

Faculty of Social Sciences

Roadmap for PhD students

Version 1: October 2017



Introduction

This document contains a step-by-step roadmap for PhD students in the Social Sciences. It describes the various administrative phases in the process of obtaining a PhD and the actors involved in each phase. It is important to note that obtaining a PhD involves two aspects: carrying out independent PhD research (under the supervision of a supervisor and individual PhD commission) *and* completing a supporting doctoral study programme. Thus, each PhD student is both a researcher and a student. With regard to the actors, we distinguish between two main levels: the central level and the faculty/departmental level. At the central level, there is the Antwerp Doctoral School (ADS). The Faculty Doctoral and Research Committee (FDOC) and the individual PhD commissions (IPCs – unique for each PhD student) are situated at the faculty/departmental level. In practice, of course, a PhD student has most contact with his/her supervisor or team of supervisors. Finally, it is important to note that PhD students may have different statutes. For example, they might belong to the AAP (assistant academic personnel) or BAP (contract research staff), or receive a doctoral scholarship. It is also possible to obtain a PhD as a voluntary worker (self-funded).

In what follows, we describe the typical procedure followed by PhD students in the Faculty of Social Sciences. This procedure is largely the same for all PhD students at the University of Antwerp. As a result, most general information can be found on the ADS website (<https://www.uantwerpen.be/ads/>). However, in this document we also highlight some specific issues related to obtaining a PhD in the Faculty of Social Sciences. These particularities are also mentioned in the Supplementary Doctoral Regulations for the Faculty of Social Sciences.

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1 Starting a PhD

1.1 Enrolment through the central Student Administration Office

When the PhD student has decided upon a research topic, and found a supervisor and funding, he/she has to submit an application to start a PhD to the central Student Administration Office. The application form includes extensive instructions about the procedure to be followed and can be found on the ADS website.

The central Student Administration Office will send the application file (“Application form for admission to a PhD” and “Advice form for admission to a PhD”) to the student administration office in the Faculty of Social Sciences, who will put it on the agenda of the next Departmental Board meeting. If the Board gives its approval, the “Advice form for admission to a PhD” is completed and signed by the chair of the department. The faculty/department aims to process the application within a period of 6 weeks¹. If approval is granted, the PhD student will be invited by the central Student Administration Office to enrol as a student for the ongoing or upcoming academic year.

The central Student Administration Office stores the original file. A copy of the full file is also stored by the faculty’s own student administration office.

1.2 Composition of the individual PhD commission

The individual PhD commission (IPC) monitors the progress and quality of the PhD research. This commission should be formed in the first year of the PhD before the first annual progress report (see Section 2, below). The faculty student administration office asks the supervisor to submit the composition of the IPC to the Departmental Board for approval. Any changes in the IPC throughout the course of the PhD project should also be approved by the Departmental Board (before submission of the first draft of the thesis).

The IPC consists of the supervisor and maximum one member from the same department. Hence, the third and possibly fourth members should belong to different departments, faculties or universities. The commission member from the same department or any other member who belongs to the University of Antwerp senior academic staff (ZAP) will serve as the chair of the commission. If there are two supervisors from the same department, then a third member belonging to the University of Antwerp senior academic staff should serve as chair. Again, the rule is that only one additional member can be from the same department as the supervisor(s).

1.3 Information session for starting PhD students

In addition to the information session for new PhD-students of the Antwerp Doctoral School, the faculty of Social Sciences organizes its own information session for starting PhD students at the beginning of the academic year. This meeting is foreseen to take place at the end of October or the beginning of November and will be announced in due time. Please note that participation is mandatory. During this information session, all aspects related to pursuing a PhD within the Faculty of Social Sciences will be explained. This session will also give new PhD students the chance to meet in an informal way.

¹ This period may be longer between 20 July and 31 August.

2 The annual re-enrolment

Every PhD student should re-enrol as a University of Antwerp PhD student at the beginning of the academic year. Annual re-enrolment is open from July 15 until the end of May. PhD students re-enrol in SisA through their student accounts. It is important that PhD students re-enrol as soon as possible. Failing to do so has important consequences, such as losing access to SisA self-service and not receiving emails from ADS and the faculty student administration.

PhD students pay tuition fees for the first year and the final year (academic year in which the thesis is defended) of their PhDs. At the beginning of the final year, the PhD student re-enrols using the same procedure as in the previous years (without paying tuition fees). After the announcement of the PhD defence, the PhD student will be invited by the central Student Administration Office to pay the tuition fees for the final academic year.

