

Timeline of the doctorate life cycle in the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences

The “Supplementary faculty regulations governing the doctorate in the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences” were approved by the Faculty Board of 9 September 2015; the amended “Supplementary faculty regulations governing the doctorate in the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences” were approved by the Faculty Board on 7 October 2015 and on 17 August 2016; the amended “Supplementary faculty regulations governing the doctorate in the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences” were approved by the Faculty Board on 18 March 2020 and by delegation of power on October 23rd 2020 (due to an incompatibility with the Resolution pertaining to awarding combined doctoral degrees for interdisciplinary doctorates).

1. Introduction

The Board of the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences approved the Supplementary faculty regulations governing the doctorate on 9 September 2015, on 7 October 2015 and on 17 August 2016. The supplementary faculty regulations governing the doctorate were modified by the Faculty Board of the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences on 18 March 2020 and by delegation of power on October 23rd 2020 (due to an incompatibility with the Resolution pertaining to awarding combined doctoral degrees for interdisciplinary doctorates).

These regulations include specific terms concerning the doctorate in the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. These regulations are to be seen as a supplement to the university-wide regulations comprised in the Education and Examination Code for Doctoral Matters of Ghent University.

2. Doctoral training

Attending the Ghent University doctoral training programme courses is not imposed by the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences. However, every doctoral student is expected to follow the mandatory introductory track for doctoral students.

3. Procedure for the doctoral exam

From AY 2022-23 onwards, the administrative flow of the doctorate is managed by means of the online platform PLATO. The procedure to be followed - timing, actions to be taken in PLATO, necessary documents, composition of the Examination Board, evaluation of the doctoral dissertation, first deliberation (internal defence), public defence - is detailed below.

It should be clear that failing to provide, enter or upload the data requested in PLATO before the moment specified in the timeline, will automatically halt the progress of the PhD procedure. PLATO sends mails with to-do's at specified intervals. It is mandatory that these are carefully read and followed up with actions in due time. In an automated system, no extra warnings are to be expected on the basis of human control intervention, and the process will inevitably halt!

4. Timing and regulations

Day -8 (or earlier):

The doctoral student contacts the dean's office to make concrete arrangements regarding the preparation of the doctorate in PLATO, i.e. filling in all data regarding the doctorate - title of the doctoral dissertation, promoter(s), name of the doctoral student's basic diploma, suggested composition of the Examination Board, personal details of the proposed members of the Examination Board, status of research results that can create value, all data regarding the first deliberation (internal defence), signature of the doctoral student and the promoter(s), etc. – and submits the dossier in PLATO.

When applicable, it is the promoter himself who contacts the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) and requests them to inform the dean about the instructions to be followed concerning research results that can create value.

Day -7:

The dean's office distributes the Faculty Board agenda. The submission of the doctoral dissertation is one of the items on the agenda.

Day -2 (or earlier):

The doctoral student uploads the PDF of the doctoral dissertation in PLATO.

Day 0:

The Faculty Board

- 1) Ensures that all administrative formalities are taken care of (degree, advice present, doctoral dissertation uploaded in PLATO, etc.);
- 2) Assigns the Examination Board according to art. 3 in the Supplementary faculty regulations and to the articles concerned in the Education and Examination Code for Doctoral Matters of Ghent University (OER Doctoreren), based on (but not limited to) the composition of the Examination Board as recommended by the promoter(s) by means of the online application PLATO. By entering the Examination Board recommendation in PLATO, the promoter(s) solemnly declare that the proposed composition of the Examination Board is in accordance with the relevant stipulations of the Education and Examination Code for Doctoral Matters (OER Doctoreren) and the Supplementary faculty regulations governing the doctorate in the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences;
- 3) Appoints a chair and a secretary from amongst the members who are qualified to vote and who are affiliated with the faculty;
- 4) Instructs the dean's office to monitor the doctoral process in PLATO. In case the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) forwarded a written question to the dean concerning the legal protection of confidential research results, the chair of the Examination Board is requested to take the necessary measures in accordance with the related article(s) in the Education and Examination Code for Doctoral Matters (OER Doctoreren).

