



**REGULATIONS RELATING TO  
OBTAINING THE ACADEMIC DEGREE OF DOCTOR  
AT HASSELT UNIVERSITY/TRANSNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
LIMBURG**

*Approved by the Board of the University on 12 December 2006 and revised by the Board of the University on 12 March 2007, 12 November 2008, 16 June 2009 and 11 December 2012, College of Deans 4 July 2025*

## I. Provisions of Ministerial Decrees

The following summary contains relevant provisions of the Structure Decree and the Increased Flexibility Decree.

### AIM OF PREPARATION OF A DOCTORAL THESIS

#### **Section 12 §6 (Structure Decree)**

Preparation of a doctoral thesis has the aim of training a researcher who can make an independent contribution to the development and growth of scientific knowledge; the thesis must make apparent the ability to create new scientific knowledge in a particular field or across fields including the arts on the basis of independent scientific research and the thesis must be capable of leading to scientific publications.

### AUTHORITY TO AWARD A DOCTORATE

#### **Section 24 §3 (Structure Decree)**

Universities may grant the degree of doctor in or including those areas of study or parts thereof in which they have the authority by virtue of sections 26 to 31 to offer courses leading to the degree of master.

Universities that may offer only bachelor degree courses in particular areas of study or parts thereof may award the degree of doctor in or including those areas of study or parts thereof on condition that the public defence of the thesis as provided for in section 84 takes place before an inter-university jury constituted in consultation with a university that is able by virtue of sections 26 to 31 to offer masters courses in the field of study concerned or part thereof.

#### **Section 24 (3) (Structure Decree)**

Within the framework of an association on or including the fields of study "Architecture", "Audiovisual and visual art", "Music and stage arts" and "Product development" and/or parts thereof, a university may grant the degree of doctor where:

1. one or more of the institutes of higher education in the association have the power by virtue of sections 32 to 53 inclusive to offer courses in the areas of study concerned that lead to the degree of master, and
2. the doctoral project is rooted in a research environment common to the university and at least one college of further education in the association.

### CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY

#### **Section 14 (Increased Flexibility Decree)**

A general condition of eligibility for enrolment to prepare a doctoral thesis is possession of a master's degree.

The university management may demand additional investigation to gauge the suitability of the student for carrying out scientific research in the discipline concerned and recording the results thereof in a thesis.

#### **Section 15 (Increased Flexibility Decree)**

The university management may allow a student who does not possess a master's degree to enrol to prepare a doctoral thesis if it considers him capable of doing so.

The university management may make this exemption dependent on:

1. a research project that gauges suitability for writing a doctoral thesis, or
2. successfully taking an examination on parts of the academic education determined by the university management.

#### **Section 69, § 2 (Structure Decree)**

For the application of the provisions of section 15 (of the Increased Flexibility Decree), diplomas from the second cycle of higher education (long type) and two cycle college of further education courses, diplomas from the second cycle of academic education and the diplomas rendered equivalent thereto by virtue of or by the Universities Decree, diplomas from postgraduate studies and the diplomas of

chartered [polytechnic] engineer and the licentiate obtained at the Royal Military Academy in Brussels are regarded as equivalent to a master's degree.

**Section 69, § 3. (Structure Decree)**

The management of the institution may exempt persons who possess a diploma of higher education issued outside the Flemish Community from the above requirements for previous education (specified in section 15 of the Increased Flexibility Decree) for the preparation of a doctoral thesis where, in the opinion of the management of the institution, that diploma is equivalent to a master's degree. If this is not the case, the management of the institution may make permission to enrol dependent on successful completion of a preparatory programme specifically developed for the purpose.

**ENROLMENT AND ENROLMENT FEE**

**Section 58 (Increased Flexibility Decree)**

On a first enrolment for preparation of a doctorate, doctoral candidates pay a tuition fee of at least € 240 but no more than € 300.

In the academic year in which the doctorate is obtained, they pay a tuition fee of at least € 240 but no more than € 300.

