

PhD Guidebook

Brussels Arts Platform

For (new) PhD students

Version 7 September 2026



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Introduction

This PhD Guide provides you with comprehensive information about the PhD trajectory, as well as the support structures and services available within the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) and Erasmus Brussels University of Applied Sciences and Arts (Erasmushogeschool Brussel) including Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel (KCB) and Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound (RITCS). It is intended as a practical and informative tool to guide you/candidates throughout the different stages of your/their doctoral journey.

This PhD guide offers an overview of key milestones, evaluation moments, and provides clarification on administrative procedures, and available doctoral training opportunities. In addition, it aims to support you in understanding the institutional context in which your research is embedded, and to facilitate a smooth and well-structured progression through your PhD trajectory.

While this guide seeks to be as complete and accurate as possible, it does not replace direct communication with supervisors or administrative services. For any questions, regardless of their nature, or at any stage of your PhD trajectory, you are encouraged to seek clarification and support. For further information or specific inquiries, please contact the coordinator of Brussels Arts Platform Inge Pieters: inge.pieters@vub.be

Part I: Get started

1. HOW TO GET STARTED?

1.1 Registration Process VUB

Online application for enrollment and start of the registration process

Get ready for your application by preparing all required documents (check this link under application procedure <https://www.vub.be/en/our-research/earning-doctorate-vub/doctoral-study-programme#paragraph-384770>) and writing your research plan together with your academic supervisor. Your application will be started by your academic supervisor. After he/she/they completed their part of your application, you will receive an email with a request to complete this procedure. Click on the link in the mail to add the necessary information and documents to your application.

Check by the student administration

The colleagues of studentenadministratie@vub.be will then check whether your application file is complete. The sooner they have all your documents, the quicker they can process your application, so prepare your required documents before starting the application.

Advice of the board members of Brussels Arts Platform

The faculty of your academic supervisor will also need an advice of the board of Brussels Arts Platform for the registration. The staff member of Brussels Arts Platform, Inge Pieters, will take care of this. You will need to send her your research plan.

Approval by the faculty of your academic supervisor

The faculty of your academic supervisor must approve your application. You will receive a confirmation email once your registration has been finalized.

Some notes:

- When starting the registration process, your academic supervisor can ask for an exemption for the doctoral training, in case you don't have more than a 50 percent designation for your PhD in the Arts (cf. point 2.4 Doctoral Training VUB, working PhD in a non-research context). In case your academic supervisor forgot to do this, you can also ask for an exemption through filling out a form yourself. Form 'application exemption compulsory doctoral training programme': https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/Regulations-&-Forms.aspx#forms
- If you are having problems with the application tool, please contact the Student Administration: studentadministration@vub.ac.be (please send an e-mail with a screenshot and description of your problem).
- Tuition fee: PhD's pay a tuition fee in the first year of enrollment and in the year of the public defense. For academic year 26-27 this is 591 euros: <https://www.vub.be/en/studying-vub/practical-info-for-students/how-much-does-studying-cost/tuition-fees#paragraph-426183>
- Re-enrolment:
Please note that you will need to re-register electronically at the start of each academic year. You will receive an invitation by e-mail in your VUB e-mailbox. Being allowed to re-enroll the next year depends on the decision of ICDO Commission ('interdisciplinary commission for doctoral progress'), after evaluation of your Progress Report. If you've submitted your report in time and no additional documentation is requested by the Commission, you will be notified

somewhere in July about your re-enrolment (by means of an e-mail to your VUB e-mail address). Especially for PhD candidates coming to Belgium on a visa, keep in mind that if you are too late with your Report, re-enrolment won't be possible before the end of September.

1.2 VUB account

As a new student, you need to create a VUB account and a VUB e-mail address. More info:

<https://www.vub.be/en/studying-vub/practical-info-for-students/e-tools-and-portals/my-vub-account>

You will need this to gain access to the computers and wifi on campus, and for various VUB applications.

1.3 Your supervisors and member(s) of the advisory committee

As a PhD student, it is obligatory to have: one academic supervisor, one artistic supervisor, and at least one extra member for the advisory commission. Together, they constitute your advisory committee.

- You will need one academic advisor who holds a ZAP mandate at VUB, as this mandate confers the formal right to supervise PhD students. Within KCB/RITCS, a limited number of staff members hold a joint mandate at both KCB/RITCS and VUB and may therefore act as academic supervisor. At RITCS, this currently includes Ellen Gillard (with a second supervisor forthcoming). At KCB, eligible supervisors include Kristin Van den Buys, Maarten Stragier, Matthias Heyman and Kurt Bertels. It is also possible to choose an academic supervisor who holds a mandate at VUB only (i.e. not affiliated with KCB or RITCS). In this case, it is requested to have a co-academic supervisor of RITCS or KCB. The co-academic supervisor must hold a doctoral degree.
- In case the academic supervisor is affiliated both to VUB and to RITCS or KCB, it is not obligatory to have a co-academic supervisor.
- In addition to the academic supervisor, it is obligatory to have an artistic supervisor. This person does not need to have a PhD. The academic supervisor provides advice on the entire research process and oversees the integration and design of the artistic practice. The artistic supervisor provides subject-specific advice on the artistic practice. The artistic supervisor may be a member of the teaching or research research staff at RITCS or KCB. While an appointed supervisor from RITCS or KCB is preferred, you may also work with an external artistic supervisor in exceptional cases. The artistic advisor is also expected to provide feedback for the annual progress report submitted to VUB.
- Alongside your academic and artistic supervisor, you will also need to appoint, in agreement with your academic supervisor, (minimal) one extra member for the advisory committee. This extra member is also following your PhD research, but in a less intense way than your supervisors. This person does not need to have a PhD.