Day 1:

The dean's office updates the status of the doctorate in PLATO, thus automatically informing the doctoral student, the promoter, the chair, the secretary and the Examination Board members of the tasks awaiting them and the timing thereof via emails from Phdfw@ugent.be.

It should be clear that:

- 1) The Examination Board should meet at least 30 calendar days and no more than 90 calendar days after its appointment by the Faculty Board. The promoter suggests a number of possible dates, thus aiming to enter as soon as possible a final date, hour and place for the first deliberation (internal defence) in PLATO;
- 2) The doctoral student enters an examination room (including possible videoconference facilities) in PLATO, and obligatorily checks the availability of the examination room with the dean's office. Note that closed defences cannot take place during the recesses stipulated in Article 2 of the Education and Examination Code of Ghent University;
- 3) All members of the Examination Board are expected to be present at the first deliberation (internal defence); when, by way of exception, a member of the Examination Board is unable to attend the first deliberation (internal defence), this should immediately be reported to the chair of the Examination Board;
- 4) All members of the Examination Board have to complete and upload two evaluation forms - on the one hand an evaluation intended for the doctoral student (and by definition also for the examination board members), and on the other hand, an evaluation intended only for the examination board members - in PLATO at least 7 calendar days before the first deliberation (internal defence).

Day 30 to 90:

Duty to provide information to the doctoral student:

The doctoral student has the right to consult the evaluation forms uploaded by the members of the Examination Board - i.e. the part intended for the doctoral student - online on PLATO. If one or more evaluation forms were not uploaded on time, the first deliberation (internal defence) will be postponed if the PhD student so requests.

Actions to be taken by the doctoral student:

The doctoral student is to upload a Dutch and an English summary of his/her doctoral dissertation in PLATO before the first deliberation (internal defence) can take place.

First deliberation (internal defence)

- 1) The meeting of the Examination Board for the first deliberation (internal defence) takes place behind closed doors. The promoters do not participate in the first deliberation (internal defence), except for one promoter (appointed via PLATO) who can be present at the first deliberation (internal defence). However, the appointed promoter is not qualified to vote and does not take part in the deliberation;
- 2) The secretary of the Examination Board records the names of the Examination Board members present by means of the attendance list. This attendance list is an integral part of the reporting

of the first deliberation (internal defence) and has to be filled out in PLATO by the secretary of the Examination Board. If one or more members attend the Examination Board meeting via video conference, the secretary of the Examination Board will register and certify this as an attendance;

- 3) First the chair presents an oral summary of the completed evaluation forms in absence of the doctoral student;
- 4) The doctoral student briefly presents his/her work (approximately 15 minutes). An elaborate discussion/interpellation follows;
- 5) The language used during the hearing of the doctoral student is to be determined in advance, in joint consultation between the doctoral student, the promoter and the chair of the Examination Board, and entered in PLATO;
- 6) The members of the Examination Board who are qualified to vote assess the candidate's performance and make individual recommendations as to whether the student can be admitted to the public defence. After the deliberation, the Examination Board will transform these individual recommendations – in joint consultation, if not by simple majority of the votes - into a general recommendation, using the template 'report of first meeting' to be found and filled out in PLATO by the secretary;

The deliberation will result in one of the appraisals below:

- a) No or only minor adjustments necessary, admission to the second part of the examination, i.e. the public defence of the doctoral dissertation (score A);
- b) Admission to the second part after substantial corrections were made by the doctoral student to his/her doctoral dissertation (score B). The revised doctoral dissertation (i.e. a rebuttal document specifying in detail the changes, an adapted version of the dissertation with visible track changes, and a final 'clean' version of the adapted dissertation) is to be uploaded in PLATO, visible to all members of the Examination Board at least 7 calendar days prior to the date on which the public defence is planned;
- c) This work is of insufficient quality, there can be no admission to the second part of the examination (score C). This score is to be extra substantiated in the document report of first meeting.

If a doctoral student scores insufficiently when questioned about the broader scientific context, a negative report (score C) is advised.