**OBTAINING THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR**

**Section 84 (Structure Decree)**

The degree of "doctor" is awarded after the public defence of a thesis.

**JOINT DIPLOMA OF DOCTOR**

**Section 86 §1 (Structure Decree)**

Within the limits of their educational authority, two or more universities may give out a joint diploma and grant the relevant degree of bachelor, master or doctor to a student who has successfully completed a course organised jointly by the universities concerned or after successful public defence of a thesis prepared under their joint supervision.

**Section 94 § 4 (Structure Decree)**

A university may, together with another university at home or abroad, give out a double diploma or joint diploma of the degree of doctor after the public defence of a thesis before a jury including at least professors of the institutions concerned on condition that the candidate has done research relating to his thesis at the partner university for at least six months.

## II. Regulations

### Chapter 1 - Introductory provision

#### Preamble

In this document the term "doctoral candidate" refers to both a male and a female doctoral student, and a promoter, co-promoter, lecturer, dean, rector and chairman may be either male or female.

#### Section 0 Definitions

1. *Faculty*: faculties are academic bodies that are set up by the Board of the University in conformity with Section 12 of the Government Decree.
2. *Dean*: the faculties are led by a dean.
3. *Authorized faculty*: the discipline in which the doctorate is taken, as specified in section 1, determines which faculty is authorized, henceforth designated in these regulations as "faculty".

#### Section 1 Scope

These regulations specify the requirements and procedure relating to the preparation of a doctoral thesis leading to the obtaining of the degree of doctor at Hasselt University or the Transnational University Limburg. The doctorate is obtained:

1. in a discipline within or involving the areas of study or parts thereof falling within the educational authority of UHasselt/tUL (Structure Decree section 24, §3) and leads to one the following degrees:
  - doctor of architecture<sup>1</sup>
  - doctor of audiovisual and visual art
  - doctor of biomedical science
  - doctor of industrial science<sup>2</sup>
  - doctor of medical science
  - doctor of law
  - doctor of revalidation science and physical therapy<sup>3</sup>
  - doctor of applied economic science
  - doctor of transport studies
  - doctor of science
  - doctor of science: biology
  - doctor of science: chemistry
  - doctor of science: physics
  - doctor of science: information technology
  - doctor of science: statistics
  - doctor of science: mathematics

#### Section 2 Obtaining the degree of doctor

The degree of "doctor" is obtained after the public defence of a thesis (Structure Decree, section 84).

#### Section 3 Aim of preparation of a doctoral thesis

Preparation of a doctoral thesis has the aim of training a researcher who can make an independent contribution to the development and growth of scientific knowledge. The thesis must demonstrate the ability to create new scientific knowledge in a particular field or across fields on the basis of independent scientific research, including the arts (Structure Decree, section 12, §6).

---

<sup>1</sup> The area of study may be supplemented by the name of a discipline.

<sup>2</sup> These doctorates can be handed out at the moment of integration, at which moment a decision will also be made on the official name of this doctor title.

<sup>3</sup> These doctorates can be handed out at the moment of integration, at which moment a decision will also be made on the official name of this doctor title.

## Chapter 2 - Conditions of eligibility

### Section 4 General conditions of eligibility

Enrolment to prepare a doctoral thesis is open to holders of the degree of master or of a degree regarded as equivalent.

Diplomas from the second cycle of higher education (long type) and two cycle college of further education courses, diplomas from the second cycle of academic education and the diplomas rendered equivalent thereto by virtue of or by the Universities Decree, diplomas from continued academic education and the diplomas of chartered [polytechnic] engineer and the licentiate obtained at the Royal Military Academy in Brussels are regarded as equivalent to a master's (Structure Decree section 69, § 2).

The rector may - on the advice of the dean<sup>4</sup> - rule that the diploma of higher education issued outside the Flemish Community to a doctoral candidate is equivalent to the degree of master.

By way of an exceptional measure, the rector may - on the advice of the dean<sup>4</sup> - permit a doctoral candidate who does not possess a master's degree to enrol to prepare a doctoral thesis if he considers him capable of doing so.

