The doctoral regulations of the Faculty of Economics and Business cover the Doctoral Programmes in Economics and Business Economics, the doctoral research, dissertation and defense. They incorporate all existing University provisions and have been approved by the Academic Council. In case of disputes, these regulations are only applicable insofar as they do not contradict existing or future decisions by the Academic Council. These regulations apply to anyone seeking to pursue a doctoral degree in Economics or Business Economics.

Additional information and documentation on pursuing a doctoral degree at the Faculty of Economics and Business can be found on the Faculty’s doctoral programme website (http://www.econ.kuleuven.be/ond/eng/edu/phd/phdindex).

General information

The Faculty of Economics and Business organizes two doctoral programmes:

- PhD in Economics
- PhD in Business Economics

Both academic degrees are obtained after the public defense of a PhD thesis.

One can only be admitted to the public defense of the PhD if all obligations of the respective doctoral programmes have been satisfied. Very exceptionally, the doctoral commission of the faculty can decide to exempt the doctoral student from the doctoral programme as it is stipulated below.

The doctoral commission of the faculty

The doctoral commission of the faculty is composed of:

- The coordinator of the doctoral programme in economics
- The coordinator of the doctoral programme in business economics
- The staff member education responsible for the doctoral programmes
- One senior academic staff member from FEB, campus Leuven from the Department of Economics, nominated by the Subfaculty Council of FEB, campus Leuven on the advice of the Center for Economic Studies
- One senior academic staff member of FEB, campus Leuven from each of the four Research Departments, who represent together the field of Business Economics, nominated by the Subfaculty Council of FEB, campus Leuven
- One senior academic staff member or member of the teaching staff from FEB, campus Antwerpen nominated by the Subfaculty Council of FEB, campus Antwerpen
- One senior academic staff member or member of the teaching staff from FEB, campus Brussels, nominated by the Subfaculty Council of FEB, campus Brussels
- When the discussion on the evaluation of the content/structure of the PhD programmes is on the agenda: two representatives of the Doctoral Students, one from the PhD programme in Economics and one of the PhD programme in Business Economics.
- When the discussion of individual student files is on the agenda: the ombudsperson for the PhD students.
- The Vice-dean Research and the Campus vice-deans Research have the right to attend each meeting as a full member.

By mutual agreement the coordinator of the PhD programme in Economics or the coordinator of the PhD programme in Business Economics act as Chairperson.

The Doctoral Commission of the faculty has the following tasks:

1) Follow-up of the progress reports
2) The examiner’s meeting of the course component of the PhD programme in Business Economics
3) Advise the Faculty Board about the admitted students to the PhD programme, also follow-up and evaluation of the admission requirements
4) Advise the Faculty Board about the proposed composition of the supervisory committee (supervisor, co-supervisor(s), members of the commission)
5) Quality control of the PhD programmes and the PhD (including an advisory role to the Faculty Board)

Students only attend meetings when topics under 5) are discussed. 1), 2) 3) and 4) will be handled by email-procedure when possible.

**Chapter 1: Doctoral research, dissertation and defense**

**Definition**

A doctorate (PhD) is a project of original research undertaken by a doctoral student under the guidance of a supervisor. A doctoral degree is awarded to candidates who have successfully defended their dissertation in a public defense and who have met all other requirements.

**Admission requirements**
In line with existing University regulations, all prospective students must meet one of the conditions below to be admitted to the doctoral programme.

Applicants holding at least a master degree from a Flemish university and Belgian citizenship must obtain approval from the coordinator.

Applicants who do not hold a master degree from a Flemish university or do not hold Belgian citizenship will need to obtain approval from the International Office as well as from the coordinator.

The following additional provisions apply:

**For admission to the doctoral programme in economics:**

Applicants must hold a master degree in economics or an equivalent degree, on condition that they can demonstrate the ability to conduct independent scientific research. To supplement their previous studies, students may be required to take on an individual “doctum colloquium” consisting of courses from the Master of Science in Advanced Studies in Economics. Students who have obtained a Master of Science in Advanced Studies in Economics degree from KU Leuven with honors or higher will be exempted from this doctum colloquium.

**Proof of proficiency in English**

Applicants who are non-native speakers of English must provide evidence of English language proficiency.  
* If the applicant’s prior degree is from K.U. Leuven, the language exam results provide sufficient information to take a decision.
* For students who hold a prior degree awarded by an English-speaking university from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom or the USA, the certified diploma and transcripts suffice, provided they confirm that the entire university study was completed in English.
* Other students should submit a satisfactory score on an internationally recognized test of English language proficiency: TOEFL (minimum score 575 paper-based, 233 computer-based, 90 internet-based), IELTS (minimum score 7). No other proficiency tests will be accepted.

