

## **Doctoral regulations of the Université catholique de Louvain**

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*Approved by the UCL Doctoral Committee on 15 September 2014*

### ***1. General framework***

Pursuant to the penultimate paragraph of Art. 134 of the Decree of 7 November 2013 defining the landscape of higher education and the academic organization of studies, uniform regulations have been drawn up by the Academy for Research and Higher Education (ARES) for examination boards responsible for conferring doctoral degrees.<sup>1</sup>

Under their own rules, universities specify the practical arrangements for organizing PhD examination boards, as well as all other aspects relating to doctoral studies.

The principles of these regulations apply to all the doctoral programmes and are as follows:

- a) a doctoral degree can be obtained on completion of a doctoral programme with two compulsory components: the first, consisting of advanced academic training, worth 60 credits, referred to as "doctoral training" under the terms of the Decree; and the second, a research assignment relating to the preparation of a doctoral thesis, worth at least 120 credits;
- b) the doctoral programme includes four compulsory stages – admission, mid-term evaluation, private defence and public defence – possibly preceded by a provisional admission stage.

Doctoral programmes are organized by UCL, and the Rector constitutes the "academic authorities" as defined by the Decree, in particular Article 115 thereof. He/she delegates this authority to three bodies:

- The UCL Doctoral Committee, whose role is to ensure the development, application and monitoring of these regulations; consensus on specific additional provisions; possible appeals made by candidates against the decisions of the subject-specific doctoral committees; arbitration between the various doctoral committees involving theses covering several fields; links between the doctoral programmes and the roles related to doctoral training assigned to the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS; and any other role entrusted to it by the Rector;
- The subject-specific doctoral committees responsible for various fields of study, as laid down by the Decree, whose specific role is to validate the various stages of students' doctoral programmes; to arbitrate in conflicts arising between supervisors and doctoral students; and any other role entrusted to them by the Rector (henceforth in these regulations, the term "subject-specific doctoral committee" refers to the relevant committee involved);
- The faculty deans, a generic term designating the local academic authorities competent in each field of study.

Within UCL, only one subject-specific doctoral committee is established for each field of studies specified in the Decree. These committees are constituted in such a way as to ensure representation from the disciplines covered by the field. The subject-specific doctoral committees should also include representatives from the research and teaching staff, selected in ways they deem appropriate. The PhD Programme Manager, who is invited to sit on the committee, acts as secretariat. A particular subject-specific doctoral committee can draw up special regulatory provisions for its own field of study and also delegate its tasks to appropriate bodies while retaining ultimate responsibility.

## **2. Stages in the doctoral programme**

The doctoral programme includes four compulsory stages – admission, mid-term evaluation, private defence and public defence – possibly preceded by a provisional admission stage.

### **2.1. Provisional admission**

Provisional admission is an optional stage of the doctoral programme. It is intended to enable candidates to complete the administrative formalities which might require prior enrolment on a doctoral programme. This might, for example, involve the award of a tax-exempt doctoral grant or obtaining a foreign student residence permit. Provisional admission also makes it possible to mark the official start of a doctoral programme, even though the precise subject or supervisory panel may not yet have been fully defined. It also enables candidates to fulfil all the conditions necessary for their admission to the doctorate (cf. 2.2.2).

Provisional admission is obtained on the basis of a favourable decision from the relevant subject-specific doctoral committee; this committee checks that the candidate meets the admission requirements listed below.

If the opinion of the subject-specific doctoral committee is favourable, the relevant UCL administrative services may, on this basis, register a candidate who has gone through the stage of provisional admission to the doctorate, subject to payment of the matriculation fees.

Provisional admission is possible for any candidate:

- 1° who meets the entry requirements for third-cycle studies as laid down in Articles 115, 117 and 119 of the Decree of 7 November 2013<sup>2</sup>;
- 2° who has identified a representative from the UCL staff who is accredited to oversee a doctoral thesis (annex 4); in agreeing to this, the member of staff undertakes to monitor and assist with the different stages in the candidate's application procedure;
- 3° who meets the special conditions laid down by the subject-specific doctoral committee(s) in the relevant field(s).

Provisional admission is valid for a maximum period of 12 months. Making use of a provisional admission period must be justified, with a planned set of objectives and the duration of the provisional admission period fixed accordingly. Unless otherwise decided by the subject-specific doctoral committee, candidates awarded a grant from FRIA or the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS and, more generally, candidates engaged on a well-defined research project will not be authorized to go through a provisional admission stage.

## **2.2. Admission to the doctorate**

### **2.2.1. Admission is the first compulsory step of the doctoral programme.**

Admission applications are submitted to the relevant subject-specific doctoral committee, which delivers its opinion after checking that the candidate has met the requirements cited below in 2.2.2.

When a thesis proposal cuts across several fields of study, the various subject-specific doctoral committees involved have to decide the case; by mutual agreement they designate a principal doctoral committee to whom supervision of the candidate's doctoral programme is then delegated. In the absence of agreement, the UCL Doctoral Committee adjudicates.

If the opinion of the subject-specific doctoral committee is favourable, the relevant administrative services of UCL may, on this basis, register the candidate on the doctoral programme, once the tuition fees have been paid and all administrative formalities completed. Tuition fees must be paid in full when students first enrol on a PhD programme. Pursuant to Article 105 of the Decree of 7 November 2013, tuition fees may be reduced or waived, depending on individual circumstances.<sup>3</sup> Enrolment is required each year, including the year in which the thesis is defended, subject to payment of matriculation fees, except in the case provided for in 2.2.6., and subject to successful completion of the mid-term evaluation within the time periods mentioned in 2.3.1.

