

The PhD Progress Tool at KU Leuven

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KU Leuven in a nutshell

- KU Leuven: 13 campuses, in 10 cities in Flanders
- Students: +63,000 PhD: +6,200
- Staff: +22,500 (+13,000 KU Leuven, +9,500 UZ Leuven)
- Faculties: 15
- Doctoral Schools: 3





**DOCTORAL SCHOOL FOR
THE HUMANITIES &
SOCIAL SCIENCES**



**DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF
BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**



**ARENBERG DOCTORAL
SCHOOL OF SCIENCE,
ENGINEERING &
TECHNOLOGY**

Director
Ortwin de Graef

Coordinator
Michèle Van Buggenum

7 faculties
29 doctoral programs
+/- 1700 PhD students
221 degrees (2020-21)

Director
John Creemers

Coordinator
Eva Boffe

3 faculties
4 doctoral programs
+/- 1600 PhD students
227 degrees (2020-21)

Director
Patrick Willems

Coordinator
Leen Cuypers

5 faculties
5 doctoral programs
+/- 3000 PhD students
400 degrees (2020-21)

Responsibilities of the Doctoral Schools

Administrative backbone

PhDs and Postdocs

Attract Research
Talent (International
recruitment)

Doctoral School

Doctoral Training
Doctoral Efficiency

Mobility &
Networking

Quality assurance

Joint &
Interdisciplinary PhD's

Career
development



The PhD Programme

PhD programme

- Compulsory (Truncus Communis) & Supplementary Part
- In general: 4 years to completion
- Exception is possible
- KU Leuven support during/due to Covid-19:
 - Flexibility
 - Corona Emergency Fund

PhD programme: doctoral training @ KU Leuven

Truncus communis:

- Scientific publication
- Present research @ international conference
- Present seminars
- Annual progress report
- Research Integrity course (1st year)
- Submit manuscript for plagiarism check

Doctoral training

- Attend seminars/courses specific for PhD – per programme/faculty

Transferable skills training
Career development

Doctoral Training programme: why?

- The ever more rapidly changing world we live in, with its complex challenges, requires highly skilled and trained researchers
- They need to be able to:
 - deal with problems by analysing in depth
 - absorb new information quickly
 - adapt easily to new situations; be flexible
 - work in interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary teams
 - have obtained 'soft skills'



- training through methodology and specialist knowledge of the discipline, as well as generic skills

