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PREAMBLE

These regulations are supplemented by the *VUB Doctoral School Regulations*.

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

- **AR:** Academic Council (Academische Raad)
- **CDO:** PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (*Commissie voor de Doctoraatsopvolging*)
- **Co-promotor:** the person who, in addition to the first promotor, is responsible for the day-to-day supervision and follow-up of the doctoral research.
- **CWI - Research Integrity Commission** (Commissie Wetenschappelijke Integriteit)
- **Dean:** the dean of the faculty in which the PhD researcher enrolls.
- **DHO:** Higher Education Database
- **PhD researcher: A person enrolled as a doctoral student and preparing a PhD thesis**
- **Doctoral Training Programme:** the educational framework for doctoral researchers organised by the Researcher Training & Development Office (RTDO) in cooperation with the Doctoral Schools, as stated in the *VUB Doctoral School Regulations VUB*
- **EHB:** Erasmushogeschool Brussel (Erasmus Brussels University of Applied Sciences and Arts).
- **ES:** faculty of Social Sciences and Solvay Business School
- **PAC:** previously acquired competence.
- **Roadmap:** document in which the faculties can adopt practical guidelines for the implementation of the central doctoral regulations, but which may in no way conflict with or deviate from the same. These are submitted to the legal advisors of the Research Department for distribution to the PhD researchers. The practical guidelines that the faculty can include in the roadmap are incorporated into these regulations in a non-exhaustive manner.
- **Expectation Sheet:** a document template that can be used by PhD researchers and their promotors to specify their mutual expectations in an explicit manner and make arrangements concerning their collaboration. The document is intended as a tool to help prepare and structure a one-on-one meeting and can be adapted and supplemented by both parties as desired. We strongly recommend using the document during the first few months after the start of the PhD programme. This can then be resumed if expectations change during the course of the PhD programme.
- **GF:** faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy
- **Joint PhD:** a PhD thesis written and defended under the joint responsibility of VUB and one or more partner institution(s), leading to a "double" or "joint" PhD degree in accordance with the requirements of article II.172. of the Higher Education Codex of 20 December 2013.
- **Main institution:** the institution that, within the framework of a joint PhD:
 - a) funds (the largest part of) the doctoral research or the institution to which the promotor belongs under whose auspices the application for external funding was made; or
 - b) where most of the doctoral research takes place and/or where the PhD researcher will mostly attend; or
 - c) where the PhD researcher has started their doctoral research and was first enrolled.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.

- **IES:** Institute for European Studies, a special university institute recognised by the legislature, linked to VUB via a separate status within the VUB with functional autonomy as defined and set out in the "Organic Regulations for IES", and which does not have its own legal personality.
- **Incoming PhD researcher:** a PhD researcher preparing a joint PhD for which VUB is not the main institution.
- **Interdisciplinary PhD:** a PhD researcher that extends over various disciplines, meaning that the PhD Researcher can be associated with several faculties.
- **IR:** faculty of Engineering
- **Prospective PhD researcher:** A person who wishes to start a PhD and initiates the registration process for this
- **LK:** faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy
- **Long-term illness:** legally determined, from 30 days of illness
- **LW:** faculty of Languages and Humanities
- **KCB:** Royal Conservatory of Brussels (*Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel*)
- **Liaison Office for Research Integrity:** this is the contact point that provides first-line information on the procedure to be followed in the event of a (suspected) breach of research integrity. It is the official contact point for reporting (suspected) breaches of research integrity and conducts the preliminary investigation. Contact via mpcwi@vub.be
- **MILO:** Multidisciplinary Institute for Teacher Training
- **OWSA:** Education and Student Administration
- **OZR:** Research Council
- **PE:** faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences
- **Thesis:** the PhD thesis can take the form of a monograph, a collection of manuscripts, an artistic or design-based realisation or a combination of any of the foregoing.
- **Promotor:** the first promotor under whose direction the PhD thesis is prepared. This person is responsible for the day-to-day supervision and follow-up of the doctoral research, as well as for administrative and financial follow-up.
- **RC:** faculty of Law and Criminology
- **RITCS:** Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound
- **RTDO:** Researcher Training & Development Office
- **Outgoing PhD researcher:** a PhD researcher who prepares a joint PhD for which VUB is the main institution.
- **VUB:** Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- **WE:** faculty of Sciences and Bioengineering Sciences
- **ZAP:** Independent Academic Staff (*Zelfstandig Academisch Personeel*)

All references made to people and positions in these regulations apply equally to all genders.

Section I. Scope of these regulations

Article 1 - General information

§1. These regulations set out the requirements and procedure for obtaining the academic degree of doctor at the VUB.

§2. A competent faculty body may, to the extent expressly authorised in these regulations, further elaborate the provisions contained in these central doctoral regulations within the regulations themselves where expressly indicated. Each faculty specifies in its roadmap the competent faculty bodies that perform the duties described in these regulations. The roadmap is a document in which only practical guidelines for the implementation of the central doctoral regulations can be adopted and which may in no way conflict with or deviate from the same. These are submitted to the legal advisors of the Research Department for distribution to the PhD researchers.

§3. Non-contractual claims by students against (direct and indirect) auxiliary persons of VUB (including staff and board members) are ineligible with regard to harm caused by the non-fulfilment of an obligation or duty arising from the student's contractual relationships with VUB to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Article 2 - Academic doctorate degree

§1. VUB awards the academic doctorate degrees included in the official list of "Academic doctorate degrees". This list can be amended or supplemented by the Education Council at any time in response to a reasoned proposal submitted by the faculty, as well as the ICDO for interdisciplinary PhD. degrees. Any change or addition must then be submitted to the Research Council (OZR) for the purpose of notification.

§2. An academic doctorate degree can only be awarded by VUB in or across the fields of study, or parts of the fields of study, for which the university has the authority to offer courses leading to a master's degree by virtue of Article II.82 of the Higher Education Codex of 20 December 2013. If VUB can only offer bachelor's degree programmes in certain fields of study or parts of fields of study, the PhD degree can be awarded in or across such fields of study or parts of these fields of study, provided that the public defence of the PhD thesis takes place before an inter-university panel assembled in consultation with a university that can offer master's programmes in the field of study or part of the field of study concerned by virtue of the Higher Education Codex of 20 December 2013.

Section II Admission for preparation of the PhD thesis

Article 3 – Admission

§1. Admission for the preparation of a PhD thesis is permitted for anyone who:

1. Either (i) holds a Flemish master's degree or an equivalent higher education diploma relevant to the doctoral research, (ii) or has passed an examination if deemed necessary by the faculty (see Article §2);
2. Has a promotor and has finalised their choice of subject;
3. Has obtained permission to prepare the PhD thesis in accordance with Article 4 of these regulations.

§2. Implementing Art. II.184 of the Higher Education Codex, the faculty shall determine the requirements that may be imposed on the prior courses and degrees/diplomas obtained previously that provide the prospective PhD researcher with access for preparation of a PhD thesis.

Faculty of Social Sciences and Solvay Business School (ES):

By way of standard grants:

- the degree of Master of Science in Economische Wetenschappen gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Economics;
- the degree of Master of Science in Toegepaste Economische Wetenschappen gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Business Economics;
- the degree of Master of Science in International Business gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Business Economics;
- the degree of Master of Science in Handelsingenieur gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Business Economics: Business Engineering;
- the degree of Master of Science in Business Engineering: Business and Technology gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Business Economics: Business Engineering;
- the degree of Master of Science in Politieke Wetenschappen gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Political Science;
- the degree of Master of Science in Political Science: European and International Governance gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Political Science;
- the degree of Master of Science in Sociologie gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Sociology;
- the degree of Master of Science in Communicatiewetenschappen gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Media and Communication Studies;
- the degree of Master of Communication Studies: New Media and Society in Europe gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Media and Communication Studies;
- The degree of Master of Science in Communicatiewetenschappen gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Media and Communication Studies: Journalism Studies;
- The degree of Master of Science in Communication Studies: Journalism and Media in Europe gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Media and Communication Studies: Journalism studies;

The degree of Master of Science in Sociale Wetenschappen gives access to the academic degree of Doctor of Social Sciences.

Exceptions to this are possible and can be submitted by the dean to the CDO.

Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy (GF):

The Faculty of GF may grant any master's degree access to any of the doctorate's degrees that may be awarded within the faculty, subject to the agreement of the prospective promotor(s) expressed in the statement of the promotor(s) accepting the promotorship of the candidate. The Faculty of GF awards the following doctorates:

Medical Sciences

Pharmaceutical Sciences

Social Health Sciences

Gerontology

Dentistry

Global Health, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Medicine

The admission requirements for each degree are:

Medical Sciences

Enrolment may be granted to holders of a university master's degree awarded by a Belgian university, or a legally equivalent degree, for the title of:

- Physician or doctor of medicine, surgery and obstetrics;
- Pharmacist, dentist, veterinarian;
- Master in Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Physical Education, Physiotherapy and Motoric Rehabilitation;
- Bioengineer, civil engineer.

Pharmaceutical Sciences

Enrolment may be granted to holders of a university master's degree awarded by a Belgian university, or a legally equivalent degree, for the title of:

- Pharmacist;
- Master in Sciences, Master in Biomedical Sciences, bioengineers, doctors, dentists and veterinarians.

Social Health Sciences

Enrolment may be granted to holders of a university master's degree awarded by a Belgian university, or a legally equivalent degree, for the title of:

- Master in MSW or in Gerontology;
- Master in Sociology;
- Master in Psychology;
- Master in Educational Sciences;
- Doctor, major in Social Health Sciences.

Gerontology

Holders of a master's degree in Gerontology or a master's degree belonging to one of the 4 subfields of Gerontology:

- Bio-Medical subfield (including Physician, Master REVAKI, Master in Movement Sciences and Physical Education, Master in Biomedical Sciences, Master in Pharmacy, Master in Dentistry, ...);
- Psycho-Medical subfield (including Master in Psychology, ...);
- Psycho-Social subfield (including Master in Sociology, Master in Educational Sciences, ...);
- Social Policy subfield.

Dentistry

Enrolment may be granted to holders of a university master's degree awarded by a Belgian university, or a legally equivalent degree, for the title of:

- Dentist

Global Health, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Medicine

Candidates should have a good academic record, experience in international research projects and show a thorough research interest in Global Health, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Medicine.

