

Regulation Postgraduate programmes University of Antwerp

Approved by the Board of Governors on 30 March 2021, 29 March 2022, 28 March 2023, on 26 March 2024 and on 25 March 2025

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

0 Field of application and definitions

0.1 Field of application

This regulation applies to the postgraduate programmes organised by the University of Antwerp and to the interuniversity programmes in which the University of Antwerp participates insofar as there is no specific regulation that is declared applicable.

0.2 Definitions

Codex Higher Education of 20 December 2013: Decretal stipulations with regard to higher education, codified on 11 October 2013.

Postgraduate programme: a training programme in the sense meant in article 17 § 1 of the decree of 4 April 2003 concerning the restructuring of higher education in Flanders.

PAVO: abbreviation of “postacademische vorming” (post-academic training) has the same meaning as “postgraduate programme” in this regulation

Faculty: a faculty or a university institute.

Steering committee: the body within the faculty responsible for the postgraduate programme.

1 Legal framework

The Codex Higher Education of 20 December 2013 states regarding the organisation of postgraduate programmes:

Art. II.61. Within the limits of their educational authority granted by this decree, universities and university colleges offer the specific and regulated training programmes that can be completed with a postgraduate certificate as meant in article 17, § 1 or with a diploma of the corresponding professional title.

Art. II.62. § 1. Postgraduate certificates can be issued by the university colleges and the universities after successful completion of training programmes with a study load of minimum 20 ECTS-credits. It concerns training programmes aiming to broaden c.q. deepen the competences acquired upon completion of a bachelor's or master's programme in the context of further professional training.

§ 2. The universities and university colleges organise shorter training programmes with a view to continuing training in the context of lifelong learning.

They determine the qualification and certification framework for these continuing training programmes autonomously or by common accord and make this public.

2 Organisation and admission requirements

2.1 Organisation

The organisation of new postgraduate programmes is submitted at the latest by 1 November of the preceding academic year to the working group Lifelong Learning which formulates an advisory opinion to the Education Board.

The application is submitted by the faculty and not by an individual staff member.

The application file contains at least the following elements:

- approval of the faculty concerned;
- the learning outcomes and the target group of the programme;
- the admission requirements, taking into account the stipulations of the Codex Higher Education of 20 December 2013;
- the courses of the training programme including the number of ECTS-credits and the contact hours, taking into account the stipulations in the legislation regarding higher education;
- per programme component the course information (includes a description of the prerequisites and learning outcomes, the contents, the teaching and assessment method, the study material and contact information)

- the way in which quality control will be organised;
- the contact details of the person(s) in charge of the postgraduate programme;
- a financial multiannual plan containing a budget for the cost and revenue, including the study fees.

2.2 Admission requirements

In accordance with the Codex Higher Education of 20 December 2013, students in a postgraduate programme should have at least a bachelor's and/or master's degree. Only in exceptional circumstances can one diverge from this condition. An evaluation of previously acquired competences and/or an admission test in which the organiser ascertains that the candidate fulfils the prerequisites of the programme, can lead to the admission of students that do not explicitly fulfil the degree requirements.

2.3 Enrolment procedure

The enrolment is done completely online in accordance with the enrolment requirements of the registrar's office. After the enrolment has been processed, a student card is generated.

2.4 Certificates

Successful completion of the postgraduate programme is rewarded with a certificate signed by the rector.

2.5 Contribution indirect costs

In execution of the decision of the Board of Governors (BoG/14.11.2017/111/7.2), for postgraduate programmes 30.000 euro is charged as contribution to the indirect costs per postgraduate programme of 60 ECTS-credits. This contribution is independent of the number of students. If less than 60 ECTS-credits are offered, the contribution is calculated proportionally at 500 euro per ECTS-credit. Exceptionally and with thorough justification, it is possible to diverge from this rule in specific cases (e.g. specific social commitment).

2.6 Special educational and/or exam facilities for certain students

A student may, on account of exceptional personal circumstances, submit a request for special educational and/or exam facilities. The steps needed to request special educational and/or exam facilities are explained in the enrolment procedure of the registrar's office. If the request is found legitimate, the steering committee will assess which special facilities can reasonably be granted after consulting with the appointed care co-ordinator of the University of Antwerp.

2.7 The structure of the academic year

For the structure of the academic year, the academic calendar of the University of Antwerp is followed. The faculty can allow deviations.

2.8 Ombuds person

The faculty appoints an ombuds person for the postgraduate programme. The appointment is for at least one academic year. The function of the faculty ombuds person is described in the education and examination regulation of the University of Antwerp.

3 Study programme

3.1 Structure

The study programme of a postgraduate programme is constructed of programme components with a study load of at least 3 ECTS-credits. Programme components are preferably programmed as assessable unities in semesters. In any case, a programme component must be completely programmed within an academic year, including the evaluation.

3.2 Description of programme components

For each programme component, the following elements are described in the language of instruction: the prerequisites and the learning outcomes, the contents, the teaching methods, the assessment methods, the number of exam opportunities (one or two, possibly per exam component) and the required study material. The steering committee shall publish the description of the programme components at the latest at the start of the academic year.

3.3 Announcement of the study programme

The steering committee publishes the study programme in the digital study guide before 1 July of the preceding academic year.

3.4 Exemptions

The steering committee decides on the granting of exemptions on the basis of proof of previously acquired competencies, credits or qualifications.

4 Evaluation

4.1 Evaluation periods

Before 1 July of the preceding academic year, the steering committee determines the exact dates of the exam periods and determines the exam period(s) for each programme component. Failing this, the schedule of the previous academic year is taken.