PhD: guidance

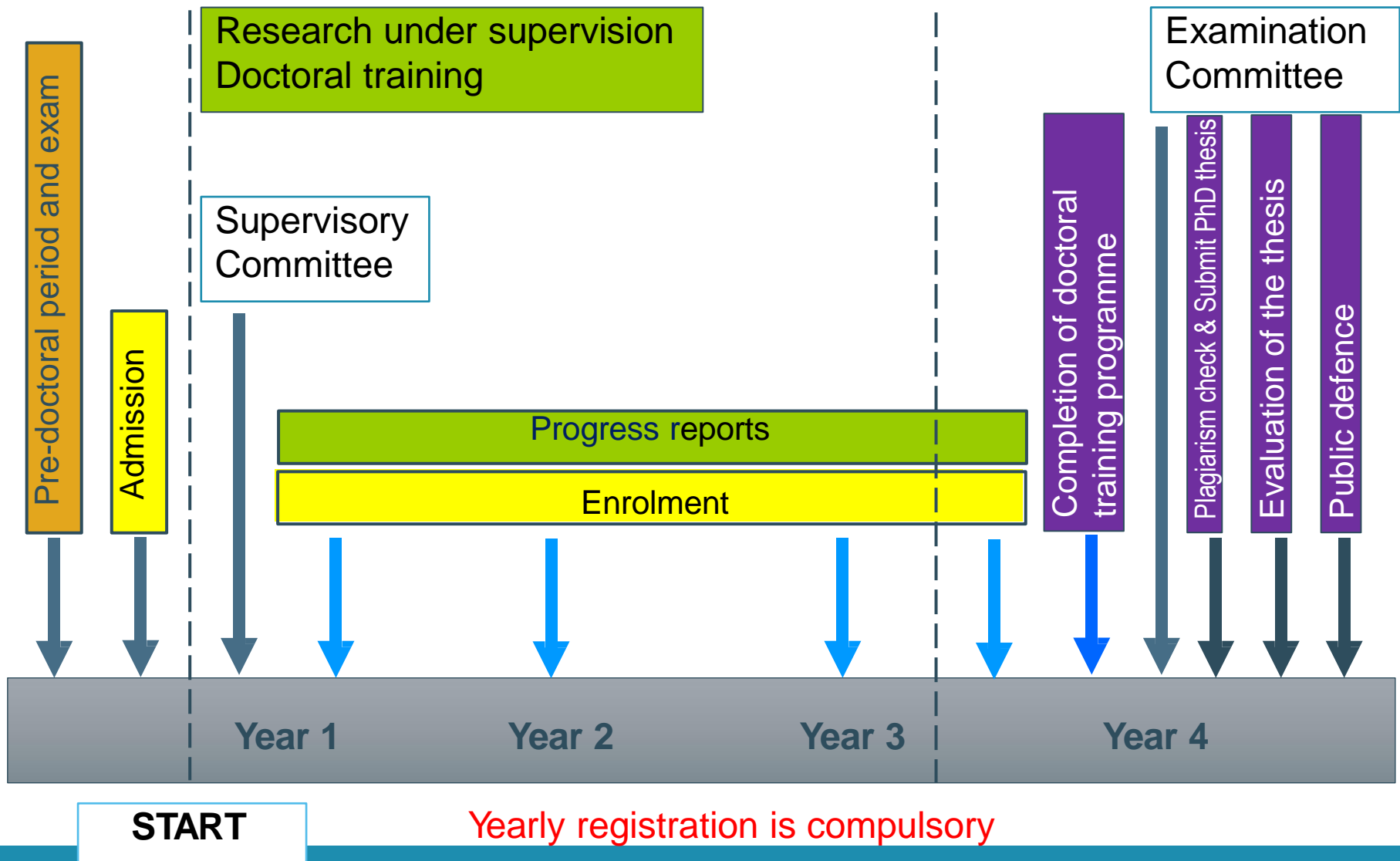
- Supervisor & co-supervisor (max. 4)
- Supervisory committee
- Doctoral Committee (faculty level)
- Examination Committee

PhD Ombuds



The PhD Progress Tool

PhD Trajectory





So: there are a lot of to-do's and deadlines.

The PhD researcher is responsible for their own PhD project, including the administration.

What does KU Leuven offer to help PhD researchers manage their PhD project?

Online tool PhD Progress

- Is automatically activated at first enrolment for the PhD programme
- Provides information about the PhD: title, summary, members in the Supervisory Committee, Start date, signature sheets, etc.
- Gives an overview of the 'milestones' in the PhD track
- Provides instructions and information about submission and approval of the milestones
- Reports and automatic e-mails: notifications, reminders, approvals
- PhD researchers and case administrators can upload additional documents (e.g. joint PhD agreement, certificate of attendance, training portfolio)
- Accessible by PhD researchers as well as members of the Supervisory Committee, Faculty Doctoral Committee members and case administrators

PhD Status

Status PhD Academic year last registration
PhD in progress 2021

Start date PhD
01-01-2019
Current status of the PhD Achieved on
2. Eval 1st year success 03-10-2019

Milestones

How to upload milestones documents?

Below you can see an overview of the milestones you need to reach and the target dates at which they should be completed. For certain milestones, you need to fill in a template document and submit it, possibly together with other forms, via this application. You can find the template of the relevant document next to the milestone. Follow the instructions below:



1. Open the template for the milestone.
2. Fill in the form and save it as a local file on your computer.
3. Afterwards, when you have collected all documents necessary to complete this milestone, you need to select the files and convert them into a single pdf file: several [freeware programs](#) allow you to do this. Make sure to save this single pdf document again as a local file on your computer. This pdf document should **not be bigger than 8 Mb**, the name **should not exceed 50 characters** (including the .pdf at the end) and may **not contain any special characters**, like a . (only for the extension).
4. Next, select the pdf document ('Browse' or 'Bladeren'). Select only one document for only one milestone. **Immediately submit your attachment upon selection.** Selecting documents for more than one milestone before submitting might result in errors.
5. If you are sure you have selected the right document, you need to submit it ('Submit'). Please note that submitting is necessary for the file to be transmitted.
6. Once you have done this, the submission date will automatically be filled in and you will receive a confirmation mail. The doctoral administration of the Faculty will also be informed by mail about your submission so that they can keep track and ask for more information if this would be necessary. The PhD administration of the Faculty will inform you about the approval of the milestone.
7. If you see 'Resubmit milestone' behind a milestone, you need to remove the old attachment and upload a new one.

