



**University of Antwerp**  
| Faculty of Pharmaceutical, Biomedical  
and Veterinary Sciences

# **Faculty of Pharmaceutical, Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences (FBD)**

## **PhD guidelines**

**Additional information to the general (UAntwerp) and  
complementary (Faculty) PhD rules and regulations**

Approved by the Faculty council FBD on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2022

**The PhD guidelines are complementary on the general and faculty PhD regulations. Both regulations are still to be consulted as the PhD guidelines are mainly a guideline of all steps through the PhD project.**

## 1 Start of the PhD

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The PhD candidate completes the “Application form for international PhD students”<sup>1</sup> and provides it to the central student administration by following the detailed instructions about the procedure as mentioned in the form. Questions about registration can be asked at the central student administration via the helpdesk: [uahost.uantwerpen.be/helpdesk/ro\\_helpdesk](http://uahost.uantwerpen.be/helpdesk/ro_helpdesk).

The central student administration sends the application file (“Application form for international PhD students” and the “Evaluation form: decision of the Faculty in respect of the PhD admission”<sup>2</sup>) to the secretariat of the appropriate department, who will forward it to the promoter with the request to compose an (independent) individual doctoral committee (IDC). The IDC will only be formally composed as from the moment the effective starting date is known. Possible changes to the IDC during the PhD programme must be approved by the Department council (DR) before submission of the first draft thesis.

The secretariat places the approval of the PhD admission and the approval of the IDC on the agenda of the DR. The department will try to process the application of the PhD admission within 6 till 8 weeks<sup>3</sup>.

After approval by the DR, the chair of the department completes and signs the evaluation form “Decision of the Faculty in respect of the PhD admission”, which will then be returned electronically to the central student administration. An electronic version of the full application file will also be kept at the department secretariat.

The student receives an email from the department secretariat with the approval of the PhD admission and of the composition of the IDC. The members of the IDC will also be informed.

Immediately after the composition of the IDC, the PhD student takes the initiative to arrange an informal acquaintance with each of the members of his/her IDC and provides them with a short summary of the research project.

After approval of the PhD admission, the central student administration invites the student to complete the registration.

If a registered PhD student does not obtain a scholarship after an application procedure and consequently does not proceed with his/her PhD activities, the student can recover the enrolment fee of the doctoral study programme before 1 February. More information about reimbursement can be obtained at the central student administration.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research/phd/antwerp-doctoral-school/regulations-and-documents/forms/>

<sup>2</sup> “Beslissing van de faculteit m.b.t. de toelating tot het doctoraat”

<sup>3</sup> The period of 6-8 weeks cannot be guaranteed between July 20<sup>th</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>

## 2 Annual re-registration / Withdrawal from the PhD

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Each year the student must re-register at the University of Antwerp<sup>4</sup>. This will be done electronically via SisA **before 15 October** of the applicable academic year. After 15 October, registration will only be possible till 31 May after the faculty's permission. The request for permission for re-registration must be addressed to the secretariat, that will ask for approval of the student's members of the IDC.

To login in SisA, the student should use his/her student account. Information about how to change a password of a student/personnel account and how to forward mails from an account to another e-mail address can be found on Pintra / subsite Department ICT (e-mail)<sup>5</sup>.

Enrolment fees are only charged in the first year and in the year of defence. The central student administration will summon the student to pay the enrolment fee.

When a student withdraws from the PhD, the student must inform all promoters, the chair of the IDC and the department secretariat. Additionally, the student submits a request for withdrawal of the PhD via SisA Selfservice (Requests > Change current enrolment).

## 3 Progress reporting

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The annual evaluation of the doctoral study programme takes place via the electronic platform SisA. The Antwerp Doctoral School (ADS) invites the student to submit his/her activities in SisA by 1 May at the latest. ADS assesses the submitted activities together with the Departmental DOCOP Committee (DDC) and, if necessary, makes corrections which the student can consult in SisA.

Upon completion of the doctoral study programme, the student must provide ADS with all proofs. The student is responsible for archiving and updating the proofs on a regular basis. Proofs can include participants' lists, registration forms, programmes, certificates, copies of the first page of articles, the academic bibliography, brief reports of research stays and other similar items. If no proof is available for some activities, the promoter's signature should be provided.

