

**Doctoral Rules and Regulations of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences –  
version dated March 2019**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

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On 1 July 2015, the board of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences approved the faculty doctoral rules and regulations presented in section 2. These rules and regulations present the faculty-specific provisions for doctorates and the doctoral training programme within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. These rules and regulations are to be considered as a supplement to the general provisions set forth in the applicable "Education and Examination Code".

## **2. FACULTY DOCTORAL RULES AND REGULATIONS**

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**Article 1.** Requests to pursue doctoral training in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences must be submitted using the "Request for authorisation to pursue doctoral training in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences" form. Only complete, legible and correctly signed requests will be processed. The faculty board will rule on the request to pursue doctoral training taking into account the opinion of the Faculty Doctoral Committee.

**Article 2.** Every doctoral student has a *supervisor* who is an active member of the professorial staff (ZAP) with a research project in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. A co-supervisor from within or outside of Ghent University may also be appointed in addition. The co-supervisor must have a doctorate with dissertation. One professorial staff member supervisor is named as the "administrative chief supervisor". He/she will hold the top responsibility for the scientific training and guidance of the doctoral student and the quality of the doctorate.

Exceptionally, a request can be submitted to the Faculty Doctoral Committee for appointment of a third supervisor. This request must be supported by a written justification clearly indicating that (i) a third supervisor is absolutely necessary for the success of the project, (ii) each of the three supervisors is responsible for overseeing a substantial and specific part of the research, and (iii) each of the three supervisors based on their expertise makes a unique contribution that is complementary to that of the other supervisors and contributes to the success of the doctorate. The three supervisors must be affiliated with at least two different research groups. The administrative chief supervisor may be heard on this subject by the Faculty Doctoral Committee.

When submitting an interdisciplinary doctorate or a Joint PhD with our faculty/university as main faculty/main institution, a maximum of 4 supervisors can be allowed (maximum 2 from each faculty/university).

The faculty board will confirm the appointed supervisors when the dissertation is presented, taking into account the opinion of the Faculty Doctoral Committee.



**Article 3.** Each doctoral student has the right to guidance by a doctoral advisory committee appointed by the faculty board. The members of the doctoral advisory committee must have doctoral diplomas.

**Article 4.** Completion of the doctoral training programme at Ghent University is recommended but not mandatory.

**Article 5.** During the course of his/her doctoral studies, the doctoral student may submit a justified written request to the dean to change the previously approved supervisor(s) and members of the doctoral advisory committee. The dean will present such requests to the Faculty Doctoral Committee that will examine the grounds. The faculty board will decide, taking into account the opinion of the Faculty Doctoral Committee, whether or not to allow the change.

**Article 6.** The criteria shown below are the *minimum conditions* set forth by the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences for submission of the dissertation. As stipulated in Article 8 (below), the examination board decides autonomously on the value of the dissertation presented. The following minimum conditions must thus be met, but are not necessarily sufficient.

The minimum criteria must be met in the following situations:

1. There are *two publications (regardless of the ranking)* on which the doctoral student is the sole first author.
2. There is *one publication with sole first authorship* in a journal with an impact factor among the **25% highest** within the assigned research field (journal in the first quartile or '**Q1 journal**') and *one manuscript with sole first authorship* submitted for publication in an A1 journal (regardless of the ranking of the journal).
3. There is *one publication with co-first authorship* in a Q1 journal and *one publication with sole first authorship* (regardless of the ranking of the journal).
4. There are *two publications with co-first authorship* in Q1 journals.
5. There is *one publication with co-first authorship* in a journal with an impact factor among the **10% highest** within the assigned research field (journal in the first decile or '**D1 journal**') and *one manuscript with sole or co-first authorship* submitted for publication in an A1 journal (regardless of the ranking of the journal).

**Comments:**

- a. "Publication" shall be understood as an A1-ranking publication presenting original research results and that was not yet used to meet the minimum criteria for another doctoral dissertation. It is effectively published or accepted for publication. In the last case, the proof of "acceptance for publication" must be provided with presentation of the dissertation.
- b. The proof that publication is accepted in a journal with D1 or Q1 ranking must be provided with the presented dissertation. For this, the version of the year of publication of the "Journal Citation Reports" (Web of Science) must be used (if available) and one of the existing "subject categories"

must be selected. When a journal is included in different “subject categories”, the most favourable classification may be used.

**Table.** Different possibilities to meet the minimum criteria

	<b>Manuscript 1</b>	<b>Manuscript 2</b>
<b>1.</b>	first author, sole authorship regardless of ranking published or accepted	first author, sole authorship regardless of ranking published or accepted
<b>2.</b>	first author, sole authorship Q1 ranking published or accepted	first author, sole authorship regardless of ranking submitted for publication
<b>3.</b>	co-first authorship Q1 ranking published or accepted	first author, sole authorship regardless of ranking published or accepted
<b>4.</b>	co-first authorship Q1 ranking published or accepted	co-first authorship Q1 ranking published or accepted
<b>5.</b>	co-first authorship D1 ranking published or accepted	first author, co- or sole authorship regardless of journal ranking submitted for publication

- c. The proof that a manuscript has been submitted to an A1 ranking journal must be provided with the presented dissertation. The examination board decides whether the manuscript is worthy of the level of an A1 publication. The faculty implicitly assumes that the supervisors guarantee that the manuscript will actually be published in an A1 journal.
- d. The following applies in cases of co-first authorship:
- All authors who share the first authorship could use this publication to meet the minimum criteria.
  - Authors who share the first authorship must explain their contribution to the publication and demonstrate why co-first authorship is necessary.
- e. “*Systematic reviews*” (for the definition, see [http://handbook.cochrane.org/chapter\\_1/1\\_2\\_2\\_what\\_is\\_a\\_systematic\\_review.htm](http://handbook.cochrane.org/chapter_1/1_2_2_what_is_a_systematic_review.htm)) published in an A1 journal or in the Cochrane Library are likewise considered as original A1 publications. *Case reports* and *narrative reviews* are not eligible for consideration.
- f. If *research results that could be valuable for technology transfer* are involved and legal protection is required such that they cannot be published in a timely manner, then the admissibility of the manuscript will be examined confidentially by two members of the Faculty Doctoral Committee in collaboration with the Technology Transfer Office. The manuscript will then be admissible if it

appears that the dissertation is based on the one hand on one A1 publication with sole first authorship and, on the other, on the transferable research results that must at least meet the level of an A1 publication within the research field.

**Article 7.** All members of the examination board must hold a doctoral dissertation. The majority of the members of an examination board must be professorial staff (ZAP) members or postdoctoral researchers at Ghent University. No more than two members of the examination board may belong to the same research group. The supervisor(s) and members of the advisory committee may not be members of the examination board, but can be heard by the board. At most one co-author on one of the publications included in the dissertation may sit on the examination board.

**Article 8.** The examination board rules autonomously on the value of the research and the manuscript and possibly suggests modifications to be made. The candidate's knowledge and the revised manuscript, if applicable, will be evaluated during a closed defence during which the candidate will be questioned about the work. The supervisors may not be present at this defence. Based on the results of the closed defence, the examination board will decide whether the manuscript can be printed and whether the candidate is allowed to hold an open defence. If the candidate is not allowed to hold an open defence, a second closed defence must be held. The supervisors can attend the discussion of the examination board for the open defence, but not the deliberations.

**Article 9.** The doctoral dissertation must be submitted in electronic form and in 8 paper hard copies.

**These rules and regulations shall enter into force on 21 April 2016.**