



Faculty Board SCIENCE: 19/01/2026

FACULTY ADDENDUM DOCTORAL REGULATIONS

This addendum is added to the doctoral regulations of Hasselt University with the latest adjustment, approved by the Executive Board on 7/7/2022. In accordance with Article 28 of the doctoral regulations, this addendum is subordinate to the doctoral regulations in case of contradiction, with the understanding that the faculty can tighten but not relax the doctoral regulations. The addendum covers all doctoral degrees for which the faculty has jurisdiction. This faculty addendum specifies agreements within the Faculty of Sciences.

In this text, doctoral candidate means both M, F and X doctoral candidate, a promotor, copromotor, lecturer, administrative director, dean, rector and chair may be either M, F or X.

1. Definitions (Article 0 – Hasselt University doctoral regulations)

Office of Department Chairs: In accordance with Art.181 - RAS, the Faculty Council, on the advice of the Dean, shall install at least one office authorized to formulate policy-preparing opinions concerning research to the Faculty Council.

2. Admission doctorate (Article 5 - Hasselt University doctoral regulations)

Granting admission to the Doctor of Science degree with a master's degree that does not grant direct admission will be delegated to the Office of Department Chairs.

3. Results of the admission investigation (Article 6 - Hasselt University doctoral regulations)

Review of each doctoral candidate's file leads to one of the following options:

1. The candidate is admitted immediately without conditions.
2. The candidate is admitted with conditions. These conditions imply that the individual must acquire a particular skill or subject matter knowledge that is considered necessary for doctoral preparation and that it is reasonable to assume that the candidate can acquire that knowledge/skills without delaying research work.

A period of time will be established within which the additional skill/knowledge must be acquired and at the end of this period a progress report will be submitted to the Faculty Council on the result achieved. The faculty will determine whether the courses taken to acquire this skill/knowledge can be included in the doctoral school program.

3. The candidate will not be admitted to the doctoral program.

The Faculty of Science rules that if the doctoral student has not completed a 2-year master's degree, a separate assessment for admission to a doctorate should always be done.

If the result of the admission examination, mentioned under paragraph 2 of Article 6 indicates that the doctoral candidate has not obtained a 2-year master's degree, the doctoral committee is asked to formulate a proposal of program for doctoral preparation. This proposal is submitted to the Office of Department Chairs for approval. The doctoral committee determines the number of credits in the program. The proposal should aim to fill identified gaps. The result depends on the content of the doctoral research on the one hand and on the master's degree obtained on the other.

If the result means that the doctoral candidate is admitted with conditions, the maximum size of the program is limited to 30 credits. The doctoral student must have passed the credits imposed as requirements.

The proposal of conditions with additional data on the course sections to be taken, period and evaluation form are included in the doctoral student's electronic doctoral file. In this way an administrative follow-up of the admission conditions is guaranteed. When applying for the "second term" extension, the conditions stipulated must be met. The PhD student can submit proof that he has acquired the skill/knowledge through an examination or other form of official evaluation. The PhD student sends the results of this to the administrative director, who adds it to the PhD student's doctoral file (under reports).

4. Discipline doctorate - promotor/co-promotor (Article 11 - Hasselt University doctoral regulations)

In order to determine the discipline of the doctorate, the extent to which the topic is located within multidisciplinary research should be considered when starting and renewing the doctorate.

If the research is not multidisciplinary, the doctorate in science is taken in the discipline, which is consistent with the subject. In case of doubt, it should be checked whether the subject is more closely related to one discipline. In that case, the discipline, on which the focus lies, is chosen.

Consequently, the following options mentioning discipline are possible within the Faculty of Science:

- doctor of science: biology
- doctor of science: chemistry
- doctor of science: physics
- doctor of science: computer science
- doctor of science: materiomics
- doctor of science: statistics
- doctor of science: mathematics

If the research is multidisciplinary and the subject is situated to a (more or less) equal degree in two or more disciplines, the general doctorate of Science is awarded without specifying the discipline.

The determination of the promotor and/or co-promotor should be seen in relation to the discipline of the doctorate.

