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## **PREAMBLE**

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

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

- Liaison Officer for Scientific 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 scientific integrity. It is the official contact point for reporting (suspected) breaches of scientific integrity and conducts the preliminary investigation.
- CDO: Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission
- Dean: the dean of the faculty in which the doctoral candidate enrolls.
- Doctoral training programme: the educational framework for doctoral candidates organised by the Researcher Training & Development Office (RTDO) in cooperation with the Doctoral Schools, as stated in the *VUB Doctoral Schools Regulations*.
- EhB: Erasmushogeschool Brussel (Erasmus University College Brussels).
- PAC: previously acquired competence.
- Joint PhD: a doctoral thesis written and defended under the joint responsibility of the VUB and one or more partner institution(s), leading to a "double" Degree of Doctor or "joint" Degree of Doctor in accordance with 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 supervisor 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 doctoral candidate will mostly be present; or c) where the doctoral candidate has started his/her 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 Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission.
- Incoming doctoral candidate: a doctoral candidate preparing a joint PhD for which the VUB is not the main institution.
- Interdisciplinary doctorate: a doctorate that extends over various fields of expertise, which means that the doctoral candidate can be associated with several faculties.
- KCB: Royal Conservatory of Brussels (*Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel*).
- OWSA: Education and Student Administration.
- OZR: Research Council.
- RITCS: Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound.
- RTDO: Researcher Training & Development Office
- Outgoing doctoral candidate: a doctoral candidate preparing a joint PhD for which the VUB is the main institution.
- VUB: Vrije Universiteit Brussel.
- ZAP: Professors or Senior Academic Staff.

All references made to people and positions in these regulations apply equally to men and women.

## **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. To the extent expressly authorised in these regulations, a competent faculty body can further elaborate the provisions of these central doctoral regulations in a set of additional faculty doctoral regulations approved by the Education Board.

*Within the faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy (LK) the set of additional faculty doctoral regulations is approved by the Faculty Council.*

*The additional faculty regulations from the LK faculty are shown in italics in a box and were approved by the Faculty Council LK on January 24, 2022.*

### **Article 2 - The academic title of doctor**

1. The VUB awards the academic degrees of doctor listed in Annex I to these regulations. This 'Annex I' can be amended or supplemented at any time by the Education Council in response to a reasoned proposal from the competent faculty body.

*In the faculty of LK, the Faculty Council will be able to submit proposals for amendments or additions.*

§2. An academic degree of doctor can only be conferred by the VUB in or in relation to the fields of study or parts of the fields of study in which it has the authority to offer training programmes leading to a master's degree in accordance with Article II.82 of the Higher Education Codex of 20 December 2013. Where the VUB can only offer bachelor programmes in certain fields of study or parts of fields of study, the Degree of Doctor can be conferred in or in relation to such fields of study or parts of these fields of study, provided that the public defence of the doctoral thesis takes place before an inter-university panel composed in consultation with a university that can offer a master's programme in the field of study or part of the field of study concerned in accordance with the Higher Education Codex of 20 December 2013.

## **Section II Admission for preparation of the doctoral thesis**

### **Article 3 – Written application for admission**

§1. Anyone wishing to acquire the academic degree of doctor at the VUB (including incoming and outgoing doctoral candidates) must obtain an admission for the preparation of the doctoral thesis. To this end, the candidates submit an admission application. The application file is approved by the competent faculty body.

A certified copy of the diploma is attached to each application, unless the doctoral candidate has been granted access to prepare the doctoral thesis on the basis of a diploma from a Belgian institution. The latter shall submit the original version of the relevant diploma at the time of enrolment.

The documents supplied, including the authenticity of the diploma, are checked by the OWSA.

This written application contains:

- details of the subject of the thesis;
- name of the supervisor(s) and the subject area(s) of the doctoral thesis;
- a curriculum vitae;
- a research plan;
- a declaration by the supervisor(s) accepting the supervision of the candidate;
- a description by the supervisor of the material resources and support available for the intended research;
- the choice of Doctoral School.

*In the faculty of LK, the application for admission is approved by the dean. For candidates without a diploma granting direct admission (Article 4), this is done on the advice of the CDO.*

*In the LK faculty, the research plan should contain an introduction including a state of the art and a study rationale, research questions to be answered and working titles of the scientific papers which will be part of the doctoral thesis (including the timing for realizing each of the papers and the entire doctorate).*

§2. The competent faculty body shall decide on the application for admission within a reasonable period of time after receiving such an application. If the competent faculty body so wishes, it can ask the ICDO to decide on the admission application. The choice of the Doctoral School for the doctoral candidate is also confirmed with the decision on the admission by the competent faculty body or the ICDO.

§3. In the case of an interdisciplinary doctorate across faculty boundaries, it must be recorded in writing no later than at the time of the decision by the competent faculty body concerning the acceptance of the application from the supervisor-spokesperson how the further progress of the interdisciplinary doctorate is to be monitored across the faculty boundaries.

§4. For a doctoral candidate with a diploma from a Belgian institution, the file is approved by the competent faculty body or the ICDO. For a doctoral candidate who is granted access on the basis of a non-Belgian diploma, the decision of the competent faculty body or the ICDO is submitted to the vice-rector for Education and Student Policy for approval.

§5. A positive decision by the competent faculty body or the ICDO and, where applicable, the vice-rector for Education and Student Policy is only valid as an admission to prepare for the doctoral thesis under the condition precedent of enrolment as a doctoral candidate in accordance with article 5 of these regulations.

#### **Article 4 – Diplomas and admission**

§1. Admission for the preparation of a doctoral thesis is permitted to all persons who:

1° have obtained one of the following degrees:

- a. a master's degree or a diploma made equivalent thereto pursuant to the provisions of the Higher Education Codex of 20 December 2013, obtained within the Flemish Community, including a Polytechnic Civil Engineering diploma, or a master's or licentiate diploma awarded by the Royal Military School in Brussels;
- b. a degree obtained outside the Flemish Community that is deemed equivalent to a master's degree in accordance with the stipulations of the Higher Education Codex of 20 December 2013;
- c. a master's degree obtained within the French Community, or a degree deemed equivalent in accordance with the decree of the French Community and which is equivalent to a master's degree obtained within the Flemish Community;
- d. a foreign degree obtained upon successful completion of a course of study with at least 240 ECTS study points and which is equivalent to a master's degree in accordance with a decree, a European Guideline or a bilateral agreement.

2° have a supervisor and have chosen a subject;

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

§2. Implementing Art. II.184 of the Higher Education Codex, the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations stipulate for each academic degree of doctor, listed in Annex I, the requirements that can be set for the preliminary training and the previously obtained diplomas which give the doctoral candidate access for preparation of a doctoral thesis.