### **2.2.2. To be admitted onto a doctoral programme, candidates must:**

- 1° meet the entry requirements for doctoral studies as defined in particular by Articles 115, 117 and 119 of the Decree of 7 November 2013<sup>2</sup>, or have been provisionally admitted to a doctoral programme for less than 12 months;
- 2° have as their supervisor a member of UCL staff who is accredited to oversee a thesis (annex 4). The supervisor undertakes to oversee, effectively and in person, the work relating to the preparation of the thesis; if the research topic justifies it, the candidate may have several supervisors;
- 3° have written a research proposal likely to lead to a doctoral thesis: this proposal must include a provisional title, a statement of the objectives of the project, highlighting its innovative aspects in relation to the state of the art, a work plan and an inventory of the human, material and financial resources required for its implementation;
- 4° have had the research proposal referred to in 3° above approved by their supervisor(s), who is/are required to specify the extent of the resources that he/she/they is/are able to put at the candidate's disposal for the purposes of the project;
- 5° have put forward to the subject-specific doctoral committee, by mutual agreement with their supervisor, a supervisory panel in compliance with these regulations; the composition and role of the supervisory panel are specified in 2.2.3. below;
- 6° have put forward to the subject-specific doctoral committee, by mutual agreement with the prospective members of the supervisory panel, a proposal for a doctoral training programme, worth 60 credits, which is appropriate for the candidate's academic profile and the proposed research project<sup>4</sup>;
- 7° meet the special conditions laid down by the subject-specific doctoral committee(s) in the relevant field(s).

In addition, candidates may be required by the relevant subject-specific doctoral committee to take additional training courses (2nd-cycle level), the number and nature of which depend on their previous academic record and/or thesis project.

**2.2.3.** The supervisory panel referred to in 5° above is made up of the supervisor(s) and at least two other members, at least one of whom must not be part of the research team of the supervisor(s). The members of the supervisory panel must hold a doctorate, obtained after public defence of a thesis, or provide evidence of an equivalent level of expert knowledge.

Supervisory panels guide and advise students, both to reinforce the role of the supervisor(s) in shaping the direction of research and to expand the network of academic contacts available to students. Supervisory panel members must be accessible to students and give constructive help with their research; they are thus committed to providing students with regular support throughout their doctoral studies. To this end, supervisory panels and students must meet at least once a year.

Supervisory panels advise students on drawing up their doctoral training programme.

Lastly, supervisory panels assess the quality of doctoral students' academic work.

**2.2.4.** The 60-credit doctoral training programme mentioned in 2.2.2., 6°, comprises:

- a number of advanced courses, attendance at high-level schools/colleges, conferences and scientific congresses, or any other training deemed equivalent by the subject-specific doctoral committee ;
- developing and using scientific communication skills by drafting and presenting scientific proposals, articles and papers;
- possibly providing teaching support, worth a maximum of 6 credits.

In terms of doctoral training in scientific communication skills, successful completion of the mid-term evaluation, private defence and public defence is worth only 5, 10 and 5 credits, respectively (maximum).

Pursuant to Article 71(2) of the Decree of 7 November<sup>5</sup>, students who have a Master's degree with a research focus in the same field (or a qualification obtained outside the French Community and deemed similar by the subject-specific doctoral committee) may earn credits towards their doctoral degree. The number of credits that can be awarded depends on the number of credits dedicated to the learning activities that are envisaged as part of doctoral training and that target the same skills, but may not exceed 30.

Doctoral training is provided at one or more Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS graduate colleges or graduate schools approved by ARES and can lead to the research qualification referred to in Art. 71(2) of the Decree of 7 November 2013.

With the agreement of the subject-specific doctoral committee, all or part of this training can also be acquired outside a graduate college or school. Scientific experience gained after completing a second-cycle degree and any professional activities undertaken in relation to the research topic may be validated by the subject-specific doctoral committee as a component of doctoral training.

The doctoral training programme may be spread out over the entire duration of doctoral studies.

**2.2.5.** Doctoral students can use their admission to the doctoral programme to benefit from effective and personal support from their supervisor(s) as well as the resources for an appropriate scientific environment.

**2.2.6.** The subject-specific doctoral committee has the authority to withdraw the student's right to undertake the doctoral programme, at the request of the supervisory panel. Each subject-specific doctoral committee establishes the special rules that it will apply in these regard.

**2.2.7.** Any conflicts arising between doctoral students and their supervisor(s) or supervisory panel fall within the competence of the relevant subject-specific doctoral committee, or, when there are several subject-specific doctoral committees involved, of the one which has been designated as the main committee. It is possible to appeal to the UCL Doctoral Committee against decisions made by the relevant subject-specific doctoral committee.

### **2.3. Mid-term evaluation**

**2.3.1.** Within a maximum of 24 months of being admitted to the doctoral programme by the subject-specific doctoral committee, students must undergo a mid-term evaluation. If circumstances justify it, the deadline can be extended by the supervisory panel, with the consent of the subject-specific doctoral committee.

This time period may be shortened where restrictions are imposed by the funding provider, such as, for example, where a fellowship or doctoral grant is renewed (e.g. renewal of Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS research fellowships).

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to determine whether students' research has progressed sufficiently well enough to enable them to complete their doctoral thesis.

**2.3.2.** In order for the supervisory panel to be able to ascertain whether students' research has progressed sufficiently well enough to enable them to complete their doctoral thesis, doctoral students are required to:

1° submit to the supervisory panel a written report, an article which they have written, or any other piece of written evidence which shows how the research is progressing,

2° give an oral presentation, in the presence of their supervisory panel, of the work completed and plans for the next stages of the doctorate.

**2.3.3.** On the basis of this, the supervisory panel reports to the subject-specific doctoral committee, either stating that the mid-term evaluation has been successfully completed and that the doctoral student may continue, or that the mid-term evaluation has been failed.

In the event of failure, the subject-specific doctoral committee can set a maximum period of 12 months within which the student may retake the mid-term evaluation. When appropriate, it will validate the doctoral training that has been acquired.

In the event of disagreement with the decision of the supervisory panel or the subject-specific doctoral committee, doctoral students may lodge an appeal with the UCL Doctoral Committee.

### **2.4. Formation of specific PhD examination boards**

**2.4.1.** Specific PhD examination boards are set up under the uniform regulations of ARES for examination boards responsible for conferring doctoral degrees (cf. 1. General framework). Universities specify the practical arrangements for organizing these boards.

**2.4.2.** With a view to conferring doctoral degrees, the academic authorities of the University form an individual examination board for each student.

This board is composed of at least five members (including the Chair and the Secretary) who hold doctorates or are acknowledged as having a high level of expertise in the relevant field of the arts or science.

It is chaired by a member of the University's academic staff, who may not be one of the thesis supervisors.