The minimum academic requirement for acceptance is possession of a master's degree in a health-related field.

Candidates with other profiles may possibly be admitted after examination of individual files by the CDO.

Faculty of Engineering (IR):

In the faculty of Engineering, the competent faculty body referred to in the above provision is the CDO, which delegates this competence to its chair and vice-chair. The chair and vice-chairs each deal separately with the departments assigned to them.

A. The following degrees give access to the academic degree of Doctor of Engineering Sciences, subject to written confirmation by the dean:

From the study area of Applied Sciences:

- The degree of Master after Bachelor from the field of Applied Sciences of a Belgian university, which gives rise to the title of civil engineer or civil engineer-architect.
- The degree of Master Engineer (civil engineer polytechnic) from the Royal Military School, polytechnic department.
- The degree of Master in Water Resources Engineering, Master in Physical Land Resources, Master in Safety Engineering from a Belgian university.

From the study areas of Sciences, Applied Biological Sciences, Medicine, Dentistry or Pharmaceutical Sciences:

- The degree of Master after Bachelor from the study area of Sciences, Applied Biological Sciences, Medicine, Dentistry or Pharmaceutical Sciences from a Belgian university, giving rise to the title of Master in Computer Science, Applied Computer Science, Chemistry, Physics, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematics, Biochemistry, Biology, Geography, Geology, Biomedical Sciences, Bioengineer, Doctor, Dentist or Pharmacist.

B. The following degrees give access to the academic degree of Doctor of Engineering Technology, subject to written confirmation of eligibility by the dean:

From the study areas of Industrial Sciences and Technology, Nautical Sciences and Architecture:

- The degree of Master in Industrial Sciences and Technology (industrial engineer).
- The degree of Master in Nautical Sciences.
- The degree of Master in Architecture.

C. The following degrees give access to the academic degree of Doctor of Engineering Sciences, subject to written confirmation of eligibility by the chair of the faculty CDO after evaluation of the dossier:

All degrees listed in sub B.

On the basis of the prior dossier evaluation, a maximum of 12 ECTS can be imposed in the 'research-related skills' category of the doctoral programme.

D. The following degrees give access to the academic degree of Doctor of Engineering Technology, subject to written confirmation of eligibility by the chair of the faculty CDO after evaluation of the dossier:

All degrees listed in sub A.

On the basis of the prior dossier evaluation, a maximum of 12 ECTS can be imposed in the 'research-related skills' category of the doctoral programme.

E. The following degrees give access to the academic degree of Doctor of Engineering Sciences and Doctor of Engineering Technology, subject to written confirmation of eligibility by the chair of the faculty CDO after evaluation of the dossier:

From the study area of Applied Sciences:

- The degree of Master after Bachelor not mentioned under A from the study area of Applied Sciences of a Belgian university.
On the basis of the prior dossier evaluation, a maximum of 12 ECTS can be imposed in the 'research-related skills' category of the doctoral programme.
- The degree of engineer or Master in Engineering (MSc in engineering) (or a degree recognised as equivalent) from a foreign university known by our faculty and recognised as equivalent, obtained after a study programme whose content is considered at least equivalent to a five-year engineering course at a Belgian university.
On the basis of the prior dossier evaluation, a maximum of 12 ECTS can be imposed in the 'research-related skills' category of the doctoral programme. These are included in the research plan and evaluated at the first or second progress report.
- The university degree of Bachelor in Engineering (BSc in engineering or bachelor of engineering) (4-year programme) supplemented with a maximum of 12 ECTS imposed in the 'research-related skills' category of the doctoral programme.
Subject to thorough justification, a reduction in the size of the pre-doctoral examination can be requested on the basis of the file.

From the study areas of Sciences, Applied Biological Sciences, Medicine, Dentistry or Pharmaceutical Sciences:

- A degree of Master after Bachelor not mentioned under A from the study areas Sciences, Applied Biological Sciences, Medicine, Dentistry or Pharmaceutical Sciences of a Belgian university.
Based on the preliminary file examination, a maximum of 12 ECTS can be imposed on the 'research-related skills' category of the doctoral study programme.

From the study area of History:

- The degree of Master in History from a Belgian university after admission on the basis of the dossier examination.
On the basis of the dossier examination, admission can be made to depend on the condition that a maximum of 12 ECTS be imposed on the 'research-related skills' category of the doctoral study programme.

Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy (LK):

Are admitted to prepare the PhD thesis with a view to obtaining the academic degree of Doctor of Movement and Sport Sciences and Doctor of Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy:

Direct admission for holders of the degree of:

1. Master of Science or equivalent
2. European MBA Sports Management (EMBASM)

For all other degrees: admission after positive advice from the CDO based on a demonstrable research dossier.

Faculty of Languages and Humanities (LW) has no further additions.

Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences (PE): **Psychology**

Admitted to the preparation of a PhD thesis in Psychological Sciences: any person who has obtained the corresponding or equivalent degree: Master of Science in Psychology.

Exceptions to this may be granted by the faculty board.

In the absence of any of the above-mentioned degrees, the faculty board may, at the suggestion of the promotor, impose additional courses to be included in the compulsory doctoral training programme. These are included in the research plan and monitored by the CDO at the time of progress reporting.

Educational Sciences

Admitted to the preparation of a PhD thesis in Educational Sciences: any person who has obtained the corresponding or equivalent degree of: Master of Science in Onderwijskunde, Master of Science in de Pedagogische Wetenschappen or Master of Science in Educational Sciences.

Exceptions to this may be granted by the faculty board.

In the absence of any of the above-mentioned degrees, the faculty board may, at the suggestion of the promotor, impose additional courses to be included in the compulsory doctoral training programme. These are included in the research plan and monitored by the CDO at the time of progress reporting.

Educational Sciences: orientation Agogic Sciences

Admitted to the preparation of a PhD thesis in Educational Sciences: orientation Agogic Sciences: any person holding a master's degree.

Faculty of Law and Criminology (RC):

To be admitted to the examination for the degree of Doctor of Laws or Notarial Law, candidates must have obtained a degree of licentiate or master of law as referred to in §1, 1°. The faculty board may grant exemption from this admission requirement, provided that the candidates have obtained another licentiate or master's degree as referred to in Article 4 §1 and demonstrate the effective and sufficient presence in their curriculum, including their professional career, of the knowledge of the legal field or fields they intend to cover in their PhD thesis.

To be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Criminology, candidates must have obtained a licentiate or master's degree as referred in §1, 1°.

Faculty of Sciences and Bioengineering Sciences (WE):

To be admitted to the preparation of the doctorate in Sciences or the doctorate in Bio-engineering, a Flemish master's degree listed in the Register of Higher Education in the study areas 'Sciences', 'Applied Sciences', 'Applied Biological Sciences', 'Architecture', 'Biomedical Sciences', 'Veterinary Medicine',

'Pharmaceutical Sciences', 'Medicine', 'Industrial Sciences and Technology' and 'Product Development' or an equivalent degree from a Belgian or foreign institution is required.

Candidates with a Flemish master's degree listed in the Register of Higher Education in the study areas 'Economic and Applied Economic Sciences', 'Political and Social Sciences', and 'Traffic Engineering' or an equivalent degree from a Belgian or foreign institution are additionally admitted to the preparation of the doctorate in the research domain 'Urban Studies and Planning'.

The above-mentioned master's degrees must be obtained with at least the grade of 'with distinction', after a study programme with a study load of at least 60 ECTS credits and which includes a master's thesis or equivalent.

If any of the above requirements are not met, and provided that this does not contradict the relevant decree, the CDO will decide. After prior dossier examination, the CDO may impose a package of lectures for such candidates for which the candidate must pass with at least the grade of 'with distinction' within two academic years. The size of the lecture package amounts to a maximum of 12 ECTS in the case of a shortage of ECTS credits or the absence of a master's thesis and a maximum of 18 ECTS for a master's degree from a field of study other than the one mentioned above. The CDO takes gaps in the candidate's prior knowledge into account when choosing topics. These lectures are added to the research plan and can count towards the compulsory PhD in the "research-related skills" domain and evaluated together with the progress report at the latest in the second year.

The files of holders of a master's degree from a recognised foreign university or institution in one of the above fields of study are subject to the same criteria as above. The examination for equivalence is conducted by the CDO.

To be admitted to the preparation of a joint PhD, the same requirements apply as for admission to the preparation of a PhD in Science or a PhD in Bioengineering. Subject to justification, the grade requirement of at least 'with distinction' may exceptionally be waived for a joint PhD within an international partnership.

§3. If the prospective PhD researcher does not hold a master's degree or equivalent diploma, the CDO can, pursuant to Article II 185 of the Higher Education Codex, still grant the prospective researcher permission to enrol for preparation of a PhD thesis if the competent faculty body deems the prospective PhD researcher competent in this regard. This permission can, however, be made dependent on reviewing the suitability of the PhD researcher to conduct academic research and the recording of the results of this in a PhD thesis, or on the passing of an examination set by the competent faculty body. The PhD researcher's aptitude for obtaining a PhD degree is gauged on the basis of this examination. The CDO decides on the content and scope of the pre-doctoral period and the pre-doctoral examination.

§4. For PhD researchers whose sole promotor is a member of Independent Academic Staff (ZAP) affiliated with MILO or IES, admission to the PhD programme takes place via the faculty that will award the relevant academic doctorate degree, and, on approval, these researchers become subject to the PhD procedure followed by the faculty awarding the degree, including monitoring of PhD progress and PhD training. The faculty undertakes to provide administrative support in relation to PhD enrolment and follow-up, appeal

procedures and the awarding of diplomas. A promotor team cannot be refused on the grounds that it does not include a member of the faculty in which the PhD enrolment is requested.

Article 4 – Written application for admission

§1. Anyone wishing to acquire the academic degree of doctor at VUB (including incoming and outgoing PhD researchers) must obtain permission to be admitted for preparation of a PhD thesis. The promotor initiates the application for admission in this regard, after which the prospective PhD researchers complete the application further. The application is approved by the competent faculty body. The procedure can be further elaborated in the roadmap. For prospective PhD researchers whose only promotor or co-promotor is a member of ZAP affiliated with MILO or IES, the intake of PhD researchers and the quality assurance of the doctoral process ensues in consultation between MILO or IES and the CDO of the faculty concerned. In consultation with the MILO/IES promotor, the prospective PhD researcher submits the application for permission to be admitted for preparation of their thesis in the field of study closest in content to the subject matter of the thesis to the CDO.