*Are granted permission to the preparation of a doctoral thesis with the aim of obtaining the academic degree of Doctor in Movement and Sport Sciences:*

*Direct admission for holders of the diploma of:*

- *Licentiate in Physical Education*
- *Master's degree in Physical Education and Movement Sciences*
- *Master's degree in Movement and Sport Sciences*
- *European MBA Sports Management (EMBASM)*

*Regarding all other diplomas as described in §1: admission upon approval by the dean on the basis of a demonstrable research record and after a positive recommendation from the CDO.*

*Are granted permission to the preparation of a doctoral thesis with the aim of obtaining the academic degree of Doctor in Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy:*

*Direct admission for holders of the diploma of:*

- *Licentiate in Motor Rehabilitation and Physiotherapy*
- *Licentiate in Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy*
- *Master's degree in Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy*
- *Master after master in Neurological Rehabilitation*

- *Master after master, licentiate or GGS (qualified and specialised studies) in Manual Therapy*
- *Master after master in Sports Physical Therapy*

*Regarding all other diplomas as described in §1: admission upon approval by the dean on the basis of a demonstrable research record and after a positive recommendation from the CDO.*

## **Article 5 – Enrolment as a doctoral candidate**

§1. If the doctoral candidate has been admitted for the preparation of a doctoral thesis for the academic degree of doctor in accordance with article 3 of these regulations, he/she must then register as a doctoral candidate at the VUB without delay.

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

§3. Registration as a doctoral candidate is possible throughout the entire academic year. The administrative requirements for the registration and the tuition fee due are listed on the OWSA website.

§4. When registering for the first time, the doctoral candidate is assigned to one of the Doctoral Schools, as specified in article 9 of the *VUB Doctoral Schools regulations*.

§5. A doctoral candidate who does not reside in Belgium at the time of his/her registration can request remote registration in a substantiated application sent to the vice-rector for Education and Student Policy. If this registration is allowed, the doctoral candidate shall provide a certified copy of his/her diploma and passport or identity card to the OWSA in advance.

## **Article 6 – Deviations regarding diplomas and admission**

1. Even if the candidate has obtained the necessary master's degree or a degree equivalent to the master's degree, the competent faculty body may, if it deems this to be necessary, insist on an additional individual review to assess the candidate's suitability to carry out academic research in the discipline concerned and to express the research results in a doctoral thesis. Where applicable, the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations shall specify the provisions for the detailed organisation of this examination.

*No examination is organised to this purpose in the LK faculty.*

§2. If the doctoral candidate does not have a master's degree or equivalent diploma, the competent faculty body or the ICDO can, pursuant to article II.185 Higher Education Codex, still grant admission for the preparation of a doctoral thesis if the competent faculty body deems the candidate competent in this regard. This permission may, however, be made dependent on an investigation regarding the suitability of the doctoral candidate to perform academic research in the discipline concerned and express the research results in a doctoral thesis, or upon the successful completion of an examination determined by the competent faculty body. The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations further specify the organisation of this examination.

*In the faculty of LK, this examination consists of an evaluation of a research record supplied by the candidate (cf. art. 3). The CDO will assess the research record supplied and will advise the dean on this matter.*



### **Article 7 – Admission by means of a foreign diploma**

§1. The holder of a degree from a foreign university or a foreign institution of academic education other than the ones referred to under article 4, §1, °1, d can be admitted for the preparation of the doctoral thesis by the competent faculty body or the ICDO, notwithstanding the absence of the required diploma.

§2. If the competent faculty body is of the view that the foreign diploma cannot be considered to be equivalent to a master's diploma, admission can be made dependent on an investigation designed to gauge the doctoral candidate's suitability to conduct scientific research and record the results thereof in a doctoral thesis, or successfully pass an examination determined by the competent faculty body. The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations further specify the organisation of this examination.

*In the faculty of LK, this examination consists of an evaluation of a research record supplied by the candidate (cf. art. 3). The CDO will assess the research record supplied and will advise the dean on this matter.*

### **Article 8 – Admission (acceptance of regulations)**

Upon being admitted for the preparation of the doctoral thesis, as referred to in article 3, the doctoral candidate shall be given a copy of these Central Regulations for the Conferral of the Academic Title of Doctor, as well as the applicable supplementary faculty doctoral regulations. The doctoral candidate shall also receive a copy of “The Charter for Researchers”, included as Annex II to these regulations, and the Valorisation Regulations, as approved by the management board of the University Association Brussels on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015.

### **Section III During the preparation of the doctoral thesis**

#### **Article 9 - Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission (CDO)**

§1. Each faculty shall set up at least one CDO. This commission is made up of at least three members of the ZAP, supplemented by at least one member of the Other Academic Staff with an advisory vote. The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations specify the precise composition and working method of this commission.

§2. Each CDO is responsible for ensuring the smooth proceedings of the preparations for the Doctoral theses in its faculty.

§3. The principles to be applied as the guideline for this follow-up are those included in "The Charter for Researchers", enclosed as Annex II to these regulations. The CDOs evaluate the progress of all doctoral candidates in their faculties on an annual basis, as specified in articles 16 and 17 of these regulations. The progress of doctoral candidates working on an interdisciplinary doctorate across faculty boundaries and of doctoral candidates preparing for a doctorate in the arts shall be evaluated by the ICDO following the same procedure.

*There are no supplementary provisions regarding the composition and working method of the CDO in the LK faculty.*

#### **Article 10 – Doctoral Schools**

As soon as the doctoral candidate has been registered at the Doctoral School, he/she shall acquire the right to follow doctoral training in accordance with the VUB Doctoral Schools Regulations. The doctoral candidate who is first enrolled in the academic year 2019-2020 is obliged to follow doctoral training in accordance with the VUB Doctoral Schools regulations and article 18 of the present regulation.

#### **Article 11 – Guidance and responsibility for the doctoral thesis**

§1. The doctoral thesis is prepared under the guidance and responsibility of at least one member of the ZAP, who can be assisted in this regard by:

- 1° an external ZAP supervisor at the VUB;
- 2° a ZAP emeritus supervisor at the VUB;
- 3° a non-ZAP supervisor with a degree of doctor based on a thesis.

If a doctoral thesis is supervised by several supervisors, a deliberation will take place to determine who should take on the role of supervisor-spokesperson. The supervisor-spokesperson manages the budgets of the doctoral candidate being supervised.

*The LK faculty recommends providing several supervisors for each doctoral thesis. Concerning the doctoral theses in Movement and Sport Sciences and in Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy, the supervisor-spokesperson must be employed in the LK Faculty.*

§2. The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations can further supplement the list of supervisors who can assist the ZAP supervisors.

*The supervisor-spokesperson, member of the ZAP, may be assisted by everyone in possession of a doctoral degree.*

### **Article 12 - Changing the supervisor**

The doctoral candidate or the supervisor can, in exceptional circumstances, submit a written request to the dean of the faculty to change the supervisor (spokesperson) of the thesis. The dean can designate a new supervisor if this is possible within the funding arrangements and after a consultation with the supervisor (spokesperson), the doctoral candidate and possible new supervisor (spokesperson).

The doctoral candidate and the supervisor (spokesperson) shall be heard and informed of any changes without delay.

*In the faculty of LK, the CDO will advise the dean in responding to the request for change of guidance and responsibility of the thesis and the possible designation of a new supervisor.*

### **Article 13 – Advisory commission**

§1. Each doctoral candidate is also supervised by an advisory commission comprising the supervisor(s) as defined in article 11 and at least one other member who, in principle, is the holder of a Degree of Doctor based on a thesis. This other member shall preferably be external to the department, the research group or the VUB.