In case of a multidisciplinary doctorate (PhD in sciences), a promotor and co-promotor are appointed from Hasselt University - departments of the disciplines involved.

The following exceptions apply:

- In case of a joint inter-university multidisciplinary doctorate: if the knowledge, expertise and background of the partner university's promotor is in the other discipline, than the discipline of the Hasselt University promotor, it is not required to appoint another co-promotor from a Hasselt University subject group.
- In case of an interuniversity multidisciplinary Hasselt University doctorate, in which a co-promotor from the discipline other than that of the promotor is appointed from an institution other than Hasselt University: the promotor, in that case, appoints a member of the doctoral committee from the Hasselt University discipline of the other discipline.

In case of a monodisciplinary doctorate, the promotor belongs to the same department as the discipline in which the doctorate is awarded. If the "promotor" does not belong to the same

department as the discipline in which the doctorate is awarded, it is determined on the grounds of the Hasselt University doctoral regulations whether the promotor has the appropriate knowledge, expertise and background to supervise a doctorate in the other discipline.

If the promotor does not have the appropriate knowledge, expertise and background, a promotor should be appointed from the department of the relevant discipline in which the doctorate is to be awarded. The initial promotor can then be appointed as co-promotor. This should already be determined when the doctoral student is first appointed. After all, the labeling of the PhD student follows the labeling of the promotor and therefore determines to which discipline the PhD student belongs.

If it is not until renewal of tenure that it appears that a doctorate has evolved toward a particular discipline, an amendment to the doctoral committee applying the above guidelines should be requested at the time of renewal.

5. PhD dissertation

The format of the doctoral dissertation can be either a classical dissertation or a cumulative dissertation. If a cumulative dissertation is chosen, the doctoral student must write an introduction and conclusion demonstrating the ability to reflect and reason scientifically. The doctoral student is expected to be able to frame the publications within a larger whole. In addition, the doctoral student must specify his or her part in the various publications.

If the doctoral student chooses to write a cumulative dissertation, he must obtain the explicit approval of the co-authors of the publications to use the article as part of the doctoral dissertation.

Finally, the doctoral student should inform himself sufficiently about the regulations regarding (self-)plagiarism so that problems of any kind are avoided after publication of the doctoral dissertation.

6. Practical arrangements around the doctoral defense phase (Article 17 - Hasselt University doctoral regulations)

The steps described below are in addition to the steps, described in the general doctoral regulations of Hasselt University regarding the submission and evaluation of the preliminary draft of the doctoral dissertation.

If the doctoral student is following the Doctoral School program, he will prepare a summary indicating that he meets the formal requirements of the doctoral school. This summary is submitted to the faculty doctoral school board which, provided the formal requirements are met, grants permission for the doctoral student to defend his or her dissertation. The doctoral school staff member informs the faculty, the doctoral student and the promotor of the faculty doctoral school board's decision.

The doctoral school issues a certificate to the doctoral student listing all accomplishments related to the doctoral program, after defending the doctorate.

The defense by the doctoral student can take place only after approval of the doctoral jury by the Faculty Council. In addition, members of the doctoral jury must give permission for defense.

The faculty of sciences agendizes approval for jury composition only if accompanied by

- Advice from the Doctoral School Sciences & Technology regarding the terms of the doctoral program, unless the doctoral student has been exempted from the doctoral program.
- Advice from the promotor including admission to the defense by the doctoral committee.

The jury proposal should be delivered through my doctoral file application, which ensures that all necessary information is provided.

The doctoral dissertation is submitted for evaluation to all jury members, who are members of the jury. They receive an evaluation form or thesis assessment form from the secretariat, after the promotor has notified the secretariat that the preliminary thesis (in pdf) was sent by e-mail. They will have 4 weeks to evaluate this thesis.

The final phase, after the period of assessment for 4 weeks, can be organized in 2 ways:

Option 1: pre defense

For doctoral students of the departments of Biology and Chemistry, it is stipulated that a preliminary defense is organized. The exception are the joint doctorates, where Hasselt University is not the main institution.

The preliminary defense is organized minimum 4 weeks after the doctoral dissertation is delivered to the jury members. No preliminary defenses are organized between July 15 and August 20.

