



JOINT AND DOUBLE PDH DEGREE

CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES

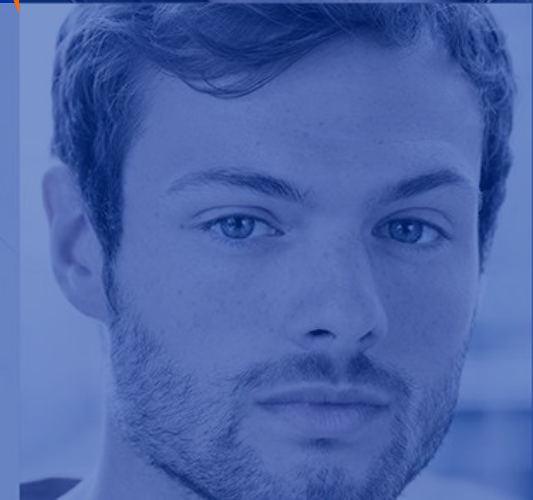
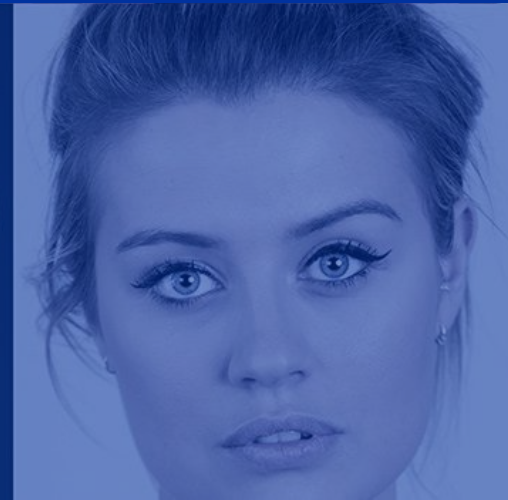
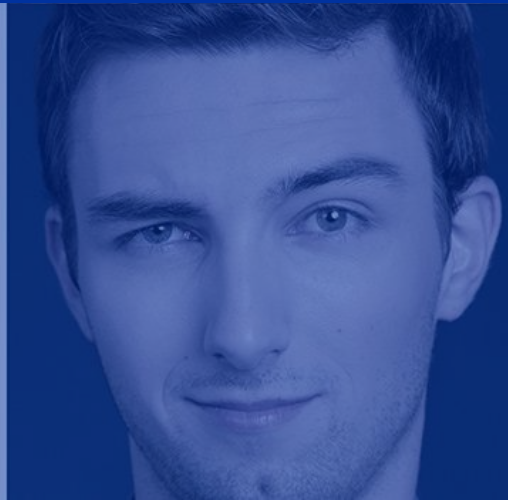
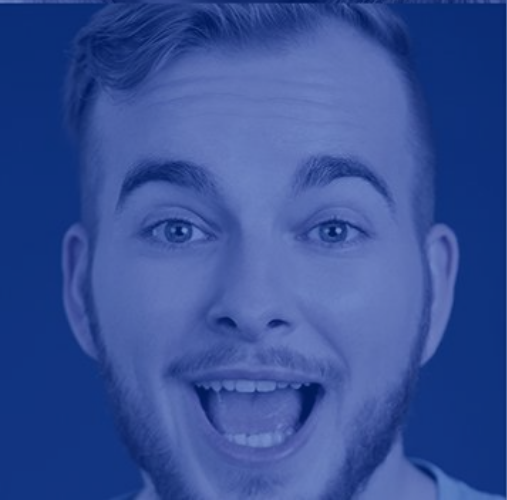
Petra Courjaret – Legal Counsel R&D



VRIJE
UNIVERSITEIT
BRUSSEL



JOINT AND DOUBLE PDH DEGREE – WHAT?



JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

WHAT?

Joint/double PhD = 'gezamenlijk/dubbel doctoraat' = 'cotutelle de thèse'