You should have appointed your artistic supervisor and the member of your advisory commission before the deadline of your first progress report.

2. To-Do List

2.1 Voluntary Scientific Collaborator – Vrijwillig wetenschappelijk medewerker

It is mandatory to become a 'voluntary scientific collaborator' of VUB. You need this statute:

- to get access to Pure, which you need to add your ORCID -ID and your discipline code (cf. infra) and to register your output for the progress report (including the obligatory introduction package);

- to get access to TEO, the platform that you will need to use to register for VUB courses (including the introduction package);
- to be able to get registered under the research group CLIC (cf. infra).

What needs to be done?

The PhD candidate whose academic supervisor has an affiliation to the Arts and Humanities Faculty will need to contact Margot Buisseret (Margot.Buisseret@vub.be) for the 'onboarding process' of new PhD students. Margot will start the process and the PhD student will receive an e-mail from ias@notifications.sap.com with further instructions to fill out personal details via a temporary TEO-account.

PhD students whose academic supervisor is linked to another Faculty, should send an e-mail to the faculty office to check what needs to be done. Please mind that you will get the statute of voluntary scientific collaborator for maximum 2 years, so before the end of this period of 2 years, you will have to contact the faculty to ask for a lengthening. In case this does not happen before the expiration date, the process will need to be started again.

2.2 Introduction Package

If you are just starting out as a PhD candidate at the VUB, you will have a lot of questions about the ins and outs of VUB. By following this introduction, you'll be able to gain insight into the different services and structures at the VUB (ranging from career to administration to legal and safety). The introduction can be followed online (except for some of the sessions on ethics) and **is obligatory for every PhD-student**. More information via this link (only accessible once enrolled and with a VUB e-mail address): https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/PhDIntroductionPackage.aspx

What is in the PhD Introduction Package? How can I enroll for the different components?

The PhD Introduction Package consists of (1) the PhD Introduction Days, (2) the Data Management track, and (3) the Ethics & Scientific Integrity track. All of the components can be followed independent of your location (digital format), and the e-learning modules also allow you to follow them at any time convenient to you.

Needless to say: you will get the most out of this package if you complete all components in your first year of enrollment!

Registration

You will need to upload the proof that you followed the introduction day in your yearly progress report. You will also need to upload this proof in the Portfolio system of VUB. For those who are obliged to do the doctoral training: you will get one credit for the introduction days.

How to add activities to my PhD Portfolio and where to find my Portfolio?

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/F.A.Q.-Portfolio.aspx#adding-activities-to-my-phd-portfolio-%28in-cali-and-or-pure%29

2.3 The Progress Report

You will have to hand in a progress report each year (date will be communicated by e-mail to your VUB email address). Most probably, the progress report will need to be uploaded online from 2027 on. More information will follow. The PhD candidate will also need to upload the written report of the meeting of the advisory commission, so it is important that this commission meets before the mid of March. Once you have filled out your part of the online questions and uploaded the report on your progress and the report of the advisory commission, your academic supervisor needs to give written feedback still and

will need to give an advice (positive, positive with conditions, negative advice). You, the PhD candidate, will need to accept or reject the advice. The report will be discussed in the commission meeting of ICDO (this stands for: interdisciplinary commission for doctoral progress). In case you get a positive advice or positive with conditions, you will be able to enroll for the next academic year.

There will only be a second chance in June, for those who could not hand in the progress report in time due to (long) illness.

New PhD students (first registration from academic year 2023-24 onwards), will need to use Pure and Portfolio for the progress report (cf. infra).

2.4 Doctoral Training VUB

The doctoral training is obligatory for all PhD students at VUB, except for most of the PhD students in the Arts. The reason for this is that most PhD students in the Arts dedicate at least 50 percent of their time to other activities than research. Only those PhD students in the Arts who (1) have a contract of more than 50 percent for research; (2) could only start with a PhD in the Arts with the doctoral training as a condition (for example those without a master diploma) will have to do the doctoral training. For the validation of the credits, Pure and Portfolio need to be used (more information about Pure and Portfolio below). PhD students that registered for the first time from academic year 23-24 onwards and have an exemption for the doctoral training, still need to use Pure and Portfolio for the registration of their output and for the progress report.

More information about the doctoral training program (chapter 'doctoral training programme'):
<https://www.vub.be/en/our-research/earning-doctorate-vub/doctoral-education-and-doctoral-schools#paragraph-384790>

Please be aware that you will need to ask an exemption for this doctoral training. See information above page 4.

KCB doctoral students are obliged to follow the doctoral training offered by Brussels Arts Platform (cf.4.1). This is different from the doctoral training program of VUB.