**Additional credentials**

Next to certified copies of diplomas and transcripts, all applicants must provide
* a GRE-score (www.gre.com)
* two recommendation forms, filled out and signed, and sent in a closed envelope signed over the lid by the referee
* a letter of motivation written and signed by the applicant, explaining the choice for Leuven and for this particular programme

Different requirements may apply for students who graduated at a Belgian University. Please contact your supervisor for more information.
The coordinator of the PhD programme in Economics evaluates all applications and has the final say on the admissibility of the student.

**For admission to the doctoral programme in Business Economics:**

Applicants must hold either of the following:

- A master’s degree in business (or a master degree equivalent to four or five years of management studies);
- A master’s degree in another field, and should be familiar with the research methodologies required for the chosen field;

Academic performance should be above average (applicants should have obtained honors at least twice for the university diplomas mentioned).

**Proof of proficiency in English**

Applicants who are non-native speakers of English must provide evidence of English language proficiency.

* If the applicant's prior degree is from K.U.Leuven, the language exam results provide sufficient information to take a decision.
* For students who hold a prior degree awarded by an **English-speaking university from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom or the USA**, the certified diploma and transcripts suffice, provided they confirm that the entire university study was completed in English.
* **Other students** should submit a satisfactory score on an internationally recognized test of English language proficiency: TOEFL (minimum score 575 paper-based, 233 computer-based, 90 internet-based), or IELTS (minimum score 7). No other proficiency tests will be accepted. The test results should not be older than two years.

**Additional credentials**

Next to certified copies of diplomas and transcripts, all applicants must provide

- a GRE or GMAT score is required for all applicants. The test results should not be older than 5 years. A GRE- or a GMAT test result above the 75th percentile on the quantitative part is required to enter the program.
- a letter of motivation written and signed by the applicant, explaining the choice for Leuven and for this particular programme.

The requirement for a GRE/GMAT or TOEFL/IELTS score can only be waived in exceptional circumstances. For more information, contact your supervisor. The supervisor needs to confirm in writing (e.g., email) that he/she is in favor of waiving the GRE/GMAT or TOEFL/IELTS score.

The coordinator of the PhD program in Business Economics evaluates all applications and has the final say on the admissibility of the student.
Enrollment at the Central Student Administration Office

Students admitted to the doctoral programme must enroll for doctoral training. Tuition fees are only payable upon initial enrollment and in the academic year when the doctoral degree is awarded. From admission to defense, doctoral students must re-enroll annually for the doctoral programme, without payment of fees. In the academic year when the dissertation is submitted, they should also enroll for the defense.

Chapter 2: Doctoral Programme

To obtain the degree of Doctor in Economics or Doctor in Business Economics, doctoral students must successfully complete the Doctoral Programme.

The doctoral programme has the following objectives: (1) to provide broader insight into research questions and methods, both within the doctoral student’s own research field and in other research fields; (2) to develop the student’s generic research skills; (3) to develop the student’s presentation and communication skills for both specialist and non-specialist audiences; (4) to facilitate the acquisition of diverse competences that will advance the student’s professional career, at or outside the University. Learning opportunities to achieve these objectives are offered by the doctoral student’s own research unit, by the doctoral school of Humanities and Social Sciences and through the participation in scientific conferences.

Completion of this Doctoral Programme is a prerequisite for the defense.

The Faculty of Economics and Business has two Doctoral Programmes: the Doctoral Programme in Economics and the Doctoral Programme in Business Economics.
Chapter 3: Progress reporting

In addition to conducting supervised research and the completion of a doctoral training programme, doctoral students should submit annual reports on the progress of their research and doctoral training.

No later than one year after the start it is evaluated whether the doctorate can be continued. The progress of the doctoral research and the development of academic skills and maturity of the doctoral student are judged. The doctoral student should submit, on his/her own initiative, the first progress report (using the template) to the administrator before June 30 or if he/she did not start at the beginning of the academic year, before the end of the first year. The report is evaluated by the supervisor, co-supervisor(s) and the coordinator of the PhD programme. A positive evaluation is essential to continue the doctorate.