It must include the research supervisor(s) and external examiners from outside the University, selected for their specific expertise in the subject matter of the thesis being defended.

**2.4.3.** When the supervisory panel considers that the student's research work and doctoral training programme have been satisfactorily completed, it draws up a proposal for the composition of the PhD examination board. After this proposal has been agreed by the subject-specific doctoral committee, it is sent for approval to the Dean of the relevant faculty.

**2.4.4.** Since the private defence and the public defence can be organised according to one of two different methods described below, it is also for the supervisory panel to decide how the defence of the thesis should proceed. This information should be included on the form outlining the suggested composition of the board.

The subject-specific doctoral committees may decide to make special arrangements for all theses in their field of study to be defended exclusively in one way or the other.

The appointment of the board is subject to verification that the candidate is enrolled as a doctoral student and that the tuition fees have been paid.

## ***2.5. First method for organising private defence and public defence***

### ***2.5.1. Private defence***

**2.5.1.1.** The examination board comes to a joint decision on the date of the private defence, in agreement with the doctoral student. No later than one month before the date chosen, the candidate submits the provisional manuscript of his/her thesis to the board members; this may be an original dissertation, or an essay accompanied by a coherent set of publications and other work of which the doctoral student is either the author or the co-author, or a dissertation centred on a project or other work that he/she has authored or co-authored. These documents can be in French or in English or, if the subject matter of the thesis justifies it, in another language agreed by the board.

**2.5.1.2.** The entire board should be present for the private defence (in person or virtually through videoconferencing, for example). If a member is unable to attend due to unforeseeable circumstances, he/she must send the Chair a written report before the session, giving his/her reasoned opinion on the value of the thesis and a list of the questions that he/she wishes to put to the candidate.

During the private defence, the board examines the manuscript submitted by the candidate and discusses the research results with him/her.

**2.5.1.3.** At the end of the private defence, the board deliberates and decides on the admissibility of the thesis. The result of this meeting is communicated immediately to the candidate and sent to the subject-specific doctoral committee.

- If the thesis is deemed admissible, the board agrees with the candidate on a date and time for the public defence, which will take place no earlier than one month after the private defence, and notifies the subject-specific doctoral committee accordingly.
- If the thesis is deemed admissible subject to amendments being made to the manuscript, the supervisor(s) is/are instructed to check and approve these amendments before the date of the

public defence. It should not take more than three months' full-time work to make these amendments. Otherwise, a new private defence must be organized.

- If the thesis is deemed inadmissible, the board sets a time limit for a new private defence.

The board also validates the candidate's doctoral training. Doctoral training is considered acquired when the doctoral student is able to show the board that he/she has obtained 60 credits as cited in 2.2.4 above (including the 5 credits potentially granted for the forthcoming public defence), and, where appropriate, the credits for the additional training cited in the last sub-paragraph of 2.2.2.

### **2.5.2. Public defence**

**2.5.2.1.** The public defence consists of an oral presentation given by the candidate of the results of the research work which have led to the thesis; this will be an opportunity for the candidate to emphasize the qualities and originality of the work and demonstrate his/her ability to make complex subjects accessible to non-specialists. This presentation is followed by a discussion between the candidate and the board and then with anyone else present at the defence. It may not last longer than three hours.

**2.5.2.2.** At least half of the members of the specific examination board are actively involved in the public defence of the thesis. Any member unable to attend the public defence must send the Chair of the board a written report before the session, giving his/her reasoned opinion on the value of the thesis and a list of the questions that he/she wishes to put to the candidate.

**2.5.2.3.** At least two weeks before the public defence, the candidate gives the board members a bound copy of his/her thesis approved by his/her supervisor(s) and one copy to the relevant subject-specific doctoral committee. An electronic copy must also be sent to the office responsible for electronic theses.

**2.5.2.4.** The specific examination board awards the student a doctoral degree if it finds that he/she has acquired the minimum number of credits, has adhered to the study programme requirements, has met the entry requirements and was duly enrolled.

**2.5.2.5.** Each member of the specific examination board has one vote and takes part in the examination board meeting either in person or by means of a written assessment.

Examination board meetings are held in private session. All board members are duty-bound to respect the confidentiality of the meeting proceedings and any votes taken.

Examination board decisions are taken collectively, by simple majority, and are without appeal. In the event of a tie, the Chair has the casting vote.

The board states the reasons for its decision in a PhD thesis defence report (according to the required format), which, as a minimum, refers to the criteria specified in 2.5.2.4.

The board's decisions are published by an official announcement of the results and then displayed for at least 15 days after the announcement.

Doctoral degrees are conferred without distinctions.

**2.5.2.6.** Immediately after the public defence, the board members sign the degree certificate and any related documents, including the thesis defence report (according to the required format). The minutes of the examination board meeting are written up. The Chair of the board then officially announces the result publicly. The degree certificate is immediately signed by the new doctor, and later by the Rector. The minutes of the examination board meeting are kept by the Dean of the faculty.

After the official announcement of the results, the thesis defence report is sent to the graduate.

## ***2.6. Second method for organising private defence and public defence***

**2.6.1.** In the second method, both the private and the public defence are organised in the same time-frame. In this case, the thesis must be deemed admissible in advance of the private and the public defence.

**2.6.2.** To enable the timetable to be as close as possible in both methods, the time the decision is made to allow a public defence (which is at the time of the private defence in the first method) is deemed to be the reference time in the second method.

**2.6.3.** The date on which this decision is made is chosen by the board as a whole, with the agreement of the doctoral candidate.

**2.6.4.** The candidate must send the provisional manuscript of his/her thesis to the different members of the examination board one month before the expected date of the decision that the thesis is admissible. All the members of the board are then required to select one of the following three options:

- The thesis is deemed to be admissible, in which case the private defence and the public defence should take place no earlier than one month after the decision that it is admissible.
- The thesis requires minor amendments, in which case the maximum period allowed for this is three months, at the end of which the private defence and the public defence should take place. Board members are requested to give a clear indication of what they expect in terms of the changes deemed necessary, whilst at the same time bearing in mind that in this situation, the thesis may no longer be refused. The supervisor should check the amendments before allowing the private defence to go ahead.
- The thesis is deemed not to be admissible, in which case the procedure is halted and a new timetable considered. Board members who contest the admissibility of the thesis are required to explain the reasons for their decision and to clearly highlight the problems they have identified while reading the document. It is only necessary for one of the board members to indicate that the thesis is not admissible for a decision of non-admissibility to apply.