2.5 PURE/PORTFOLIO/CREATION ORCID-ID/DISCIPLINE CODE

PURE

Pure has to be used (obligatory) for several things:

- (1) As a PhD student you are obliged to add your discipline code in your PURE account (cf. infra).
- (2) As a PhD student you are obliged to create an ORCID-ID and to link this to your PURE account (cf. infra).
- (3) In case you have a peer reviewed publication (more info cf. infra)
- (4) In case you have to do the doctoral training (cf. supra)
- (5) For your progress report (in case your first enrollment was from academic year 23-24 onwards).

Use of Pure and Portfolio is mandatory for doctoral students in the arts enrolled at VUB from academic year 2023-2024, for the registration of the output of the PhD or for the progress report.

Doctoral students in the arts enrolled before academic year 2023-24 will therefore not be obliged to use Pure and Portfolio for the registration of the output and for the progress report, but will be encouraged to do so. An exception are those PhD students who have to follow the Doctoral Training as a condition for the entrance to the PhD in the Arts (for instance PhD students who don't have a master degree).

Below you will find some information about PURE (as copied from the VUB website). You can book an online infosession (30 minutes) via this link:

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/PUREteam@vub.be/bookings/>

Pure is the Current Research Information System (CRIS) the Vrije Universiteit Brussel uses to capture research output. This software collects all research output from our researchers and is used to disclose our research to the general public and for various reporting purposes. Pure also connects to the governmental database FRIS.

Only people with a current affiliation (as an employee) with the VUB or the university hospital can have access to this platform.

Pure allows to collect and manage different type of research output and activities, such as

- Research projects (managed by R&D and Tech Transfer)
- Publications
- Media contributions
- Theses
- Activities (e.g., talks and presentations, peer-review and editorial work)

You can access Pure by choosing 'Pure' under Tools at the left- hand side of the page of wearephd.vub.be

- **PURE admin (back end):** <https://cris.vub.be/admin/>
- **PURE public portal:** <https://researchportal.vub.be/en/>
- **How to add in PURE?:** https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/Research-Output.aspx?CT=1742988061626&OR=OWA-NT-Mail&CID=7e872433-d148-7977-7128-d668540771b9
- **Information on PURE:** https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_RD_PureDatabase
- **General Sharepoint page R&D:** https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_RD/
- **Open Access help desk:** openaccess@vub.be
- **Pure help desk (= tickets):** rd.databank@vub.be
- **Projects & awards:** Project and award registration(s) in PURE can only be done by the R&D administration (for fundamental research projects) research.secretariaat@vub.be or Tech Transfer (for applied research and scientific service agreements) via techtransfer@vub.be

Use of Pure and Portfolio is mandatory for doctoral students in the arts enrolled at VUB from academic year 2023-2024. Doctoral students in the arts enrolled before academic year 2023-24 will therefore not be obliged to use Pure and Portfolio to register their output, not even for the annual progress report, but will be encouraged to do so.

PORTFOLIO

The PhD portfolio is a personal online documentation system which allows the PhD candidate to gather data on the research they have done so far and present it as proof in the annual progress report.

More information (only accessible for those who have a VUB e-mail address already):

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/PhD-Portfolio.aspx

CREATION ORCID-ID

All doctoral students of VUB need to create an ORCID-ID and you will have to connect this to your Pure account.

*ORCID stands for **Open Researcher and Contributor ID**. ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes you from every other researcher and, through integration in key research workflows such as manuscript and grant submission (e.g. FWO), supports automated linkages between you and your professional activities ensuring that your work is recognized.*

Link to create an ORCID-ID:

<https://orcid.org/register>

How can I connect an ORCID-ID to Pure?

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_RD_PureDatabase/SitePages/Update-your-Pure-Profile.aspx

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_RD_PureDatabase/SitePages/ORCID--FAQ.aspx

FILL OUT THE DISCIPLINE CODE

All PhD students of VUB will have to fill out a discipline code in PURE.

More info here:

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_RD_PureDatabase/SitePages/Update-your-Pure-Profile.aspx

PART II: The PhD Trajectory

3. The PhD Trajectory

3.1 Trajectory at RITCS School of Arts

At RITCS School of Arts, the doctoral trajectory is embedded in an environment for artistic research and developed in close dialogue with the candidate's artistic practice, the relevant discipline(s), and the wider artistic and societal context.

Participation in one complete cycle of the RITCS peer coaching sessions (see 4.1) is mandatory for all RITCS doctoral candidates. This cycle normally takes place during the second academic year and offers sustained feedback on a concrete aspect of the doctoral research project.

RITCS doctoral candidates are strongly encouraged to participate in the other doctoral training modules offered by Brussels Arts Platform. The relevance of Modules 1 and 2, which focus on artistic research, research questions and methodology, and of Module 4, which focuses on academic writing and publishing, is discussed with the RITCS research coordinator in view of the candidate's prior knowledge, experience and individual training needs.

As part of their appointment, doctoral candidates contribute to teaching activities at RITCS. This may take the form of one Transversal Atelier (three weeks) or an equivalent amount of other distributed teaching activities. Its form and timing are agreed with the RITCS research coordinator and the relevant heads of programme, and should be meaningful in relation to the candidate's research activities.