§2. A certified copy of the diploma is to be attached to each application, unless the prospective PhD researcher has been granted admission to prepare their PhD thesis on the basis of a diploma from a Belgian institution. In the latter case, the diploma is checked in the Higher Education Database.

The documents supplied, including the authenticity of the diploma, are checked by the Education and Student Administration (OWSA).

§3. The application for admission includes:

- a statement setting out the subject matter of the thesis;
- the name of the promotor(s) and, if applicable: the specialist field(s) to which the PhD thesis relates for interdisciplinary doctorates;
- a curriculum vitae¹;
- a research plan for the coming year, consisting of at least the following components:
 - **Abstract (max. 250 words)**
 - **Rationale and positioning within state-of-the-art literature**
 - **Research objectives/questions**
 - **Methodology and work plan**
 - **Composition of the advisory committee (if already known)** First step towards completing the mandatory components of the doctoral programme (regarding training and societal outreach), including teaching tasks (mandatory for fellowship assistants, and for the other doctoral researchers if agreements have been made in this regard. This can also be supplemented by courses the faculty requires to be taken in the first/second year;
 - An outline of how the ethical and RDM obligations will be met (where applicable)
- the choice of the Doctoral School.

§4. A comprehensive research plan for the coming years must be added at the time of the first progress report at the latest. If an extensive research plan was not added to the first progress report in the first session, or such a research plan is inadequate, this automatically leads to postponement to the second

¹ Since the renewed PhD application procedure as of 30/1/2025, this is no longer applicable.

session. If an extensive research plan has not yet been added in the second session, or such a research plan is inadequate, the chairman of the CDO shall notify the Research Council, which can take appropriate measures.

§5. The competent faculty body shall decide on the application for admission within a reasonable period of time after receiving such application. If the competent faculty body so wishes, it can ask the (I)CDO to decide on the application for admission. The choice of the Doctoral School for the PhD researcher is confirmed when the decision on admission is made by the competent faculty body or the ICDO.

§6. A positive decision by the competent faculty body or the ICDO is only valid as admission to prepare for a PhD thesis subject to the person concerned being enrolled as a PhD researcher in accordance with article 5 of these regulations.

Article 5 – Enrolment as a PhD researcher

§1. If the PhD researcher has been admitted for the preparation of a PhD thesis for the academic doctorate degree in accordance with Article 4 of these regulations, they must then register as a PhD researcher at VUB without delay. The PhD researcher must be enrolled in the desired doctoral programme at VUB for at least twelve (12) months before the doctoral thesis can be submitted.

§2. 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. Re-enrolment is subject to the notice regarding the progress report drawn up by the Research Council (see Article 14§8). If the re-enrolment period is exceeded, a completely new enrolment is required.

§3. Enrolment as a PhD researcher is possible throughout the academic year. The tuition fee due is stated on the OWSA web page.

Article 6 – Declaration of acceptance of internal regulations and charter

Prospective PhD researchers applying for admission to prepare a thesis, as referred to in Article 4§1, must accept these Central Regulations for the Award of the Academic Doctorate Degree”, “the Charter for Researchers”, and the Valorisation Regulations, as approved by the Executive Board of the Brussels University Association on 2 June 2015.

Section III During preparation of the PhD thesis

Article 7 – Responsibilities of PhD researchers

The following is expected of PhD researchers:

- To conduct scientific research with the aim of making an innovative contribution to existing knowledge within a research domain, under the guidance of one or more promotor(s) (see Article 10);
- To regularly inform the promotor team concerning the progress of the thesis; how regularly this is done is best agreed between the PhD researcher and the promotor(s), e.g. on the basis of the Expectation Sheet at the start of the collaboration and in the annual progress report;
- To successfully complete a PhD training programme (see Articles 9 and 15) with the aim of (i) broadening and deepening the PhD researcher’s knowledge in the research domain and (ii) acquiring

various competencies that promote the quality and efficiency of the doctoral research, as well as the professional career of the PhD researcher after obtaining the PhD degree within or outside the academic world.

- To write and defend a PhD thesis (see Articles 14 to 28).
- To be informed, stay informed, apply and comply with the applicable rules and evolving policy of VUB by consulting the standard communication channels regularly and in a proactive manner. Some examples of important rules and policies:
 - o the provisions set out in these regulations
 - o the rules of research integrity (see Article 13).
 - o Charter for Researchers. In the event of non-compliance with the obligations set out in the Charter for Researchers on the part of the PhD researcher, the promotor may contact the confidential counsellors or the Academic Director of the faculty concerned.
 - o If the PhD researcher has a staff affiliation (as an employee or a PhD scholarship holder): the regulations² of these statutes and the regulations and contractual obligations imposed by the relevant funding body
 - o the other internal VUB regulations, which can be found at www.vub.be³.
- Timely re-enrolment in the event of a positive progress recommendation following the annual progress report.
- Inform the promotor team with regard to leave and in the event of illness⁴. With regard to illness, a doctor's certificate must be submitted to the promotor team (for absences longer than 1 day or on the 7th individual day) with a clear start and end date, and in one of the following languages: Dutch, French or English. People suffering from a long-term illness must also report their absence to the faculty secretariat.

It is the responsibility of both the PhD researcher and the promotor(s) to make arrangements from the outset concerning the distribution of other responsibilities within the scientific cooperation. These arrangements can be recorded on the basis of the Expectation Sheet

Article 8 PhD Progress Monitoring Commission (CDO)

§1. Each faculty shall set up at least one CDO. This is made up of at least three members of the ZAP, plus at least one doctoral researcher with an advisory vote. This composition can be included in the Roadmap.

§2. The CDO has the following tasks:

- Giving permission to enrol as a PhD researcher;
- Approving the composition of the promotor team and the advisory committee;
- Monitoring progress reporting.

§3. The tasks listed in §2 may be delegated within the faculty if day-to-day operations so require.

² [Regulations and guidelines \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

³ <https://www.vub.be/nl/studeren-aan-de-vub/praktische-info-voor-studenten/reglementen-en-verzekeringen/reglementen>

⁴ M&O's well-being team may be consulted if guidance is required.

Article 9 – Doctoral Schools

As soon as the PhD researcher has been enrolled at the Doctoral School, they shall acquire the right to attend a PhD training programme in accordance with the *VUB Doctoral Schools Regulations*. A PhD researcher enrolled from the 2019-2020 academic year is obliged to meet the conditions of the PhD training programme in accordance with *the VUB Doctoral Schools Regulations* and Article 15 of these regulations.

Article 10 - Thesis supervision

§1. The PhD thesis is prepared under the guidance and responsibility of one or more ZAP members. The promotor may also be assisted by (i) a co-promotor, ZAP outside VUB, (ii) a co-promotor, ZAP emeritus of VUB, (iii) a co-promotor, non-ZAP with a doctoral degree based on a thesis. Collectively, they are referred to as the promotor team, which can consist of a maximum of three (3) members. However, this maximum number does not apply in the case of a joint PhD

§2. If a PhD is supervised by several promotors, it will be determined who should take on the role of promotor and co-promotor(s). All the promotors take on a significant part of the supervision. The financial and administrative follow-up is carried out by the promotor. The division of responsibilities and roles between promotors is discussed explicitly from the start and made clear to the PhD researcher accordingly.

§3 After enrolling for the doctorate, the team of promotors may be expanded. Only promotors included in the last progress report prior to the submission of the PhD thesis shall be part of the final promotor team.

§4. A blood relative or relative of the PhD researcher up to and including the third degree, or a person who cannot sufficiently guarantee an objective assessment of the thesis due to a strong personal involvement with the PhD researcher, may not act as the PhD researcher's promotor.

§5. The promotor or the promotor team must have verifiable research expertise in the research field to which the PhD thesis relates.

§6. The promotor team has the following tasks:

- following up the content of the PhD programme, as well as the material and intellectual climate in which the PhD researchers develop and carry out their research projects;
- Adopting a mentoring, stimulating and coordinating role for the entire duration of the doctoral programme. The promotor team observes the principles of the "Charter for Researchers". In the event of non-compliance with the obligations set out in the Charter for Researchers on the part of the promotor team, the PhD researcher may report this to the dean and/or one of the Ombudspersons for PhD researchers accordingly.
- Ensuring that the PhD researchers can also acquire other skills during their training programme that are conducive, from a career perspective, to enabling them to switch smoothly to another position after the PhD programme, both within and outside the academic world.
- Composition of an advisory committee (see Article 12§1)

It is the responsibility of both promotor(s) and the PhD researcher to make arrangements concerning the distribution of other responsibilities within the scientific cooperation from the outset. These arrangements can be recorded on the basis of the Expectation Sheet.

§7. In addition to the promotor, the PhD thesis is also followed up by an advisory committee as stipulated in Article 12 of these regulations.

Article 11 - Changing the promotor

§1. The PhD researcher or the promotor may, in exceptional circumstances, submit a written request to the dean of the faculty to change the (co-)promotor of the thesis. The PhD researcher may be assisted in this by one of the Ombudspersons for PhD researchers (see also Section V). If the (co-)promotors retire or are no longer able to perform their duties for legitimate reasons, the dean may appoint a new (co-)promotor, after consultation with the PhD researcher and possible new promotor. The dean may designate a new promotor if this is possible within the funding arrangements, and following consultation with the promotor/promotor team, the PhD researcher, and possible new supervisor. The faculty is responsible for ensuring the continuation of the doctorate.

The PhD researcher and the promotor/promotor team shall be consulted and informed of any changes without delay.

§2. The task of the dean as referred to in §1 may be delegated to the CDO.

Article 12 – Advisory committee

§1. A advisory committee must be set up and convened for the first progress report. This committee is assembled in consultation between the promotor/promotor team and the PhD researcher. The advisory committee comprises the promotor team as defined in article 10 and at least one other member who has, in principle, been awarded a PhD degree based on a thesis. If there is only one promotor, the advisory committee shall consist of at least two other members who have, in principle, been awarded a PhD degree based on a thesis. One of the members should preferably be from outside the research group or VUB and have specific knowledge of and expertise in the subject matter or methodology used for the doctorate. The advisory committee may be changed throughout the doctoral programme.