To enable them to communicate their decision on admissibility in accordance with the required procedure, members of the board are clearly informed of the constraints of the timetable and also of the consequences arising from their decision.

The Chair of the board, who organises the examination board meeting, is responsible for conveying the result to the candidate, the different members of the board and the relevant subject-specific doctoral committee within the relevant timescale. He/she should also set the date(s) for the private and public defences with the rest of the board and the candidate.

**2.6.5.** As in the first method, the private defence always takes place before the public defence. The major difference is that, in the second method, the private defence is always based on a final manuscript (where appropriate, after amendments have been made).

The possibility of requiring the manuscript to be amended is therefore a proper prerogative of the members of the board in both methods. However, whereas the first method enables board members to require amendments to be made to the manuscript at the time of the private defence, the second method asks them to voice their opinion on this subject ahead of the private defence.

In all cases, the final manuscript (where appropriate, after amendments have been made) should be sent to members of the board at least one month before the date of the private defence.

**2.6.6.** The public defence should be held according to the procedures set out in 2.5.2.

### 3. Special and transitional provisions

**3.1.** Doctoral degree certificates issued by UCL must be accompanied by a diploma supplement, in accordance with Art. 146 of the Decree of 7 November 2013<sup>6</sup>.

**3.2.** Pursuant to Article 82 of the Decree of 7 November 2013<sup>7</sup>, if justified for academic reasons, a doctorate may be pursued as part of a joint doctoral programme involving UCL and another university institution either within or outside the French Community of Belgium.

In such cases, an agreement should be signed between the two institutions. The supervisors, on behalf of UCL, must ensure that this is in accordance with the standard agreement drawn up by UCL and therefore complies with the regulatory provisions. They should submit an account of why they support a joint programme and the draft agreement to the subject-specific doctoral committee for its approval before presenting the agreement to the Rector.

This agreement must stipulate, in particular, that the doctoral student will spend a minimum of 25% of his/her research time in each of the two institutions and that he/she will abide by the rules in force at each of the two institutions, especially relating to doctoral training and ethics as specified in Articles 9 and 11 of the standard agreement which can be found in Annex 1.

**3.3.** A "European doctorate" may be awarded by UCL when the following three conditions are fulfilled:

- At least two members of the examination board must belong to a higher education institution in two European Union member states other than Belgium. The report of the examination board meeting at the end of the private defence serves as the report authorizing the public defence;
- Part of the public defence must be held in an official language of the European Union other than French;
- The doctorate must have been prepared, in part, during a research stay of at least four months in a member state of the European Union other than Belgium.

Applications for a European doctorate must be submitted by the doctoral student to the subject-specific doctoral committee after the private defence. The committee requires enough information to enable it to reach a decision on whether the criteria for the award of a European doctorate have been fulfilled, namely:

- An official certificate from the host institution certifying that the doctoral student has stayed for research purposes in another member state of the European Union and the duration of that stay (specifying the name of the local supervisor, the host laboratory/unit and the start and end dates of the research stay(s));
- A copy of the examination board meeting report of the private defence;
- After the public defence, the examination board meeting report should specify that part of the defence was held in a language of the European Union other than French and state which language was used.

The award of a European doctorate is confirmed by the issue of a certificate from UCL. This certificate must be appended to the doctoral degree but distinct from it. A standard certificate can be found in Annex 3 to these regulations.

**3.4.** These regulations apply to students enrolling on a doctoral programme for the first time during or after the 2014-2015 academic year.

**3.5.** The special conditions laid down by the relevant subject-specific doctoral committees enter into force after they have been approved by the Rector of UCL, following a procedure established by him/her.

**3.6.** During the procedure described under 3.5, the Rector must seek the opinion of the UCL Doctoral Committee and also confirms the Committee's composition and role.

**3.7.** At the request of the Rector, the UCL Doctoral Committee will evaluate the implementation of these regulations. Where appropriate, it will submit proposals to amend the regulations to the competent authorities of UCL.

## Annexes:

**Annex 1:** Standard agreement for a joint doctoral programme

**Annex 2:** Equivalence of foreign degrees to 3rd-cycle degrees (doctorate)

**Annex 3:** Modèle d'attestation pour la délivrance du « Label de doctorat européen » (*only in French*)

**Annex 4:** Eligibility criteria for supervising a doctoral thesis

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Article 134. - (...) Pour les jurys chargés de conférer le grade de docteur, un règlement unique est fixé par l'ARES.

<sup>2</sup> Article 115. - § 1er. Aux conditions générales fixées par les autorités académiques, ont accès aux études de troisième cycle en vue de l'obtention du grade qui les sanctionne, les étudiants qui portent :

1° un grade académique de master en 120 crédits au moins;

2° un grade académique similaire délivré par un établissement d'enseignement supérieur, en Communauté française ou extérieur à celle-ci, en vertu d'une décision des autorités académiques et aux conditions complémentaires qu'elles fixent;

3° un grade académique étranger reconnu équivalent à ceux mentionnés aux littéras 1° à 2° en application de ce décret, d'une directive européenne, d'une convention internationale ou d'une autre législation, aux mêmes conditions.

Les conditions complémentaires d'accès visées au 2° sont destinées à s'assurer que l'étudiant a acquis les matières et compétences requises pour les études visées. Lorsque ces conditions complémentaires d'accès consistent en un ou plusieurs enseignements supplémentaires, ceux-ci ne peuvent représenter pour l'étudiant plus de 60 crédits supplémentaires, compte tenu de l'ensemble des crédits qu'il peut par ailleurs valoriser lors de son admission. Ces enseignements font partie de son programme d'études.

§ 2. Aux conditions générales fixées par les autorités académiques, l'étudiant porteur d'un titre, diplôme, grade ou certificat de deuxième cycle, en Communauté française ou extérieur à celle-ci, qui ne lui donne pas accès aux études de troisième cycle en vertu du paragraphe précédent peut toutefois y être admis par le jury des études visées aux conditions complémentaires qu'il fixe, si l'ensemble des études supérieures qu'il a suivies avec fruit est valorisé par le jury pour au moins 300 crédits.