§2. The Advisory Commission shall be constituted by the competent faculty body on the initiative of the supervisor(s). In any case, the Advisory Commission shall be composed within 18 months after the first registration of the doctoral candidate. The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations can specify the composition, powers and procedure of the Advisory Commission in greater detail.

§3. When carrying out the annual progress evaluation, the CDO shall verify the due and proper composition of the Advisory Commission as specified in article 17. If it has not yet been constituted, the CDO will encourage the supervisor to constitute it. If the supervisor fails to constitute the Advisory Commission within the period of time stipulated under §2 of this article, the chairperson of the CDO can put this on the agenda of the OZR, which can take measures accordingly.

*In the faculty of LK, the CDO shall approve the Advisory Commission as part of the progress report. The Advisory Commission must include at least one member who is not affiliated with the same research group as the doctoral candidate. The LK faculty furthermore advises that clear arrangements are made (between the supervisor(s), the doctoral candidate and members of the Advisory Commission) on the composition of the Advisory Commission with regard to possible participation of members of the Advisory Commission in the adjudication of the thesis or possible co-authorship of publications from the thesis (or neither). Co-authorship of publication(s) from the thesis is incompatible with the role of jury member.*

### **Article 14 - The Charter for Researchers**

§1. The supervisor is obliged to provide guidance and encouragement to the doctoral candidate for the preparation of the doctoral thesis. In this regard, the supervisor must observe the principles specified in "The Charter for Researchers", attached as Annex II to these regulations.

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

§3. In the event of non-compliance with the obligations set out in The Charter for Researchers, the doctoral candidate or the supervisor can inform the dean and/or one of the Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates of this.

### **Article 15 - Breach of scientific integrity**

§1. The doctoral candidate shall refrain from committing any breach of scientific integrity in any form.

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

§3. If the Commission for Scientific Integrity is of the view that the thesis submitted by the doctoral candidate contains breaches of scientific integrity, such a breach can give rise to one of the following (examination-related disciplinary) decisions:

- 1° the obligation to revise/rewrite the doctoral thesis in such a way that the thesis no longer contains any breaches in the opinion of the Commission for Scientific Integrity;
- 2° rejection of the doctoral thesis: the doctoral candidate is not permitted to submit or defend a thesis on the same or any closely related subject;
- 3° rejection of the doctoral thesis and exclusion of the doctoral candidate: the doctoral candidate is not permitted to submit or defend a thesis on the same or any closely related subject and is prohibited from enrolling at the university again for a number of academic years to be determined.

§4. Identification of a breach of scientific integrity after the public defence of a doctoral thesis can lead to the title of doctor conferred being withdrawn and to the decisions referred to in paragraph 3 of this article.

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

### **Article 16 – Annual progress report**

§1. Each doctoral candidate shall draw up an annual follow-up report on the progress of the doctoral thesis. No later than on April 30<sup>th</sup> of each academic year, he/she shall send a copy of this report to his/her supervisor(s), the dean and the chairperson of the(I)CDO, who will in turn make this report available to all members of the(I)CDO. This date can be brought forward under the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

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

- 1° The part to be submitted by the doctoral candidate, 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' introductory course mandatory for doctoral candidates enrolled from the academic year 2017-2018 on, or a justification for non-participation;
  - b. a plan for the subsequent year;
  - c. indication of any potential problems.
- 2° The supervisor's part, containing:
  - a. a report of the doctoral candidate's activities;
  - b. indication of any potential problems;

- c. the compilation and a report by the Advisory Commission, including any remarks or comments it may have.

§3. The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations can stipulate further requirements for the specific content of the progress report.

*In the faculty of LK, a publication plan (= working titles and timing of all publications to be included in the doctoral thesis) must be added to the 'tentative working plan' in the progress report.*

### **Article 17 – Evaluation of progress**

§1. Each academic year, all CDOs shall discuss the progress of the doctoral theses. The relevant CDO invites the doctoral candidate and supervisor(s) to be heard when a clear lack of progress, or a large discrepancy between the parts of the supervisor and the parts of the doctoral candidate, is detected in the progress report, if the doctoral candidate submitted the progress report on time. The doctoral candidate can request the presence of one of the ombudspersons for doctoral candidates during this meeting.

§2. The (I)CDO shall issue a report about this to the OZR no later than on May 25<sup>th</sup>, and send the progress report and a recommendation to the supervisor, the dean and the doctoral candidate. In this report, the (I)CDO shall, in a reasoned and detailed manner, formulate a recommendation in relation to the doctoral candidate's re-enrolment. The recommendation can be positive or negative, or the decision to issue a recommendation can be postponed. Failure by the doctoral candidate to submit the annual progress report in time, referred to in article 16, will automatically lead to a negative recommendation for re-enrolment, barring force majeure.

3. The (I)CDO has until August 31<sup>st</sup> to submit a new recommendation to the OZR on the cases previously submitted to it.

§4. The OZR decides on allowing the doctoral candidate to re-enrol on the basis of the report by the (I)CDO. This decision can be appealed against in accordance with the provisions of Section VII of these regulations.

### **Article 18 – Doctoral training programme**

§1. Within the framework of the supervision of the doctoral candidate, the VUB offers a doctoral training programme as further described in the VUB Doctoral Schools regulations.

§2. This doctoral training programme is compulsory for doctoral candidates first enrolled in the academic year 2019-2020. This training must be successfully completed before the doctorate can be submitted. Participation in this doctoral training programme is not compulsory for doctoral candidates enrolled for the first time before the academic year 2019-2020, with the exception of the introduction day for doctoral candidates, and for additional obligations imposed on the doctoral candidate by supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

§3. Further specifications can be included in the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations, such as within which period (part of) this training must be successfully completed and by which body this will be checked.

§4. The Doctoral Schools regulations determine which categories of doctoral candidates can be exempted from the compulsory doctoral training and which procedure must be followed for this.

## **Section IV. The doctoral examination and the doctoral thesis**

### **Article 19 – The doctoral examination**

The examination for the academic degree of doctor includes the submission and public defence of a thesis that meets the requirements specified in article 20.

### **Article 20 – Learning outcomes of the doctoral thesis**

§1. The doctoral examination gives the doctoral candidate the opportunity to prove that he/she is able to make an independent contribution to the development and growth of scientific knowledge and report on this both in writing and orally.