The doctoral appointment initially covers two academic years at 50% and is extended for a further two-year period. The continuation of the research is informed by the annual progress reporting to VUB, including an updated plan for the subsequent phase of the trajectory. Where the annual progress reporting identifies concerns that may affect the continuation of the research, these are addressed in a discussion with the supervisory team and the RITCS research coordinator.

3.2 Trajectory at KCB

PhD Trajectory

A doctoral candidate conducts research within the framework of the approved PhD project, the content and outcomes of which are supervised by an academic supervisor, artistic supervisor, and where applicable, one or more co-supervisors. This ("predoctoral") trajectory spans a total of four academic years and consists of two consecutive periods of two academic years. Following the first two-year period, a thorough evaluation ("hurdle") takes place. During this evaluation, the PhD candidate presents the progress of the research (cf. infra). Pending a positive evaluation, the candidate's contract is extended once for a second two-year period, enabling the continuation and completion of the doctoral trajectory. Throughout these two phases, the PhD student engages in a combination of research, doctoral training, knowledge dissemination and teaching activities or other supportive activities.

- Participation in the Doctoral Training programme (cf. *infra*) is mandatory for all doctoral candidates;
- In addition to presenting the research internally during the annual research days, the PhD candidate is required to give at least one public presentation on an international platform, such as a conference, symposium, or festival.
- Prior to the defence, the PhD candidate must submit an article to a peer-reviewed journal (either individually or in collaboration with the supervisor). To this end, the candidate submits an abstract at the end of the second academic year (before the hurdle), including a clearly defined research question, a well-founded methodology, and a delineation of the research objectives;
- Depending on the departmental needs, the PhD student may be assigned a limited teaching load, which is included within the part-time appointment. This teaching assignment, in consultation with the research coordinator, is capped at a maximum of 0.05 FTE. In addition to the research, the PhD candidate is expected to actively contribute to the expertise and functioning of the department, for instance through participation in seminars or other activities that foster knowledge exchange and collaboration.
- Each doctoral candidate is required to use Pure, the institutional registration system for research activities. Publications, presentations, and other research activities must be recorded regularly and certainly before the PhD candidate must complete his/her/their part of the progress report to ensure the visibility of research output.

Hurdle

The hurdle serves as a formal evaluation to monitor the progress of the doctoral research and takes place at the end of the second academic year (i.e. at the end of the first phase of the doctoral trajectory). Following this evaluation, a positive recommendation may be issued for the extension of the doctoral appointment, or a recommendation may be made to initiate a remediation trajectory with clearly defined points for improvement.

Before being admitted to the hurdle, the PhD candidate must meet the following conditions:

- Have completed VUB's Introduction Package (cf. *Introduction Package*);
- Have successfully completed the four mandatory modules of the Doctoral Training programme (cf. *infra*).

During the hurdle, the PhD candidate is expected to:

- Submit, prior to the hurdle, an initial contribution to an (international- peer-reviewed publication to your academic supervisor and research coordinator. This includes:
 - (1) the identification of a target journal;
 - (2) an abstract of max. 300 words;
 - (3) a synopsis of ca. 3000 words.
- Deliver a presentation of max. 20 minutes, providing a clear and concise overview of the progress achieved over the past two years, with particular attention to research output and dissemination, as well as a plan for the subsequent two years. This is followed by a discussion with the jury (max. 40 minutes), during which questions may address all aspects of the PhD research;

4. Phd Support

4.1 Doctoral Training for PhD students at KCB and RITCS

The *Doctoral Training* programme consists of four modules, which are organized during the first two academic years (i.e. the first phase) of the doctoral trajectory. These sessions are mandatory and are scheduled on the first or last Monday of each month during the academic year. **Modules 1, 2 and 4 are open to RITCS doctoral candidates.** Further guidance on participation in these modules is provided in section 3.1.

As academic discipline artistic research has not yet been around for very long, and its integration in higher arts education is still a work in progress. As a result, many PhD candidates in the arts only really engage with it for the first time upon their entry into the PhD program. The doctoral seminars on artistic research are meant to facilitate this introductory phase. They cover fundamental topics, such as the position of the discipline in and outside of academia, the concepts of research question and methodology, and the way knowledge is shared in artistic research. But they also offer practical guidance in the development of small-scale research projects and the preparation for discursive output for publication.

Module 1: Introduction to Artistic Research and the Brussels Model

This module offers a general introduction to artistic research and is built around the following questions:

- What is artistic research?
- What is the position of artistic research in and outside of academia?
- What is the value of artistic research?

The module consists of prerecorded lectures; reading assignments; analysis of existing research; and 2 guided group discussions.

Module 2: Research Question and Methodology

This module explores the definition and use of two critical research concepts: the research question and research methodology. Amongst the topics of discussion:

- Differences and common ground with more traditional academic disciplines
- The open nature of artistic research
- Some existing models for artistic research methodology

The module consists of prerecorded lectures, reading assignments, analysis of existing research, and 2 guided group discussions.