- 7) The final outcome of the deliberation is immediately communicated to the doctoral student by the chair of the Examination Board. The secretary takes down the decision in the document 'report of first meeting'. This document (clearly and unambiguously mentioning the score A/B/C assigned by the Examination Board), is to be updated in PLATO together with the attendance list, ultimately within 5 calendar days after the first deliberation (internal defence). No further notification is given to the doctoral student, except when the Examination Board advises a score C (no admission to the second part of the doctoral exam): in this case the decision is also to be substantiated in writing to the doctoral student and the promoter(s). When a doctoral student is admitted to the public defence (whether corrections are to be made or not), a date and time for the public defence are set and filled out in PLATO by the secretary, after the doctoral student checked the availability of the examination room with the dean's office. The dean's office will then book the examination room selected (including the faculty board room) for the duration of the examination. The duration of the examination is limited in time by the UGent reservation system until 7.45 pm. Except when permission was

obtained from the doctoral student for a suitable later date, the public defence should take place within 60 days after admission to the second part of the doctoral exam was granted. Except when permission for a suitable earlier date was obtained from the dean, the public defence should take place at the earliest 14 calendar days after the first deliberation (internal defence).

Very important: reservation of adjacent rooms and places for a small celebration of the PhD, if awarded, are to be reserved by the PhD student or promoter themselves. As this does not categorise as an educational event, such reservations follow a different UGent regulation: they are financially charged by the UGent and should be reserved 3 weeks in advance (i.e. earlier than the abovementioned minimum 14 days in between the internal and public defence). The dean's office assumes no responsibility for the reservation of adjacent rooms for small celebrations. Only availability can be checked, if necessary, with the dean's office.

Public defences cannot take place during the recesses stipulated in Article 2 of the Education and Examination Code of Ghent University;

- 8) The doctoral student and/or secretary of the Examination Board enter all necessary data (i.e. place and date of the public defence) in PLATO, after which the dean's office completes the necessary administrative formalities with respect to diploma, etc.;
- 9) The doctoral student and the promoter meticulously verify that all administrative actions in PLATO were taken care of. If not, the PhD process automatically halts and the public defence cannot take place!

Days between admission to the second part of the doctoral exam and the public defence

- 1) The doctoral student:
 - a) Informs the dean's office of the location preferred by the doctoral student where the public defence will be held, after checking whether this location is available (free). The dean's office will do the booking (only if this location is within the FFW faculty building; a public defence in other UGent (e.g. representative) locations, Aula, etc., has to be organised by the PhD student and promoter themselves. But then also the dean's office has to be informed);
 - b) Pays the enrolment fee for the doctoral exam;
 - c) Delivers a final, printed (if necessary reworked) version of the doctoral dissertation to all members of the Examination Board and to the dean's office, before or at the start of the public defence. Besides that, in case of a B-score, the reworked electronic version(s) and rebuttal have to be uploaded in PLATO and visible to all members of the Examination Board at least 7 calendar days prior to the public defence;
 - d) Delivers, by electronic means, to all Examination Board members, the slides which will be used for the explanation of the broader international perspective of the conducted research, at least 2 working days prior to the public defence.
- 2) The dean's office:
 - a) Announces ad valvas (also to the Doctoral School) the time and location of the public defence meeting and books the location requested by the doctoral student where the public defence will be held (only if this location is within the FFW faculty building); a public defence in other UGent (e.g. representative) locations, Aula, etc., has to be organised by the PhD student and promoter themselves;

- b) Provides all relevant information to the Registrar's Office of the Department of Educational Policy, to enable the announcement of the doctoral dissertation's public defence by the central administration.
- 3) The central administration:
- a) Announces the public defence on the Ghent University website;
 - b) Automatically invites the doctoral student to pay the enrolment fee by sending him/her an invoice.