§2. The doctoral 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. The doctoral thesis must be drawn up in the form permitted by the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

*In the faculty of LK, there are several options regarding the form of the doctoral thesis. For all options, the doctoral thesis must be a scientifically coherent whole and must be an important contribution in the field of movement and sport sciences or in the field of rehabilitation sciences and physiotherapy.*

*The faculty of LK encourages the use of option 1, insofar as the scientific domain of the doctorate offers this possibility.*

*Option 1 implies that the doctoral thesis should be submitted as a coherent whole of valuable publications, whether or not they have been published or are in the process of being published. The overview should be structured in such a way that it clearly states the overall question, as well as the coherence between the publications. This implies that the whole should contain a general introduction with a problem definition, a general discussion, a conclusion, an abstract and a bibliography. The publications to which the overview refers, must be bound in the printed thesis.*

*For doctoral candidates who make use of option 1, the LK faculty requires that at least three related publications as first author in peer-reviewed international journals, of which at least one has been accepted at the moment of the submission, are bundled in the doctoral thesis. The unpublished papers should at least be (or have been) submitted for publication in an international peer-reviewed journal.*

*Option 2 is a yet unpublished text, consisting at least of:*

- (1) an introduction with a problem definition and a literature review*
- (2) a section on methods and materials used*
- (3) a section on the results obtained*
- (4) a section on discussion and general conclusions*
- (5) an abstract*
- (6) the bibliography*

*In case of option 2, the doctoral candidate retains the option of including peer-reviewed publications in the doctoral thesis. In consultation with the supervisor(s), the doctoral candidate opts for one of the 2 formulas and announces this choice in the second progress report. If applicable to the scientific domain in which the subject of the thesis is situated, the LK faculty encourages the choice of a coherent set of publications.*

### **Article 21 – Admission to the doctoral examination (general)**

§1. When the doctoral candidate wishes to take the doctoral examination, he/she must, with the agreement of the supervisor(s), submit a request to take the doctoral examination.

This request to take the doctoral examination can be specified in greater detail under the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

The request for approval of the doctoral jury (Article 27) is regarded as the request to take the doctoral examination.

§2. To be admitted to the doctoral examination, the same diploma requirements apply as specified in article 4, with the additional condition that the diploma granting access to the preparation of the doctoral thesis must have been acquired at least two years prior.

§3. To be admitted to the doctoral examination, the doctoral candidate must demonstrate the ability to undertake scholarly work independently.

§4. If the relevant supplementary faculty doctoral regulations stipulate that attending (part of) the doctoral training programme is mandatory in accordance with article 18, the successful completion of that programme shall then become a condition for submission of and being admitted to the defence of the doctoral thesis.

The Faculty Board verifies this condition when approving the doctoral jury.

### **Article 22 – Admission to the doctoral examination (internal and public defence of the thesis)**

The doctoral candidate shall only be admitted to the internal and public defence of the doctoral thesis following a mandatory plagiarism screening of the thesis.

The introduction to the plagiarism software shall be done by the person responsible at the faculty, after which the chairman of the doctoral examination panel interprets the results document of the plagiarism software, following the principles and definitions specified in the regulations concerning breaches of the scientific integrity of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Annex III). If the chairman of the doctoral examination panel does not specify any peculiarities, the doctoral candidate can be admitted to the internal defence of the doctoral thesis.

In the faculty of LK, the student himself/herself is responsible for the introduction to the plagiarism software.

### **Article 23 – Submission of the doctoral thesis**

§1. The doctoral candidate must submit at least one (1) copy of the thesis to the faculty secretariat at the time of requesting the doctoral examination. In any case, this submission must be done in electronic form, as explained further in these regulations.

§2. Supplementary faculty doctoral regulations can further specify the methods for the submission of the thesis and the number of copies to be submitted.

*In the faculty of LK, the doctoral candidate submits one printed copy for each juror.*

## **Article 24 – Intellectual property rights and the doctoral thesis**

§1. The doctoral candidate holds all copyrights relating to his/her doctoral thesis.

§2. The doctoral candidate irrevocably grants the VUB the non-exclusive permission to reproduce the doctoral thesis, in the version submitted for the public defence of the doctoral thesis in accordance with article 23, in its entirety and unchanged, unless expressly stipulated otherwise, and to make this available to the public in the following ways:

1° on paper:

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

2° in electronic form:

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

When submitting the thesis, the doctoral candidate has the choice of making the thesis immediately available in full or in part via a publicly accessible network (via the Internet). The modalities of this availability will be indicated by the doctoral candidate on the form that he/she signed on enrolment. The bibliographical description of the thesis (such as title, author, year, brief content or abstract if available, etc.) will always be immediately included in the (online) library catalogue of the VUB university library.

The doctoral candidate shall have two years from the date of his/her public defence to exploit the thesis commercially or otherwise, and to reproduce (or allow it to be reproduced) it in an edited or reworked form and publish it (or allow it to be published). If the thesis has not been published within this period of two years (commercially or otherwise), the VUB has the right to reproduce it in its entirety and to make it available (without intent to profit) via an open network (such as the Internet). This deadline may be extended if the doctoral candidate can submit a justified reason for this (e.g. by submitting a signed publication contract in which, in accordance with the customary industry practices, a reasonable period of time is set for the agreed number of copies of the thesis to be produced and distributed, even if the publication has not occurred yet).

§3. The use of the thesis in electronic form in accordance with this article implies that it can be reproduced on digital media, 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 protection period of the copyright and of all other intellectual and commercial property rights applying to the thesis.

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Article 25 – Storage of the doctoral thesis**

One copy of the doctoral thesis will remain in the secretariat of the faculty concerned, where it will be available to the members of the ZAP. Following the public defence and provided the doctoral candidate has been awarded the title of Doctor, one copy of the doctoral thesis will be deposited in the university library by the faculty secretariat. This copy will be made available under the same conditions as those specified in articles 23 and 24. If the doctoral candidate is not awarded the title of Doctor, the copy of the doctoral thesis intended for the library will be filed in the faculty archives.

#### **Article 26 – Language of the doctoral thesis**

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

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

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

*In the faculty of LK, the CDO gives permission on this matter.*

#### **Article 27 – Doctoral examination panel**

§1. The competent faculty body shall constitute a doctoral examination panel on a proposal of the supervisor(s) and prior to the submission of the doctoral thesis at the latest.

§2. The doctoral examination panel consists of at least three members of the ZAP of the VUB, and at least two external members. In principle, the doctoral examination panel shall be composed in such a way that it includes at least two people of the other gender. Any deviations from this principle must be justified.

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

4. The doctoral examination panel must consist of no more than eight voting members. The Advisory Commission may not constitute the majority of the voting members on the doctoral examination panel. The supervisor(s) is (are) part of the doctoral examination panel and, if there is more than one supervisor, all of the supervisors are considered to be a single voting entity. The votes of the VUB members must, however, at all times constitute the majority of the votes cast. Written recommendations are not included in the voting.

§5. The chair appointed from among the members of the doctoral examination panel by the competent faculty body shall under no circumstances be the supervisor of the doctoral candidate.

§6. If an interested party demonstrates the existence of serious conflicts of interest with one of the members of the doctoral examination panel, the competent faculty body that approved the constitution can be asked for a replacement via a reasoned request.

*In the faculty of LK, the Faculty Board approves the composition of the doctoral jury (including the appointment of the chair and the secretary).*

*The supervisors must include – along with the application for the composition of the doctoral jury – a written statement that none of the proposed jurors (including the chair and excluding supervisors) have submitted and/or published papers (conference abstracts/proceedings, scientific and/or non-scientific papers) with the doctoral candidate.*

*A serious conflict of interest is suspected for jurors if they have (a) joint publication(s) with the doctoral candidate (obviously this does not apply to supervisors).*

### **Article 28 – Assessment period for the doctoral thesis**

§1. The doctoral examination panel has two months from the time of submission, in accordance with articles 23 and 24, to examine the doctoral thesis submitted to it and to decide whether the internal defence of the thesis should take place.

