

Readers should be aware that only the Dutch version of these Regulations has legal force. This English translation is strictly for reference and cannot be invoked as a legal tool.

## **ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS ON OBTAINING THE ACADEMIC DEGREE OF DOCTOR IN THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

### **I General provisions**

- Art. 1. These regulations apply to PhD studies conducted in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (Dutch: *Geneeskunde en Gezondheidswetenschappen*, GGW) at the University of Antwerp. PhD studies are understood to consist of the doctoral study programme and the PhD by thesis. These additional regulations are supplementary to the provisions specified in the Higher Education Codex of 11 October 2013, ratified by the Decree of 20 December 2013, and to the general regulations on obtaining the academic degree of doctor at the University of Antwerp (University of Antwerp PhD Regulations), approved by the University of Antwerp's Board of Governors on 30 January 2018.
- Art. 2. The following board and commissions are authorised to oversee PhD studies in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences: the GGW Faculty Board (Dutch: *Faculteitsraad*), the Scientific Research Commission (Dutch: *Commissie Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek*, CWO) and its three sub-committees (the doctoral evaluation committees (Dutch: *Doctoraatsevaluatiecommissies*, DECs))<sup>1</sup> and finally the individual PhD commissions (IPCs). The authority of the Faculty Board and the various commissions and committees with regard to PhD studies is explained in the articles below.
- Art. 3. The CWO has decision-making authority with regard to the following aspects of PhD studies:
- admission to PhD studies, based on an aptitude test for prospective PhD students and on the project proposal (cf. Article 8 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations);
  - determination of any additional training to be taken during the PhD by candidates who fall under Article 10 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations;
  - determination of a possible preparatory programme for candidates who fall under Articles 9, 10 or 11 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations and the appointment of the examinations board responsible for this preparatory programme;
  - appointment of the supervisor(s) of the PhD thesis (cf. Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations);
  - composition of the individual PhD commissions and designation of the chair (cf. Articles 17, 18 and 19 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations);
  - designation of the faculty PhD coordinator (Dutch: *facultaire coördinator doctoraten*, FCD), who is also a member of the CWO (cf. Article 19);
  - approval of the IPCs' evaluation reports following the submission of PhD progress reports (cf. Article 20 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations);
  - approval of the annual progress report on the doctoral study programme of the PhD student<sup>2</sup> concerned (cf. Article 21 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations);
  - composition of the PhD jury, designation of the chair and secretary, and specification of the details for the public defence of the thesis; verifying that the PhD student has proven that the conditions of Article 4 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations have been met (cf. Articles 25 to 29 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations);
  - approval of the doctoral study programme file and the conferral of the doctoral study programme certificate;
  - granting exemptions from the University of Antwerp's doctoral study programme (cf. Article 12 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations and Article 16 of these additional regulations);
  - the points in Article 4 of these additional regulations, as advised by the IPC;
  - the points in Article 5 of these additional regulations, as advised by the FCD.
- Art. 4. The IPCs advise the DECs with regard to the following aspects of PhD studies:
- evaluation of the annual progress report on the doctoral study programme of the PhD student concerned (cf. Article 20 of the University of Antwerp's doctoral regulations);
  - disputes between PhD students and their supervisors (cf. Article 50 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations).
- Art. 5. The FCD advises the DECs with regard to the following aspects of PhD studies:
- evaluation of the annual progress report on the doctoral study programme of the PhD student concerned, for the purposes of which he/she may consult ZAP, (postdoctoral) BAP and postdoctoral research staff in the faculty;

<sup>1</sup> In the Faculty of GGW, the DECs fulfil the role of the 'faculty PhD commissions' as described in the rules and regulations of the Antwerp Doctoral School which were approved by the Board of Governors on 30 January 2018

<sup>2</sup> In these regulations, 'PhD student' denotes doctoral students of any gender

- monitoring of any training programme(s) imposed on the PhD student concerned by the CWO (cf. Article 3, second point).