If a PhD student decides to discontinue his/her thesis, the supervisor should report this to the chair of the IPC and the faculty's student administration office.

3 Annual progress reports

The PhD student carries out research and follows a doctoral study programme. He/she should submit an annual progress report on both of these aspects. The reporting is done in two separate documents: (1) Progress report (focusing on research) and (2) Activity report (focusing on the doctoral study programme). Both the progress report and the activity report should be submitted before 1 May by the PhD student with the agreement of his/her supervisor and the chair of the IPC. ADS and the Faculty Students Administration will send a reminder email to the PhD student's **student account**. In this email, he/she will be invited to submit both reports through SisA. The email contains precise instructions on how to do this.

3.1 The progress report

When preparing the progress report, the PhD student should complete the entry fields "overview to date" and "overview of future planning" in his/her SisA self-service and upload any relevant attachments. Once the PhD student has submitted his/her final report through SisA, all members of the IPC will receive an email.

The supervisor and/or chair of the IPC organises a meeting with the IPC. The purpose of this meeting is to evaluate the progress of the PhD research, and it can take place either in person or online, either with or without the PhD student. The chair of the IPC records the comments from the meeting. He or she also registers the general evaluation (positive/negative) and the explanation (motivation) in SisA. Once they have been finalised, these documents are made available to the PhD student and the supervisor(s).

Exemption: Students who started or who will defend their PhD in that academic year, are exempted from this annual obligation. The academic year starts and ends on 1 October.

Students who do not submit a progress report will receive a warning. If no progress report is submitted in two consecutive years, re-enrolment may be denied.

3.2 The activity report

In the activity report, the PhD student describes the steps he/she has taken in the past year to complete his/her doctoral study programme. This doctoral study programme involves each PhD student obtaining a total of 30 credits by engaging in activities (e.g. publishing research, participating in training, etc.) which foster various competences (for instance research, management, and communication skills). An overview of eligible activities (and the number of credits they are worth) can be found in the appendix of the Supplementary Doctoral Regulations for the Faculty of Social Sciences.

After submission, the activity report is evaluated by FDOC representatives. If the FDOC adds any corrections, ADS sends the activity report plus these corrections back to the PhD student.

It is not necessary to attach proof of the activities mentioned in the annual activity report. Only if there is confusion about the number of credits awarded will official proof be requested from the PhD student. When the doctoral study programme is finished (i.e. when a total of 30 credits has been obtained) an integrated file – including all proof – needs to be submitted to ADS (ProgressreportADS@uantwerp.be). This file consists of a full overview of all activities on the basis of the standardised tables and the supporting documentation as proof of these activities. This supporting documentation may include attendance lists, registration forms, programmes, certificates, copies of first pages of articles, academic bibliography, a short report of a research stay, etc. If no proof is available for a certain activity, the supervisor's signature is sufficient.

Until the PhD is in its final phase, PhD students can opt not to complete the doctoral study programme, even if they have already obtained 30 credits. In this way, all activities undertaken will still be included on the doctoral study programme certificate.

4 Annual PhD-day(s) Faculty of Social Sciences

In addition to the information session for new PhD students organized at the beginning of the academic year, the FSS organizes two PhD-days open to all PhD-students of our faculty. The first PhD-day (January/February) focuses on getting acquainted with other PhD-students: it offers doctoral students the opportunity to present their research to each other. The second PhD-day (April/May) usually focuses on acquiring transferable skills (e.g. related to project management, elevator pitching, leadership, ...). To this end, the Faculty often hires an external speaker who will train the PhD students during an interactive workshop. Participation in the PhD days is highly recommended and is rewarded in the doctoral study program. It also provides PhD students the opportunity to maintain informal contacts with fellow PhD students from other research groups and departments. Suggestions with regard to the content and the format of the annual PhD-Days can be communicated to the AAP/BAP-representatives of the FDOC or directly to the chairperson of the FDOC.

5 Doctoral exam: submission and defence of the thesis

In order to obtain the title of doctor, the PhD student should pass the doctoral exam. The doctoral exam consists of submitting the thesis and defending it successfully. The doctoral exam is assessed by an appointed jury of experts (the doctoral jury). After a successful doctoral exam, the PhD student receives a diploma.