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

§3. The doctoral candidate and the doctoral examination panel members shall be informed in a timely fashion by the chairman of the panel of any holiday periods that may extend the assessment period by more than one month. The panel and the doctoral candidate must expressly agree with this extension.

*The LK faculty imposes the jury chair to follow the protocol of doctoral adjudication of the faculty.*

### **Article 29 – Attendance requirements for the internal defence**

§1. The assessment of the internal defence of the doctoral candidate's thesis by the doctoral examination panel shall only be valid when at least half of the voting members are present at the deliberation, or take part in the deliberation by means of interactive electronic means of communication.

§2. When a member of the doctoral examination panel has submitted a written opinion, that member is then deemed to be present as far as the attendance requirements of paragraph 1 above are concerned.

### **Article 30 – Consultation and assessment procedure**

§1. On expiry of the period specified in article 28, the panel members shall commence a consultation and assessment procedure comprising two phases:

1° phase 1: the panel members consult among themselves. This can be done in writing or orally;

2° phase 2: the doctoral candidate shall defend the thesis internally.

§2. The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations determine the course of the internal defence and specify the possibilities for revision of the thesis in greater detail. At minimum, there shall be a moment during the procedure for the doctoral candidate to defend the thesis by answering questions from the panel members.

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

1° The doctoral examination panel decides that the doctoral 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 doctoral examination panel decides that the doctoral thesis needs to be revised. The consultation and assessment procedure is suspended, and the submission of the updated doctoral thesis is then handled in accordance with article 28. If the doctoral candidate receives conflicting instructions or comments in relation to the required revision of the thesis, the chairman of the doctoral examination panel shall make a recommendation to the doctoral candidate regarding such contradictions.

3° The doctoral examination panel decides to admit the doctoral candidate to the public defence, but sets the requirement that he/she must first carry out certain verifiable revisions to the doctoral 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 doctoral candidate receives conflicting instructions or comments in relation to the required revision of the thesis, the chairman of the doctoral examination panel shall make a recommendation to the doctoral candidate regarding such contradictions. The chairman shall also, if the doctoral examination panel 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.

4° The doctoral examination panel decides that the doctoral thesis cannot be defended. The procedure specified in this article shall then be discontinued. The doctoral examination panel can ask the (Interdisciplinary) Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission to advise the OZR to refuse re-enrolment in accordance with the provisions of article 17.

§4. The chairman of the doctoral examination panel shall, in all cases, issue a written report to the doctoral candidate after the internal defence. This report shall state clearly which of the four possible decisions has been made.

§5. In the case of a tied vote, the decision shall be made in favour of the doctoral candidate.

*The LK faculty imposes the jury chairs to follow the protocol of doctoral adjudication of the faculty. At the faculty of LK the internal defence contains a presentation of a maximum of 30 minutes by the doctoral candidate, followed by a questioning by the examination panel. Depending on the availability of the doctoral candidate and the jurors, the internal defence can be organized by teleconference.*

### **Article 31 – Date of the public defence**

§1. The day on which the public defence will take place is within one month after the decision to allow a public defence at the latest.

§2. If the doctoral examination panel has decided that the thesis needs to be revised, as provided for in article 30 §3 under 3, the chairman of the doctoral examination panel shall, at the time the doctoral examination panel decides that the doctoral thesis can be publicly defended, set the date on which this defence will take place and take the necessary measures to announce this date.

### **Article 32 – Announcement of the public defence**

§1. The faculty secretariat will ensure that an announcement of the public defence is published on the VUB website. Each faculty can define more detailed rules concerning the way in which the announcement of the public defence can be organised in the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

§2. The announcement, which is made no later than eight calendar days prior to the public defence, shall contain at least the name of the doctoral candidate, the title of the doctoral thesis, as well as the date, time and place of the public defence.

§3. The doctoral candidate shall also draw up a concise popular scientific abstract of the doctoral thesis in English or possibly, in accordance with article 26, in Dutch, which shall be approved by the supervisor. This text of 200 to 500 words shall be delivered to the Expertise Unit for Scientific Communication for the public defence. This text may be used for press releases and notices and will be accessible to the general public.

### **Article 33 – Location of the public defence**

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

*In the LK faculty, the CDO approves exceptions to this principle.*

### **Article 34 – Content and course of the public defence**

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

§2. Both the doctoral examination panel and the public have the right to question the doctoral candidate. The latter must defend him/herself against any questions and concerns.

## **Section V. Deliberation and proclamation**

### **Article 35 – Attendance requirements for the public defence**

The doctoral examination panel can only deliberate in a valid manner on whether the doctoral candidate has passed or not and whether the degree is to be conferred when at least half of the voting members are present or take part in the public defence via interactive electronic means of communication or have issued a written opinion beforehand. A maximum of one written opinion may be taken into consideration for calculating the presence of a quorum in accordance with the attendance requirements.

### **Article 36 – Deliberation after the public defence**

Immediately following a public doctoral thesis defence, the doctoral examination panel will leave the room to proceed in private to the deliberation on awarding the degree of doctor and, if thusly stipulated by the supplementary faculty regulations, will decide on the grade to be awarded.

### **Article 37 – Assessment of the public defence**

The doctoral examination panel declares by majority vote whether or not the doctoral candidate has passed or not, taking into account the substantive academic value of the doctoral thesis and the manner in which the doctoral candidate defended himself/herself. In the event of a tie, the decision will be made in favour of the doctoral candidate. A maximum of one written opinion may be taken into consideration for the assessment.

### **Article 38 – Conferral of degrees**

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

### **Article 39 – Proclamation**

If the doctoral examination panel declared that the doctoral candidate has passed the examination, the chairman of the panel shall issue the proclamation immediately after the deliberation. He/she shall publicly declare that all the relevant rules and regulations have been observed.

### **Article 40 – Degree of Doctor**

The Degree of Doctor shall be awarded to the doctoral candidate preferably at the time of the proclamation or otherwise no later than two months thereafter.

## **Section VI. Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates**

### **Article 41 - Appointment of Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates (the purpose)**

With a view to the high-quality supervision of doctoral candidates, the VUB shall appoint three Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates, who shall have the powers specified below. Each Ombudsperson performs his/her duties within the area of operation of one Doctoral School and works or has worked in a faculty of that Doctoral School.

### **Article 42 – Appointment of Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates (the candidates)**

§1. The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates are appointed by the Academic Council prior to the start of each academic year on a proposal of the OZR. Candidates must demonstrate that they have sufficient experience in the supervision of doctoral candidates.

The prospective Ombudsperson shall either be a member of the ZAP or an emeritus with an assignment after retirement, with the proviso that a professor emeritus can only hold the post of an Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates up to, at the most, five years after reaching emeritus status.

§2. The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates can, whenever necessary, assist each other with (the handling of) files or take over files from each other.

§3. The mandate of the Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates is incompatible with the position of (vice-)rector, (vice-)dean, (deputy) member of the Academic Council, (deputy) member of the OZR or (deputy) member of a Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission.

§4. The names of the Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates, as well as where and when they can be reached, are published in an annual circular addressed to all doctoral candidates.