The PhD can be stopped at any time if it is clear that one or more of the requirements of the Doctoral Programme is not fulfilled.

In the following years a standard doctoral progress report form should be completed and submitted to the administrative coordinator by June 30 of each year. This report is prepared by the doctoral student in consultation with the supervisor and the possible co-supervisor(s), who countersign(s) the form.

Chapter 4: Supervisor and co-supervisor(s)

Doctoral students conduct research at a research unit within the Faculty of Economics and Business under the guidance of a supervisor who assumes responsibility for guiding the student’s research. The supervisor and co-supervisor(s) agree to abide by the code of conduct for research supervision.

The Faculty Board assigns a supervisor and possibly a co-supervisor for each student.

The following combinations are possible:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Co-supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior academic staff FEB</td>
<td>Senior academic staff FEB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior academic staff other Faculty KU Leuven</td>
<td>Senior academic staff other Faculty KU Leuven</td>
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<td>Senior academic staff other university</td>
<td>Senior academic staff other university</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associated professor or Senior academic staff track of member of teaching staff of campus Antwerp and Brussels</td>
<td>Associated professor or Senior academic staff track of member of teaching staff of campus Antwerp and Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-doc</td>
<td>Post-doc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of the corporate world (condition: PhD-degree and relevant)</td>
<td>Member of the corporate world (condition: PhD-degree and relevant)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only as an exception granted by the executive committee
In cooperation with the co-supervisor, the supervisor assists the student during the course of the research.

**Supervisory committee and examination committee**

The supervisory committee investigates whether the topic and the design of the research project provide a firm basis for successful doctoral research which can be completed within the specified time frame.

The subjects of doctoral dissertations, approved by the Faculty Board, will be reserved for the doctoral students concerned during the time of study and research. The Faculty Board can deprive the person concerned of this privilege, if he/she has not shown his/her supervisor any concrete proof of progress in his/her activities.

**PhD in Economics**

Together with the submission of the Doctoral proposal, the Faculty Board sets up a supervisory committee after advice by the supervisor. This committee is chaired by the supervisor and contains (the supervisor included) at least three and at most five senior academic staff members of the Department of Economics. Besides senior academic staff members, the commission can also include post-docs, associated professors and emeritus professors.

After the approval of the research proposal, the Faculty Board sets up an examination committee, after advice by the supervisor, to evaluate the doctoral dissertation. The examination committee consists of a minimum of five and a maximum of seven members. The members of the supervisory committee are part of the examination committee, unless an exception is made by the Faculty Board. At least two members of the examination committee are not a member of the academic staff of the Department of Economics. At least one member of the examination committee is not a member of the association of the KU Leuven. The committee can include post-doctoral mandate holders and associated professors.

**PhD in Business Economics**

During the first two years of the doctoral programme, the student prepares a doctoral research proposal, under the supervision of the supervisor and co-supervisor(s). The title of the doctoral proposal, together with the proposed supervisory committee, has to be submitted to the administrative coordinator of the Doctoral Programme. The supervisory committee has to include at least three members, preferably including one member from a different research group. The committee can include post-doctoral mandate holders and associated professors.

For the preliminary and public defense, an examination committee is proposed including at least five and at most seven members, from which at least one does not belong to the association of KU Leuven. The members of the supervisory committee always are part of the examination committee.

**Article 5: Double or joint doctoral degree**

If the completion of the doctoral dissertation has involved extensive research collaboration between two institutions, KU Leuven can award a double or a joint doctoral degree with another Belgian or
foreign university, in accordance with Art. 94 of the Decree on the Structure of Higher Education. KU Leuven prefers to award a joint degree, but if this is not possible for legal reasons, a double degree will be awarded.

At the Faculty of Economics and Business, a number of conditions apply to the award of a double or joint degree: the candidate’s doctoral training programme must be approved by the KU Leuven coordinator; the candidate must have a (co-)supervisor at each of the universities involved; he/she must have conducted research relating to the dissertation at each university for at least six months; the dissertation must be defended orally before a jury comprising professors from both institutions. The candidate should register each year as a doctoral student at KU Leuven.

Further arrangements should be stipulated in a collaboration agreement between KU Leuven and the other institution(s) awarding the degree, in accordance with existing KU Leuven guidelines. This collaboration agreement is set out in consultation with the doctoral school at the start of the collaboration and signed by the rector or vice-rector of research on advice of the Research Coordination Office. An original copy of the agreement is saved by the Research Coordination Office.

