

PROCEDURE CONCERNING THE DOCTORAL EXAM AT THE FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE – GHENT UNIVERSITY

Information for the external members of the Examination Board for the doctoral exam at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Article 1. Submission of the doctoral dissertation

§1. Doctoral students submit their doctoral dissertation to the Faculty Board, and the Faculty Board assigns an Examination Board for the doctoral exam.

§2. With the exception of the chair, each member of the Examination Board who is qualified to vote, evaluates the dissertation prior to the doctoral exam and draws up a **written report**. The promoters are not qualified to vote. The **'Form for the evaluation of the PhD thesis by the members of the Examination Board'**, as sent by the Dean's office together with the pdf file of the dissertation, should be used. Please send the completed form back to the Dean's office (email doctoraat.di@ugent.be), not later than **10 days before the first meeting of the Examination Board (private defence)**. Afterwards, the Dean's office will send all completed evaluation forms to all members of the Examination Board, and also to the doctoral student.

The evaluation form consists of two parts:

(1) the first part includes the recommendation on whether or not the public defence will be allowed (possibly after the doctoral student has made some adjustments in the dissertation text, i.e. minor or major revisions).

(2) the second part includes general and detailed comments. Please note that this report is also sent to the doctoral student. So, specific questions an Examination Board member would like to address during the public defence should not be mentioned on this form.

Article 2. The Doctoral Exam

§1. The doctoral exam consists of **two parts** that are each deliberated on and assessed:

- The **private defence** of the doctoral dissertation
- The **public defence** of said dissertation

§2. Not later than 4 days prior to the private defence, the doctoral student will receive from the Dean's office the **evaluation forms** drawn up by each of the Examination Board member who is qualified to vote (with the exception of the chair).

§3. During the **private defence**, the appraisal of the Examination Board occurs behind closed doors. All members of the Examination Board attend the meeting, possibly via video conference, and sign the attendance register. If a member of the Examination Board is unable to attend the private defence, she/he is asked to report this to the chair of the Examination Board. In order to deliberate legitimately, at least three fifths (60%) of the members qualified to vote must be present.

The Examination Board hears the doctoral student during this private defence for **maximum 1 hour** and appraises the doctoral dissertation of the candidate. Both specific and more general questions can be raised by each member who is qualified to vote (approximately 10 minutes foreseen for each member). The questioning takes place in Dutch or English, and at least for non-Dutch speaking members in English.

The members of the Examination Board who are qualified to vote, assess the candidate's skills and competencies and deliberate in the absence of the candidate and the promoters on the basis of (1) the written reports by each of the members who are qualified to vote and (2) the hearing of the doctoral student.

The deliberation will result in one of the following appraisals:

- admission to the second part of the examination (public defence of the doctoral dissertation);
- admission to the second part, after corrections have been made by the doctoral student to her/his doctoral dissertation within the time span imposed by the Examination Board. In joint consultation, the chair and the promoters will ensure that these requested corrections are implemented;
- no admission to the second part of the examination.

The members of the Examination Board who are qualified to vote decide by simple majority of the votes, abstentions not taken into consideration. The final outcome of this deliberation is communicated to the candidate immediately after the deliberation and is included in a deliberation report. After its approval, the deliberation report (including the final deliberation decision) is communicated to all members of the Examination Board, the candidate and the Dean's office in writing.

In case minor or major revisions have to be included in the dissertation, a revised version including highlights and a rebuttal letter should be sent to all members of the Examination Board not later than one week before the public defence takes place. Each Examination Board member has then 1 to 2 days to give her/his approval.

§4. During the **public defence**, the doctoral student puts forward an oral and public defence of her/his doctoral dissertation before the Examination Board. In order to deliberate legitimately, at least three fifths (60%) of the members qualified to vote must be present.

The public defence consists of **two parts**:

- a presentation of the PhD dissertation by the candidate in a comprehensive way. This lasts approximately 45 minutes and is in Dutch or English.
- immediately after this presentation, each member of the Examination Committee has the opportunity to ask questions (approximately 7-8 minutes foreseen for each member). The complete questioning lasts approximately 45 minutes. The questioning takes place in Dutch or English, and at least for non-Dutch speaking members in English.

§5. The members of the Examination Board who are qualified to vote deliberate in a separate room on the examination as a whole, immediately after the public defence session. They discuss both the presentation and the answers to the questions.

They decide by simple majority of the votes, abstentions not taken into consideration, whether or not the academic degree of doctor is awarded.

§6. The examination decision is publicly announced by the chair immediately after the deliberation, including the proclamation of the academic degree of doctor.

§7. The examination decision needs to be included in a deliberation report, together with the attendance register of the members of the Examination Board. After its approval, the deliberation report (including the final examination decision) is communicated to all members of the Examination Board and the Dean's office in writing.

Article 3. Prize 'Best clinical doctorate' or 'Best non-clinical doctorate'

If the thesis is eligible for the prize 'Best clinical doctorate' or 'Best non-clinical doctorate', the supervisor with administrative responsibility must propose it at the time the thesis is submitted along with a written argumentation mentioned on the 'Application form doctorate examination board', on which the proposition is based. One or more of the following selection criteria may apply:

- publications with exceptional impact and relative ranking;
- special prizes for oral and/or poster presentations;
- patent application and/or value resulting from the doctoral research;
- distinctive societal value;
- any other argument that indicates the exemplary character of the doctoral research (e.g. innovation, multidisciplinary, etc);
- information mentioned in the reports of the private and public defence.

The chairperson of the examination board will discuss such proposition with the examination board during the private and public defence. The examination board shall decide whether or not the doctorate is eligible for the prize of best clinical doctorate or best non-clinical doctorate of that academic year, and reports with sufficient detail the arguments hereto (i.c. based on the above mentioned selection criteria).