### **Article 43 - Duties of the Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates**

The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates receive and assess comments and complaints from doctoral candidates. Where supervising difficulties in relations with the supervisor(s) or the (Interdisciplinary) Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission, or in the event of difficulties with the preparation and the conducting of doctoral research, the Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates can decide:

- to further investigate the aforementioned comments and complaints;
- at the request of the doctoral candidate, to mediate between the doctoral candidate and the supervisor(s), the chairman of the (Interdisciplinary) Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission, the dean, the chairman of the doctoral examination panel, or the members of the academic staff or the Administrative Secretary, with the aim of reaching an amicable settlement of the conflict;
- to report on their findings in the form of analyses, opinions or recommendations, in accordance with article 46 of these regulations.

### **Article 44 – Ombudsperson procedure**

§1. The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates keep a register of all comments and complaints received in confidential files. The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates are under an obligation to maintain confidentiality and discretion.

§2. The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates determine, in consultation with the doctoral candidate concerned, the way in which to respond to contact initiated by the doctoral candidate.

After the first meeting, the necessity of a further procedure will be considered. When a complaint is confirmed in writing, there will always be a written follow-up.

§3. Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates shall, in general, propose an amicable settlement in case of (written) comments and complaints referred to in article 43 as soon as possible. The doctoral candidate shall be informed of this proposal in writing without delay.

§4. If an Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates is principally a member of the same research group as the doctoral candidate requesting the intervention of the Ombudsperson, or if it is found that the Ombudsperson is too closely involved, one of the other Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates shall step in.

§5. The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates shall ensure that comments and complaints that are reported but which do not, in their view, fall within the scope of the Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates, are forwarded directly to the correct point of contact, provided that the person reporting the comments and/or complaints agrees to this in the light of the guarantees offered.

#### **Article 45 – The Ombudsperson’s right of inspection**

The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates have the right for the performance of their duties:

- 1° to be involved in the discussions of the Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commissions;
- 2° to consult all information necessary to implement the provisions of articles 43 and 44;
- 3° to view data of the annual PhD survey if the person responsible in the faculty advises this.

#### **Article 46 – Reporting by the Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates**

§1. The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates shall, prior to November 15<sup>th</sup>, report to the Academic Council on the activities of the previous academic year. This report shall be submitted to the OZR beforehand. The report must contain a numerical overview of all contacts made and all cases in which mediation was actually carried out, without violating the duty to maintain confidentiality.

§2. The Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates can submit a report to the vice-rector for Research Policy every three months.

§3. If an Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates is of the view that there are matters that are so serious that they have to be reported, he/she shall report these directly to the vice-rector for Research Policy.



## **Section VII. Possibilities for appeal**

### **Article 47 – 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 a decision being made.

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

3. If the determined error leads to a less favourable decision with regard to the doctoral candidate, 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 doctoral candidate and will be adequately documented within the faculty.

### **Article 48 – Decisions against which an appeal can be lodged**

Decisions made as specified in article 17, §4, article 30, §3 and article 37 can be appealed against both internally and externally. An external appeal can only be lodged when the internal appeal possibilities provided for have been exhausted.

### **Article 49 – Composition of the internal appeal body**

§1. An appeal body is set up per faculty or per study programme, which has the competence to acquaint itself with all internal appeals lodged within the faculty concerned against the decisions referred to in article 17, §4, article 30, §3 and article 37.

§2. The appeal body comprises at least one ZAP member and two other members of the academic staff with relevant experience in the supervision of doctoral candidates in the relevant or a directly related subject area. The members of the appeal body shall appoint a chairman from their midst.

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

- One member of RTDO;
- One of the Ombudspersons for doctoral candidates. If the Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates so wishes, he/she can refuse membership of the appeal body by means of a substantiated letter sent to the chairman.
- A lawyer from the Research and Data Management department.

§4. The further composition of the appeal body can be elaborated further in the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations.

*In the faculty of LK, the CDO appoints one ZAP member as 'faculty contact person for doctoral candidates' who acts as the secretary of the appeal body and has an advisory vote. The faculty contact person for doctoral candidates has access to the aggregated data of the annual PhD survey at a faculty level and can monitor this data year after year.*

*The faculty contact person for doctoral candidates has the role of confidential advisor towards the doctoral candidate and will therefore not assess any progress reports within the faculty commission on doctoral progress (but will be present during the discussion on the progress of the LK doctoral candidate in an advisory role).*

## **Article 50 – Internal appeal procedure, with the exception of the decision concerning reasonable accommodation**

§1. Decisions, as specified in article 17, §4, article 30, §3 and article 37, which the doctoral candidate or the person to whom the decision relates considers to be affected by a violation of the law, can be appealed against by that person to the office of the relevant dean. 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 the announcement or proclamation;  
2° in the case of another study progress decision: the day after notification of the doctoral candidate about the decision made.

§2. The doctoral candidate must factually substantiate the request and state the grounds for the objections raised within the expiry period of seven calendar days referred to above. If he/she fails to do this, his/her appeal shall then automatically be deemed inadmissible insofar as there are no other complaints and a factual account of the alleged objections has not yet been recorded.

§3. On pain of inadmissibility, the appeal shall be lodged by means of a signed and dated petition submitted to the chairman of the relevant appeal body by way of a registered letter. The petition shall at least contain the identity of the doctoral candidate concerned, the contested decision(s) and a factual account and justification of the alleged objections. The doctoral candidate shall, at the same time, send an identical electronic version of the petition for information purposes via email to the email address stated in the supplementary faculty doctoral regulations. The date of the appeal is the date of the postmark of the registered mail.

§4. The doctoral candidate or the person to whom the decision relates has the right to be heard by the appeal body. The appeal body shall determine whether this right to a hearing is to be exercised in writing or orally. The doctoral candidate can seek assistance from a third party during the oral proceedings concerning his/her appeal. The secretary of the appeal body shall be present during this discussion and take condensed minutes of the statements made, which can be submitted to the doctoral candidate for signing. If the chairman deems it necessary for a fair and reasonable assessment of the appeal, these minutes shall be submitted to the supervisors concerned for a 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 in accordance with §5 shall be communicated to the doctoral candidate 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 made in accordance with §5 shall be communicated by the dean to the Ombudsperson for doctoral candidates of the Doctoral School concerned.

§7. The decision made in accordance with §5 can be appealed against to the Council for disputes regarding study progress decisions.

**Article 51 – Internal appeal procedure for a decision to refuse reasonable accommodations**

§1. The doctoral candidate can lodge an internal appeal against a decision to refuse reasonable accommodations of education and examination activities for a doctoral candidate with functional impairments, which the doctoral candidate considers to be 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 the notification of the decision.

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

§3. The decision in accordance with §2 shall be communicated to the doctoral candidate 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 doctoral candidates.

## **Section IIX. Special doctoral theses**

### **Part 1. General provisions**

#### **Article 52 - Scope and guiding principle of the section**

§1. This section discusses: the joint PhD, the interdisciplinary doctorate and doctorate in the Arts.

§2. Everything previously specified in these regulations also applies in full to joint PhDs, interdisciplinary doctorate and doctorate in the arts, unless there is an express derogation from these provisions in this section.