### Section 5 Specific eligibility investigation

The file of every doctoral candidate shall be assessed individually.

The dean may advise the rector to subject doctoral candidates to additional screening to gauge the suitability of the candidate for carrying out scientific research in the discipline concerned and recording the results thereof in a thesis (Increased Flexibility Decree section 14).

Permission for the various doctorates will automatically be given, with no additional investigation, to holders of the following master's degrees:

Doctorate in	from Master of
Architecture: architecture	Architecture
Architecture: interior architecture	interior architecture
Audiovisual and visual art: visual art	Visual art
Biomedical Science	Biomedical Science, Medicine, Revalidation Science and Physical Therapy
Medicine	Medicine
Industrial science	Industrial science <sup>5</sup>
Medical science	Medicine
Law	Law
Revalidation Science and Physical Therapy	Revalidation Science, Physical Therapy <sup>6</sup>
Applied Economic Science	Economic science
	Applied economic science
	Commercial engineering
Transport studies	Transport studies
Science: physics	Physics
Science: mathematics	Mathematics
Science: biology	Biology
Science: chemistry	Chemistry

<sup>4</sup> Every faculty internally works out a policy on the manner of working that is followed with respect to powers of decision on granting and following up doctoral candidates.

<sup>5</sup> Upon the establishment of the Industrial Engineering Science faculty, the faculty will at the moment of integration further investigate and if necessary expand the list of diplomas that automatically, with no additional investigation, give permission for the doctorate in Industrial Engineering Science.

<sup>6</sup> Upon the integration in the Medicine and Life Science faculty, the list of diplomas that automatically, with no additional investigation, give permission for the doctorate in Revalidation Science and Physical Therapy will be further investigated and if necessary expanded.

Science: information technology	Information technology
Science: statistics	Statistics, Physics, mathematics, biology, chemistry, information technology
Science	Physics, mathematics, biology, chemistry, information technology

This list of master's degrees that will be permitted to enrol for a doctorate without eligibility investigation may be expanded, but not restricted, on the recommendation of a faculty.

The eligibility investigation as described in section 6 is carried by an ad hoc eligibility committee established by the faculty board<sup>7</sup>. If there is a proposed promoter, this promoter is a member of the committee.

The committee informs the faculty board about the results of its research. The latter passes on its advice to the rector, who decides on the matter<sup>8</sup>.

## **Section 6 Results of the eligibility investigation**

The assessment of each doctoral candidate's file will lead to one of the following possibilities:

1. The candidate is admitted immediately without conditions.
2. The candidate is admitted immediately with conditions. These conditions mean that the person concerned must acquire a particular skill or substantive knowledge of the subject that is considered necessary for the doctoral preparation and for which it may reasonably be expected that the candidate can acquire the knowledge/skills without delaying the research work. The total number of study points for the additional knowledge to be acquired may not exceed 30.  
A period is laid down in which the additional skill/knowledge must be acquired and on expiry of his period the result obtained shall be reported to the faculty board.
3. The candidate is not admitted immediately. The person concerned must first take an additional course or acquire skills or knowledge that are considered necessary for the doctoral preparation and which must be acquired prior to the start of the doctoral preparation since the risk of delay to the doctoral preparation is too extensive. The total number of study points for the additional knowledge to be acquired may not exceed 60.
4. The candidate is not admitted to the doctoral programme.

## **Chapter 3 - Enrolment**

### **Section 7 Enrolment**

Anyone wishing to prepare their doctoral thesis at UHasselt/tUL must enrol as a doctoral student at the start of the doctorate, and this enrolment must be renewed annually at the start of every academic year. The terms are specified annually by the university board.

<sup>7</sup> For doctorates in the study areas of the tUL schools, Information technology and Life Science, or in Transport Studies, the faculty of Science, Medicine or Business Economic Science will be competent respectively for appointing an ad hoc eligibility committee.