All members of the doctoral jury are required to participate in the preliminary defense. 24h before the preliminary defense, each jury member provides a "Thesis assessment form" to the faculty (email address mentioned on evaluation form). This allows the chair to highlight a number of points in summary form at the beginning of the pre-defense. If a member of the doctoral jury is unable to be present due to force majeure, it is expected that at least 24 hours before the preliminary defense takes place he/she will send a detailed evaluation report (see option 2) with questions and remarks to the faculty with the promotor in cc. The chair of the doctoral jury has no voting rights.

The preliminary defense may be organized hybrid. Once the preliminary defense has taken place, the composition of the doctoral jury may no longer be changed. Only the chairman may still be replaced. Before the start of the preliminary defense, the promotor is appointed as reporter/secretary.

During the preliminary defense, members of the doctoral jury question the doctoral student regarding the content of the doctoral dissertation. The doctoral jury judges the quality of the dissertation and decides whether the doctoral student is admitted to the public defense. The preliminary defense may last a maximum of 3h. At the end of the preliminary defense, the reporter informs the doctoral student of the necessary changes to the thesis, which the jury has agreed upon by consensus. The jury members present determine the date for the defense with a maximum period of 6 months from the time of the preliminary defense. Within 24 hours, the reporter provides the jury members and doctoral student with a short report of the arrangements. At the end of the preliminary defense, the jury members are given the choice whether to receive the doctoral dissertation again for approval.

The doctoral student informs the jury members of what changes have been made. Before the doctoral dissertation goes to print, the promotor checks that the doctoral student has acted on all desired comments. If the doctoral student meets the above described requirements (certificate from the doctoral school and approval of the doctoral jury), a public defense is organized according to the rules in the general doctoral regulations.

Option 2: assessment report

All members of the doctoral jury, except the promotor, provide an evaluation report with comments to the faculty with copy to the promotor. In the evaluation report, the jury member must complete a final evaluation. Here he has a choice of the following formulations:

Decision	Implication
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted without revision or with minor revision	No review of the revised version is necessary. Permission for public defense is granted immediately. The promotor will check if the PhD student has made the requested revisions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted with major revision	The jury must confer. Based on this discussion, two options are possible: a) review of the revised version is necessary before the candidate can be allowed to defend the work in public, b) the procedure is stopped due to major flaws and/or deficiencies in the work.
<input type="checkbox"/> Not accepted	

If all jury members agree with the content of the thesis (accepted without revision or accepted with minor revision) then there will be no meeting of the doctoral jury.

If not all jury members agree with the content of the dissertation (accepted with major revision, not accepted) then there will be a consultation between the jury members. The chairman of the doctoral jury takes the initiative for this. If after this the jury unanimously agrees with the defense then the procedure may continue. If the jury does not unanimously agree, in that case the proceedings will be temporarily suspended. The jury determines the date by which the new version must be ready for review, and the period within which the defense must take place, with a maximum period of 6 months from the time of the consultation.

Before the doctoral dissertation goes to print, the promotor checks that the doctoral student has acted on all desired comments. The doctoral student informs the jury members of what changes have been made. If the doctoral student meets the requirements described above (certificate from the doctoral school and approval of the doctoral jury), a public defense is organized according to the rules in the general doctoral regulations.

7. Arrangements regarding the submission and printing of the doctoral thesis (Article 18, point 2 - Hasselt University doctoral regulations)

The Faculty of Sciences has determined that all doctoral students within the faculty, regardless of discipline, must provide a printed copy of the doctoral thesis for all jury members, including the chair, as well as one copy for the relevant research group.

The doctoral student is responsible for the printing costs and may choose a printing company. In the exceptional case where the printing costs are financed by the relevant department or research group, the printing order will be placed with the company with which Hasselt University has a framework printing contract (currently: XoD campus bookstore).

8. Entry procedure

Faculty doctoral regulations will be applied from April 1, 2023.

Organizing a preliminary defense for the doctoral students of the departments of Biology and Chemistry will be applied for all doctoral juries approved from January 1, 2024.

The provisions regarding the submission and printing of the doctoral thesis, as stipulated in Article 7, will be applied from February 15, 2026.