Final day

The public defence

- 1) The doctoral student puts forward a relatively long presentation (minimum 40 minutes, maximum 50 minutes) about the conducted research, accessible also to a non-expert public. This presentation is to be followed by an explanation of the broader international perspective of the conducted research, paying explicit attention to the economic and/or social relevance of the research, to anticipated future developments in the discipline concerned and to the potential contribution of his/her research to these developments. This explanation takes 10 to 15 minutes. Next, the members of the Examination Board may interact with the doctoral student regarding the statements made in this second part of the public defence. This interactive discussion is limited to maximum 20 minutes;
- 2) The members of the Examination Board who are qualified to vote deliberate in camera on the examination as a whole, immediately after the public defence session, as determined in the Education and Examination Code for Doctoral Matters (OER Doctoreren). The promoter(s) will not participate in the deliberation but they can be heard;
- 3) Immediately after the public defence the chair of the Examination Board publicly announces the Examination Board's appreciation concerning the contents and the presentation of the work (no degrees).

The appreciation by the Examination Board comprises the extent to which the following criteria have been evaluated:

- a) Scientific contents and results;
 - b) Answers to the questions asked during the first deliberation (internal defence);
 - c) Presentation of the doctoral dissertation during the public defence;
 - d) Explanation and discussion of the broader international perspective of the conducted research.
- 4) The secretary of the Examination Board records the names of the Examination Board members present by means of the attendance list – which is an inherent part of the report of the public defence – and sees to it that this attendance list is filled out in PLATO ultimately within a month following the public defence. If the academic degree of doctor is not awarded, this decision has to be extra substantiated and communicated in writing to the doctoral student, the promoter(s) and the dean.

After the public defence the doctor receives a PDF with the diploma and the diploma supplement from the Department of Educational Policy (DOWA). DOWA will send the official hard copy of the diploma to the Faculty Student Administration by registered internal mail. The doctor can obtain the official diploma from the Faculty Student Administration in principle two days after the date of the public defence.

And finally

After the successful public defence of the doctorate, the doctoral thesis is uploaded on Biblio by PLATO. Without detracting from the rights of the author, Ghent University or third parties, the university library will make the doctoral dissertation accessible by way of an open access system.

TO-DO LIST

To do	By	Before first deliberation	After first deliberation and before the public defence
Contact the dean's office to make concrete arrangements regarding the preparation of the doctorate in PLATO	Student	✓	
Prepare the application to the final phase of the doctorate in PLATO	Student/promoter	✓	
When applicable, contact the Technology Transfer Office (TTO)	Promoter	✓	
Present the composition of the Examination Board to the Faculty Board, by means of the online application PLATO	Promoter	✓	
Take the necessary measures concerning the legal protection of confidential research results	Chair	✓	
Upload the PDF of the doctoral dissertation in PLATO	Student	✓	
Update the status of the doctorate in PLATO, informing the doctoral student, the promoter, the chair, the secretary and the Examination Board members of the tasks awaiting them and the timing thereof via emails from Phdfw@ugent.be	Dean's office	✓	
Contact the dean's office to reserve an examination room for the first deliberation (internal defence)	Student	✓	
Upload the completed evaluation forms in PLATO	Examination Board members	✓	
Upload a Dutch and an English summary of the doctoral dissertation in PLATO	Student	✓	

To do	By	Before first deliberation	After first deliberation and before the public defence
Record the names of the Examination Board members present at the internal defence in the attendance list in PLATO	Secretary		✓
Fill out in PLATO the document 'report of the first meeting'	Secretary		✓
In case of a score B, upload the electronic version(s) of the revised doctoral dissertation and rebuttal in PLATO	Student		✓
Check the availability of the examination room for the public defence with the dean's office and ask to make the reservation in TimeEdit	Student		✓
Set and fill out the date and time for the public defence in PLATO	Secretary		✓
Verify that all administrative actions/mandatory information inputs in PLATO were taken care of	Student Promoter Secretary		✓
Pay the enrolment fee for the doctoral exam	Student		✓
Deliver a final, printed (if necessary reworked) version of the doctoral dissertation to all members of the Examination Board	Student		✓
Deliver to all Examination Board members the slides which will be used for the explanation of the broader international perspective	Student		✓
Record the names of the Examination Board members present at the public defence in the attendance list in PLATO	Secretary		✓
Fill out the report of the public defence in PLATO	Secretary		✓