<sup>8</sup> Until the integration of the academic further education courses of the XIOS and the PHL at UHasselt, the eligibility committee for doctoral candidates with (candidate) promoter/co-promoter associated with the Industrial Science department of the XIOS college of higher education or with the Healthcare department of the PHL consists, ad hoc, of at least two members from the associate faculty concerned, one of whom is linked to the college of higher education.

## Chapter 4 - Start of the doctoral preparation

### Section 8 The doctorate file

1. In consultation with his promotor, the doctoral candidate draws up a doctorate file that he submits to the faculty within 3 months of his first enrolment<sup>91011</sup>. Doctoral candidates with an assistant's mandate of 3 x 2 years are given 6 months to submit this file. The doctorate file is submitted to the faculty board for approval. After approval, the faculty sends the doctorate file to the student office.
2. The doctorate file states:
  - the doctoral candidate's master's degree, a copy of which is added;
  - the research group/research institute in which the doctorate will be prepared;
  - the subject, consisting of an indicative title and a research plan. The research plan contains an issue, objectives, the methodology to be followed and a timetable;
  - the discipline (possibly multi-disciplinary);
  - the faculty;
  - the doctoral school to which the doctoral candidate belongs, and the URL where the doctoral school regulations can be found;
  - the promotor;
  - at the suggestion of the promotor: the constitution of the doctoral committee and possible co-promoter(s) (maximum 2);
  - in case of a Baekeland doctorate or a doctorate in cooperation with a company, the company that will be cooperated with in the doctoral framework and the industrial mentor (maximum 1) with the necessary skills to guide the doctorate from within the company or from an industrial perspective;
  - the detailed results of the eligibility investigation (see section 6) so that they can be followed up further.
3. The faculty sends the doctorate file to the student office, after approval from the faculty board. The faculty also sends the student office its advice on the doctorate file.

### Section 9 The promotor

The doctorate is supervised by a promotor. The promotor must be:

- a. a member of the academic staff with tenure (ZAP) of UHasselt with a doctorate by thesis. In exceptional cases, when the scientific file of a researcher is of such a nature that it can be regarded as equivalent to that of a member of the academic staff with tenure (ZAP) with a doctorate, the rector can, on reasoned advice from the faculty, make an exception to the need for a doctorate on the part of the promotor;
- b. visiting professors with a doctorate by thesis employed at UHasselt. In exceptional cases, when the scientific file of a researcher is of such a nature that it can be regarded as equivalent to that of a member of the academic staff with tenure (ZAP) with a doctorate, the rector can, on reasoned advice from the faculty, make an exception to the need for a doctorate on the part of the promotor;
- c. staff members with a doctorate, associated with UHasselt and empowered by the faculty concerned to assume the promotorship;
- d. the emeritus members of the academic staff with tenure (ZAP) of UHasselt. An emeritus member of the academic staff with tenure can only further guide doctorates that were started under his promotorship prior to his reception of emeritus status, and with the express approval of the faculty concerned.

---

<sup>9</sup> Until the integration of the academic further education courses of the XIOS and the PHL at UHasselt, doctoral candidates with a promotor/co-promotor associated with the *Industrial Science* department of the XIOS college of higher education submit the doctorate file for approval to the Science faculty. The Science faculty provides its advice by way of information to the competent bodies of the college of higher education.

<sup>10</sup> Until the integration of the academic further education courses of the XIOS and the PHL at UHasselt, doctoral candidates with a promotor/co-promotor associated with the *Healthcare* department of the PHL submit the doctorate file for approval to the associate faculty Revalidation Science & Physical Therapy.

<sup>11</sup> Until the integration of the academic further education courses of the XIOS and the PHL at UHasselt, doctoral candidates with a promotor/co-promotor associated with the study areas "Architecture" and "Audiovisual and visual art" submit the doctorate file for approval to the relevant associate faculty. The associate faculty provides its advice by way of information to the competent bodies of the college of higher education.