§2. The task of the advisory committee consists at the very least of monitoring progress by evaluating the annual progress report during a consultation meeting (digital or physical) at which the PhD researchers may present their research orally and the advisory committee can ask questions and provide advice. The annual meeting with the advisory committee must have taken place during the 6 months prior to submission of the annual follow-up report. A report of this meeting, together with the advice given by the committee, is to be attached to the follow-up report. However, the PhD researcher and promotors may also request advice from the advisory committee with regard to the doctoral research or programme outside the annual progress report.

§3. When carrying out the annual progress evaluation, the CDO shall verify the due and proper composition of the advisory committee as set out in article 14. If it has not yet been convened, the CDO will encourage the promotor to convene it. If the promotor team fails to constitute the advisory committee within the period of time stipulated under §1 of this article, the chairperson of the CDO may put this on the agenda of the Research Council, which can take note of this accordingly.

Article 13 - Breach of research integrity

§1. The PhD researcher shall refrain from committing any breach of research integrity in whatever form.

§2. In the case of suspicion of any breach of research integrity, this must be reported to the liaison office for research integrity, and the CWI regulations shall apply. Determination of an infringement of research integrity following the public defence of a PhD thesis may lead to revocation of the doctorate degree awarded.

§3. If the PhD researcher is also a staff member or holder of a doctoral scholarship at VUB, the disciplinary regulations and relevant staff or scholarship regulations shall apply.

Article 14 – Annual progress report and evaluation of progress

§1. Each PhD researcher shall draw up an annual report on the progress of the PhD thesis in consultation with the promotor team. No later than on 15 April of each academic year, they shall send a copy of the same to the promotor team and the chairpersons of the (I)CDO, who shall in turn make the same available to all members of the (I)CDO. If the faculty decides to bring the date forward, it will include this date below:

ES: Last Wednesday of March
GF: 10 April
IR: 3rd Friday of March
LK: 15 April
LW: 15 April
PE: no later than 7 calendar days before the start of spring break as stipulated in the academic calendar
RC: 15 April
WE: 15 April

§2. The complete progress report contains two sections and must be signed by the PhD researcher and the promotor team⁵:

- 1° The part to be submitted by the PhD researcher, containing:
 - a. a report of the activities undertaken by him/her during the past year (including a publication list), including the mention of having attended the Doctoral Schools mandatory introductory package for PhD researchers enrolled from the academic year 2017--2018 on, or legitimate reasons for not attending this;
 - b. a plan for the subsequent year;
 - c. indication of any problems occurring.
- 2° The promotor's part, containing:
 - a. a report of the PhD researcher's activities;
 - b. indication of any problems occurring;
 - c. compilation and a report of the advisory committee meeting, including any remarks or comments it has.

First submission round procedure:

§3. All of the CDOs shall discuss the progress of the PhD theses each academic year.

⁵ In the case of a joint Ph.D., the supervisor of the partner institution must also sign the progress report.

§4. The CDO in question shall invite the PhD researcher and the promotor(s) to be heard if the progress report identifies an apparent lack of progress, or a major discrepancy between the activities of the promotor and that of the PhD researcher if the latter submitted a progress report in good time.

The PhD researcher may request the presence of one of the Ombudspersons for PhD researchers at this meeting, to act as a facilitator, not as an advisor.

§5. The (I)CDO shall report on this to the Research Council by 15 May at the latest. In this report, the (I)CDO shall provide an overview of the opinion and recommendations relating to the PhD researcher's re-enrolment. The opinion can be positive or negative, or the decision to issue and opinion can be postponed. Failure to submit the annual progress report in time on the part of the PhD researcher in the first or second session shall automatically lead to a negative recommendation for re-enrolment, except in cases of force majeure. Students suffering from a long-term illness and other legitimate long-term absentees with a valid absence certificate that cannot be evaluated shall receive a positive recommendation.

Procedure for the second session in exceptional cases:

§6. In exceptional cases such as force majeure, legitimate long-term absence or pregnancy (leave), the annual progress report may be submitted by the PhD researcher in the second session, by 31 August at the latest. If the exceptional circumstance still applies on that date, the PhD researcher will receive a positive recommendation for re-enrolment. If the faculty decides to bring the date forward, it will include this date below:

ES: 16 August
GF: 10 August
IR: 8 August
LK: 15 August
LW: 5 July
PE: 15 June
RC: 15 June
WE: 15 August

§7. The (I)CDO has until 31 August to submit a new opinion to the OZR on the previously delayed cases.

§8. The Research Council decides on permitting the PhD researcher to re-enrol on the basis of the report drawn up by the (I)CDO. This decision may be appealed against in accordance with the provisions of Section VI of these regulations.

Article 15 – PhD training programme

§1. As part of the support for PhD researchers, VUB offers a PhD training programme as described in greater detail in the VUB Doctoral Schools Regulations.

§2. This PhD training programme is mandatory for PhD researchers enrolling for a doctorate at VUB for the first time from the 2019-2020 academic year on. This training programme must be completed successfully before the PhD thesis can be submitted. Participation in this PhD training programme is not mandatory for

PhD researchers enrolling for the first time before the 2019-2020 academic year, with the exception of the mandatory PhD introductory package.

§3. The Doctoral Schools Regulations determine which categories of PhD researchers may be exempted from the mandatory PhD training programme and what procedure must be followed for this.

Section IV. PhD thesis and thesis defence (private and public)

Article 16 – Conditions for admission to PhD thesis defence

§1. By submitting and defending the thesis in a manner that meets the requirements set out in this article, the PhD researcher shows that they are able to independently contribute to the development and growth of scientific knowledge and report on this both in writing and orally.

§2. The PhD thesis should demonstrate 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. When determining the minimum conditions, the ways in which the relevant research field was used are taken into account.

§3. If PhD researchers wish to defend the thesis, they must, with the consent of the promotor team, submit an application to defend the thesis to the faculty. Each faculty has its own procedure regarding the admission and defence of PhD theses.

§4. The PhD researcher must submit the thesis to the faculty secretariat in digital form. The practical arrangements regarding submission are included in the faculty's procedural rules.

§5 The PhD researcher shall only be admitted to the private and public defence of the PhD thesis following mandatory screening of the thesis for plagiarism. Plagiarism is understood to mean using the work or ideas of others without properly citing the original source. If no peculiarities are ascertained during this screening, the PhD researcher may be allowed to defend their PhD thesis internally.

§6. The PhD researcher shall draft a brief popular-scientific summary of the thesis in Dutch or English, which is to be added to the thesis. This text may be used for press releases and notices.

§7. The work forming part of the thesis must have been completed during the period of enrolment as a PhD researcher at VUB; parts worked on outside this enrolment period must have been elaborated under the supervision of the VUB promotor team.

§8. The parts in which the VUB promotor team was not involved are subject to an integrity analysis conducted by an internal committee within the faculty, composed of members who are not involved in the PhD researcher's research and have no ties to the promotor team. The purpose of this committee is to verify the research integrity of the submitted material that will form part of the PhD thesis. When enrolling, the PhD researcher agrees to provide the necessary material to this committee and that they can also provide the relevant raw data when requested to do so by the committee. Where applicable, the original ethical applications for and approvals of the studies must also be provided in order to analyse the study design and sampling method. If these applications and approvals were not originally submitted in English or Dutch, a sworn translation must be provided. Although the integrity analysis does not have any suspensive effect on enrolment, a positive recommendation must be obtained prior to the PhD researcher indicating that they wish to submit their PhD thesis. In the event of a negative recommendation, the material submitted may not be included in the thesis and is also deemed not to meet the submission requirements.

§9. The thesis must be drawn up in the form as permitted by the faculty below.

ES:

The ES faculty stipulates that the promotor(s) and the advisory committee decide by mutual agreement whether the PhD thesis sufficiently demonstrates the ability to create new scientific knowledge in a particular field, or across fields, and can therefore be submitted.

GF:

The Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy imposes the following minimum requirements on each PhD thesis before it may be submitted, and the CDO screens each PhD thesis to determine compliance with the same. The fact that the PhD thesis meets the requirements for submission does not automatically mean that admission to the private and public defence procedure has been approved. It is ultimately the decision of the doctoral examination committee as to whether a PhD thesis can proceed to the public defence stage.

A PhD thesis can only be submitted if it at least includes the following elements or meets the following conditions:

- **One first-author original research paper** in an international journal with peer review, indexed by Web of Science, the first author of which is the PhD researcher who reports original research results, **as well as** a first-author research section reporting on original research results. Systematic reviews (based on the processing of newly created datasets) published in international peer-reviewed journals are also considered original publications.
- The first-author publication has been published in a journal that has an impact factor among the 25-50% highest of the research domain to which it is assigned (Q1 or Q2 in Web of Science).
- A case report or review article is not deemed to meet the minimum criteria.
- If it concerns one co-first authorship research paper, a second article submitted in a Q1/Q2 Web of Science journal is required in addition. If this co-first authorship research paper is published in a D1 journal (top 10%), a research section is then sufficient.

Possible minimum scenarios for first-author publications:

- 1 Q1-2 published + research section
- 1 D1 co-published*+ research section
- 1 Q1 co-published*+ 1 Q1-2 submitted

*The contribution of each "co-"authorship must be highlighted in the thesis in explicit terms. This is to prevent two PhD researchers from obtaining a doctorate with a similar thesis.

In the exceptional case of papers/articles being published in international peer-reviewed journals that are not among the 25-50% highest in the research domain to which these are assigned (Q1 or Q2 Web of Science), the promotor(s) and the Ph.D. researcher must submit a letter setting out the relevant reasons for this to the CDO for the purpose of requesting permission to submit the thesis. In this case, the CDO evaluates whether the thesis may still be submitted and may call in external experts to assess the work and advise the CDO accordingly. The CDO may also ask these external experts to be part of the Ph.D. jury. The composition of the jury and possible dates for the private and public defence will be proposed at the time the thesis is submitted. The promotor shall confirm that, as far as possible, the majority of the jury members can be present on these dates.

IR:

The IR faculty sets the following minimum requirements for each PhD thesis before it can be submitted and the CDO screens each PhD thesis to ensure that these are met.

A PhD thesis can only be submitted if it includes or fulfils at least the following conditions:

- One original research article ('research paper') in an international peer-reviewed journal, indexed by 'Web of Science', 'Scopus', 'VABB-SHW' (Architecture), 'CIE, International Commission of Illumination', of which the doctoral researcher is the first author and which reports original research results.
- The first-author publication is published in a journal that has an impact factor belonging to the 25-50% highest of the research domain to which it is assigned (Q1 or Q2, year of publication in Web of Science).