5.1 The doctoral jury

The doctoral exam is assessed by the doctoral jury, which is an extension of the IPC. The supervisor proposes the composition of the doctoral jury (taking into account possible conflicts of interest, and ensuring a balanced representation in terms of expertise), within four weeks of the submission of the first draft of the thesis. This proposal is submitted to the Departmental Board for approval. The doctoral jury consists of between five and seven members. At least three members of the doctoral jury should be members of the senior academic staff (ZAP) at the University of Antwerp. At least two members of the doctoral jury should be affiliated with an external university or university college.

5.2 Submission of the thesis

5.2.1 Types of thesis

The thesis may be a monograph, a coherent collection of papers appropriate for publication in scientific journals, or a combination of the two. The IPC and the doctoral jury assess its independence, originality, coherence and scientific contribution to the discipline.

5.2.2 Language of the thesis

All departments in the Faculty of Social Sciences have granted permission for PhD students to write and defend their theses in Dutch, English or French. Other Languages are subject to approval of the departmental board. A title and summary should always be included in Dutch, however.

5.2.3 Layout of the thesis

We ask that PhD students use the University of Antwerp layout. Logos and examples of covers can be found at pintra.uantwerpen.be ⇒ My Subsites ⇒ Communications Department ⇒ Guidelines & materials. For advice on graphic design (e.g. layout, font, use of figures, cover design, etc.), please contact the New Media Office (University of Antwerp). The cover of the thesis should include the identification information shown in the appendix. Published articles may form an integral part of the thesis, but a consistent layout should be used.

4.2.4 Procedure: first and second draft

The PhD student must submit a sufficient number of copies of the first draft of the thesis: one for each member of the IPC. The members of the IPC have four weeks (starting from the date of submission) to formulate their comments on the first draft. Comments may be formulated in writing and/or during a final meeting of the PhD student with his/her IPC. This final meeting can be organised at the request of the chair of the IPC and/or the PhD student.

After reworking the thesis based on the IPC's comments, and obtaining their approval, the PhD student submits the final draft thesis (both digitally and on paper, with a hard copy for every jury member). The chair of the jury sends an electronic version of the thesis to all members of the jury and asks them to prepare their comments. The administration office delivers the hard copies of the thesis. The doctoral jury then has 6 weeks to decide whether the thesis can be defended, potentially after further revisions. The jury's comments and decision are communicated to the PhD student by the chair of the IPC.

5.3 Defence of the thesis

5.3.1 Preparation

The PhD student begins looking for suitable dates for the defence after submitting the first draft. As soon as these dates are known, the PhD student should provisionally reserve potential rooms, until the final date is known (via pintra.uantwerpen.be ⇒ Department of Social, Cultural and Student Services ⇒ Catering & Congresszalen (not available in English)). It is the PhD student's responsibility to organise a reception, if he or she wishes to do so. Within this period of four weeks, the PhD student should also contact ADS for proof that he/she has successfully completed the doctoral study programme. The faculty's student administration office and the diploma service will make sure that all the necessary documents ("Information regarding the defence of the PhD thesis", "Consent for publication in microform" and "Doctoral thesis confidentiality checklist") are signed by the PhD student and sent to the right people before the defence. These documents can be downloaded from the ADS website: www.uantwerpen.be/ads.

The faculty's student administration office will also request an abstract of the thesis for the faculty website, and an electronic version of the final thesis.

5.3.2 Scheduling the defence

When the jury decides that the thesis can be defended, the chair of the IPC will inform the PhD student and the administration office accordingly. The public defence should take place between three and six weeks after the jury's decision. The faculty's student administration office sends the invitation for the public defence to all members of the jury.

5.3.3 Public defence

The PhD defence is public and should not last more than two hours. The defence starts with a short presentation (about 30 minutes) by the PhD student, after which the jury members comment on the presentation and ask questions. Immediately after the defence, the jury will deliberate and decide whether the student has passed the examination. Then follows the official conferral of the doctorate and laudation by the supervisor. Members of the jury are requested to wear academic robes during the public defence.

5.4 Financial support

4.4.1 During the PhD

PhD students who are taking a doctoral study programme can request financial support from ADS. To ensure that students can participate in activities in Belgium or abroad, training credits and a bonus are available. More information is available at <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-and-innovation/phd/antwerp-doctoral-school/doctoral-study-programme/educational-credit-and-bonus/>.

4.4.2 For the defence

The Faculty of Social Sciences provides funding for:

- An international jury member from outside Europe: travel costs and a maximum of two nights in a hotel
- A jury member from Europe: travel costs and a maximum of one night in a hotel
- The faculty also provides 700 euros for costs related to the defence, such as the reception, printing costs, etc.