## **Section 10 The doctoral committee**

1. The promoter together with any co-promoter(s) is responsible for supervising the doctoral candidate and ensures that it is possible for the latter to carry out the preparatory research for his doctoral thesis under favourable circumstances within the research group. The doctoral committee oversees the progress of the doctoral work and reports to the faculty board as specified in section 11 subsection 5.
2. The co-promoter(s) of a doctorate must belong to:
  - a. the UHasselt academic staff with tenure (ZAP) with a doctorate by thesis or the foreign equivalent of a member of academic staff with tenure. In exceptional cases, when the scientific file of a researcher is of such a nature that it can be regarded as equivalent to that of a member of the academic staff with tenure (ZAP) with a doctorate, the rector can, on reasoned advice from the faculty, make an exception to the need for a doctorate on the part of the co-promoter;
  - b. visiting professors with a doctorate by thesis. In exceptional cases, when the scientific file of a researcher is of such a nature that it can be regarded as equivalent to that of a member of the academic staff with tenure (ZAP) with a doctorate, the rector can, on reasoned advice from the faculty, make an exception to the need for a doctorate on the part of the co-promoter;
  - c. staff members with a doctorate, associated with UHasselt and empowered by the faculty concerned to assume the promotorship;
  - d. the emeritus members of the academic staff with tenure (ZAP) of UHasselt. An emeritus member of the academic staff with tenure can only further guide doctorates that were started under his co-promotorship prior to his reception of emeritus status, and with the express approval of the faculty concerned.
3. The doctoral committee consists of at least three persons including the promoter and any co-promoter(s). The doctoral committee must contain at least one member who is not the promoter or co-promoter of the doctoral candidate.

Following reasoned advice from the faculty concerned, the rector of UHasselt can make an exception to the constitutional regulations above.

## **Chapter 5 - Monitoring the progress of the doctoral preparation**

### **Section 11 Monitoring, progress and reporting**

1. The doctoral committee meets with the doctoral candidate at least once a year to monitor the progress of the research and to make adjustments if necessary.
2. Eighteen months after his first appointment the doctoral candidate produces a progress report for the doctoral committee. The report contains both a report of the activities during the past doctoral period, taking into account the results of the admission investigation as stated in section 6, subsection 2, and a forecast of the planned activities for the coming two years. Doctoral candidates with an assistant's mandate of 3 x 2 years repeat this reporting of progress three and a half years after their first appointment.
3. The doctoral committee assesses the progress report from section 11, subsection 2 and produces a written report on this subject for the doctoral candidate. The report pays special attention to the feasibility of the doctorate within the anticipated time span and any rectification. If the doctoral committee is of the opinion that progress in the doctoral work is inadequate, it explicitly states this in its report.
4. If the doctoral committee, outside the reporting period(s) described above, is of the opinion that progress in a doctoral research is manifestly insufficient, it reports this promptly and in writing, and as often as necessary, to the doctoral candidate. If the doctoral candidate is of the opinion that there is a problem with the progress of the doctorate, or with the doctorate guidance, he reports this promptly and in writing, and as often as necessary, to the promoter, the members of the doctorate committee and/or to the arbitration service (see art. 19.3).
5. For doctoral candidates whose appointment as a staff member or doctoral scholarship student at UHasselt has to be extended, the doctoral committee sends a biannual report for advice to the faculty concerned which will issue an advice for the Management Committee. The report pays special attention to the feasibility of the doctorate within the anticipated time span and any



rectification. If the doctoral committee is of the opinion that progress in the doctoral work is inadequate, it explicitly states this in its report<sup>1213</sup>.

6. If the advice on the progress of the doctoral work from the faculty concerned is negative, the preparation of the doctoral thesis can no longer be continued.