Possible base requisite scenarios for first-author publications:

- 1 Q1-2 first-author article published.
- 1 patent application submitted is also considered equivalent to a Q1-2 article.
- In specific domains, certain conference categories are considered equivalent to journal articles (e.g. in the AI A* CORE ranking)

In the exceptional case that publications are published in international peer-reviewed journals which do not belong to the 25-50% highest of the research domain to which it is assigned (Q1 or Q2 Web of Science), the supervisor(s) and doctoral researcher must send a motivation letter to the CDO to request the possibility of submitting the thesis. In this case, the CDO evaluates whether the thesis may still be submitted.

At the time of submission, the jury composition and possible dates for the internal and public defence are proposed. The supervisor confirms that, as far as possible, the majority of the members of the jury can be present on these dates.

LK:

In the LK faculty, there are two options for the form of the PhD thesis. For all options, the PhD thesis must form a scientifically coherent whole and be a significant contribution in the field of Movement and Sports Sciences or Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy.

Under **option 1**, the PhD thesis should be submitted as a coherent body of valuable publications which have already been published or have been accepted for publication. The overview should be structured in such a way that it clearly states the overall question as well as the relationship between the publications.

This implies an overall introduction with a problem statement, general discussion, conclusion, summary and bibliography. The publications covered by the overview should be added to the submitted thesis. For PhD researchers using option 1, the LK faculty requires to bundle at least 3 related publications as first author in peer-reviewed internationally circulated journals, of which at least 1 is accepted at the time of submission, into the PhD. The unpublished papers should be (have been) submitted for publication to an international peer-reviewed journal as a minimum.

Option 2 is a completely unpublished text, at least consisting of

1. An introduction with a problem statement and literature review
2. A methods and materials used section
3. A section on results obtained
4. A discussion and general conclusions section
5. A summary
6. The bibliography

If option 2 is chosen, the PhD researcher retains the option of including peer-reviewed publications in the thesis.

The PhD researcher makes the choice between the 2 options in consultation with the promotor(s). The LK faculty, insofar as the scientific domain of the PhD allows it, encourages the use of option 1. Option 2 can only be used after approval by the CDO on the basis of a rationale submitted by the promotor.

LW:

In the faculty of Arts and Philosophy, a PhD thesis may take the form of a classic monograph or, subject to the promotor's agreement, a body of articles. If the PhD thesis takes the form of a classic monograph, there is the possibility of integrating previously published original work into the whole of the PhD thesis: the PhD thesis does not have to be a completely unpublished text, but it must offer unmistakable value compared to any previously published own work. If the PhD thesis takes the form of a body of articles, these articles should also be integrated into a coherent whole, to which at least an overarching introduction and conclusion should be added. Again, the PhD thesis should offer unmistakable added value compared to the sum of the articles included. Moreover, a PhD thesis that takes the form of a body of articles should include at least 4 scientific and internationally peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters as the main author, at least 2 of which have already been published or accepted for publication. The added value of the submitted thesis compared to any previously published own work is assessed by the doctoral jury.

PE:

A PhD thesis should take one of the following forms:

- a separate and novel work (traditional form);
- a compilation of manuscripts with an additional general introduction and discussion. These manuscripts contain scientific articles submitted for publication to scientific journals with referee system (the PhD researcher is in principle the first author);

- any variant between the two forms mentioned above.

RC:

1. The PhD thesis shall be submitted either as a monograph or as a collection of publications.
2. A PhD thesis (whether monograph form or as a bundle) should display unity and contain one or more clear theses or positions, which are substantiated, argued, tested and weighed in accordance with the scientific practices of the legal or criminological discipline. It should make a meaningful contribution to that discipline.
3. The PhD thesis in monograph form may incorporate and/or include already published texts by its author, subject to explicit acknowledgement of the source.
4. The PhD thesis as a bundle includes at least four (submitted or published) peer-reviewed publications, either journal articles or book chapters. At least half of the bundled publications should be published or formally accepted. All bundled publications were submitted or published during the PhD track.
5. PhD researchers state the intention to write a PhD thesis as a bundle in their progress report and justify this choice. Changes to the intended form of the PhD thesis (bundle or monograph) are communicated to the CDO and the advisory committee.
6. The members of the advisory committee give their agreement on which publications are to be included in the bundle. The faculty board reviews whether the conditions for a PhD thesis on bundle are met, on the advice of the faculty research director.
7. PhD researchers writing a PhD thesis on bundle must be the author with the largest contribution of at least three-fourths of the publications submitted for bundling.
8. The PhD thesis on bundle should be preceded by a situational introduction, explaining the problem statement and structure of the PhD thesis, the methodology and importance of the research.

WE:

The PhD thesis in Sciences and the PhD thesis in Bioengineering is an original PhD thesis, which relies on scientific research, original works of a technical nature or which fits within the framework of the subject matter of the various departments. The topic is recognised as important by the Faculty and relates to a group of sciences or applied sciences taught at the Faculty.

The PhD thesis includes at least an introduction, the objectives of the research, the research results, a general discussion and a summary. The PhD thesis forms a coherent whole, but may partly consist of already published articles. If the PhD thesis contains articles or chapters with several authors, the PhD researcher's contribution to these is clearly indicated.

The application for the doctoral examination is made using the appropriate form, made available by the Faculty secretariat. The proposal contains the title of the PhD, the composition of the jury, the name of the PhD to be obtained, a CV of the PhD student with the list of publications, a Dutch and English vulgarised abstract of the PhD, and the name, affiliation, address and e-mail address of all jury members.

The application is first reviewed by the Departmental Council and then approved by the Faculty Council or Faculty Board of the Faculty of Sciences and Bioengineering.

The Faculty of Sciences and Bioengineering requires, prior to the approval of the composition of the jury, at least one accepted peer-reviewed publication with the PhD student as main (co-)contributor. 'Peer-reviewed' means (i) journals included in the Web of Science, (ii) journals included in the Flemish Academic Bibliographic Database for the Social and Human Sciences (VABB-SHW) and (iii), additionally for PhD students whose promotor-spokesperson belongs in main order to the DINF department, the publications in the PURE category of contributions to conferences ('Conference contribution', either as 'Contribution to journal' or as 'Chapter in book / report / conference proceeding'), where the conference was labelled as international ("Conference" = 'International'), and where an ISSN or ISBN number was given. Exceptions must be approved by the CDO based on a written motivation by the supervisor and the doctoral student.

Article 17 – Intellectual property rights and the PhD thesis

§1. The PhD researchers hold all the copyrights relating to their PhD theses.

§2. The PhD researcher irrevocably grants VUB non-exclusive permission to reproduce the thesis, in the version approved by the jury, in its entirety and unchanged, unless expressly stipulated otherwise, and to make this available to the public at large.

When submitting the thesis, the PhD researcher has the choice of making the thesis directly available in full or in part via the channel on which VUB publishes its scientific results. The modalities of this availability shall be

indicated on the form that they and the promotor(s) signed on submission. The metadata of the thesis (such as title, author, year, the brief content or abstract in Dutch and English if available, etc.) shall be immediately included in open access at all times via the channels on which VUB publishes its scientific results, apart from the exception as specified in the form that they and the promotor(s) signed on submission.

The PhD researcher shall have two years from the date of their public defence to exploit the thesis commercially or otherwise, and to reproduce it in an edited or reworked form and to publish it. If the thesis has not been published within this two-year period (whether commercially or not), VUB shall have the right to reproduce it in its entirety and communicate it to the public by making it available to the public (without a profit motive) via the channels on which VUB publishes its academic results. This period may be extended if the PhD researcher can provide a legitimate reason for this (e.g. by submitting a signed publishing contract that provides for a reasonable period of time in accordance with fair professional practice to produce and distribute the agreed number of copies of the thesis, even if publication has not yet taken place).

§3. Use of the thesis in electronic form pursuant to this article implies that it can be reproduced on digital media in compliance with the modalities chosen on the form, so that it can be used in accordance with the generally recognised rules. Depending on technological developments, the thesis may be reproduced in any way and reworked technically to ensure that the techniques used for the permitted use 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 researcher will not receive any compensation for any of the aforementioned user rights granted to VUB.

§6. PhD researchers guarantee that they will not grant or have not granted any exploitation rights to third parties that are incompatible with the rights of use they have granted to VUB.

§7. PhD researchers guarantee that they are the author of the thesis and that they have obtained any permission that may be needed to include copyrighted materials belonging to third parties (e.g. texts, charts, illustrations, images, etc.) in the thesis and to grant the aforementioned rights of use to VUB.

§8. The PhD researcher shall indemnify VUB without limitation against all possible claims by third parties (e.g. for breach of intellectual property rights, personality rights, etc.).

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

Article 18 - Language of the thesis

§1. The thesis is to be written and defended in Dutch and/or English. If the thesis has another language as its subject matter, it may be written in that language.

§2. At the request of the PhD researcher and provided that the permission of the competent faculty body has been obtained, the thesis can also be written and defended in a language other than Dutch or English.

§3. If the thesis has been written in a language other than Dutch, the PhD researcher must provide an abstract in Dutch if they have obtained a basic bachelor's or master's degree in Dutch. The abstract may be in English if the thesis has also been drafted in a language other than English. This abstract will be available to the general public.

Article 19 – Location of the public defence

In principle, the public defence will take place on the premises of the VUB. Exceptions to this must be approved by the competent faculty body.

Article 20 – Doctoral examination panel

§1. The competent faculty body shall assemble a PhD jury on the proposal of the promotor(s) and at the latest prior to submission of the PhD thesis.

§2. The PhD jury shall consist of at least four and a maximum of six members, of which at least two are ZAP members or ZAP emeriti with a post-retirement assignment from VUB and at least two members are from outside VUB. The advisory committee may not constitute the majority of the voting members on the PhD jury. The promotor team is not part of the PhD jury but shall be present at the private and public defence, including the deliberation. In principle, the jury shall be composed in such a way that it includes at least two persons of the other gender. Any departures from this must be justified.

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

§4. The chairperson is not part of the PhD jury and is under no circumstances a member of the PhD researcher's promotor team. They belong to the VUB ZAP and are able to lead the PhD jury in an objective manner. The chair takes note of the thesis, but does not ask any questions and monitors the assessment procedure and process.