The evaluation of the PhD research takes place during the second half of the second research year (based on the effective starting date) by means of an oral presentation to the IDC about the progress of the research. The student will be invited and informed in due time by the secretariat. The presentation contains an overview of the research performed and the planning of the second half of the PhD. At least 10 working days before the presentation, the student submits a summary of one page of the research performed and a detailed scientific CV in the electronic platform SisA. The members of the IDC and the secretariat will receive an email informing them that the documents were submitted.

In the case of mandate assistants with a six-year research programme, the oral presentation to the IDC about the progress of the research will be given both in the second half of the second research year and in the second half of the fourth research year.

The IDC gives feedback on the progress and results of the PhD work, gives possible recommendations for further research plans and evaluates if the work progress of the PhD student is satisfactory. The IDC can also decide that the student must be heard again in the third year following the same procedure. Based upon these findings, the chair completes the evaluation in SisA.

In the case of a negative evaluation, the Department council decides whether or not the student gets permission to re-register.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/study/admission-and-enrolment/>

<sup>5</sup> [https://pintra.uantwerpen.be/webapps/ua-pintrasite-BBLEARN/module/index.jsp?course\\_id= 8 1&tid= 18652 1&l=en\\_us](https://pintra.uantwerpen.be/webapps/ua-pintrasite-BBLEARN/module/index.jsp?course_id= 8 1&tid= 18652 1&l=en_us)

**Note:** The department of pharmaceutical sciences organises the oral presentations for the IDC during their annual doctoral research day, supplemented by a presentation given by one student per research group who is already further along in the research process. The secretariat will invite and inform the appropriate PhD students in due time.

At the start of the second half of the fourth research year (second half of the sixth year for mandate assistants) the PhD student submits a brief report to the IDC about the status of the research and a detailed planning for finishing the PhD, no later than four months before the end of the respective research year. The student will be invited and informed in due time by the secretariat. If the IDC is not sufficiently convinced about the progress of the PhD based on this report, the student may have to give a new oral presentation, according to the procedure mentioned above.

However, this brief report is not required if the student submits a first draft thesis to the IDC within the fixed term of four months before the end of the fourth year (or sixth year for mandate assistants), or if the IDC judges that there are enough guarantees that the first draft thesis will be submitted before the end of the fourth year (sixth year for mandate assistants). The decision about this will be communicated to the student by the chair of the IDC.

If the PhD is not finished after four years (six years for mandate assistants), the PhD student will be evaluated by the IDC at the end of each next research year, based on a brief report, according to the procedure mentioned above.

If the PhD programme is different from the normal duration of four or six years, the time schedule of the abovementioned procedure can be adapted upon request from the student and after consultation of the promoter, chair of the IDC and the departmental DOCOP coordinators.

The PhD student or one of the members of the IDC can convene a meeting of the IDC at any time.

In the case of a negative evaluation by the IDC or the DDC, the PhD student can ask to be heard respectively by the DR or the FDC and can be supported by the ombudsperson. The DR or the FDC respectively can advise the rector to refuse permission to register.

## 4 The defence

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The thesis is written and will be defended in Dutch or English and contains a summary and a title both in Dutch and in English. Another foreign language is also permitted, if approved by the Department council.

Regarding the formal requirements of the thesis, students are requested to work according to the house style of the University of Antwerp. Logos and examples of covers can be found via Pintra / subsite Department Communications (Guidelines and materials)<sup>6</sup>. Advice concerning graphics (e.g. lay-out, font, use of figures, cover design) can be obtained from the “Nieuwe Media Dienst” and “Reprografie CDE”. The cover of the thesis must contain at least the identification data specified in the appendix. Published articles can be an integral part of the thesis, taking into account a homogeneous lay-out.

Before submission of the first draft of the thesis (!), the student closes its doctoral study programme in due time<sup>7</sup>. The thesis can only be submitted if it contains at least one scientific publication. The scientific publication is considered to be a first authored article in an international peer reviewed journal. Motivated exceptions are only allowed after approval by the IDC.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://pintra.uantwerpen.be/webapps/ua-pintrasite-BBLEARN/module/index.jsp?course\\_id= 17 1&tid= 1727 1&l=en\\_us](https://pintra.uantwerpen.be/webapps/ua-pintrasite-BBLEARN/module/index.jsp?course_id= 17 1&tid= 1727 1&l=en_us)

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/centres/antwerp-doctoral-school/phd-procedure/phase-4-preparation-of-the-defence/>

The student provides the department secretariat with a pdf and one copy per member (who wishes so) of the IDC of the first draft of the thesis in A4-format, along with a pdf of the form "Checklist confidentiality doctoral thesis". The department secretariat verifies in SisA if the doctoral study programme was successfully closed and if the PhD student is registered for the current academic year. Thereafter, the department secretariat distributes the draft thesis to the members of the IDC. Within 4 weeks the IDC informs the student (with a copy to the department secretariat) about its advice, based on the first draft thesis and the internal defence. Preferably, the student already sets a date and a room for the internal defence by consulting the IDC before submitting the first draft of the thesis. There are no guidelines about the internal defence; the student can inform with the promoter and/or chair of the IDC what expectations they have.