## II Conditions of admission

- Art. 6. PhD studies in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences are open to any candidate who fulfils the conditions referred to in the Higher Education Codex of 11 October 2013 and who have received explicit notification of admission following an aptitude test by the DEC.
- Art. 7. The application file for admission to PhD studies in the Faculty of GGW consists of (i) the enrolment file for the Registrar's office and (ii) the registration form specific to the Faculty of GGW.
- Art. 8. The candidate's application file is submitted to the DEC selected by the candidate, which decides:
- whether the candidate can be admitted to PhD studies;
  - whether the DEC (cf. Article 17) selected is the most appropriate.
- Art. 9. The DEC's decision must be announced to the candidate within a reasonable period. Six weeks is considered to be a reasonable period. If the result of the aptitude test taken within the framework of Article 8 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations is not communicated to the candidate within three months, a positive decision is always assumed. The latter does not apply to aptitude tests required in the case of Articles 9 or 10 of the University of Antwerp doctoral regulations, although decisions on such tests should also be reached within the reasonable period of six weeks.
- Art. 10. If the DEC requires the candidate to complete an additional training programme during the PhD (see Article 3, second point, of these additional regulations), the DEC will announce this to the candidate along with the results of the aptitude test. This training programme can consist of no more than 30 credits. The DEC also sets the period within which the training programme must be completed. The candidate will contact the faculty secretariat to find out about the practical arrangements regarding the classes to be followed.
- Art. 11. If the DEC requires the candidate to complete a preparatory programme including examinations (see Article 3, third point, of these additional regulations), the CWO will announce this to the candidate along with the results of the aptitude test. This preparatory programme can consist of no more than 30 credits. In justified cases, recognition of prior learning and/or qualifications may compensate for all or a portion of the preparatory programme. This programme does **not** form part of the candidate's doctoral study programme. The candidate signs a degree contract with the Registrar's office for the components of this preparatory programme.
- Art. 12. If the result of an aptitude test taken within the framework of Article 8 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations is positive, the relevant DEC will compose an individual PhD commission (IPC). If the result of an aptitude test taken within the framework of Article 10 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations is positive, the IPC will only be composed once it has been proven that the required preparatory programme has been completed successfully.

## III Doctoral study programme

- Art. 13. As part of the doctoral programme in medical sciences, PhD students are expected to strengthen their competences as young researchers. They must report on their progress annually using the online Student Information System Antwerp (SisA). Using the [competence profile](#) for PhD students at the University of Antwerp, and in consultation with their supervisors, PhD students determine the activities that they will undertake.
- Art. 14. In order to complete the doctoral study programme successfully, PhD students are required to submit a file with their activities according to the following general rules:
- the activities undertaken must amount to a total of at least 30 credits;
  - at least one credit must have been earned in at least four categories of the competence profile;
  - no more than half of the total number of credits may be earned in a single competence category;
  - credits are calculated using the table attached and the explanation given in Articles 14 to 16;

- the maximums apply to the entire duration of the doctoral study programme;
- the mandatory training course 'Mind the GAP' was successfully completed and the certificate of participation was delivered as proof (only applicable for PhD students starting from academic year 2022-2023);
- a certificate of participation must be provided for all activities.

The PhD student must complete his/her doctoral study programme *before* the official composition of the PhD jury (cf. Article 25 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations) and according to the procedure described on the Antwerp Doctoral School's website.

Art. 15. The table attached describes the allocation of credits in the doctoral study programme and includes the specifications and limitations listed in Article 16 of these additional regulations. The credits available in the various competence categories can be earned through the completion of certain activities, divided into different types.

ADS courses completed and passed from academic year 2015-2016 onwards are added to the SisA activity overview automatically (with the relevant number of credits and link to the competence category).