§ 3. Par dérogation à ces conditions générales, aux conditions complémentaires qu'elles fixent, les autorités académiques peuvent également admettre aux études de troisième cycle les porteurs d'un titre, diplôme, grade ou certificat délivré hors communauté française qui, dans ce système d'origine, donne directement accès aux formations doctorales ou études et travaux relatifs à la préparation d'une thèse de doctorat, même si les études sanctionnées par ces titres ou grades n'y sont pas organisées en cycles distincts ou en cinq années au moins.

Cette admission doit être exceptionnelle et dûment motivée sur base, notamment, de la preuve formelle et authentique de cette capacité de poursuite d'études doctorales dans le système d'origine.

Article 117. - Aux conditions générales que fixent les autorités de l'établissement d'enseignement supérieur, en vue de l'admission aux études, les jurys valorisent les crédits acquis par les étudiants au cours d'études supérieures ou parties

d'études supérieures qu'ils auraient déjà suivies avec fruit. Les étudiants qui bénéficient de ces crédits sont dispensés des parties correspondantes du programme d'études.

Lorsqu'il valorise des crédits acquis dans le cadre d'études préalables, le jury ne peut valoriser davantage de crédits que ceux octroyés par le jury de l'établissement où les enseignements correspondants ont été suivis, évalués et sanctionnés.

Article 119. - § 1er. Aux conditions générales que fixent les autorités de l'établissement d'enseignement supérieur, en vue de l'admission aux études, les jurys valorisent les savoirs et compétences des étudiants acquis par leur expérience professionnelle ou personnelle.

Cette expérience personnelle ou professionnelle doit correspondre à au moins cinq années d'activités, des années d'études supérieures ne pouvant être prises en compte qu'à concurrence d'une année par 60 crédits acquis, sans pouvoir dépasser 2 ans. Au terme d'une procédure d'évaluation organisée par les autorités de l'établissement d'enseignement supérieur, le jury juge si les aptitudes et connaissances de l'étudiant sont suffisantes pour suivre ces études avec succès.

Au terme de cette évaluation, le jury détermine les enseignements supplémentaires et les dispenses éventuelles qui constituent les conditions complémentaires d'accès aux études pour l'étudiant.

§ 2. En vue de l'admission aux études via la valorisation des savoirs et compétences des étudiants acquis par leur expérience professionnelle ou personnelle, l'établissement d'enseignement supérieur organise un accompagnement individualisé visant à informer l'étudiant sur la procédure à suivre telle que fixée par les autorités de l'établissement et précisée dans le règlement des études, et à faciliter les démarches de l'étudiant jusqu'au terme de la procédure d'évaluation visée au § 1er.

Sur proposition de l'ARES, le Gouvernement peut fixer la forme et le contenu du document d'admission dans ce contexte.

<sup>3</sup> Article 105. - § 1er. Le montant des droits d'inscription pour des études est fixé par décret.

Ces montants comprennent l'inscription au rôle, l'inscription à l'année académique et l'inscription aux épreuves et examens organisés durant cette année académique. Il ne peut être prélevé aucun droit ni frais complémentaires.

Dans chaque établissement d'enseignement supérieur, une commission de concertation est chargée d'établir la liste des frais appréciés au coût réel afférents aux biens et services fournis aux étudiants et qui ne sont pas considérés comme perception d'un droit complémentaire. Ces frais sont mentionnés dans le règlement des études propre à chaque établissement. Cette commission est composée, à parts égales, de représentants des autorités académiques, de représentants des membres du personnel de l'établissement et de représentants des étudiants. Dans les Écoles supérieures des Arts et les Hautes Écoles, les représentants des étudiants sont issus du Conseil étudiant. Le Commissaire ou Délégué du Gouvernement assiste aux travaux de cette commission.

Pour les étudiants non finançables, à l'exception de ceux issus de pays de l'Union européenne, des pays moins avancés — repris sur la liste LDC (Least Developed Countries) de l'ONU — ou des pays avec lesquels la Communauté française a établi un accord en ce sens pour lesquels les droits d'inscription sont similaires à ceux des étudiants finançables, l'ARES fixe librement les montants des droits d'inscription, sans que ces droits ne puissent dépasser cinq fois le montant des droits d'inscriptions visés au 1er alinéa.

Ce paragraphe ne s'applique pas aux études codiplômantes organisées dans le cadre de programmes particuliers définis par l'Union européenne.

§ 2. En ce qui concerne les étudiants bénéficiant d'une allocation octroyée par le service d'allocations d'études de la Communauté française en vertu de la loi du 19 juillet 1971 relative à l'octroi d'allocations et de prêts d'études et du décret du 7 novembre 1983 réglant pour la Communauté française les allocations et les prêts d'études coordonné le 7 novembre 1983, ainsi que les étudiants titulaires d'une attestation de boursier délivrée par l'administration générale de la Coopération au Développement, il ne peut être réclamé aucun droit d'inscription.

Il en est de même pour les membres du personnel d'un établissement d'enseignement supérieur ou pour les chercheurs qu'il accueille conformément à l'Article 5. -§ 2., lorsqu'ils s'inscrivent aux études de troisième cycle ou de masters de spécialisation.

§ 3. Les étudiants à revenus modestes bénéficient de droits d'inscription réduits; ceux-ci sont fixés par décret. Le Gouvernement fixe les conditions que doivent satisfaire les candidats pour être considérés comme à revenus modestes.

§ 4. Les établissements d'enseignement supérieur peuvent accorder à certains étudiants, à titre individuel, d'autres réductions des droits d'inscriptions à charge de leurs allocations ou subsides sociaux accordés en vertu de la loi du 3 août 1960 accordant des avantages sociaux aux universités et établissements assimilés, de l'article 89 du décret du 5 août 1995 fixant l'organisation générale de l'enseignement supérieur en Hautes Écoles ou de l'article 58 du décret du 20 décembre 2001 fixant les règles spécifiques à l'Enseignement supérieur artistique organisé en Écoles supérieures des Arts (organisation,

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financement, encadrement, statut des personnels, droits et devoirs des étudiants). En cas de désinscription de l'étudiant, ces montants sont rétrocédés au budget social de l'établissement.