Help

Description	Target date	Status	Attachment	Submission date
Compose supervisory committee	26-10-2018	Approved on 18-10-2018	Info/template Supervisory Committee .pdf	10-10-2018
Blueprint doctoral training	26-10-2018	Approved on 16-10-2018	Info/template Blueprint .pdf	10-10-2018
Charter for PhD researchers	26-10-2018	Approved on 16-10-2018	Info/template PhD Charter .pdf	15-10-2018
First oral presentation	02-10-2019	Approved on 03-10-2019	Info/template 9maanden documenten 031019.pdf	03-10-2019
Seminar scientific integrity	01-01-2020	Approved on 17-05-2019	Info/template	17-05-2019
Teacher assistant training	01-01-2020	Approved on 27-09-2019	Info/template attest teach assis.pdf	27-09-2019
Mid term report	02-10-2020	Approved on 28-09-2020	Info/template midterm .pdf	28-09-2020
Second oral presentation	01-01-2022	Overdue	Info/template <input type="button" value="Choose File"/> No file chosen <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✘
Submit doctoral diary			Info/template <input type="button" value="Choose File"/> No file chosen <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✘

Online tool PhD Progress

- Some milestones are mandatory in **each faculty**:
 - Seminar on scientific integrity
 - Evaluation within year 1
 - Composition of the Supervisory and Examination Committee
 - ...
- PhD researchers in some faculties will have additional milestones, eg **depending on** how **the faculty** organizes the progress reports or the final phase of the PhD
- Case administrators can modify the milestones or the deadlines of milestones in an **individual file**
 - In case of a joint PhD
 - In case of maternity leave, long absence ('on hold' status)
 - In case closer follow-up is needed to monitor the progress (eg. additional oral presentation)
 - ...

Description	Target date	Status	Attachment	Submission date
Course work programme	19-10-2019	Approved on 24-10-2019	Info/template 	18-10-2019
Charter PhD Researcher and supervisor	19-12-2019	Approved on 19-12-2019	Info/template 	19-12-2019
supervisory committee	19-09-2020		Info/template <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Progress report (Doctoral booklet)	19-09-2020		Info/template <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Doctoral booklet	10-07-2021		Info/template <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Doctoral proposal	19-09-2021		<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Comprehensive exam	19-09-2021		<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Seminar on research integrity	19-09-2021	Approved on 18-11-2019		18-11-2019
Doctoral booklet	10-07-2022		Info/template <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Doctoral booklet	10-07-2023		Info/template <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
First doctoral seminar			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Second doctoral seminar			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Conference participation			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
International publication			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
examination committee			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Application preference			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Preliminary defense			Info/template <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Upload PhD thesis			Info/template	
Public defense			<input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗
Research Data Management (RDM)			Info/template <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Browse..."/> <input type="button" value="Submit"/>	✗

It is up to the PhD researcher
to use the tool



Which support do we offer?

- Several trainings offered:
 - Managing your PhD
 - Time Management
 - Presentations skills
 - Academic writing skills
 - ... and many more
- Welcome Session for new PhD researchers
 - Information about the regulations, expectations, guidelines
 - Overview of the online PhD progress tool
 - Overview of the training and support offered
- Several initiatives about mental well-being
 - Website with tips & tricks, activities and support services
 - Podcast with personal stories from PhD researchers and supervisors
 - Workshop about Stress & Wellbeing for PhD researchers

What are the Results and Advantages

- Clear overview of milestones
- From the start up to the public defence
- For PhD researcher, supervisory committee, doctoral committee and administration
- Separate overview for supervisor of all PhD researchers and their status (on-going, defended, not yet registered, discontinued)
- Automatic e-mail communication and reports
- Online (proven especially valuable during covid)
- No additional back-up system (excel, paper, email,.....) required
- Flexible: Individual modifications possible

What do PhD researchers think?

“PhD progress tool is extremely helpful”

“Speed of approving achieved milestones”

“The clear time planning for the PhD trajectory”

“clear roadmap provided by ADS up to prelim defense, I always knew what to do and what was expected”

“milestones are good as they keep PhD students on track”

“clear structure of the deliverables for the doctoral school”

“The milestones of the PhD progress”

“The milestone system”

“the doctoral school follow-up of the PhD trajectory”

“Deadlines and what to do are very clear”