Art. 16. In general, the following specifications apply:

- the credits allocated to each activity, as determined by the Faculty of GGW, apply to all PhD students in this faculty. The Education Board, or its delegated committee, reserves the right to request changes to the faculty-determined credits.
- certain activities can contribute to two or more competency categories and may thus be reported as such. If the PhD student chooses this option, the number of credits must be divided equally between the different categories. Exceptions may be made to this rule on the basis of a well-founded justification provided in writing.
- activities which were undertaken after the completion of the degree which enabled enrolment to prepare a thesis, but *before* actual enrolment as a PhD student took place, may be counted in part or in full within the framework of the doctoral study programme. The CWO decides on this on the basis of a justified proposal accompanied by relevant supporting documents.
- PhD students themselves are responsible for the correct annual reporting of activities undertaken as part of the doctoral study programme, taking into account the distribution of credits and the maximums described in the table attached. This part of the progress report is evaluated annually under the supervision of the FCD.
- teaching and organisational activities must be verified and confirmed by the PhD student's supervisor.

#### IV Assessment of the PhD and the doctoral study programme

Art. 17. There are three doctoral evaluation committees (DECs, subcommittees of the CWO):

- Fundamental DEC;
- Clinical DEC;
- Public Health DEC.

These committees have at least six permanent members each, appointed by the CWO and endorsed by the Faculty Board, as well as the members of the IPC, who vary from PhD to PhD (cf. Article 18). Each DEC therefore consists of:

- at least six elected permanent members, specific to each DEC, elected by the CWO every three years and appointed by the Faculty Board;
- the IPC members (varying from PhD to PhD), one of whom serves as chair and another as secretary.

The mandate of an internal member of the DEC lasts for three years, renewable twice. Only after a break of at least three years can a former member reapply. The DEC meets at least eight times a year. The members of the DEC must attend at least half of the meetings in order for their contribution to be included in the e-curriculum. The dates on which the committees meet are communicated well in advance on the faculty's website. The committee can rely on a member of staff from the dean's office for administrative support as well as on the spearhead manager involved.

Art. 18. The IPC consists of three to six members (cf. Article 17 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations), including:

- two independent members, at least one of whom is a member of ZAP staff from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences who has already supervised at least one PhD successfully. One of these independent members, preferably the ZAP member, is appointed as chair;
- the supervisor(s).

A doctoral 'mentor' may also play an advisory role in the IPC. Additional members may be added to the IPC (without voting rights) if it is believed that this would benefit the supervision of the

PhD. The IPC may be convened at any time at the request of the PhD student or one of the IPC members.

- Art. 19. The CWO appoints a faculty PhD coordinator (Dutch: *facultaire coördinator doctoraten*, FCD) to facilitate the annual evaluation of the research (cf. Article 3). The FCD must be a member of ZAP staff who sits on the Faculty Board. The FCD is automatically a member of the CWO and of the CWO 'bureau'. The FCD can rely on a member of staff from the GGW dean's office for administrative support.
- Art. 20. All activities undertaken as part of the doctoral study programme are reported annually through SisA by the PhD student using the activity table attached.
- Art. 21. Two years after the start of the PhD, the PhD student is invited to submit a detailed report (max. 10 pages) on the status of the PhD research and the plan for the coming years, and to present this report to the DEC. The IPC members are also invited for this presentation and are required to make an active contribution. This presentation is a requirement for enrolling for the next academic year and for defending the PhD.
- Art. 22. During this meeting of the DEC, the PhD student explains his/her results in an oral presentation to the members of the DEC and the IPC. The requirements for the presentation will be made known to the PhD student in advance. The presentation will be followed by a question and answer session. The supervisor(s) and mentor may attend but should not intervene.
- Art. 23. Immediately after the presentation, the DEC and the IPC deliberate on the content and determine any additional requirements before the PhD student can submit his/her thesis for defence (the PhD student and the supervisor(s) do not attend this deliberation). When formulating its requirements/advice, the DEC may ask for additional information and consult with the supervisor(s). The decision is communicated immediately in person and the consensus of the DEC/IPC/PhD student/supervisor is subsequently confirmed in writing.
- Art. 24. The IPC reserves the right to request changes to the PhD or even to discontinue it, in consultation with the DEC and supervisor(s). The DEC will explain its decision clearly. If, after the presentation, the IPC and the DEC agree to the continuation of the PhD, no further action is required. If the IPC and the DEC have concerns after the presentation, the PhD student may be invited back to explain to the IPC and the DEC how he/she has responded to the committees' comments. If the IPC and the DEC deem it impossible for the PhD student to obtain a doctorate, they may advise that the PhD be discontinued. The candidate or supervisor(s) can appeal against the DEC's decision to the CWO, which can then review the decision.
- Art. 25. If a PhD student discontinues his PhD, either voluntarily or at the request of the supervisor(s), a concluding discussion must take place between the PhD student and the IPC. The minutes of this meeting are to be submitted to the relevant DEC.
- Art. 26. PhD students must complete their doctoral study programme before the PhD jury is composed (see Article 25 of the University of Antwerp's PhD regulations).