<sup>4</sup> Article 116. - Nul ne peut obtenir le grade de docteur s'il n'a suivi avec fruit une formation doctorale correspondante.

<sup>5</sup> Article 71. (...) § 2. Les formations doctorales sont encadrées par des équipes associées en une école doctorale thématique agréée par l'ARES sur avis de la Chambre thématique universitaire. Elles sont liées aux compétences spécifiques des équipes de recherche et confèrent aux diplômés une haute qualification scientifique et professionnelle.

Elles peuvent conduire à la délivrance d'un certificat de formation à la recherche sanctionnant forfaitairement 60 crédits de formation. Elles consistent essentiellement en des activités spécifiques liées au métier de chercheur et ne peuvent donc comporter plus 30 crédits d'activités d'apprentissage du type visé au 1° de l'Article 76. -. Les porteurs d'un titre de master à finalité approfondie du même domaine bénéficient d'une valorisation automatique des 30 crédits maximum portant sur ces activités d'apprentissage.

<sup>6</sup> Article 146. - Les diplômes attestant les grades académiques sont délivrés accompagnés d'un supplément au diplôme reprenant notamment la liste des enseignements du programme d'études suivi par l'étudiant, les conditions d'accès aux études et les évaluations sanctionnées par le grade académique conféré.

Le supplément au diplôme est signé par le secrétaire du jury.

Les éléments personnels de ce supplément liés à chaque étudiant peuvent être regroupés en une annexe au supplément. Dans ce cas, seule cette annexe doit être signée par le secrétaire du jury, la partie commune du supplément étant certifiée par l'établissement.

Le supplément au diplôme respecte la forme et le contenu fixés par le Gouvernement.

Quelles que soient les modalités de délivrance des diplômes visés à l'Article 143. -, un seul supplément au diplôme est délivré.

<sup>7</sup> Article 82. - § 1er. Dans le cadre de leurs missions, les établissements d'enseignement supérieur développent des partenariats entre eux, ainsi qu'avec d'autres institutions ou personnes morales issues du monde scientifique, éducatif, professionnel et culturel.

Les partenaires choisis peuvent être belges ou étrangers. Ils peuvent conclure des conventions de collaboration avec ces partenaires.

Pour les conventions en matière d'enseignement, les établissements partenaires doivent être reconnus par leurs autorités compétentes en matière d'enseignement supérieur.

(...)

§ 4. En vue d'encadrer certains travaux relatifs à la préparation d'une thèse de doctorat, les universités peuvent conclure des conventions de cotutelle de thèse avec d'autres universités ou établissements d'enseignement supérieur, en Communauté française ou extérieurs à celle-ci, habilités à délivrer le grade de docteur. Ces conventions sont assimilées aux conventions de codiplômation, mais sont spécifiques pour chaque étudiant; celle-ci spécifie l'école doctorale encadrant sa formation.

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**Agreement for a joint doctoral programme**

**between [name of the partner university] and the Université catholique de Louvain**

**PhD candidate:** [surname and first name of the PhD candidate]

BETWEEN

**[Name of the partner university]** [address], represented by its Rector/President, Prof. [name of the Rector/President of the university], (*select as appropriate*)

AND

**Université catholique de Louvain** Place de l'Université, 1, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium), represented by its Rector, Prof. [name of the Rector],

\*\*\*\*\*

*For [name of the partner university]*

**HAVING REGARD TO**

- [the legal texts relating to organizing university education in [name of the country/community] and, more specifically, the courses of study that are awarded the rank of Doctor];
- [the statutes and/or internal regulations of [name of the university] University relating to the organization of courses of study that are awarded the rank of Doctor];

*For the Université catholique de Louvain*

**HAVING REGARD TO**

- the Decree of 31 March 2004 defining higher education, promoting its integration into the European Higher Education Area and refinancing universities);
- the doctoral regulations of UCL (transitional regime), approved by the UCL Doctoral Committee on 15 September 2014);

**the following provisions are agreed.**

**PREAMBLE**

**General provisions**

The procedure for a joint doctoral programme between [name of the partner university] and the Université catholique de Louvain is designed to establish and develop academic and scientific cooperation by promoting the mobility of PhD candidates.

The general provisions of the agreement, particularly those relating to the protection of thesis topics as well as the publication, use and protection of the results of research common to the two host [Faculties/Departments/Institutes/Schools, etc. (*select as appropriate*)] of the PhD candidate are required to be in conformity both with the specific procedures in each of the two countries/communities and with

the relevant internal regulations of each institution. Any cases of potential conflict in the provisions will form the subject of arbitration between [name of the partner university] and the Université catholique de Louvain.

**TITLE 1**

**Administrative procedures**

**Article 1**

Having obtained the agreement of the relevant authorities and in conformity with the regulations in force relating to doctoral studies in each country/community, the PhD candidate may gain admission to pursue the preparation of his/her thesis in the two institutions by observance of the following procedures for enrolment on the doctoral programme:

***At the Université catholique de Louvain:***

In order to gain the degree awarded by the French Community of Belgium, the PhD candidate is required, upon first enrolling on the doctoral programme after the date cited in Article 2 when this agreement comes into force, to pay his/her tuition fees in full to the Université catholique de Louvain.

In all subsequent years, including the year of the doctoral defence, he/she is required to pay his/her matriculation fees to the Université catholique de Louvain.

***At [name of the partner university]:***

The PhD candidate is required, when he/she first enrolls at [name of the partner university], to pay .....  
*(to be filled in).*

In subsequent years, he/she is required to pay ..... *(to be filled in)* to [name of the partner university].

and

***At the Université catholique de Louvain:***

The PhD candidate is enrolled on the doctoral programme in [field of research] (option: [name of the Doctoral School]).

***At [name of the partner university]:***

The PhD candidate is enrolled on the doctoral programme in ..... *(to be filled in).*

Thesis topic registered by the PhD candidate:

.....  
.....  
.....

A description of the thesis is appended to this agreement (Annex 1) *(append Annex 1)*.