## **Chapter 6 - Final phase of preparation of doctorate**

### **Section 12 Submission and assessment provisional draft doctoral thesis**

1. The doctoral candidate submits a draft doctoral thesis to the members of the doctoral committee with an accompanying letter in which he states he wishes to defend his thesis. This provisional draft includes the full content of the proposed doctoral thesis. The promoter can submit the draft doctoral thesis to an external referee.
2. Within one month of submission, the doctoral committee, backed up if applicable by the assessment of the external referee(s), assesses the draft of doctoral thesis. This assessment occurs preferably in discussion and based on written reports. If applicable, the positive advice of the doctoral school board is added to this report regarding compliance with the requirements set out in the doctoral school regulations (see art. 8.2). The doctoral candidate receives from the promoter a consistent written report of the comments.
3. If the doctoral committee gives permission for the doctoral thesis to be submitted, the doctoral candidate receives a notice from the promoter, including notice of the deadline within which it must be submitted. The student office receives a copy of the notice and checks whether all formal requirements have been complied with.
4. If the doctoral committee decides that the provisional draft requires fundamental reworking, the procedure is suspended and will be dealt with in accordance with subsection 2 of this section as from submission of the reworked draft.
5. To actually be permitted to submit the thesis, the doctoral candidate needs permission both from his doctoral committee and, if applicable, from the doctoral school board.

### **Section 13 Submission of doctoral thesis**

1. The candidate amends the doctoral thesis based on the assessment of the draft doctoral thesis by the doctoral committee. The doctoral candidate sends his thesis to the promoter within the anticipated time span, as specified in section 12, subsection 3.

### **Section 14 Constitution of doctoral jury**

1. Once the doctoral committee and (if applicable) the doctoral school board have given permission for the doctoral thesis to be submitted (see section 12, subsection 3), the promoter informs the dean of the faculty in writing of the proposed<sup>14</sup>:

<sup>12</sup> Until the integration of the academic further education courses of the XIOS and the PHL at UHasselt, the doctorate committee of doctoral candidates with a promoter/co-promoter associated with the Industrial Science department of the XIOS college of higher education or the Healthcare department of the PHL respectively, for whom the appointment at the UHasselt has to be extended, submits a biannual report for advice to the faculty of Science or the associate faculty Revalidation Science & Physical Therapy respectively, which draws up an advice for the Management Committee. Until this integration the doctorate committee of doctoral candidates in the study areas of "Architecture" and "Audiovisual and visual art" for whom the appointment at the UHasselt has to be extended, submits a biannual report for advice to the competent associate faculty, which draws up an advice for the Management Committee.

<sup>13</sup> For doctoral candidates for whom during the period preceding the integration the appointment at the college of higher education concerned, the following rules apply. Until the integration of the academic further education courses of the XIOS and the PHL at UHasselt, the doctorate committee of doctoral candidates in the study areas of "Architecture" and "Audiovisual and visual art" and of doctoral candidates with a promoter/co-promoter associated with the Industrial Science department of the XIOS college of higher education or the Healthcare department of the PHL, for whom the appointment at the XIOS college of higher education or the PHL has to be extended, submits a biannual report for advice to the faculty concerned, which draws up an advice for the competent bodies of the colleges of higher education.

<sup>14</sup> For doctoral candidates with a promoter/co-promoter associated with the Industrial Science department of the XIOS college of higher education or the Healthcare department, the promoter informs the relevant faculty of the

- provisional date of the defence;
- title of the doctoral thesis;
- proposal of constitution of the doctoral jury<sup>15</sup>;
- the university most eligible for the required inter-university discussions, if the doctoral thesis is involved in an area of study or part of an area of study in which UHasselt/tUL is only able to offer a bachelor's course.

2. During the next meeting, the faculty issues advice on the proposal in subsection 1 to the rector.
3. The faculty ensures that the jury is from different universities and preferably has an international constitution. The jury has a minimum of 6 members. The members of the doctoral committee form part of the jury. Only members of the academic staff with tenure, or their foreign equivalents, emeriti and postdoctoral researchers or postdoctoral assistants may be members of the doctoral jury. Researchers associated with research institutions, research institutes and/or from business may be members of the doctoral jury, subject to written justification by the promoter. The doctoral jury may include a maximum of one person without a doctorate.

The faculty takes account of the decreed gender balance requirements when constituting examination boards and committees.

The rector of UHasselt can, following advice of the dean of the faculty, make an exception to the previous constitution rules.