## V PhD thesis and public defence

- Art. 27. In order to submit the thesis the PhD student need at least 3 first author publications:
- A1 publications or Letters to the editor (a letter in a repository file is only eligible if it contains new unpublished data analysis and discussion)
  - 1 publication can be a review
  - minimum 2 publications have to be accepted and/or published
  - the other publication(s) has (have) to be ready to submit and appear as such in the thesis
  - if published in a top 10 journal, 2 publications will do
  - shared first authorship: counts for 1 publication if used in 1 thesis, counts for ½ publication if used in 2 theses, counts for 1 publication in both theses if published in a top 10 journal. The contribution of both 1st authors has to be proven.
  - case report only stands for a full article in combination with a literature review
- Art. 28. The language in which the thesis will be written and defended (Dutch, English or French) is determined in consultation with the supervisor and communicated to the faculty secretariat upon submission. The Faculty provides the possibility to write and defend the thesis in French.
- Art. 29. When the PhD student/supervisor(s) decide(s) that the PhD is ready for defence, the PhD student schedules a meeting with the IPC and, at least four weeks before this meeting, provides an electronic version to each member of the IPC and to the faculty secretariat, along with a report

from a plagiarism check. At the internal evaluation, both chair and member of the IPC should be present as well as a delegation of the supervisor team. During the meeting, which lasts a maximum of two hours, the PhD student presents his research for five minutes, after which the IPC members discuss the draft of the thesis in detail and formulate suggestions for improvement. On the basis of this meeting, the IPC decides whether the defence can take place. The chair of the IPC prepares and sends the minutes of this meeting to the faculty secretariat. If the IPC does not approve the draft version of the thesis, the PhD student must make changes and schedule a new consultation with the IPC.

- Art. 30. If the IPC approves the draft, it proposes a jury that is then confirmed by the DEC. The supervisor(s) has/have the right to propose jury members. The PhD jury consists of the following five to eight members:
- the members of the IPC;
  - two external members.
- The PhD student submits the electronic version of the thesis to the faculty secretariat, which sends it on to the external jury members. The public defence is also planned. The external jury members have six weeks to comment on the thesis and/or approve the defence. During the summer period there is an administrative break of four weeks, so this timeline is extended by four weeks.
- Art. 31. Published articles may represent an integral part of the thesis, but the overall thesis should form a coherent whole.
- Art. 32. The PhD student is responsible for covering the printing costs.

### **VI Special provisions**

- Art. 32. These regulations took effect on 1 January 2019 and apply, from that point on, to all pending decisions about PhDs that have not yet been started. With regard to ongoing PhDs, previously taken decisions can be adapted in the light of the new regulations, though this is not mandatory.