Module 3: Research Questions and Methodology (KCB)

This is a hands-on module built around developing a small-scale research project. It covers the choice of a research topic; collecting, assessing, and using sources; formulating a research question and methodology; and presenting results.

Collective and individual feedback are the pillars of this module. It consists of two group discussions,

individual coaching sessions, and two presentations with peer feedback.

It is recommended that participants have gone through the first two modules of doctoral seminars.

Module 3: Peer Coaching Sessions RITCS School of Arts (RITCS)

Participation in one complete cycle of the RITCS peer coaching sessions is mandatory for all RITCS doctoral candidates (see section 3.1).

A mutual nurturing and challenging of researchers is indispensable for a healthy research environment. The proposal described here is born from the observation that there is a **desire among various PhD students in the arts for a sustainable(er) and (more) in-depth exchange with colleagues**. Although there are many good initiatives in existence, Brussels Arts Platform would like to propose a **peer coaching method** that aims to get PhD students out of their work isolation, but also places the **emphasis on peer feedback, deepening, problem solving and long-term cooperation**. The latter goals are not always achieved in the current initiatives. For example, there are numerous presentation events where researchers give a glimpse of the things they have achieved. Rarely do these events offer the time to go deeper into the challenges of a research project. There is much to be learned from hearing about each other's successes, but perhaps even more from articulating, presenting and discussing (as yet) unsuccessful cases: stumbling blocks, ethical dilemmas, methodological and content-related knots.

The proposal for peer coaching is inspired by the methods of a number of well-functioning international film and script labs, such as the Berlinale Talents Lab, the IDFA Academy, the VAF workshop and the European Short Pitch training.

These labs are specifically aimed at developing film creations and networks, but the methodology is very well applicable to both the creative and discursive part of research projects, within a wide variety of disciplines.

How will the peer coaching workshops be set up?

Each atelier consists of 3 RITCS researchers and one tutor with experience in both the academic and artistic field.

The atelier consists of 4 sessions of 3,5 hours each. These take place every two months. Start and finish dates are fixed.

Before the atelier, each participant sets a concrete goal, which comes down to preparing/working out a particular part of the research. Examples of this are: writing an academic article, drawing up a construction plan for the discursive part, finishing a trailer, setting up an artistic workshop, designing an exhibition, etc.

The sessions are monitored by the tutor. Each project is treated together during 1 hour. At the end of each treatment, the researcher formulates a new interim goal. Based on the feedback, he or she starts working individually after the session. At least 4 days before the new session, the researcher shares a new presentation of the steps taken. In the same way (1h per project), these steps are examined together. This pattern is repeated four times. The last session can, for those who want, be considered as a moment of completion and thus 'showcase' of the personal project.

Before the start of the sessions, participants share a brief presentation of their research in general (max.4 pages and/or some video excerpts) and a description of their goal for the workshop (max. 1

page). This description should ideally contain a number of questions or issues that the researcher, together with the co-researchers and tutor, wants to find an answer to.

In the run-up to the first session, each participant has carefully read these documents.

The form of this workshop is quite rigid. We hope that this rigid structure will provide the framework for personal initiative, creativity, discussions, brainstorming and feedback. Each researcher is free to fill in this format according to their own taste and needs.

Module 4: Writing Labs

This module focuses on supporting PhD researchers in their individual writing needs at different stages of the research process. It offers hands-on guidance in academic writing, peer review, and the communication of research to both scholarly and broader audiences. Key topics include learning how to write an abstract, developing a clear structure for academic texts, identifying appropriate publication journals, and adapting writing style to different formats (e.g. articles, conference papers, or popularizing texts). Collective and individual feedback form the core of this module. It consists of guided peer-review sessions, individual coaching tailored to participants' writing projects, and collective discussions of writing strategies and challenges. It is recommended that participants have completed the previous three doctoral seminar modules or have equivalent experience with academic or artistic research writing.

PhD year 1	
Module 1 Maarten Stragier	Semester 1
Module 2 Maarten Stragier	Semester 1/Semester 2
Module 3 (KCB) Maarten Stragier	Semester 2
PhD year 2	
Module 3 (KCB) Maarten Stragier	Semester 1
Module 4 Kurt Bertels	Semester 2

4.2 Training offers VUB

General offer of courses and seminars: via TEO platform.

Offer of Flames: <https://www.flames-statistics.com/>

Individual Consults: <https://square.research.vub.be/consult>

4.3 Two-day get together with PhD students

Almost every year (period and dates to be defined), we organize a two-day get-together with the PhD students of RITCS and KCB. Depending on the location, we also stay overnight.

The PhD students can choose the kind of contribution they want to do (lecture, lecture-performance, concert, film screening etcetera) and there will also be round table talks in

4.4 Research Events

Each year, there are research events at both KCB and RITCS. At KCB, the dates are usually concentrated in one week (dates to be defined each year), at RITCS there are research events all year through.

Researchers and PhD students of each institution can propose activities originating from their own research (lecture, lecture-performance, workshop, concert, film screening, masterclass etcetera). They can also invite guests. Next to the research week, each School of Arts also regularly organizes research days with presentations of researchers and PhD students.