4. The chairmanship of the jury is awarded to the dean of the faculty concerned, who can delegate this task to a member of the academic staff with tenure (ZAP) of the faculty. The promoter cannot act as chairman.
5. The rector decides on the constitution of the doctoral jury. As a rule the doctoral jury will be definitively constituted within a period of 10 calendar days of the rector receiving the letter from the dean of the faculty.  
If a doctoral thesis for which interuniversity consultation is needed is involved, the doctoral jury shall only be constituted when agreement has been reached between the rector of UHasselt and the rector of the university concerned. A maximum period of three weeks is aspired to in this regard.

The rector of UHasselt informs the dean of the faculty, the members of the jury and the doctoral candidate of the final constitution of the doctoral jury as well as the time and place of defence.

## **Section 15      Assessment of the content of the doctoral thesis by the jury and "pre-defence"**

1. As soon as the constitution of the jury has been notified by the rector, the promoter provides the members of the jury with the content of the definitive doctoral thesis in accordance with section 13. The promoter informs the members of the jury that they have a maximum of 4 weeks from receipt to assess the doctoral thesis and to make their objections to the public defence known if they wish.
2. In agreement with the faculty regulations in the matter, there is the possibility of organising a pre-defence, before giving permission for the public defence. In that case the faculty arranges matters regarding the timing of and the presence of the jury at the pre-defence.
3. If a member of the jury objects to the public defence, the jury must in any event discuss this matter. A 2/3 majority is required for permission for the public defence.  
As a result of these discussions, the doctoral jury may also make permission to defend subject to conditions, to which a rectification plan is linked.  
If the doctoral jury does not give permission for the public defence (or subjects it to conditions), the promoter informs the doctoral candidate of the objection and the remarks in the matter. The promoter also informs the rector and the dean.
4. If the doctoral jury agrees to the public defence, the promoter of the jury informs the doctoral candidate, the rector and the dean.

---

proposal in (1a) until the integration of the academic further education courses of the XIOS and the PHL at UHasselt.

<sup>15</sup> For a doctorate in life sciences or information sciences, the jury preferably includes an expert from Maastricht University.

## **Chapter 7 - Public defence and deliberations**

### **Section 16 Public defence<sup>1</sup>**

1. The defence of the thesis is public. The rector watches over the application of the public nature of the defence. Notice of this defence will be given by the student office and announced on the notice boards. No public defence may take place during the period of 15 July to 20 August inclusive.
2. The doctoral candidate provides the External Communications department with a draft press release on the doctoral research.
3. <sup>1</sup>The doctoral candidate ensures that the members of the jury have a printed copy of the doctoral thesis in their possession at least 7 days before the planned defence. The library of UHasselt receives 2 printed copies and one copy on CD-ROM, for safekeeping and inter-library loans.
4. The public defence of the thesis may not last for longer than 2 hours including the exposition of the thesis which may last a maximum of 50 minutes.

### **Section 17 Deliberations and proclamations**

1. The jury shall deliberate immediately after the end of the defence and proceed to the proclamation. The jury decides by a two-thirds majority.
2. In the deliberations no degrees are awarded: it is merely decided whether the doctoral candidate has succeeded.
3. The doctoral jury cannot validly deliberate unless at least five members including its chairman are present.

## **Chapter 8 - Language rules**

### **Section 18 Language**

1. The doctoral thesis may be written and defended in Dutch or English. The UHasselt rector can allow for an exception to this rule in consultation with the faculty board.
2. In all cases the doctoral thesis is provided with a summary in Dutch (maximum 3 pages), directed to the general public.