4.2 Examination board

The steering committee of the postgraduate programme composes an examination board which consists of a sufficient number of examiners and at least 3 academic staff members. Within the examination board, a member is appointed chairperson and another member is appointed secretary. The examination board invites the faculty ombuds person to its meetings.

The members of the examination board are required to attend meetings. If they are unable to attend, they should inform the chair of the examination board beforehand and in writing.

All decisions by the examination board should be adequately motivated and noted in the report. Decisions are only binding if at least half of the members had attended the discussions. The examination board shall decide by majority of members present, blank ballots, abstentions, and invalid votes not included. Secret votes may be taken if a board member should so request. In case of a tie, the decision taken shall be in favour of the student.

4.3 Assessment method

Before the start of the programme, the steering committee determines the assessment method for each programme component, including continuous evaluation and makes this known to the students.

The chair of the examination board may, for serious reasons, grant permission to deviate from the specified exam format.

4.4 Exam result and succeeding in a programme component

The examiner(s) determine(s) the exam result of a programme component in integers from 0 to 20. The steering committee can make a motivated decision that for certain programme components with a particular specificity the exam result is determined in a non-numerical form "pass" or "fail".

A student succeeds in a programme component when having obtained at least 10 out of 20 or the non-numerical result "pass". Each programme component in which the student succeeds entitles the student to a credit.

4.5 Final result and succeeding in a postgraduate programme

In order to succeed in a postgraduate programme the student has to obtain a credit for all the programme components in the training programme.

A student's final result is a weighted average of all numerical exam results the student has obtained in the training programme. In calculating the final result, the credits corresponding to the various programme components are used for weighting the results obtained for those components. The final result is expressed as an integer out of 100. In the calculation the result is rounded up if the first figure after the comma is a 5 or higher. The final result and the exam result for each programme component are mentioned in the supplement of the postgraduate certificate.

If the certificate is awarded with a grade of merit, this is based on the following calculation:

- satisfaction: final total between 50 and 67 out of 100;

- distinction: final total between 68 and 76 out of 100;
- great distinction: final total between 77 and 84 out of 100;
- greatest distinction: final total of 85 or more out of 100.

The Examination Board is called to a special meeting in case there are exceptional circumstances for a student who does not comply with the predetermined rules to succeed. Exceptional circumstances could be study-related or personal. The examination board may declare a student who does not comply with the predetermined rules successful if it can motivate that the general objectives of the programme have been achieved.

4.6 Announcement of results

The steering committee communicates the date and the manner of the announcement of the definitive results at the start of the academic year.

5. Complaints, disputes, errors

5.1 Complaints about education

The steering committee appoints at least one of its members as the person students can go to for treatment of complaints concerning educational aspects. If need be, the faculty ombudsperson may act as a mediator. The steering committee reports annually to the faculty, providing an overview of complaints that have been dealt with.

5.2 Complaints and exam disputes

For the treatment of complaints concerning the exam process, students can go to the chairperson of the examination board or the representative. If need be, the faculty ombudsperson may act as a mediator.

For disputes regarding a decision by the examination board the chairperson of this board is informed.

5.3 Internal and external appeal

A student who feels that a final exam result or a decision by the examination board is tainted by a violation of his or her rights may submit a request in writing for a review of that decision to the chairperson of the examination board or the deputy within a period of seven calendar days which starts on the day after the day on which the exam or deliberation results are announced or on the day after the day on which the student has been notified of the decision in case of a different study progress decision. The request contains a factual description and the grounds for the objections called upon.

The examination board shall treat any such request which is deemed admissible by the chair or the deputy in a special meeting. The student is heard orally by the competent body if the student has asked for it in the written request to reconsider the decision.

All internal appeals should lead either to a motivated confirmation of the original decision or to a revision of that decision.

The decisions referred to under the previous paragraph shall be announced to the student within twenty calendar days from the day that the appeal was lodged. The contents of the following paragraph will be mentioned as well as the point where the student can get more information about the decision made.

After exhaustion of the internal appeal the student can appeal a decision of the examination board or another study progress decision to the Board for disputes in study progress decisions

(<http://www.onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/raad>). The student has to submit the request within a period of seven calendar days which starts on the day after the day on which the student has been notified of the decision of the internal appeal procedure. At the same time the student sends a copy of the request by registered mail to the rector (address: Rector Universiteit Antwerpen, Middelheimlaan 1, 2020 Antwerpen).

After the nullification of a wrongful decision by the Board for disputes in study progress decisions there is no longer an obligation to exhaust the internal appeal procedures when challenging a new unfavourable decision following the verdict of the Board before appealing again to the Board.

5.4 Material errors

When a study progress decision is tainted by a material error that is observed within 10 calendar days after which the decision was made, the body that has made the decision immediately rectifies the error, irrespective of whether the consequences of the rectification are more or less favourable for the student.

After the term of 10 calendar days, the body involved can only withdraw the decision and replace it by the correct decision in one of the following cases:

- if the rectification leads to a decision more favourable for the student
- if the study progress decision is tainted by such a gross and manifest irregularity that its factual existence has to be ignored both by the student and by the body concerned, even if this leads to a decision less favourable for the student
- if it has become certain that the decision was elicited by fraud, even if this leads to a decision less favourable for the student.

5.5 Fraud and plagiarism

Reporting and treatment of fraud and plagiarism are done in accordance with the stipulations of the education and examination regulation of the University of Antwerp. The chairperson and the secretary of the examination board form ex-officio the fraud commission of the postgraduate programme.

This regulation enters into force as from academic year 2020-2021.