## Article 2

Enrolment of the PhD candidate on a joint programme takes effect on [the date of entry into force]. The projected length of research is fixed at [to be filled in] years. The defence of the thesis is planned during the [year y]-[year y+1] academic year.

This period may only be extended as a special exception with the agreement of the two institutions and at the recommendation of the thesis supervisors (named in Article 5). Such a request must be made six months before the date by which the thesis is scheduled to end.

## Article 3

The period during which the thesis is being prepared should be divided alternately between the two signatory institutions. Research work should therefore be conducted in both institutions according to a timetable jointly drawn up by the two thesis supervisors named in Article 5. This timetable is also set out in Annex 2 (*append Annex 2*).

Any amendment to this timetable should be requested from both signatory institutions by the thesis supervisors at least one month in advance.

## Article 4 (*select as appropriate*)

### **(If the partner institution is outside Belgium)**

A PhD candidate is covered by social security insurance in line with the legislation in force in each country, providing that he/she has fulfilled the enrolment requirements in the institution of the relevant country.

However, he/she must provide evidence of a main insurance policy in [one of the two countries, either Belgium or XXX (*to be filled in as appropriate*)]. Moreover, he/she must be able to provide evidence of an additional insurance policy to cover illness and civil risk for the duration of the periods of time he/she spends in [one of the two countries – XXX/Belgium] and abroad.

### **(If the partner institution is in the Flemish Community of Belgium)**

A PhD candidate is covered by social security insurance in line with the legislation in force in Belgium, providing that he/she has fulfilled the enrolment requirements. In addition, he/she must provide evidence of an additional insurance policy to cover illness and civil risk for the duration of any periods of time he/she may spend outside Belgium.

## TITLE II

### Academic procedures

#### Article 5

PhD candidates who are undertaking a joint doctoral programme must conduct their work under the supervision and responsibility of a thesis supervisor in each of the two institutions:

*At [name of the partner university]:*

name of thesis supervisor [name]

*At the Université catholique de Louvain:*

name of thesis supervisor [name]

They undertake to exercise to the full the role of supervisor of the PhD candidate and to do so according to the conditions in force within each signatory institution. They will hold regular meetings on the progress of the PhD candidate's research.

## **Article 6**

Approval for defence of a thesis is granted jointly by the two institutions, according to the legal and regulatory provisions in force in both places.

The members of the PhD examination board are jointly nominated by the two partner institutions. The composition of the board must be in conformity with the legal and regulatory provisions in force in the two institutions. The board must include the thesis supervisors (see Article 5) and an external examiner from outside the two institutions. The board must be formed of at least five members, all of whom are required to have gained the academic rank of Doctor after having defended a thesis, or who can provide evidence of expert knowledge of an equivalent level.

## **Article 7**

The thesis of Mr/Ms [surname and first name of the PhD candidate], prepared as part of the joint doctoral programme, shall be written in ..... [*select language as appropriate*: French or English, or a language approved by the PhD examination board where the thesis justifies an alternative].

The thesis of Mr/Ms [surname and first name of the PhD candidate] shall be defended in ..... [*select language as appropriate*: French or English, or a language approved by the board where the thesis justifies an alternative].

## **Article 8**

In conformity with the doctoral regulations of the Université catholique de Louvain and subject to the relevant provisions of these regulations, there shall be a private defence of the thesis, held in one of the two institutions, in the presence of all the members of the board.

There shall then be a single public defence, recognized by both institutions, to be held at ..... [*fill in place name*: [name of the partner university] OR the Université catholique de Louvain].

In advance of the public defence, the PhD candidate shall present the results of his/her research at a seminar held at the partner institution where the public defence is not being held.

The date and place of the public defence are jointly agreed and notified in writing by the thesis supervisors in the two partner institutions to the Deans of the relevant faculties.

## **Article 9**

The PhD candidate undertakes to abide by the regulations on doctoral studies in force in the institutions bound by this agreement. In particular, he/she shall follow the rules on the submission, description and reproduction of theses.

Mr/Ms [surname and first name of the PhD candidate] will have to fulfil the doctoral training programme requirements applicable in both institutions. Nevertheless, he/she is authorized to take into account the same activity in both programmes if it is recognized as part of a doctoral training programme in both institutions.

## **Article 10**

In conformity with the regulations in force in each country/community and on the basis of the report on the public defence, the rank of Doctor in [(to be filled in)] from [name of the partner university] and that of Doctor in [(to be filled in)] from the Université catholique de Louvain shall be conferred, on the basis of joint deliberation, on Mr/Ms [surname and first name of the PhD candidate] as a .... [*select as appropriate*: single joint degree or degree from each institution]

[*select as appropriate*]

[*In the case of a single joint degree*: This degree certificate shall make explicit reference to the joint doctoral programme agreement.]

or

*[In the case of a degree from each institution: The degree certificates shall make explicit reference to the joint doctoral programme agreement and to the other degree awarded.]*

There shall be a single supplement to the degree certificate, composed of two parts containing respectively the texts usually appended to degree certificates in the two institutions, in the relevant languages. This single supplement must be signed by the board secretary.

**Article 11**

The partner institutions undertake to abide by the strictest ethical rules in force.

**TITLE III**

**Final provisions**

**Article 12**

This agreement is valid for a period of [to be filled in – see Article 2] years from [the date in Article 2 of this agreement]. Any amendments to this joint doctoral programme agreement must be confirmed by both institutions.

This agreement is made in five copies, one copy for each signatory.

*For [name of the partner university]*

*For the Université catholique de Louvain*

Thesis Supervisor

Thesis Supervisor

Prof. ....

Prof. ....

Date: .....

Date: .....

Signature

Signature

President/Rector (*select as appropriate*)

Rector

Prof. ....

Prof. ....

Date: .....

Date: .....

Signature

Signature

PhD candidate

Surname: .....

First name: .....

E-mail: .....

Date: .....

Signature

## EQUIVALENCE OF FOREIGN DEGREES TO 3RD CYCLE DEGREE (DOCTORATE)

### *A2-1. Equivalence committees*

An equivalence committee is formed for each area of study:

- It is competent to grant equivalence for foreign academic third cycle (doctorate) degree relating to the relevant area in the French Community of Belgium ;
- It is made up of a President, an Academic Secretary and a third member of the relevant doctoral committee ;
- It rules on the basis of a **file** provided by the applicant, in conformity with the provisions cited in point A2-2 of the current annex and with the **opinion given** by the body formed for this purpose, in conformity with the provisions cited in point A2-3 of the current Annex.