## **Chapter 9 - Arbitration Service and Disputes**

### **Section 19 Arbitration Service and Disputes**

1. The doctoral candidate receives the doctorate regulations on his first enrolment. A doctoral candidate who does not comply with the prescriptions of these regulations loses the guarantees relating to a normal doctoral procedure as provided for in these regulations.
2. A doctoral candidate who observes any neglect to apply these regulations or the administrative prescriptions may report this to the rector. The rector decides which action will be taken on doctoral candidate's complaint.
3. Doctoral candidates who have a dispute during their doctorate with their promoter and/or doctoral committee, or who experience other problems which they cannot take to their promoter or doctoral committee, can approach the arbitration service (ombudsman). The arbitration service is an independent third party that will listen, give advice, and - only at the request of and in consultation with the doctoral candidate - take on a conciliation function. The arbitration service can be reached at [PhD-Ombuds@UHasselt.be](mailto:PhD-Ombuds@UHasselt.be)

---

<sup>1</sup> At the College of Deans of July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 an amendment to 'Section 16 – paragraph 3' was approved. This amendment is included in Addendum n°1

- 12.
4. If in a dispute between the doctoral candidate and the promoter and/or doctoral committee the conciliation by the arbitration service does not lead to a solution, the file is submitted to the rector, who takes appropriate steps or proposes such to the faculty concerned.

## **Chapter 10 - Reimbursement of expenses**

### **Section 20 Reimbursement of expenses associated with the doctorate**

1. A contribution to reimburse the expenses associated with the defence of the doctorate is provided within the envelope of the input-output financing, and is granted to the research group. This is an advance deduction from the envelope of the input-output financing.

## **Chapter 11 - Joint doctorate**

### **Section 21 Joint doctorate**

1. Students can carry out a doctorate under the joint supervision of UHasselt/tUL and one or more other Flemish universities or foreign institutes of higher education within the framework of a cooperation agreement<sup>16</sup> concluded between the student and the institutions concerned in accordance with the regulations on the joint doctorate applicable at UHasselt/tUL and the partner institution(s). The manner of awarding diplomas is laid down by the mentioned cooperation agreement.
2. A basic condition of the joint doctorate is that the student performs research at each of the partner institutions for at least 6 months. The student must enrol at UHasselt/tUL from the first day of his stay at UHasselt/tUL.
3. In the event of a joint doctorate as specified in sub-section 1 sections 9 and 14 will be added to as follows:
  - a. Section 9: Each partner institution appoints an additional (co)promoter.
  - b. Section 14: The rectors of the partner institutes decide on the constitution of the doctoral jury in observance of the legislation on the subject and their internal procedures. The members of the doctoral jury come from multiple universities including members from all partner institutions and preferably has an international constitution. The chairmanship of the doctoral jury is awarded to the rector of the partner institution where the student defends the doctorate. He may delegate this task.

## **Chapter 12 - Format and house style**

The thesis must be written in accordance with the rules on house style as specified by the university board.

---

<sup>16</sup> Template of "Partnership agreement for joint supervision and award of a doctorate between Hasselt University and partner institution" as appendix.

**Addendum n°1: Print procedure doctoral thesis**  
**Adjustment 'Regulations relating to obtaining the academic degree of doctor at Hasselt University/ transnational University Limburg', approved by the College of Deans on 4 July 2025 (CvD 245-N-CvD-079)**

The article below will be amended as follows:

**Chapter 7 – Public defence and deliberations**

**Section 16 Public defence**

3. The doctoral candidate ensures that the jury members have a copy of the final doctoral thesis (digital or physical) <sup>2</sup> in their possession at least 7 calendar days before the planned defence. Theses are formatted according to the guidelines described on the UHasselt website regarding doctoral research<sup>3</sup>. The doctoral thesis is made available electronically via the UHasselt depository before the defence. To safeguard further publication purposes, doctoral theses are generally placed under embargo for a period of 5 years, and are therefore (temporarily) not made publicly available. The doctoral candidate and supervisor can, however, jointly decide to adjust this period or not to apply an embargo.

The addendum n°1 comes into effect on February 15th, 2026 and applies to all doctoral candidates whose public doctoral defence will take place after this date.

---

<sup>2</sup> The faculty addendum or the faculty procedures will state whether a printed version is necessary for the jury members.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.uhasselt.be/en/research/phd/current-phd-students/step-by-step-plan-per-year>