§5. In principle, the PhD jury decides in a collegial manner. If no collegial decision can be taken, a majority vote is taken. In the event of a tie, the chairperson shall have the casting vote.

§6. A blood relative or relative of the PhD researcher or their promotor up to and including the third degree, or a person who cannot sufficiently guarantee an objective assessment of the thesis due to personal involvement with a PhD researcher or their promotor, may not be a member of the PhD jury. If it is demonstrated by an interested party that there are serious conflicts of interest with one of the jury members, a substantiated request for replacement may be made to the competent faculty body that approved the composition of the PhD jury.

Article 21 - Assessment period for the thesis

§1. Pursuant to Articles 16 and 24, the PhD jury has two months from the time of submission to examine the PhD thesis submitted to it and to decide whether the private defence of the thesis should take place.

§2. If all members of the PhD jury agree, the period stated in §1 above may be shortened by a maximum of one month or, with the express consent of the PhD student, extended by a maximum of one month.

§3. The PhD researcher and the jury members shall be informed in good time by the chairman of the jury of any holiday periods that may extend the assessment period by more than one month. The jury and the PhD researcher must expressly agree to such extension.

Article 22 – Attendance requirements for the private defence

§1. The assessment of the private defence of the PhD researcher's thesis by the PhD jury shall only be valid if, in addition to the chairman, at least three of the voting members are present (physically or digitally) at the deliberation.

§2. The private defence may take place entirely digitally.

Article 23 – Consultation and assessment procedure

§1. On expiry of the period specified in article 21, the panel members shall commence a consultation and assessment procedure comprising two phases:

- 1° phase 1: Each jury member sends a written evaluation of the thesis to the chairperson, including an explicit recommendation as to whether the thesis is ready to be defended or not.
- 2° Phase 2: the jury members consult each other on the basis of the submitted documents from phase 1. This can be done in writing or orally;
- 3° phase 3: the PhD researcher defends the thesis internally.

§2. The private defence consists of at least the following parts: a presentation of the thesis by the PhD researcher followed by an extensive round of questions from the jury members.

§3. The assessment of the private defence can only lead to the following decisions:

- 1° The PhD jury decides that the thesis can be publicly defended. The chairman of the doctoral examination panel sets the date on which the public defence will take place and takes the necessary measures to announce this date.
- 2° The PhD jury decides to admit the PhD researcher to the public defence, but sets the requirement that they must first carry out certain, verifiable revisions to the thesis.
The chairman of the doctoral examination panel stipulates in writing the conditions that the revision of the thesis has to meet as well as the modalities concerning the revision.
If the PhD researcher receives conflicting instructions or comments in relation to the required revision of the thesis, the chairman of the PhD jury shall make a recommendation to the PhD researcher regarding such contradictions. The chairman shall also, if the committee is of the view that the conditions referred to have been met, set the date on which the public defence is to take place and take the necessary measures to announce this date.
- 3° The PhD jury decides that the thesis needs to be revised.
The consultation and assessment procedure is suspended and the submission of the updated PhD thesis is then dealt with in accordance with Article 21. If the PhD researcher receives conflicting instructions or comments in relation to the required revision of the thesis, the chairman of the PhD jury shall make a recommendation to the PhD researcher regarding such contradictions.
- 4° The PhD jury decides that the thesis cannot be defended.
The procedure set out in this article shall then be discontinued. The doctoral examination panel can ask the (I)CDO to advise the OZR to refuse re-enrolment in accordance with the provisions of article 14.

§4. The chairman of the PhD Jury panel shall issue a written report to the PhD researcher after the private defence in all cases. This report clearly states which of the four possible decisions has been taken. The faculties may add a deadline to the roadmap by which this report must be submitted.

§5. In the event of a tied vote, the chairman of the PhD jury shall make a decision in accordance with §3.

Article 24 – Date and announcement of the public defence

§1. The date on which the public defence will take place shall be at the latest three months after the decision to allow a public defence.

§3. The faculty secretariat will ensure that an announcement of the public defence is published on the VUB website. The announcement, which is to be made no later than eight calendar days prior to the public defence, shall contain at least the name of the PhD researcher, the title of the thesis, and the date, time and place of the public defence.

Article 25 – Quorum attending the public defence

The PhD jury can only deliberate validly on the success or failure of the PhD researcher if, in addition to the chairman and the promotor team, at least two of the voting members are (physically or digitally) present at

the deliberation. At least one VUB member and at least one external member must be present at the deliberations of the members present that are entitled to vote.

Article 26 – Deliberation after the public defence

Immediately following a public PhD thesis defence, the PhD jury will leave the room to deliberate in private on the award of the PhD degree and, if provided for in the faculty procedure, will decide on the grade to be awarded.

Article 27 – Assessment of the public defence

The PhD jury declares by way of a majority vote whether the PhD researcher has passed or not, taking into account the substantive academic value of the PhD thesis and the manner in which the PhD researcher has conducted their defence. In the event of a tie, the chairperson of the PhD jury shall have the casting vote.

Article 28 – Conferral of degrees

If the PhD jury declares that the PhD researcher has been successful, no grade will be awarded here unless provided for otherwise by the faculty. In such case, the jury shall announce whether the PhD researcher has passed with the grade 'with merit', 'with distinction', 'with great distinction' or 'with the greatest distinction'.

Degrees are awarded in the Faculty of Engineering. In the roadmap, pass grades are provided for as follows: 'with merit', 'with distinction', 'with great distinction' or 'with the greatest distinction'.

Article 29 – Proclamation

If the PhD Jury declares that the PhD candidate has passed, the chairperson of the jury shall issue the corresponding proclamation immediately after the deliberation. They shall publicly declare that all the relevant rules and regulations have been observed. The proclamation text is further elaborated in the roadmap.

Article 30 – PhD degree

The PhD degree diploma is handed to the PhD researcher by the faculty.

Article 31 – Safekeeping of the PhD thesis

VUB stores the digital thesis via the library and makes it available through the channels on which VUB publishes its scientific results and according to the modalities indicated by the PhD researcher on the form.

Section V. Ombudspersons for PhD researchers

Article 32 - Appointment of Ombudspersons for PhD researchers (purpose)

With a view to the high-quality support of doctoral students, VUB appoints three Ombudspersons for PhD researchers: each Doctoral School has an ombudsperson who works, or has worked, at a faculty within that Doctoral School. The Ombudspersons are available for questions and complaints from PhD researchers in the event of suspected violations of the proper supervision of PhD researchers as stipulated in the Charter for Researchers, or in the event of other difficulties experienced within the doctoral process that exceed standard administrative procedures and because of which PhD researchers feel that they cannot access the direct support they need. The Ombudspersons perform their duties with the powers defined below.

Article 33 – Appointment of Ombudspersons for PhD researchers (candidates)

§1. The Ombudspersons for PhD researchers are appointed by the Academic Council before the start of each academic year following a proposal from the Research Council. Candidates take on the assignment voluntarily and must have sufficient experience in supporting PhD researchers.

§2. The prospective ombudsperson shall either be a ZAP member or an emeritus with a post-retirement assignment, on the understanding that a professor emeritus may only hold the post of Ombudsperson for PhD researchers on condition that they are still sufficiently in touch with day-to-day practice.

§3. The Ombudspersons for PhD researchers may not hold any other position that jeopardises their neutrality or independence, such as the position of (vice-)rector or (vice-)dean or (deputy) membership of the Academic Council, the Research Council, CDO, the Disciplinary Committee or the Committee for Research Integrity

§4. The Ombudspersons for PhD researchers may assist each other in (the handling of) files and may take over files from each other if this is necessary and they have the approval of the PhD researcher concerned. If an Ombudsperson for PhD researchers is principally a member of the same research group as the PhD researcher requesting the intervention of the Ombudsperson, or if it is found that the Ombudsperson is too closely involved in the case, one of the other Ombudspersons for PhD researchers shall step in, provided the requesting party agrees.

§5. The names of the Ombudspersons for PhD researchers, as well as where and when they can be reached, are updated annually on the website and are also made known explicitly to students starting their PhD

Article 34 – Duties of Ombudspersons for PhD researchers

§1. The Ombudspersons for PhD researchers receive questions and complaints from PhD researchers, make themselves available for a meeting if desired, and use their expertise to investigate together with the PhD researcher whether a solution can be further facilitated. They apply the methodology described below.

§2. In the mandate of Ombudsperson for PhD researchers, the duty of discretion and protection of the identity of PhD researchers who approach an ombudsperson takes precedence.

§3. In very exceptional cases where the Ombudsperson suspects serious or repeated violations of research integrity, transgressive behaviour, breaches of the rights of the PhD researcher, or the position of promotor, the Ombudsperson may also send a signal without the explicit consent of the PhD researcher(s) concerned, with the aim of preventing similar violations in the future. A signal is only given with the knowledge of the requesting party or parties and in consultation with another fellow Ombudsperson and an expert on the suspected infringement, in particular the Research Integrity Committee, Liaison Office, Research Department

or trade unions. When considering how to send a signal, protection of the identity of PhD researchers remains one of the most important elements.

§4. The Ombudspersons issue an annual report on aggregated, anonymised findings in the form of analyses, opinions or recommendations, in accordance with Article 46 of these regulations.

§5. The Ombudspersons ensure that PhD researchers with questions and complaints that do not come under the remit of the Ombudspersons for PhD researchers and for which better expertise and help is available, are immediately referred to the appropriate channel.

Article 35 – Ombudsperson procedure

§1. The Ombudspersons for PhD researchers are available for comments and complaints from PhD researchers. Contact will always be followed up within a reasonable period of time. The Ombudspersons determine the manner in which contact made by the PhD researcher will be responded to in consultation with the PhD researcher concerned.

§2. Further discussions with the PhD researcher or other parties involved may be scheduled by agreement, either one-on-one or via a mediation meeting between different parties with the aim of settling a conflict in an amicable manner. The direct involvement of other parties only takes place with the consent of the PhD researcher and the other parties, such as the promotor(s), the chairperson of the (I)CDO, the dean, the academic director or the chairperson of the PhD jury.