5.5 Communication about the defence

At least three weeks before the defence, the communication officer in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Piet De Vroede, will ensure that the defence is announced via Pintra, an e-invitation and the faculty website.

The student should provide the following information for the e-invitation: name, name of the supervisors, title of the thesis, date and location of the defence, registration information and (if possible) a picture. The PhD student should also provide an abstract, which might form the basis for a press release (maximum one A4 page).

The e-invitation will be sent by email to all members of the faculty at least one week before the defence.

5.6 Certificate/diploma

The central diploma registration department receives the diploma supplement from the faculty's student administration office. This document is delivered to the chair of the doctoral jury and must be signed by the chair and the secretary. The supplement is then sent to the diploma registration department. As soon as the signed diploma is available, the central student administration office contacts the PhD student. Besides the diploma, the student also receives the ADS certificate and supplement, which provides an overview of the courses and activities he/she has completed during the PhD.

6 Contact information

6.1 Faculty of Social Sciences

PhD administration:	Patsy Schmit – CST M.135 Patsy.Schmit@uantwerp.be
Faculty doctoral coordinator:	Prof. Heidi Vandebosch – CST M.484 Heidi.Vandebosch@uantwerp.be
Communication officer:	Piet De Vroede Piet.DeVroede@uantwerp.be
BAP/AAP Board	Elke Claessens Elke.Claessens@uantwerp.be

6.2 Antwerp Doctoral School

Administration	Sien Pinxteren – CMI A.212 Sien.Pinxteren@uantwerp.be
Central doctoral coordinator	Nel Grillaert – CMI A.212 Nel.Grillaert@uantwerp.be

6.3 New Media Service²

Natacha Hoevenaegel / Anita Muys – CDE C 2nd floor

Natacha.Hoevenaegel@uantwerp.be

Anita.Muys@uantwerp.be

6.4 Reprografie CDE

Lucky Van Gasse / Maggi Janssens / Linda Van Pelt –
CDE D.133

cursusdienst.cde@uantwerp.be

The ICT Info Centre for students, which can be consulted through the University of Antwerp website, provides information about changing your student account password and forwarding emails from the student account to another email address.

7 Important documents

Faculty doctoral regulations

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-and-innovation/phd/antwerp-doctoral-school/doctoral-study-programme/phd-from-a-to-z/rules-and-regulations/>

Code of practice

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/research-and-innovation/phd/antwerp-doctoral-school/doctoral-study-programme/phd-from-a-to-z/code-of-practice/>

² The New Media Services and Reprography CDE can assist with the layout of your thesis. Fees apply.

8 Appendix

The thesis cover should include the following details:

UAntwerp Logo	
(faculty) <i>(discipline)</i>	
Title of the thesis in the language in which the thesis is written*	
Thesis for the degree of doctor in (academic degree) ** at the University of Antwerp to be defended by First Name FAMILY NAME	
Name of supervisor(s)	Antwerp, year

* A translation of the title in Dutch should be shown inside the thesis if the thesis is in another language.

** Titles of the academic degrees of doctor at the University of Antwerp/ Faculty of Social Sciences:

Doctor in ...

Information and Library Science

Education Sciences

Social Sciences: Political Communication

Social Sciences

Social Sciences: Communication Sciences

Social Sciences: Political Sciences

Social Sciences: Social Work

Social Sciences: Sociology

Film Studies and Visual Culture

Combined study areas

Doctor in ...

Socioeconomic Sciences (in cooperation with the Faculty of Applied Economics)

Environmental Science (in cooperation with the Faculty of science)

Appendix - E-Invitation to PhD Defence (example)



Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen

Suzanne Overmars (departement Communicatiewetenschappen) nodigt u van harte uit op de openbare verdediging van haar doctoraal proefschrift

Touching communication technologies

The role of online product experiences and the lack of physical sensory examination in online stores



Promotor: Prof. dr. Karolien Poels

Datum: donderdag 28 januari 2016 om 16u00

Locatie: Promotiezaal Grauwzusters, Lange Sint-Annastraat 7, 2000 Antwerpen.

Aansluitend bent u van harte welkom op de receptie.

Graag uw aanwezigheid bevestigen per mail voor 21 januari via suzanne.overmars@uantwerpen.be

 Universiteit
Antwerpen

SUMMARY