During this period of 4 weeks the department secretariat asks the promoter to suggest a PhD jury. The chair of the IDC checks on possible conflicts of interest and ensures that the jury is balanced according to expertise. After the chair's approval, the PhD jury must be finally approved by the DR.

As soon as the date of the public defence is known, the department secretariat makes a reservation for a room for the defence and for the jury. The student is responsible for organising a reception, if applicable. For defences at Campus Drie Eiken, the student can contact [lokaalbeheer.cde-cgb-cmi@uantwerpen.be](mailto:lokaalbeheer.cde-cgb-cmi@uantwerpen.be) to reserve a room for having the reception and contact [catering.evenementen@uantwerpen.be](mailto:catering.evenementen@uantwerpen.be) for fixing the catering wished for.

Taking into account the advice of the IDC, the student prepares a second draft of the thesis and submits a pdf and one copy per member (who wishes so) of the PhD jury in A4/A5-format to the department secretariat. The department secretariat distributes the second draft to the members of the PhD jury and requests their comments. Taking into account possible corrections, the PhD jury must decide within 6 weeks\* whether or not the thesis may be defended. The chair of the jury informs the student of the comments (if any) and the decision of the jury.

*(\*) A minimum of 3 weeks for the members of the jury must be maintained, plus a buffer of 1 week for eventual late comments and the time for the chair of the jury to gather and communicate all comments and the decision of the jury.*

When the jury decides that the thesis may be defended, the chair of the jury informs the student, the chair of the department and the department secretariat. The student preferably has the final thesis printed via the Nieuwe Mediadienst, which takes about 2 weeks (the cover can already be designed earlier). The public defence takes place no sooner than 3 weeks after the date of the jury's decision.<sup>8</sup> The promoter is responsible for all costs associated with participation of external members in the PhD jury.

The department secretariat ensures that the student completes the form "Information regarding the defence of the PhD thesis" that must be submitted to the appropriate persons at least 3 weeks before the defence. After this form has been submitted, the student will be summoned to pay the enrolment fee for the year of defence and the student will be asked to make a choice between the general and specific diploma supplement<sup>9</sup>. For the purpose of the faculty's social media platform, the student also provides a lay summary of the research, targeted to a general audience (max. 500 words), together with a photo or image, as well as web links or videos.

The department secretariat also asks the student to provide an abstract for publication on the faculty website and a pdf of the final thesis for the department electronic archive. For the registration of the defended thesis in the academic bibliography, the student also submits a pdf in the institutional repository via [helpdesk@library.uantwerpen.be](mailto:helpdesk@library.uantwerpen.be).

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<sup>8</sup> No public defences will be held between July 20<sup>th</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/centres/antwerp-doctoral-school/phd-procedure/phase-4-preparation-of-the-defence/>

At least 3 weeks before the defence, the department secretariat ensures that the defence is announced via the faculty website and posters. The secretariat also sends invitations to the members of the PhD jury, along with the final thesis in A5-book format. For this, the student provides the department secretariat with the correct number of copies (1 copy per member of the jury + 2 for the library or 4 in case of an ISBN number<sup>10</sup>). The members of the jury are asked to preferably wear a gown at the public defence (additional gowns for members of the jury not connected to the faculty are available on request at the faculty).

One week before the defence, the department secretariat sends the poster, announcing the defence, by e-mail to the members of the faculty.

The defence of the thesis is public and may not last longer than two hours, including the questioning by the PhD jury. The presentation should last between 30 and 40 minutes. The PhD jury deliberates immediately thereafter and decides whether or not the PhD student has succeeded. The defence ends with the proclamation.

