program). Students are offered some possible activities and topics, but they decide and organize the content and format themselves (e.g. invite a guest speaker). On these days, students can:

• discuss a generally relevant topic such as
  ➢ What is a good researcher?
  ➢ Which steps do I need to take in order to start a PhD?
  ➢ …
• Disseminate research to a wider audience (e.g. organize an activity on de dag van de wetenschap).
• Promote the university and research at the university information days

After the Honours internship, the honours students will organize a mandatory intervision moment:
• A symposium where they present their research to each other in a 3 to 5-minute poster presentation.

In addition, Honours students will assist other students through one of the following tasks:

• Tutoring via the study guidance centre. For this they will
  ➢ follow a 2 hour training
  ➢ 5 hours of tutoring (student scan tutor more, but not as part of the program)
  ➢ After a tutor session they will fill in a tutor guidance document for feedback
• Assist in research related courses, e.g. answer questions on the canvas fora

Selection procedure and agreements

Students can apply to enter the program until October 27, 2019 by sending the following information to PEHonoursprogramma@vub.be:

• CV
• Study results
• Motivation letter in which they mention;
  ➢ why they want to enter the program
  ➢ their vision on research
  ➢ the specific project for which they want to apply and why
  ➢ their expected activities (during the Honours internship or regarding the other tasks)
  ➢ the timing in which they plan to complete the program and how they will combine the program with their studies
Based on the submissions, a first selection of students will be made by November 1, 2019 by the PE Honours Committee (i.e. Elien Heleven (coordinator), Joeri Hofmans (PSYC) and An-Sofie Smetcoren (EDWE)). The number of selected people depends on the number of available places. A student will only be eligible for a specific internship if there is sufficient prior knowledge or if this knowledge can be acquired in an acceptable period of time. Following steps will be taken by November 15:

1. Potential promoters will be informed about Honours internship candidates

2. If there is a match between promotor and student, we will determine
   - who will actually take on the supervision (i.e. the supervisor; this person can also be the promotor, but this is not necessary)
   - who will evaluate the student (see further at the student's evaluation)

3. It will be discussed what the supervisor expects from the student, and also what the student can expect from the supervisor (availability, workload for co-authorship, etc.)

4. An IDP will be developed and will be examined by the Honours committee on aspects such as feasibility. This IDP will encompass:
   - A description of the specific tasks during the Honours Internship with an estimated duration, including the time at which the assignment must be carried out. The student will work out this part of the IDP together with his supervisor.
   - A description of the specific other tasks that the student will take on outside of the internship with an estimated duration, including when they will be performed. The coordinator and students will prepare this part of the IDP together in order to achieve that everyone can propose and choose activities.
   - The timing of the necessary training. The supervisor will ensure that the student can receive the necessary training. For this, the doctoral school for Human Science can be contacted. If the majority of students need a similar training (e.g. academic English), a common training moment can be organized.

When developing the IDP we will take into account
   - The variety of activities (e.g. students will not only tutor as other task, but also organize an activity etc.)
   - Specific needs of the students taking into account their home or work situation
   - The timing of the interim evaluation (see further evaluation of the student)

5. Students will receive potential reimbursements for transportation, conference fees, etc. Financing for this, will be determined (e.g. faculty educational resources or via promoter).

6. If the student's internship and master's thesis promoter are the same, it has to be described what work will be carried out in the context of the internship or master's thesis. This description will be included as an addendum in the internship portfolio, PE Honours program portfolio (see below for the student's evaluation) and the master's thesis.

7. Students are asked to sign a form to prevent potential copyright issues.

8. Students are asked to act according to the guidelines in the Researcher's Charter: https://www.vub.ac.be/sites/vub/files/nieuws/users/avschare/1a_charter_van_de_onderzoeker_26092014.pdf
**Student’s evaluation**

Students will be assessed at the end (summative), but also during the program (formative). These evaluations are given by an evaluation committee consisting of at least 2 members, including the supervisor, promoter and another person who is appointed during the selection phase.

**End evaluation**

Students receive a "Pass" or "Fail" from their evaluation committee. This judgement is based on the experiences of the supervisor and (if this is not the same person) promotor, and the student’s output, summarized in a portfolio. This portfolio will include the following documents;

- Presented poster
- PowerPoint presentation
- Tutor guidance document
- Process evaluation, filled in by the supervisor
- Peer evaluation, i.e. “Pass” or “Fail” given by other honours students
- ...

**Interim evaluation**

Halfway through the program (timing depends on the IDP), the evaluation committee will advise the student to continue or stop the program, based on a provisional portfolio containing

- The preliminary demonstrable output
- Interim process evaluation of the supervisor
- Interim peer evaluations
- ...

**Appreciation**

After successful completing the program, a ‘Pass’ evaluation, a certificate "PE Honours Program - Student Researcher" will be issued with a description of it

- Acquired research competencies
- Acquired ‘soft skills’
- The number of credits that the work included

The certificate is signed by the supervisor, the Dean and Rector of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

**Identification of problems**

At the start of the program it will be clearly stated that every problem must be raised in time. However, it is also the task of the PE Honours committee to identify potential problems during the evaluation moments, based on the process reports and peer assessments. Moreover, the Honours students will be able to assess their supervisor and all activities. For this we will ask them questions such as:

- Did you encounter any problems during your internship so far?
- Did you encounter any problems during the organization of intervision days so far?
- Did you encounter any problems during tutoring activities so far?
- Are these problems solved, how?
- Was there respect for deadlines?
- Could you follow the timing in your IDP?
- Was the workload as expected for the student?
- Was the workload as expected for the supervisor?
- …

**Contact persons**

- For general questions and problems, mail to PEHonoursprogramma@vub.be
- For specific questions and problems regarding the internship, contact the supervisor or promotor.
- For specific questions and problems regarding tutoring, contact the study guidance centre.
- In the event of a dispute, the faculty ombudsperson will mediate.