Doctoral students undertaking a joint doctorate can complete (or have completed) one or several doctoral training components at the partner institution on the condition that the doctoral training programme at the partner institution is equivalent.

This equivalence must be approved by the coordinator of the Doctoral Programme at KU Leuven.

**Article 6: Preliminary defense**

The members of the examination committee need to give approval to the student to proceed to the preliminary defense. The doctoral student asks the administrative coordinator of the PhD programmes at least 4 weeks before the date of the pre-defense to put the request on the agenda of the sub-Faculty Board.

The members of the examination committee receive the preliminary text of the dissertation at least two weeks before the date of the pre-defense. Members of the examination committee who cannot be present, send their remarks to the supervisor (in writing) before the time of the pre-defense.

The examination committee can take one of the following decisions:

a) The dissertation can be submitted unaltered for public defense

b) The dissertation can be submitted for public defense on the condition that some changes are carried out. In this case it can be stipulated that the final changes have to be approved by the supervisor and co-supervisor(s), or that the final changes have to be approved by all the members of the examination committee.

c) The dissertation cannot be submitted for public defense and a new pre-defense is necessary.

In case b) the doctoral student, while reworking the dissertation, will need to follow the modifications imposed by the examination committee. To that end, the student receives written confirmation of the modifications that are to be carried out and provides feedback to the examination committee as to how
the comments were addressed. As soon as the supervisor and co-supervisor(s) have announced the final approval to the Faculty Board and the doctoral student, the latter can start the reproduction of the manuscript.

At least one week before the public defense, the final version of the dissertation should be electronically archived in Lirias; In addition, a one-page summary (preferably in Dutch) intended for a wide audience should be made available via KU Loket, My PhD, for use by the KU Leuven Press Office. This summary is not part of the doctoral dissertation.

*PhD in Economics: Adjoined theses*

At least three months before the public defense and in any case before the pre-defense, the doctoral student presents a list of six adjoined theses, approved by the supervisor, to the Faculty Board. These theses have to be original, have to be formulated concisely and have to contain statements that allow discussion. They are expected to show that the doctoral student is also versed in other parts of economics than those that apply to the dissertation. Therefore they may not be related to the dissertation. The Faculty Board chooses three theses from the submitted list, on which the student can be examined during the public defense.

**Chapter 7: Public Defense**

The date of the public defense has to be announced to the administrative coordinator of the PhD programmes, at least 6 weeks before the public defense. The members of the examination committee must receive the final version of the dissertation at least 2 weeks before the public defense.

The defense takes place in Dutch or in English (or both) and will be chaired by the programme coordinator. In case the latter is unable to attend, he/she can be replaced by another senior academic staff member of the Faculty. Members of the examination committee, who are unable to attend, should send their questions (in writing) to the supervisor before the time of the public defense.

During the public defense, the doctoral student has twenty minutes to present the dissertation to the public. Afterwards the members of the examination committee, as well as members from the public, can ask questions.

The examination committee takes the decision to grant the degree of Doctor.

For the final text and the layout of the dissertation, the doctoral student follows the regulations developed by the Faculty of Economics and Business. For that purpose, he/she consults the administrative coordinator of the doctoral programme beforehand.

After the successful defense of the doctoral dissertation, the doctoral student obtains an allowance up to a maximum of 750 Euro to cover the expenses incurred during the doctoral programme, upon submission of supporting documents. (see http://www.econ.kuleuven.be/eng/edu/phd/defence).

**Chapter 7: Ombudsperson for doctoral students**
The ombudsperson for doctoral students is appointed by the Faculty Board. At the Faculty of Economics and Business the administrative coordinator of the PhD programmes is the ombudsperson for the doctoral students.

Should problems arise in the course of the project, as a result of internal or external factors, either party can contact the ombudsperson for doctoral students. The Faculty’s ombudsperson is also the first appellate body for appeals against the decisions of the doctoral committee.

Chapter 8: Appeals process/Settlement of disputes

The doctoral student can appeal the discontinuation of the doctorate by the University in accordance with the doctoral regulations and/or the end result of the doctoral dissertation, at first instance via the ombudsperson and if no solution is found via the Vice-Rector of Students Policy.

He/She has to follow the appeal procedure as defined in the University doctoral regulation, section 5. Appeal procedure, article 24: [https://admin.kuleuven.be/rd/intranet/regl_doctoraat.html](https://admin.kuleuven.be/rd/intranet/regl_doctoraat.html).