In the case of a favourable decision, an equivalence certification, on the required model, is issued by the Equivalence Committee. The original is then sent to the Rector's office of UCL.

### *A2-2. Submission of equivalence applications*

Requests for equivalence for a third cycle (doctorate) degree must be submitted to the Rector's office.

The applicant must produce the following documents to ensure that his or her request is admissible:

- A **certified copy of the doctoral degree certificate** together with a translation achieved by a sworn translator (translation is not required for certificates in English, French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese or German) ;
- A **copy of the second cycle degree certificate, as well as copy of certificate(s) for post-graduate degrees** if relevant;
- A **paper copy of the doctoral thesis** (which will be returned to the applicant) together with an abstract in English or French if the thesis is written in another language ;
- A **curriculum vitae** including the applicant's full contact details as well as the titles (and any special results) of the years of study he or she has pursued, a list of publications (particularly those relating to the thesis) and contributions to international conferences together with any other details which he or she considers relevant to the application ;
- If needed, **the name of a contact person** from UCL (compulsory for requests relating to applications for an F.R.S.- FNRS post).
- If it is available, the **doctoral regulation of the university** which has awarded the doctorate for which recognition of equivalence has been requested or any other document which enables verification of the entry criteria for doctoral studies as well as the accreditation or the recognition by the competent foreign authorities of the institution which has awarded the degree and the status of the degree as recognized by the competent foreign authorities.

### *A2-3. Advisory body*

An advisory body shall be formed to consider all requests for equivalence and to submit a reasoned opinion to the relevant Equivalence Committee.

The advisory body shall be made up of **three members** nominated by the Equivalence Committee.

**LABEL DE DOCTORAT EUROPÉEN**

**Année académique ..../....**

Attestation de label de « doctorat européen » conféré à [Nom et Prénom du récipiendaire], né(e) à [Ville/Pays], le [date de naissance] et titulaire du diplôme de docteur en [domaine d'études] délivré par l'Université catholique de Louvain.

Le jury certifie que [Nom et prénom du récipiendaire] a satisfait aux conditions prévues à l'article 3.3 du règlement doctoral de l'Université catholique de Louvain (régime transitoire) en vue de l'obtention du label de doctorat européen.

▪ Titre de la thèse : .....

▪ Promoteur(s) de la thèse : .....

[nom(s), prénom(s), institution(s) d'appartenance du(des) promoteur(s) avec mention du pays]

▪ L'autorisation de soutenance publique a été accordée au vu du rapport de délibération de la défense privée auquel ont contribué :

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

[Noms, pré noms, institutions d'appartenance des membres du jury avec mention du pays]

▪ La thèse a été soutenue en [préciser une langue de l'UE y compris le français] et, partiellement, en [préciser une langue de l'UE y compris le français].

▪ Le(s) séjour(s) de recherche à l'étranger s'est (se sont) déroulé(s) du [date de début du séjour] au [date de fin du séjour] dans l'équipe du Prof./Dr. : [nom de l'encadrant dans l'entité d'accueil] de/du [Nom du laboratoire ou unité d'accueil] de [Nom de l'établissement d'accueil, adresse avec mention du pays].

En foi de quoi le jury décerne à [Nom et Prénom du récipiendaire], le label de « doctorat européen ».

Fait à ....., le [date de la soutenance publique]

(Nom, prénom et signature)  
Président du jury

(Nom, prénom et signature)  
Secrétaire du jury

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR SUPERVISING A DOCTORAL THESIS IN THE UNIVERSITE CATHOLIQUE DE LOUVAIN**

### **Preamble**

To be admitted to the doctorate, the Doctoral Regulation of UCL stipulates, among other conditions, that the candidate must “*have a thesis supervisor who is a member of staff of UCL who is accredited to supervise a doctoral thesis. The supervisor undertakes to oversee, effectively and in person, the work relating to the preparation of the thesis; if the research subject justifies it, the candidate may have several supervisors.*” (Article 2.2.2. 2°)

In addition to the requirement that the supervisor should be a member of staff of UCL, it is important that he or she is available to undertake supervision of work on the thesis until the end of the doctorate.

Furthermore, in view of the fact that the nomination of a thesis supervisor is an integral part of the doctorate admission process, the relevant Doctoral Committee remains the decision-making body for the approval of the candidate’s application and, consequently, may also refuse proposals which it deems to be unsuitable where supervision of the thesis is concerned, even where the suggested supervisor meets the eligibility criteria for supervising a thesis.

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### **Eligibility criteria for supervising a doctoral thesis:**

#### **1. Criteria relating to the status of the supervisor: accredited supervisors and authorised supervisors:**

1.1. The following are considered as **accredited supervisors** to oversee a doctoral thesis:

- members of the tenured academic staff of UCL;
- doctors with clinical academic status, members of the academic staff of UCL;
- permanent F.R.S.-FNRS representatives attached to UCL;
- members of the tenured research and teaching staff of UCL.

1.2. The following are considered as **authorised supervisors** to oversee a doctoral thesis (*providing that an ‘accredited’ supervisor is also nominated – cf. 1, above*):

- non-tenured lecturers from UCL ;
- tenured lecturers or research and teaching staff not from UCL;
- any other person who holds the title of Doctor obtained after defence of a thesis or of ‘Agrégé de l'Enseignement Supérieur’
- The relevant Doctoral Committee may dispense with this requirement if it considers the academic background of the person concerned to be equivalent.

#### **2. Criteria relating to the availability of the accredited supervisor until the end of the doctorate:**

2.1. The supervisor should be available during the period necessary for supervision of the whole thesis.

2.2. At the time of admission to the doctorate, if the supervisor is within 3 years or less of being awarded emeritus status or of retirement, the relevant Doctoral Committee should forthwith nominate an additional member to the supervisory committee, who fulfils the criteria of an accredited supervisor. This is to enable him or her officially to become the second supervisor when the first supervisor is awarded emeritus status or retires.