#### **Article 53 – Composition of the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Progress Monitoring Commission (ICDO)**

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

### **Part 2. Joint PhD**

#### **Article 54 - Joint PhD contract**

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

§2. The aforementioned joint PhD contract may deviate from the provisions in these regulations and in the relevant faculty doctoral regulations, provided that each deviation is approved in a specific file by the competent faculty body, and only insofar as it does not conflict with any current decrees.

#### **Article 55 - The doctor's degree for a joint PhD**

The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations determine which diploma gives access to which doctor's degree in the case of a joint PhD.

*In the faculty of LK, there is no deviation from Article 4 for joint PhDs.*

#### **Article 56 - Guidance and responsibility for a joint PhD**

In the case of a joint PhD, the doctoral thesis must be co-prepared under the guidance and responsibility of a ZAP member of the partner institution, possibly assisted by:

- 1° A supervisor, ZAP external from the VUB;
- 2° A supervisor, ZAP emeritus at the VUB;
- 3° A supervisor, non-ZAP with a doctorate based on a thesis.

#### **Article 57 - Progress report for a joint PhD**

In the context of a joint PhD, if the VUB is not the main institution, the template of the other institution, completed for that reason, shall suffice for the drawing up and submission of the annual progress report.

### **Article 58 - 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 can be dispensed with if the doctoral candidate has obtained permission for this from the doctoral examination panel.

### **Article 59 - Defence of a joint PhD thesis**

For the defence of a joint PhD thesis, the organisation of the internal defence can be deviated from in the concluded joint PhD contract. The supplementary faculty doctoral regulations stipulate under what conditions this deviation is permitted. The explicit approval of the competent faculty body, as referred to in article 54, paragraph 2, is not required for such a deviation.

*The organisation of the internal defence can only be deviated from when the VUB is not the main institution and when the other institution does not require an internal defence.*

### **Article 60 - Submission of the joint PhD thesis**

The obligations of article 23 relating to the submission of the doctoral thesis apply equally to the thesis in a joint PhD if the doctoral candidate wishes to publicly defend the doctoral examination at the VUB. The obligation mandating the submission of the doctoral thesis in electronic form applies in full to the doctoral candidate engaging in a joint PhD, regardless of the location of the public defence.

### **Article 61 - Composition of the panel for a joint PhD**

§1. The doctoral examination panel set up for a joint PhD will consist of the supervisors and a minimum of four other members. Each partner institution will be represented on the panel by a minimum of two members, including the supervisor. If there are several supervisors per partner institution, all of these supervisors will be considered as a single voting entity. In addition, at least two external members who are not connected to either of the partner institutions will have a seat on the panel.

§2. The members connected to the VUB will be appointed by the competent faculty body. The chairman and the external members of this doctoral examination panel shall be designated in accordance with the provisions of the joint PhD contract.

§3. The Advisory Commission may not constitute the majority of the voting members on the doctoral examination panel. Written opinions are not included in the voting procedure. Article 27, §1, §3, §5 and §6, and article 73 §1 apply in full to joint PhDs.

*In the faculty of LK, the Faculty Board approves the composition of the doctoral jury (including the appointment of the chair and the secretary).*

*The supervisors must include – along with the application for the composition of the doctoral jury – a written statement that none of the proposed jurors (including the chair and excluding supervisors) have submitted and/or published papers (conference abstracts/proceedings, scientific and/or non-scientific papers) with the doctoral candidate.*

*A serious conflict of interest is suspected for jurors if they have (a) joint publication(s) with the doctoral candidate (obviously this does not apply to supervisors).*

**Article 62 – Defence of the joint PhD thesis**

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

### **Part 3. Interdisciplinary Doctorate and Doctorate in the arts**

#### **Article 63 – Admission to an interdisciplinary Doctorate**

§1. The competent faculty body shall evaluate the diploma requirements in accordance with articles 6 and 7 for each admission application concerning an interdisciplinary doctorate. The competent faculty body can, if it so wishes, ask the ICDO to issue an opinion in a specific case.

*In the faculty of LK, the same bodies are involved in an interdisciplinary doctorate as in a VUB doctorate.*

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

#### **Article 64 – Admission to a doctorate in the arts**

§1. In order to be admitted for the preparation of a doctorate 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 audio-visual arts, music, performing arts, literature, architecture or visual arts. In this regard, a non-binding opinion may be obtained from the Brussels Arts Platform with regard to doctorates 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 an equivalent) in one of the above-mentioned study areas can be admitted to this doctoral programme if the competence evaluation for PAC's conducted by the competent faculty body shows that a recognition of competences that are generally of a master's level in the field of the arts is possible. The competent faculty body can, if it so wishes, ask the ICDO to issue an opinion in a specific case.

#### **Article 65 – Application for admission to a doctorate in the arts and additional research**

In the case of an application for admission to a doctorate in the arts, the competent faculty body can conduct additional research or include a further examination, such as the one specified in articles 6 and 7. The competent faculty body can, if it so wishes, ask the ICDO to issue an opinion or organise the research or examination in a specific case.

#### **Article 66 – Admission for preparation of a doctorate in the arts**

In the case of a doctorate in the arts in cooperation with the EhB, the competent faculty body shall obtain the opinion of the Brussels Arts Platform.

#### **Article 67 – Doctoral study programme for special doctorates**

§1. The competent faculty body can, on the basis of the candidate's admission application, make the doctoral study programme, or a part thereof, mandatory for the doctorate in the arts or for an interdisciplinary doctorates. In that case, the mandatory study package will be a prerequisite for the permission to defend a doctoral 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 can provide for a maximum period of time within which this study package must be completed.

#### **Article 68 – Follow-up of doctorates in the arts and interdisciplinary doctorates**

In the case of an interdisciplinary doctorate across faculty boundaries or a doctorate in the arts, the ICDO monitors the smooth progress of the doctoral programme. For the monitoring of the Doctorates in the arts, the ICDO will be supplemented by the Chairman of the Brussels Arts Platform, who will serve in an advisory capacity.

#### **Article 69 – Guidance and responsibility for a doctorate in the arts**

In addition to article 11, there is, in the case of a doctorate in the arts, always a supervisor to carry out the artistic supervision, aside from the VUB ZAP supervisor(s). The artistic supervisor is exempt from the condition of being the holder of a doctor's degree based on a thesis.

#### **Article 70 – Advisory Commission for a doctorate in the arts**

The Advisory Commission for a doctorate in the arts comprises the supervisors and at least one additional member. The artistic supervisor is counted as a supervisor, and can therefore not act as an additional member.

#### **Article 71 – Doctoral thesis for a doctorate in the arts**

§1. In the case of a doctorate in the arts, the thesis comprises 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, done in an academically responsible manner and taking into account the specific nature of artistic research.

§2. These two components 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 doctorate in the arts is exempt from the obligation stipulated in article 24 to grant non-exclusive permission to reproduce the thesis and make it available to the public. Granting this permission is considered to be worthwhile, but is not mandatory.

#### **Article 72 – Application to take the doctoral examination**

The doctoral candidate preparing an interdisciplinary doctorate or a doctorate in the arts shall submit his/her written application to take the doctoral examination to the dean of the faculty with which his/her ZAP supervisor is principally affiliated.

#### **Article 73 – Panel composition**

1. If the relevant doctoral thesis has an interdisciplinary character that transgresses faculty borders, each faculty needs to be represented in the doctoral examination panel by a minimum of one member of the ZAP.