4.5 CLIC Research group

Since the academic year 2025–2026, the senior academic staff (ZAP) of RITCS and KCB, together with their PhD researchers, make part of the large VUB research group *Centre for Literary and Intermedial Crossings* (CLIC). This multidisciplinary research group brings together scholars working in artistic research, literary studies, translation studies, theatre and performance studies, and journalism studies. It investigates how stories, ideas, and cultural practices move across media, genres, languages, and geographical contexts. Its research focuses on themes such as intermediality, multilingualism, cultural exchange, transnational networks, and artistic practices. This research environment offers support to PhD researchers in applying for external funding opportunities, such as travel grants and research fellowships, and regularly organizes study days, seminars or conferences. More information about CLIC can be found on its website <https://clic.research.vub.be>

4.6 Doctoral School of Human Sciences

PhD students in the Arts belong to the Doctoral School of Human Sciences of VUB (on condition that the academic advisor falls under the School of Human Sciences, most do):

<https://www.vub.be/en/our-research/earning-doctorate-vub/doctoral-education-and-doctoral-schools#paragraph-106645>

There is a possibility to ask for grants within the Doctoral School of Human Sciences:

Call for activities/ travel grants/ Language support/ publishing grants:

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/DoctoralSchoolGrants.aspx

Call for travel grants – International stays and summer schools:

Please note that most probably you will only get these grants (maximum 2000 euros) once in the whole PhD trajectory (so maximum one time international stay and one time summer school), as there is so much demand for this grant.

This grant application is set up such that it's as **compatible as possible with FWO applications** for international mobility. There is a high success rate for this type of FWO grants, so check it out <https://fwo.be/en/support-programmes/international-mobility/>.

Support for conferences? The drawback of this policy is that **conferences can no longer be supported through the doctoral schools**. Additionally, it is still possible to apply for an FWO grant for participation

at a conference abroad. You can also apply for a travel grant through Brussels Arts Platform (see page 19).

4.7 Travel Grant Brussels Arts Platform

You can apply each year – until your public defense- for a travel grant of maximum 750 euros, from Brussels Arts Platform.

In case you want to apply for a travel grant, please send a motivational letter with a budget to Inge.Pieters@vub.be

The information will then be sent to the members of the board of Brussels Arts Platform. Only if the members give a positive advice, you will get the travel grant. Your costs will be reimbursed after the travel has taken place. You will have to send the receipts of all the costs you made to Inge Pieters to get reimbursed.

4.8 Production Budget

Each PhD student is entitled to a production budget of 6000 euros to support the production of the PhD's artistic part. This budget may be used whenever needed, from the start of the registration as a PhD student in the Arts, until a maximum of one year after the public defense. Also expenses made after the public defense must still be directly related to the PhD project (for instance, costs associated with the publication of the PhD). All expenses must be clearly linked to your PhD. Each funding request should therefore be accompanied by a motivation explaining its relevance.

In case of invoices or costs above 500 euros, the representatives of Brussels Arts Platform (research coordinator RITCS, research coordinator KCB, representative for VUB) will have to give their 'approval' for reimbursement. For subcontracting for more than 2000 euros, you will need to make a financial plan of the total expenses for your budget of 6000 euros.

In the case of small costs (under 100 euros) and on condition that the company cannot send an invoice to VUB and wait for the payment, the PhD student can do the payment him- or herself and can be reimbursed by VUB/ Brussels Arts Platform. For the reimbursement, a proof of payment is always needed.

For costs above 100 euros, the company or subcontractor needs to send an invoice to VUB directly. The company will need to receive an order form from VUB with an order number on it. The order number should be mentioned on the invoice (cfr infra).

You cannot invoice VUB from an organization of which you make part (for instance, your own 'vzw'). If you think that there is no other solution or when in doubt, please contact Inge Pieters.

In case you buy equipment with this budget, this equipment needs to be returned to Brussels Arts Platform after the defense of your PhD.

In case of the organization of a concert or performance or alike, Brussels Arts Platform asks the PhD student to look for a presentation partner in the cultural field, that has expertise in the organization of events and that can generate an audience for the event. It is to be avoided to organize a concert and pay for all the costs with the production budget of Brussels Arts Platform. It is important that the jury is invited for the concert, if it is part of the artistic output of the PhD. It is not obligatory/necessary to organize a concert or performance the day preceding the public defense.

You will need to be able provide a declaration of intent of a partner (concert promoter, label, publishing company, production company, ...) in case a small part of the total cost needs to be paid by Brussels Arts Platform.

Subcontracting always has to come with a guarantee of delivery. For example, rehearsals have to lead to output like a performance/concert or a professional recording.

You will need to add the logo of Brussels Arts Platform, VUB and RITCS or KCB in the communication about productions, films, CD's, etcetera or on a book in case there was financial support by means of the production budget. You can send an e-mail to Inge.Pieters@vub.be to get the logos.

You will also need to provide a CD, book, file, ... to Brussels Arts Platform for archival matters.

It is absolutely to be avoided to organize a concert/performance yourself and use the production budget to pay for all the costs (fee of the musicians, the rental of the concert hall, etc.). It is important that the artistic output is embedded in the cultural field. In case it is not possible to organize a concert or plan a performance with the support of a cultural organization, other formats of artistic output can be considered (for instance a recording). In case you can plan a concert/performance, but this cannot be done close to the public defense, this is not a problem. It is important that the jury can see the artistic outcome of the PhD before the internal defense. It is to be recommended to make a recording of the artistic output, if possible.