Before the defence, the department secretariat provides the chair of the jury with the diploma addendum (= report of the jury), which must be signed by all members of the jury present, and which the department secretariat will send afterwards to the diploma administration. The diploma administration will award the diploma file when all formalities are fulfilled and will then contact the PhD student via its UAntwerp email. The student can pick-up the diploma personally or it can be sent to the home address. Along with the PhD diploma, the PhD student also receives the certificate of the doctoral study programme, accompanied with a supplement with an overview of the followed activities.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/library/research/publishing/requesting-an-isbn/>

## SUMMARY TIMELINE DOCTORAL PROCEDURE

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- Submission application PhD admission > IDC composition > approval of application + IDC composition at DR > finalisation registration > afterwards yearly re-registration > **IMPORTANT:** public defence is not legally valid if not registered for the academic year of defence!
- Informal acquaintance between PhD student and members of the IDC
- Oral presentation during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> research year (+ 4<sup>th</sup> research year for mandate assistants) > for FAR this will be organised during the research day
- Brief report at least 4 months before the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> research year (6<sup>th</sup> research year for mandate assistants)
- BEFORE submission 1st draft of the thesis
  - **DOCOP file to be closed** with ADS (count +/- 3 weeks)
  - **thesis contains at least one scientific publication**
  - **search for a date for the internal defence** (to be organised by the student)
- Submission **1st draft of the thesis**  
+ pdf of the signed form “**Checklist confidentiality**” via email to the secretariat
- **Internal defence** within 4 weeks after submission of the first draft of the thesis, including the advice from the IDC to the student and the secretariat
- Submission **2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the thesis** > date/hour + room for the defence must be known + jury proposal must be approved
- Term of min. 4 weeks (!) – max. 6 weeks for the **comments/decision of the jury**
- PhD student finalises the form “Information regarding the defence”, abstract, lay summary (+ photo/image + web links/videos), pdf and books of the final thesis
- Secretariat arranges the announcement of the defence via posters and the faculty’s website, email to the faculty and sends the invitation letters to the jury
- **Defence** min. 3 weeks (!) after the decision of the jury (defences do not take place between 20<sup>th</sup> July and 20<sup>th</sup> of August). The student must be **enrolled** in the academic year of defence to have a legal public defence.

**REMARK:** the calculation of the terms exclude the holiday periods, as listed in the academic calendar for UAntwerp personnel.

### PhD regulations:

- <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/centres/antwerp-doctoral-school/regulations-and-documents/>
- <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/about-uantwerp/faculties/fbd/research/phd/> (where can I find more information)

**Forms defence:** <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research/phd/antwerp-doctoral-school/regulations-and-documents/forms/>

## 5 Contact information

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### **Department Biomedical Sciences**

PhD secretariat: Evy Pluym – CDE S.124  
evy.pluym@uantwerpen.be

Departmental DOCOP-coordinator: Prof. dr. Tom Vanden Berghe

### **Department Veterinary Sciences**

PhD secretariat: Stef Kockelberg – CDE T.130  
stef.kockelberg@uantwerpen.be

Departmental DOCOP-coordinator: Prof. dr. Jo Leroy

### **Department Pharmaceutical Sciences**

PhD secretariat: Eva Sterckx – CDE S.124  
Secretariaat.farmacie@uantwerpen.be

Departmental DOCOP-coordinator: Prof. dr. Adrian Covaci

### **Antwerp Doctoral School**

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-and-innovation/phd/antwerp-doctoral-school/contact/>

### **Nieuwe Media Dienst**

Thomas Campaert / Natacha Hoevenaegel / Ann Roelant  
CDE D.015  
nmd.grafisch@uantwerpen.be

### **Reprografie CDE**

Linda Gladiné / Linda Van Pelt / Werenfried Tuerlinckx  
CDE O.015  
cursusdienst.cde@uantwerpen.be



## Appendix

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The following details at least should feature on the cover of the thesis:

<b>LOGO UANTWERPEN</b>	
<b>(faculty)</b> <i>(field of study)</i>	
<b>Title of the dissertation</b> <b>in the language in which the dissertation is written*</b>	
<b>Dissertation for the degree of doctor in (academic degree)**</b> <b>at the University of Antwerp to be defended by</b> <b>First Name FAMILY NAME</b>	
<b>Name supervisor(s)</b>	<b>Antwerp, year</b>

\* The title of the dissertation should be mentioned in Dutch inside the thesis, if the dissertation is written in another language

\*\* Titles academic degree of doctor University of Antwerp / Faculty FBD:

**Doctor in biomedical sciences**

**Doctor in pharmaceutical sciences**

**Doctor in science: biochemistry and biotechnology**

**Doctor in veterinary medicine**