§2. For a doctorate in the arts that has been realised in cooperation with the EhB, the proposal for the composition of the doctoral examination panel shall be accompanied by the non-binding opinion of the Brussels Art Platform.



**Article 74 – Defence of the thesis for a doctorate in the arts**

In the case of a doctorate in the arts, the presentations that form part of the doctoral examination are not bound by the time and location restrictions specified in articles 33 and 34.

**Section IX. General and concluding provisions**

**Article 75 – Holidays**

Academic leave and the period from July 15<sup>th</sup> to August 15<sup>th</sup> are not included in the calculation of the applicable periods in these regulations, with the exception of Section VII.

**Article 76 – Entry into force of these regulations**

These regulations shall, following approval by the Academic Council, enter into force on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019, with the exception of the provisions in Section VI, which shall enter into force on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

Doctoral theses that were submitted prior to January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 will be examined, defended and, where applicable, proclaimed in accordance with the provisions of the Central Regulations for the conferral of the title of Doctor, as they were in force at the time of submission.

## **APPENDIX 1 The academic titles of doctor**

The VUB awards the following academic Degrees of Doctor.

	<b>Dutch designation</b>	<b>English designation</b>
1	Doctor in de wijsbegeerte en de moraalwetenschappen	Doctor of Philosophy and Moral Sciences
2	Doctor in de taalkunde	Doctor of Linguistics
3	Doctor in de letterkunde	Doctor of Literary Studies
4	Doctor in de taal- en letterkunde	Doctor of Linguistics and Literary Studies
5	Doctor in de toegepaste taalkunde: Journalistiek	Doctor of Applied Linguistics: Journalism Studies
6	Doctor in de toegepaste taalkunde: Vertaalwetenschap	Doctor of Applied Linguistics: Translation Studies
7	Doctor in de toegepaste taalkunde: Tolkwetenschap	Doctor of Applied Linguistics: Interpreting Studies
8	Doctor in de geschiedenis	Doctor of History
9	Doctor in de kunstwetenschappen en de archeologie	Doctor of Art Studies and Archaeology
10	Doctor in de kunstwetenschappen en de archeologie: cultureel erfgoed studies	Doctor of Art Studies and Archaeology: Cultural Heritage Studies
11	Doctor in de rechten	Doctor of Laws
12	Doctor in het notariaat	Doctor of Notarial Law
13	Doctor in de criminologische wetenschappen	Doctor of Criminology
14	Doctor in de psychologische wetenschappen	Doctor of Psychology
15	Doctor in de pedagogische wetenschappen	Doctor of Educational Sciences
16	Doctor in de pedagogische wetenschappen: agogische wetenschappen	Doctor of Adult Educational Sciences
17	Doctor in de economische wetenschappen	Doctor of Economics
18	Doctor in de toegepaste economische wetenschappen	Doctor of Business Economics
19	Doctor in de toegepaste economische wetenschappen: handelsingenieur	Doctor of Business Economics
20	Doctor in de politieke wetenschappen	Doctor of Political Science
21	Doctor in de sociale wetenschappen: sociologie	Doctor of Sociology

22	Doctor in de media- en communicatiestudies	Doctor of Media and Communication Studies
23	Doctor in de media- en communicatiestudies: journalistieke studies	Doctor of Media and Communication Studies: Journalism Studies
24	Doctor in de bewegings- en sportwetenschappen	Doctor in Movement and Sport Sciences
25	Doctor in de revalidatiewetenschappen en de kinesitherapie	Doctor in Rehabilitation Sciences and Physiotherapy
26	Doctor in de wetenschappen	Doctor of Sciences
27	Doctor in de bio-ingenieurswetenschappen	Doctor of Bio-Engineering Sciences
28	Doctor in de ingenieurswetenschappen	Doctor of Engineering Sciences
29	Doctor in de industriële ingenieurswetenschappen	Doctor of Engineering Technology
30	Doctor in de medische wetenschappen	Doctor of Medical Sciences
31	Doctor in de sociale gezondheidswetenschappen	Doctor of Social Health Sciences
32	Doctor in de tandheelkunde	Doctor of Dentistry
33	Doctor in de farmaceutische wetenschappen	Doctor of Pharmaceutical Sciences
34	Doctor in de gerontologie	Doctor of Gerontology
35	Doctor in de kunsten	Doctor of Arts
36	Doctor in de interdisciplinaire studies *	Doctor of Interdisciplinary Studies *
37	Doctor in gender en diversiteit	Doctor of Gender and Diversity
38	Doctor in de Wereldwijde gezondheidszorg, humanitaire hulp en rampengeneeskunde	Doctor of Global Health, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Medicine

\*The title / name of the study programme is always supplemented by the exact combination of the study areas that relate to the content of the doctoral thesis.

## **APPENDIX II THE CHARTER FOR RESEARCHERS**

### BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# **I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

## **European Charter for Researchers**

The European Charter for Researchers enshrines the following principles.

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

### **General Principles and Requirements applicable to Researchers:**

#### *Research freedom*

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

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

#### *Ethical principles*

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

#### *Professional responsibility*

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

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

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

#### *Professional attitude*

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

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

### *Contractual and legal obligations*

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

### *Accountability*

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

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

### *Good practice in research*

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

### *Dissemination, exploitation of results*

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

### *Public engagement*

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

### *Relation with supervisors*

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

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

### *Supervision and managerial duties*

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

### *Continuing professional development*

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

## **VUB staff regulations**

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

## **Research policy**

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

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

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

One priority is raising the awareness of young researchers through training. To this end, the Doctoral programme includes instruction on the different aspects of ethical research.

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

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

## **II. Infringement on the scientific integrity**

### **Definition**

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

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



the acknowledgement that is customary in the medium concerned (plagiarism). This also includes unjustified claims of (co-)authorship;

c. use of information in breach of the duty of confidentiality, e.g. in assessing a manuscript or funding request. This also includes breaches of guarantees of anonymity.

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

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

### **III. GOOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved;

The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected;

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

Harm to research participants and researchers must be avoided at all times;

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

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

## **IV. THE GOOD RESEARCHER**

### **Publication, a moral obligation**

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

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

## **International screening and visibility**

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

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

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

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

## **Patent literature**

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

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

Check whether the research results obtained can be protected;

Check the extent to which they have freedom of action as far as social or economic exploitation of the research results is concerned.

## **V. PROFILE OF A GOOD RESEARCHER**

### **The good researcher:**

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

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

## **VI. THE GOOD SCIENTIFIC AUTHOR**

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

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

## **VII. PROFILE OF A GOOD SCIENTIFIC AUTHOR**

### **A good scientific author:**

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

## **VIII. PROFILE OF A GOOD PEER REVIEWER**

### **The good peer reviewer:**

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

## **IX. PROFILE OF A GOOD SUPERVISOR**

### **The good supervisor:**

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

***expertise, infrastructure and support*** — The supervisor:

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

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

**coordination** — The supervisor:

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

**planning & use of time** — The supervisor:

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

**stimulation** — The supervisor:

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

**evaluation** — The supervisor:

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

**publication** — The supervisor:

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