Brussels Arts Platform must follow the internal financial rules and regulations of VUB.

On 1 January 2026, the VUB has implemented the new procedure for electronic invoices, as required by law. E-invoicing means that Belgian VAT-registered suppliers must send their invoices electronically (in an XML file and in accordance with the Peppol format). A PDF invoice alone will therefore no longer suffice.

Invoicing terms and conditions of VUB:

- Every invoice must include a purchase order number (PO number). Without this number, your invoice cannot be processed or paid.
- For each invoice, please use the VUB GLN number as the Peppol ID: 0088:5415339000013 (the VAT number of VUB is not unique and also applies to UZ Brussel).
- The GLN number may not be visible as a standard field in the Peppol application of the client; please ask your IT manager to have this programmed.

It is also necessary to put an order number on foreign invoices.

The details that should be mentioned on the invoice are:

Vrije Universiteit Brussel Pleinlaan 2 1050 Brussel

Global Location number (GLN) 0088:5415339000013

AND the order form number (see above). Contact Inge Pieters about this.

4. 9 Libraries

VUB Library

The VUB Library provides essential support for research, teaching. It offers access to an extensive collection of academic resources, including books, journals, databases and digital materials across a wide range of disciplines.

During your PhD trajectory, you are strongly encouraged to make active use of the library's expertise and infrastructure. In addition to providing access to scholarly materials, the VUB Library offers guidance on literature searches, reference management, open science practices and research data management. These services are designed to help researchers work efficiently and meet academic standards regarding transparency and reproducibility. More information on access, collections and services can be found here:

<https://biblio.vub.ac.be/iguana/www.main.cls?url=vub&p=f88fe9ec-2425-11e7-a7e4-90084dd7a2c4&language=eng#>

To support the development of research skills, the VUB Library offers a basic online course on information literacy, which provides practical guidance on how to find, evaluate and use academic sources effectively:

English course: <https://canvas.vub.be/courses/15856>

Dutch course: <https://canvas.vub.be/courses/10421>

In addition, the library can organize tailored workshops on request, including sessions on the responsible and effective use of AI in academic research.

KCB Library

The KCB Library complements the VUB Library by offering highly specialized resources for research in music and the performing arts. Its exceptional collections include musical scores, recordings, musicological and historical literature and other discipline-specific materials that are essential for artistic research in music. Moreover, it provides access to unique and often hard-to-find materials. The library staff (librarian Johan Eeckeloo, johan.eeckeloo@ehb.be) can also assist with specialised searches and the use of music-related databases and archives. More information: <https://www.kcb.be/en/Library>.

RITCS Library

Mobo is the reflection space and media archive of RITCS. You can find the Mobo library catalogue of items available for loan at ritcs-bib.ehb.be. Whilst the physical collection is limited by the size of the physical space, the online offering is much broader. More info on mobo.ritcs.be

You can find Mobo on the second floor of Dansaertstraat 70. The space is open every day from 8:30 am and freely accessible to students for individual quiet study or group work. You can reserve or borrow media, or make an appointment, via email. To borrow books yourself, take a photo of the barcode sticker and email it from your ehb address to mobo.ritcs@ehb.be. If you wish to make an interlibrary loan request, please send an email to julia.clever@ehb.be.

4.10 VUB Data Repository

The *VUB Institutional Data Repository* is the university's central platform for the secure storage, management and preservation of research data. It enables researchers to archive datasets in a sustainable and structured way, ensuring that valuable research outputs remain accessible, reproducible, and compliant with institutional and funder requirements.

Using the repository is an important part of responsible research practice. It supports transparency and reproducibility by allowing data to be preserved alongside publications, while also ensuring that sensitive or restricted data is handled appropriately. Researchers can deposit both open and restricted datasets, depending on the nature of the data and any legal, ethical or contractual constraints.

The VUB repository is particularly suited for data that cannot be shared openly, including:

- Personal data (preferably pseudonymised)
- Data with military or dual-use potential
- Third-party data obtained under non-disclosure agreements
- Data subject to intellectual property rights (e.g. copyright, database rights, or pending patents)
- Data with commercial or valorisation potential
- Data with ethical sensitivities (e.g. locations of endangered species)

By providing controlled access options, the repository ensures that such data can still be preserved and, where appropriate, shared under clearly defined conditions. Although open data is supported, researchers are encouraged to deposit fully open datasets in recognised external repositories when suitable. If there is any uncertainty about the openness or sensitivity of your data, the *VUB Institutional Data Repository* is the recommended starting point.

Since its launch in June 2024, the repository has already preserved over 200 datasets, demonstrating its growing role in safeguarding the university's research output. For more information, consult the repository page or contact the support team at: data.archive@vub.be. For more information: <https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB-ARDI/SitePages/VUB-Institutional-Data-Repository.aspx?web=1>

4.11 Technical problem with VUB software

If you have a technical problem with VUB software, you can make a 'ticket' at the VUB service desk: <https://vub.service-now.com/sp/>

This system is linked to your VUB e-mail address.