## Appendix: Table of activities

Competence category	Activity	Credits per activity	Maximum
A. Research skills and techniques	Course <sup>3</sup> Examinations taken (or similar)	0.1 credit/hour 0.5 credit	
	Lectures attended <sup>4</sup>	0.1 credit/hour	5 credits
	Referee assignment for an article/book chapter <sup>5</sup>	0.5 credit	1.5 credit
	Research residency	0.2 credit/working day	5 credits
	Research day in the candidate's own faculty, Antwerp University Hospital and Doctoral Day ADS	0.5 credit	
	Jury membership for a dissertation/thesis/Ba of Ma thesis	0.3 credit	1.5 credits
B. Adaptation to the research environment	Course <sup>6</sup> Examinations taken (or similar)	0.1 credit/hour 0.5 credit	
	Course Mind the Gap <sup>7</sup>	1 credit	
	Faculty peer review for a doctoral programme	0.1 credit/hour	3 credits
	Active membership on councils/committees	0.1 credit/hour	6 credits Max. 1 credit/year
C. Research management	Course <sup>8</sup> Examinations taken (or similar)	0.1 credit/hour 0.5 credit	
	Supervision of a Bachelor dissertation <sup>9</sup>	0.5 credit/Bachelor dissertation	6 credits
	Supervision of a Master dissertation <sup>9</sup>	2 credits/Master dissertation	
	Supervision traineeship <sup>10</sup>	0.1 credits/week	
	Proposals and recognitions <sup>11</sup> - proposal for an individual doctoral fellowship - project proposal for FWO/VLAIO/BOF (or similar organisation) - project proposal for a research fellowship from the University of Antwerp/Ethics Committee or similar body	0.2 credits 0.2 credits 0.1 credit	2 credits

<sup>3</sup> This includes First Aid and fire-extinguisher training, continuing education, Advanced Master programmes, workshops and other learning opportunities (e.g. E-bronnen, Excel, Access, Scientific Reasoning and Reporting)

<sup>4</sup> This includes FWO information sessions, symposiums, study days, workshops, conferences, Antwerp University Hospital research club, webinars, online training, journal clubs, internal scientific presentations and similar experiences

<sup>5</sup> Referee assignments can be honoured only for PhD candidates who are able to corroborate their efforts with a certificate in the name of the editor or with a written statement from the supervisor

<sup>6</sup> e.g. Innovation Management & Entrepreneurship

<sup>7</sup> Good Academic Practice: mandatory for PhD students starting from academic year 2022-2023

<sup>8</sup> e.g. Project Management, Word, Mind Mapping

<sup>9</sup> Supervision of a dissertation or thesis may be honoured only once for any completed dissertation or thesis. The candidate must be listed as the official supervisor, stated on the first page of the Bachelor or Master dissertation or recognised as such by the supervisor in a signed, written statement of confirmation

<sup>10</sup> Supervisor of students in training and internships that is not official Ba or Ma trial supervision. Ba trial supervision, Ma trial supervision and traineeship cannot be combined for the same student

<sup>11</sup> Participation in competitive calls for funding (e.g. multi-year project funding through FWO/IWT/BOF, external doctoral grants, research fellowships) can be honoured if the supervisor confirms that the PhD candidate was the first author of the proposal

	Organisation of a scientific activity	1 credit/day of the activity	3 credits
D. Personal effectiveness	Course <sup>12</sup> Examinations taken (or similar)	0.1 credit/hour 0.5 credit	
	Publication <sup>13</sup> in an international journal/book/digital publication peer-reviewed - first/last author - other author	3 credits 1.5 credit	9 credits
	Publication <sup>13</sup> in a national peer-reviewed journal - first/last author - other author	2 credits 1 credit	
	International publication <sup>13</sup> in a journal/book/digital publication not peer-reviewed - first/last author - other author	1.5 credit 1 credit	3 credits
	National publication <sup>13</sup> in a journal/book/digital publication that is not peer-reviewed - first/last author - other author	1 credit 0.5 credit	
	Publication <sup>13</sup> for a broader audience in a journal/book/digital publication that is not peer-reviewed - first/last author - other author	0.5 credit 0.2 credit	1 credit
	Individual academic award/distinction <sup>14</sup>	0.2 credit	
E. Communication skills	Course <sup>15</sup> Examinations taken (or similar)	0.1 credit/hour 0.5 credit	
	Teaching in higher education <sup>16</sup>	0.2 credit/contact hour	6 credits
	Supervision of practical training and teaching	0.1 credit/contact hour	6 credits
	Knowledge transfer to a broader audience <sup>17</sup>	0.1 credit/hour	3 credits
	Mid-term presentation of research in DEC	3 credits	3 credits
	Speech at an international conference (or similar): - invited speaker or selected speaker <sup>18</sup> - other	3 credits 2 credits	6 credits
	Speech at a national conference (or similar):		