§3. The Ombudspersons for PhD researchers keep a personal register of all questions and complaints received by them in confidential files. They keep at least one summary per case according to the case template available to them. A central, encrypted backup with all case summaries is provided at least at the end of each academic year, and if an Ombudsperson resigns at any other time. Access to these centrally stored case summaries of other (ex-)ombudspersons is only possible if an Ombudsperson is given permission to inspect a file by the PhD researcher concerned.

Article 36 – Right of access of the Ombudspersons for PhD students

The Ombudspersons for PhD students have the right for the performance of their duties:

1. to be involved in the discussions of the PhD progress monitoring commissions and appeal committees;
2. to consult all information necessary to implement the provisions of articles 34 and 35;

Article 37 – Reporting by the Ombudspersons for PhD researchers

The Ombudspersons for PhD researchers report to the Academic Council every year, before the end of the academic year. This report shall be submitted to the OZR beforehand. The report contains at least a numerical list of all contact names per faculty and the number of cases in which mediation was actually carried out. This can be supplemented with aggregated, anonymised findings such as trends in the type of problems the Ombudspersons have to deal with and policy recommendations, with respect for confidentiality at all times.

Section VI. Possibilities for appeal

Article 38 – Appeal against material errors

§1. If a material error is established when making a study progress decision, this shall be formally reported to the dean within 10 calendar days of such decision being taken.

§2. 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 researcher and adequately documented within the faculty.

§3. If the ascertained error leads to a less favourable decision for the PhD researcher, the error must be corrected by the body that made the original decision. Where necessary, that body shall be convened by the dean as quickly as possible. The correction is communicated to the PhD researcher and adequately documented within the faculty.

Article 39 – Decisions against which an appeal can be lodged

Decisions taken as set out in article 14, §4, article 23, §3 and article 27 may be appealed against internally and externally. An external appeal can only be lodged when the internal appeal possibilities provided for have been exhausted.

Article 40 – Composition of the internal appeal body

A central appeal body is set up with the competence to hear all internal appeals lodged within the relevant faculty or study programme against the decisions referred to in article 14, §4, article 23, §3 and article 27.

§2. The Appeals Committee is composed of a chairperson and at least two assessors, spread across the various Doctoral Schools. The Academic Council designates the persons who can take on the role of chairman and assessor within the Central Appeal Committee, as well as their deputies, from among the ZAP members (including emeriti). An expert with professional knowledge may be added if this proves necessary for the assessment.

§3. If members who only have an advisory vote are invited to take part in the appeal body:

- A member of the RTDO;
- One of the Ombudspersons for PhD students. If the Ombudsperson for PhD students so wishes, they can refuse membership of the appeal body by means of a letter sent to the chairman stating the relevant grounds.
- A lawyer from the Research Department.
- The faculty secretary

§4. If the Appeals Committee deems this useful, it may be assisted in the handling of an appeal by the chairperson of the CDO concerned. The members of the Appeals Committee directly involved in the decision to refuse the requested adjustments shall be replaced by their deputies.

Article 41 – Internal appeal procedure, with the exception of the decision concerning reasonable accommodation

§1. Appeals against decisions described in article 14, §4, article 23, §3 and article 27, in relation to which the PhD researcher or the person to whom the decision relates is of the view that this is affected by a

violation of the law, can be lodged with the office of the relevant dean by the person concerned. The appeal must be lodged within an expiry period of seven calendar days, starting from:

- 1° in the case of an examination decision: the day after that of the notification or proclamation;
- 2° in the case of another study progress decision: the day after the PhD researcher was notified of the decision taken.

§2. The PhD researcher must factually substantiate the application and state the grounds for the objections raised within the expiry period of seven calendar days referred to above. If they fail to do this, their appeal shall then automatically be deemed inadmissible insofar as there are no other grievances and a factual account of the alleged objections has not yet been recorded.

§3. The appeal must be lodged by means of a signed and dated petition submitted to the chairman of the relevant appeal body by way of registered letter sent to Research***, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, failing which the appeal shall be deemed inadmissible. The petition shall contain at least the identity of the PhD researcher concerned, the contested decision(s), and a factual account and substantiation of the objections invoked. At the same time, the PhD researcher shall send an identical electronic version of the petition to legalrd@vub.be for information purposes. The date of the appeal is the date of the postmark of the registered mail. For a valid appeal, proof of registered mail is to be attached to the aforementioned email.

§4. The PhD researcher or the person to whom the decision relates has the right to be heard by the appeal body as part of an admissible appeal procedure. The appeal body shall determine whether this right to a hearing is to be exercised in writing or orally. The PhD researcher may seek assistance from a third party for the oral proceedings concerning their appeal. The secretary of the appeal body shall be present during this meeting and take condensed minutes of the statements made, which can be submitted for signing by the PhD researcher. If the chairman deems it necessary for a fair and reasonable assessment of the appeal, these minutes shall be submitted to the promotor concerned for their response.

§5. The appeal leads to:

- 1° the reasoned rejection of the appeal by the chairman of the appeal body concerned on the ground of its inadmissibility, or
- 2° a decision of the appeal body that confirms or revises the original decision in a substantiated manner.

§6. The decision pursuant to §5 shall be notified to the PhD researcher or the person to whom it relates within a period of 20 calendar days from the date on which the appeal was lodged. This notification shall contain the possibility to lodge an external appeal as well as the relevant deadline periods. The decisions taken pursuant to §5 shall be communicated to the Ombudsperson for PhD researchers at the Doctoral School concerned by the dean.

§7. The decision taken pursuant to §5 can be appealed against to the Council for disputes regarding study progress decisions.

Article 42 – Internal appeal procedure in the event of a decision to refuse reasonable accommodations

§1. The PhD researcher may lodge an internal appeal against a decision to refuse reasonable accommodations for a PhD researcher with functional impairments, where the student is of the view that such decision was affected by a violation of the law. This appeal must be lodged with the office of the

relevant dean within an expiry period of seven calendar days starting from the day after notification of the decision.

§2. The internal appeal procedure leads to a substantiated decision that is binding on everyone within the institution. The PhD researcher has the right to be heard in this regard. An Ombudsperson for PhD students, as well as a lawyer from the Research and Data Management department can be present at this hearing.

§3. The decision pursuant to §2 shall be notified to the PhD researcher within a period of one month starting from the day on which the appeal was lodged. The decision shall be communicated to the competent Ombudsperson for PhD students.

Article 43 – External appeal procedure

§1. Within an expiry period of seven calendar days, starting on the day after notification of the decision taken in accordance with Article 41, the PhD researcher or the person to whom the decision relates may lodge an appeal with the Council for disputes concerning study progress decisions, based at the Ministry of the Flemish Community (address: Ministry of the Flemish Community, Department of Education, Council for Disputes concerning Study Progress Decisions, Hendrik Conscience Building, Koning Albert II-laan 15, 1210 Brussels). 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 the period provided for in Article 41, the appeal shall be lodged with the Council within the term of seven calendar days following the expiry of that period, unless the internal appeal body informs the PhD researcher 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 is to be dated and signed by the requesting party or their counsel, failing which it will be deemed inadmissible.

§3. The petition shall state:

1° the name and place of residence of the applicant. Where the choice of residence is made by the applicant's counsel, reference must be made to this 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 at the same time by registered letter (addressed to VUB Appeal Body, RESEARCH, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, for the attention of the chairperson of the appeal body). The date of the appeal shall be the date of the postmark.

§5. The applicant may add the supporting documents that they consider 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 such 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.

The PhD researcher may not raise any new objections in the course of the proceedings before the Council for Disputes concerning Study Progress Decisions, unless the basis for this has only come to light during or after the handling of the internal appeal procedure, unless the objection relates to the way in which the internal appeal was handled or unless the objection concerns public order.

§6. The documents the PhD researcher becomes aware of in the context of the appeal procedure may not be used for reasons other than personal purposes. The PhD researcher is therefore not permitted to use, reproduce and/or distribute these documents, under penalty of disciplinary sanctions as stipulated in the Regulations and Disciplinary Regulations for staff of Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

Section VII. Special doctorates

Part 1. General provisions

Article 44 - Scope and guiding principle of the section

§1. This department deals with: the joint PhD, the interdisciplinary PhD and PhD in the Arts.

§2. Everything previously set out in these regulations also applies in full to joint PhDs, interdisciplinary PhDs and PhDs in the Arts, unless these previous provisions are expressly derogated from in this section.

Article 45 – Composition of the ICDO

The ICDO comprises three directors of the Doctoral Schools, the vice-rector for Education and Student Policy and the vice-rector Research, plus at least one member of the other Academic Staff with an advisory vote.

Part 2. Joint PhD

Article 46 - Joint PhD contract

§1. A PhD contract is drawn up as soon as possible at the beginning of a joint PhD (Joint PhD contract). A draft version of the joint PhD contract must be drawn up no later than one (1) year prior to submission of the theses and be handed to the partner institution.

§2. The aforementioned PhD contract may derogate from provisions set out in these regulations, provided that each derogation in a specific case is approved by the competent faculty body and only insofar as this is not inconsistent with any decrees in force.

§3. However, if it concerns a joint PhD contract concluded with a Flemish institution, the rules of the main institution are followed at all times without exception, meaning that no derogation is possible or necessary.

Article 47 - The doctor's degree for a joint PhD

In the case of a joint PhD, the faculties determine which diploma provides access to which academic doctorate degree.

Article 48 - Guidance and responsibility for a joint PhD

The PhD thesis is prepared under the direction and responsibility as stipulated in Article 10. In the case of a joint PhD, the PhD thesis may be prepared jointly under the guidance and responsibility of a ZAP member of the partner institution.

Article 49 - Advisory committee

In the case of a joint PhD contract concluded with a Flemish institution, the advisory committee is assembled in mutual consultation with the partner institution and officially approved by the competent authorities of both partner institutions. Members of both institutions sit on the advisory committee so that both institutions can assess the quality of the doctorate.

Article 50 - Progress report for a joint PhD

In the context of a joint PhD, if VUB is not the main institution, the annual follow-up report may be drawn up and submitted using the relevant template of the other institution. The PhD researcher is him/herself

responsible for reporting progress to both institutions, in accordance with each institution's procedure provided for this purpose.

Article 51 - Language of the thesis

§1. The thesis within the framework of a joint PhD is drawn up and defended in the language stipulated in the joint PhD contract signed by all the parties involved.

§2. With regard to the public defence, the preceding paragraph may be derogated from if the PhD researcher has obtained permission for this from the PhD jury.