5. Useful links and information

5.1 VUB Portal for PhD researchers

You can find a lot of useful information on the [Wearephd.vub.be](https://wearephd.vub.be) portal

Check the menu on the left-hand side of the page and the information under each header:

- news
- calendar
- community
- tools

-support
-contact

You can also find information about doing a PhD at VUB via this link:

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/My-PhD.aspx

You have only access to these pages when you are already registered as Phd student at VUB and have a VUB e-mail address.

There is also a public web page on research at VUB:

<https://www.vub.be/en/vub-research>

5.2 TEO

Text on the VUB website:

At VUB we consider it important to offer you, our employee or (PhD student), the opportunity to continuously develop your skills and potential. That's why you can find our diverse training offer for all staff under one umbrella, 'VUB LRN'. You can browse and register our VUB LRN catalogue with more ease via TEO Learning.

At VUB you can follow several courses, such as academic English, how to publish an article, but also more content bases courses. With your statute of 'voluntary scientific collaborator', you won't be able to log in in TEO. You can ask for a guest account and via the link below you can already browse the offer.

The introduction package will also be announced on TEO.

For TEO, choose 'tools' on the left - hand side of the wearephd.vub.be page and then choose 'TEO'.

Only accessible to those who have a VUB e-mail address already AND have the statute of 'voluntary scientific collaborator' (cfr point 2.1).

5.3 Peer-Reviewed Publication

Publishing peer-reviewed research output as well as outputs aimed at a broader audience or professional sector is an important part of your PhD trajectory. At Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), such publications by PhD researchers in the Arts may generate funding if they meet specific criteria. Publications are considered peer-reviewed if it appears in a recognized academic journal and have undergone an independent review process and thus academic quality standards. At VUB, the following categories are eligible:

- Articles published in journals indexed in the *Web of Science*, limited to: research articles, review articles, letters, and notes.
- Articles published in journals included in the *Vlaams Academisch Bibliografisch Bestand* (VABB-SHW), using the same publication types.

Examples of relevant journals in the Arts are *FORUM+*, *Journal for Artistic Research (JAR)*, *Collateral Journal* and *Art/Research International*. These journals support a range of formats, including practice-based and artistic research outputs, provided they are peer-reviewed. Support for developing peer-

reviewed publications is offered through the Doctoral Training (cf. *Module 3: Writing Labs*). These sessions focus on academic writing and publishing strategies.

Examples of non-peer-reviewed journals and platforms that reach broader professional and public audience include *Rekto: Verso*, *Etcetera*, *Sabzian*, *De Witte Raaf*, *e-flux journal*, *De Gids*, *DW B*, *nY*).

All peer-reviewed publications must be registered in PURE research information system. VUB uses this platform to monitor and validate research output and related funding.

5.4 Rules and Regulations/ Forms/ Manuals & Guidelines/ Templates

Central PhD regulations, with additions about the PhD in the Arts Specifically (go to 'Regulations'- 'Central PhD regulations'):

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/Regulations-&-Forms.aspx

You will also have access to different forms, manuals and guidelines and templates via the same page.

5.5 Charter for researchers VUB

https://wearephd.vub.be/s/124362606/a/335601228?title=VUB_Charter_for_Researchers

5.6 The Platform Council

The Platform Council is responsible for developing the vision of the Arts Platform and consists of the members of the executive committee, two representatives of KCB and of RITCS, five representatives of VUB, and a representative of the doctoral students as an advisory member. For the moment this is Jens De Mey.

PART III: PhD Defense

6. The Central PhD regulations and the composition of the jury

When the defense of your PhD comes closer, it is important to think—together with your supervisor—about the composition of your jury. Check the central PhD regulations and the ‘roadmap’ per faculty via this link:

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB_PhD/SitePages/Roadmap-per-faculty.aspx?web=1

The composition of the jury needs to be approved by the board of Brussels Arts Platform and by the faculty of your academic supervisor.

In the central PhD regulations, you will also find information on the time frame within which you need to hand in your PhD, as well the maximum length between internal and public defense (3 months).

A template for the PhD thesis can be found here:

7. How to submit your PhD?

See the road map per faculty (link above). You can also make an appointment with Inge Pieters (Inge.Pieters@vub.be) to discuss things. Your PhD needs to be handed in two months before the internal defense. If all jury members agree, this can be shortened to one month before the internal defense. Please note that there can be maximum 3 months between the internal defense and the public defense. The public defense can only be announced after the jury has given their go at the internal defense.

PhD students in the Arts are required to have their artistic output archived. When submitting their doctoral thesis, they must contact archieff@vub.be and data.archive@vub.be to obtain the guidelines for the submission and archiving of the artistic component. The correct submission of the artistic output is a prerequisite for admission to the internal defense.

Some useful links:

Transfer of paper archives:

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB-ARDI/SitePages/Archieff_Overdragen.aspx

VUB Institutional data repository:

<https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB-ARDI/SitePages/VUB-Institutional-Data-Repository.aspx>

Consulting archives:

https://vub.sharepoint.com/sites/PUB-ARDI/SitePages/Archieff_Opvrage.aspx