<sup>12</sup> Time Management, Achieving Your Goals

<sup>13</sup> Publications must have been *accepted* for publication: those that have been *submitted* or are currently *under review* do not count. Publications can be honoured only after they have been accepted (confirmation from editor or copy of the publication). The number of credits awarded depends upon the author's contribution to the publication

<sup>14</sup> e.g. best presentation or poster at a conference

<sup>15</sup> e.g. Giving Presentations, Writing, Communication, PowerPoint, Speed Reading, Web Design, Writing Proposals, Writing Coaching

<sup>16</sup> The presentation of a candidate's own research during a lecture at the request of the course unit coordinator can also be counted as teaching in higher education

<sup>17</sup> This includes the SID-in (education information days) exchange. Knowledge transfer to a broader audience (e.g. Children's University, Science Week, teaching in a company or to a lay audience) can be honoured if the candidate can provide proof of active participation, stating the number of hours (e.g. written confirmation from the organiser, initiator or supervisor)

<sup>18</sup> The PhD candidate must have given the presentation personally. 'Selected speakers' are PhD students who have been chosen from multiple submissions to present their results

	- invited speaker or selected speaker <sup>18</sup> - other	2 credits 1 credit	
	Poster presentation at an international conference (or similar): presenting author <sup>19</sup>	1.5 credit	1.5 credit
	Poster presentation at a national conference (or similar): presenting author <sup>19</sup>	1 credit	
	Presentation at the Antwerp University Hospital research club (or similar)	0.5 credit	1 credit
	Presentation within the candidate's own research group (min. 30 minutes) <sup>20</sup>	0.1 credit	
	Interactive panel discussion/shareholder meeting	0.1 credit	
	Press conference or interview	0.1 credit	
	Webmaster	0.1 credit/year	
F. Networks and teamwork	Course <sup>21</sup> Examinations taken (or similar)	0.1 credit/hour 0.5 credit	
	Research residency	0.2 credit/working day	5 credits
G. Career management	Course <sup>22</sup> Examinations taken (or similar)	0.1 credit/hour 0.5 credit	
	Attendance at career-focused events <sup>23</sup>	0.1 credit/hour	

Not honoured:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extension of FWO fellowships</li> <li>- Lecture on a Master dissertation (official supervision does count)</li> <li>- Device training</li> <li>- Defence of a PhD thesis</li> <li>- Meetings (these are not considered to be lectures or training)</li> <li>- Reports or abstracts of conferences or similar (those made in the form of posters or presentations might count)</li> <li>- Discussions or other presentation of interim results (in contrast to presentations [min. 30 minutes] within the candidate's own research group, provided the candidate can prove that it was a fully-fledged presentation [e.g. slides])</li> <li>- Supervision of examinations</li> <li>- Serving on a jury, if the activity takes place within the framework of supervising a dissertation/thesis or if it is connected to membership on a council/committee</li> <li>- Travel fellowships</li> </ul>
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## Keep in mind:

- the list of activities presented above is not exhaustive. If your activity is not listed, you may make a substantiated proposal for the number of credits to be allocated;
- courses can count for a maximum of 15 credits overall the different competence categories;
- credits are rounded up to one digit after the decimal.

<sup>19</sup> Poster presentations only count if the candidate presented personally

<sup>20</sup> The candidate must prove that it was a full presentation (e.g. submit the slides as proof)

<sup>21</sup> e.g. Leadership and Teamwork

<sup>22</sup> e.g. Job-Application Techniques

<sup>23</sup> e.g. Talent Forum