Article 52 - Defence of a joint PhD thesis

For the defence of a joint PhD thesis, the organisation of the private defence may be derogated from in the joint PhD contract concluded.

Article 53 - Submission of the joint PhD thesis

The obligations set out in Article 16 relating to the submission of the PhD thesis apply equally to the PhD researcher pursuing a joint PhD if said PhD researcher wishes to publicly defend the PhD thesis at VUB. The mandatory submission of the PhD thesis in electronic form also applies to a PhD researcher pursuing a joint PhD, regardless of where the public defence takes place.

In the case of a joint PhD contract concluded with a Flemish institution, the normal style of the main institution shall be followed. At least the logo of the partner institution must be clearly visible on the cover of the manuscript, as well as the names of all the (co-)promotors involved.

In the case of a joint PhD contract concluded with a Flemish institution, if the PhD researcher and the promotor team wish to proceed to the final phase of the PhD (i.e. submission of the thesis for evaluation), the main institution must inform the partner institution of the following as soon as possible:

- the outcome of the plagiarism screening in accordance with Article 16§5;
- completion of the PhD training programme in accordance with Article 15,
- meeting the publication condition provided for in Article 54
- the proposal for the composition of the PhD jury in accordance with Article 55,
- the official title of the thesis and
- (once known) the dates of the various steps in the examination procedure

The partner institution shall then inform the main institution of the administrative admission to the examination procedure as soon as possible. A person responsible for this communication is appointed in each institution, with one per faculty at VUB.

Article 54 – Publication condition regarding application for admission to the examination procedure

In the case of a joint PhD contract concluded with a Flemish institution, the PhD researcher must submit at least one academic publication or equivalent contribution at international level when applying for admission to the examination procedure (i.e. submitting the thesis for evaluation). Publication at international level is understood to mean: a reviewed contribution (journal article, contribution to a book, conference proceedings, patent, design, monograph) on one's own research and written in a specialist forum language. The

regulations of the main institution determine what constitutes a valid publication/output in the relevant discipline. The contribution must be published or accepted for publication. The advisory committee may exceptionally grant a derogation from the latter condition, in particular where the delay in publication is due solely to the longer publication periods/waiting times within a certain discipline. This joint, mandatory publication/output requirement, takes precedence over any other publication or output requirements that apply to each of the individual institutions.

Article 55 Composition of the jury for a joint PhD

§1. The PhD jury for a joint PhD shall consist of at least six members. Each partner institution shall be represented on the jury by a minimum of two members. In addition, at least two external members who are not associated with either of the partner institutions shall have a seat in the doctoral jury. In principle, the committee shall be composed in such a way that it includes at least two people of the other gender. Any derogations from this must be justified.

§2. In the case of a joint PhD contract concluded with a Flemish institution, the PhD jury is assembled by the main institution in mutual consultation with the partner institution following consultation between the promoters of both institutions and officially approved by the competent bodies of both partner institutions. Members of both institutions shall have a seat on the PhD jury so that both institutions can assess the quality of the PhD thesis. The promoters may not act as chairperson. By way of derogation from Article 63§1, at least one member of the Examination Board shall be external to both institutions.

§3. The members connected to the VUB will be appointed by the competent faculty body. The external members of this PhD jury shall be appointed in accordance with the provisions of the joint PhD contract. The chairperson of the PhD jury, who is not part of the PhD jury, is appointed by the main institution.

§4. The advisory committee may not constitute the majority of the voting members on the PhD jury. Article 20, §1, §2 (with the exception of the maximum number of jury members), §3, §5 and §6, and Article 67, §1 apply in full to joint PhD degrees.

Article 56 – Defence of the joint PhD thesis

The defence of a joint PhD shall take place on the premises of the PhD researcher's main institution, unless agreed otherwise in the joint PhD contract.

Article 57 – Mandatory PhD training programme

As stated in Article 15, the Doctoral Schools Regulations stipulate which categories of PhD researchers may be exempted from the mandatory doctoral training programme and what procedure has to be followed in this regard. This is the case for, among others, PhD researchers pursuing a joint PhD where VUB is not the main institution.

Article 58 – Awarding of degrees for a joint PhD

If the PhD jury declares that the PhD researcher has passed the examination procedure for a joint doctorate ("joint PhD"), it will not award a degree in this case, unless the faculty provides for this in its roadmap. In such a case, the jury shall announce whether the PhD researcher has passed with the grade 'with merit', 'with distinction', 'with great distinction' or 'with the greatest distinction'. However, a degree can only be awarded for a joint PhD if the partner institution also operates a degree award system.

Degrees are awarded in the Faculty of Engineering. In the roadmap, pass criteria are provided for as follows: 'with merit', 'with distinction', 'with great distinction' or 'with the greatest distinction'.

Part 3. Interdisciplinary PhD and PhD in the Arts

Article 59 – Admission to an interdisciplinary PhD

§1. The promotor's competent faculty body shall evaluate the diploma requirements in accordance with articles 3 and 4 for each admission application concerning an interdisciplinary PhD. The competent faculty body can, if it so wishes, ask the ICDO to issue an opinion in a specific case.

§2. The authority to judge whether a PhD is of an interdisciplinary nature or not rests with the ICDO.

§3. In the case of PhD researchers who have ZAP members affiliated with MILO or IES as the sole promotor or co-promotor, the faculties that will award the relevant academic doctoral degree shall, in the event of an interdisciplinary PhD, deal with the application for admission (in consultation with MILO and IES) and the intake, but with the process monitored (progress and appeals) by the ICDO.

Article 60 – Admission to a PhD in the Arts

§1. In order to be admitted for preparation of a PhD in the Arts, the candidate must in principle be the holder of a master's diploma for a study programme in the areas of the audiovisual 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 PhD's 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*).

§2. Candidates who do not have a master's degree (or the equivalent) in one of the above-mentioned study areas can be admitted to this PhD if the competence evaluation for PAC's conducted by the competent faculty body shows that competences can be recognised that are generally of a master's level in the field of the arts. The competent faculty body can, if it so wishes, ask the ICDO to issue an opinion in a specific case.

Article 61 – Application for admission to a PhD in the Arts and additional research

In the case of an application for admission to a PhD in the Arts, the competent faculty body may conduct additional research or include a further examination, such as that referred to in articles 3 and 4. The competent faculty body may, if it so wishes, ask the ICDO to issue an opinion or organise the research or examination in a specific case.

Article 62 – Admission to prepare for a PhD in the Arts

In the case of a PhD in the Arts in cooperation with EhB, the competent faculty body shall obtain the prior opinion of the ICDO and/or Brussels Arts Platform.

Article 63 – Doctorate study programme for special PhDs

§1. The competent faculty body may, on the basis of the candidate's admission application, make the doctorate study programme, or a part thereof, mandatory for the PhD in the Arts or for an interdisciplinary PhD, or make PhD researchers for whom the doctorate study programme is mandatory subject to additional training obligations. In this case, the aforementioned mandatory study package will be a prerequisite for permission to defend a PhD thesis. The competent faculty body can, if it so wishes, ask the ICDO to issue an opinion in a specific case in this regard.

§2. The competent faculty body may stipulate a maximum period of time within which this study package must be completed.

Article 64 – Following up PhDs in the Arts and interdisciplinary PhDs

In the case of an interdisciplinary PhD across faculty boundaries or a PhD in the Arts, the ICDO monitors the smooth progress of the course. For the monitoring of the PhD's in the Arts, the ICDO will be supplemented by the Chairman of the Brussels Arts Platform, who will serve in an advisory capacity.

Article 65 – Guidance and responsibility for a PhD in the Arts

In addition to Article 10, in the case of a PhD in the Arts, there is always a promotorto provide artistic guidance, besides the VUB ZAP promotor(s). The artistic promotor is exempt from the condition of being the holder of a doctor's degree based on a thesis.

Article 66 – Advisory committee for a PhD in the Arts

The advisory committee for a PhD in the Arts comprises the promotors and at least one additional member. The artistic promotor is counted among the promotors and can therefore not act as an additional member.

Article 67 - PhD thesis for a PhD in the Arts

§1. In the case of a PhD in the Arts, the thesis forms a whole comprising two components, each of which must be taken fully into account:

- 1° an artistic part, consisting of all the artistic results that have emerged during the research and presented in a manner specific to the artistic process concerned.
- 2° A discursive part, consisting of a relevant reflection on the individual artistic process, on the methodology and on the skills and competences used, doing this in an academically responsible manner and taking into account the specific nature of artistic research.

§2. These two component elements must result in an original thesis, as referred to earlier in this article. This provision also applies to the realisations in the artistic part of the thesis.

§3. 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.

§4. The artistic part of the thesis of the PhD in the Arts is exempt from the obligation stipulated in article 17 to grant non-exclusive permission to reproduce the thesis and make it available to the public. The granting of this permission is considered to be worthwhile but is not mandatory.

Article 68 – Application to take the PhD examination

The PhD researcher preparing an interdisciplinary PhD or a PhD in the Arts shall submit their written application to take the PhD examination to the dean of the faculty with which their ZAP promotor is principally affiliated.

Article 69 – Panel composition

1. 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 panel by a minimum of one ZAP member

§2. If it concerns a PhD in the Arts that has been realised in cooperation with the EHB, the proposal for the composition of the doctoral panel shall be accompanied by the non-binding opinion of the Brussels Art Platform.

Article 70 – Defence of the thesis for a PhD in the Arts

In the case of a PhD in the Arts, the presentations that form part of the PhD examination are not bound by the time and location restrictions referred to in articles 19 and 24.

Section VIII. General and concluding provisions

Article 71 – Holidays

Academic leave and the period from 15 July to 15 August are not included in the calculation of the periods applying in these regulations, with the exception of Section VII.

Article 72 – Entry into force of these regulations

These regulations shall enter into force on 01/01/2025, following approval by the Academic Council. The provisions set out in Articles 10, 12, 16, 48 and 65 shall only apply to new PhD admissions from the date on which these regulations enter into force. Article 10§1 does not apply if the doctorate is part of a collaboration agreement concluded prior to these regulations entering into force which provides for more than 3 promotor. Article 20 does not apply to PhD researchers who have already submitted their thesis before these regulations enter into force.

The provisions set out in Articles 20, 54 and 67 only apply to PhD theses submitted from the date on which these regulations enter into force.