Definition

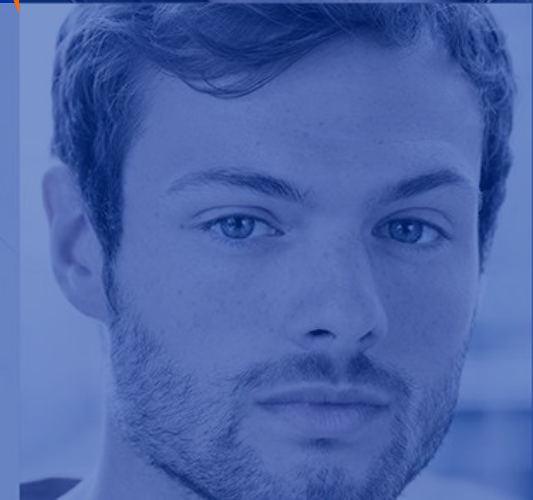
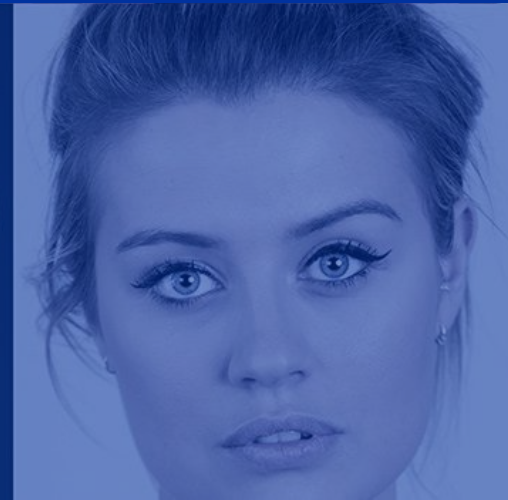
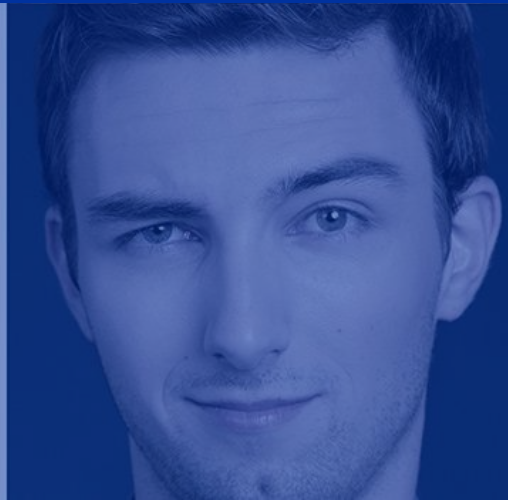
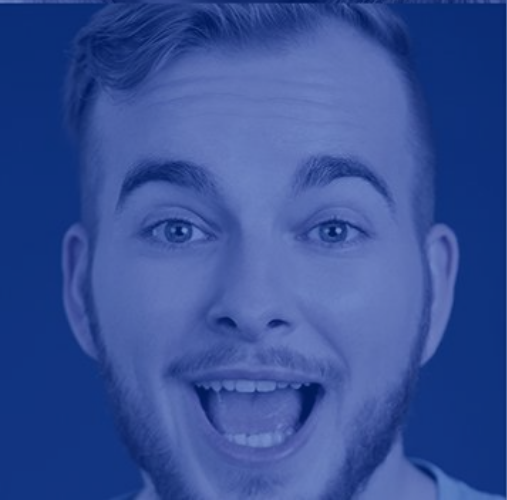
- A doctoral thesis researched, written and defended under the joint responsibility of two partner institutions

Concretely

- A co-operation between the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and another domestic or foreign institution either within or outside Europe.
- The terms are stated for each PhD student individually in a **contract** signed by the rectors of the two institutions, both co-supervisors and the PhD student.



**JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD
DEGREE - DIPLOMA**



JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

DIPLOMA

A joint PhD can lead to two types of diploma, both conferring **one** PhD (doctoral) degree:

Joint degree

- Requires full academic equivalence between the PhD degrees of both partner institutions.
- A joint degree certificate, stating one, joint PhD degree title and the discipline

Double degree

- No degree equivalence at the two partner institutions
- Double degree certificate, stating the two titles.

JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

DIPLOMA

A joint PhD can lead to two types of diploma: a joint or a double degree

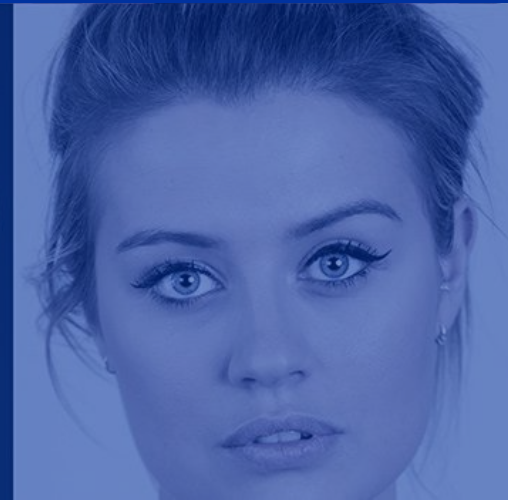
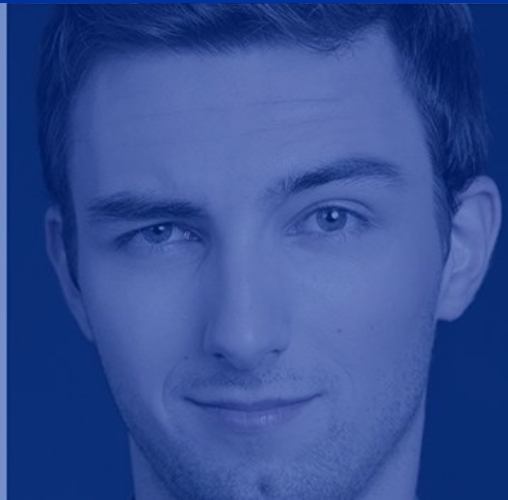
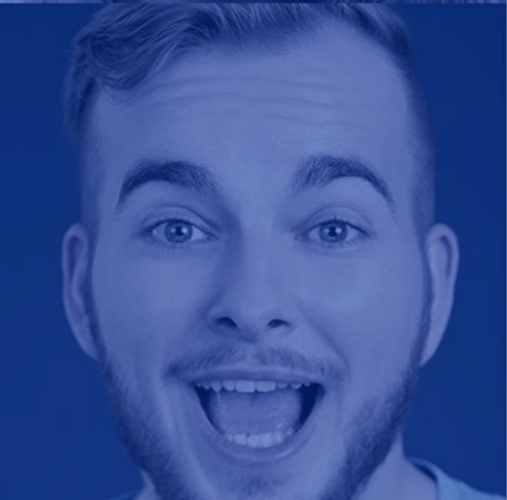
Certificate

Either can lead to one certificate or two separate certificates.

- One certificate: in principle drawn up by the institution where the thesis defense takes place;
- Two certificates: each institution will draw up its own certificate.



**JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD
DEGREE - CONDITIONS**



JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

CONDITIONS

- Individual contracts – Central PhD Office - Always
- Institutional contracts (MoU) – IRMO (Sarah Schoofs) – Only if other institution requires it

Requirements

- The candidate has a supervisor in each partner institution
- The candidate has an approved research proposal in both institutions
- The candidate works at least six months at each partner institution, which is possible in one stay or divided in several short stays
- The partner institution can rely on a legislation which allows a joint PhD
- The candidate is enrolled at each institution for the duration of the joint PhD (re-enroll annually)

JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

CONDITIONS

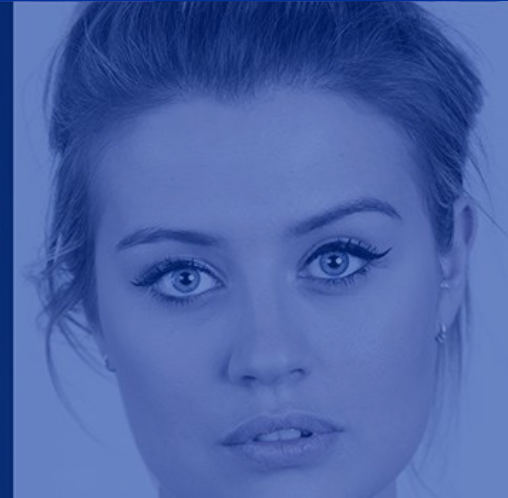
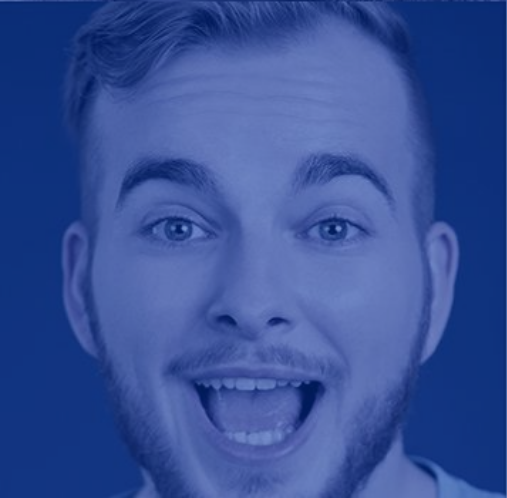
The conditions for conducting a joint PhD in Flanders are set out in the Higher Education Code (Codex Hoger Onderwijs) of 20 December 2013:

"A university may confer, in conjunction with another domestic or foreign university, a joint PhD degree or a double PhD degree, provided that a public defense of the thesis has taken place before a jury including professors from the two institutions concerned and that the PhD student has spent a minimum of six months at the partner university for thesis research work."

The partner institution should be backed by similar legislation creating the preconditions for joint PhD projects.



**JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD
DEGREE - PROCEDURE**



JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

PROCEDURE

- Start the procedure **at least 1 year before the defense.**
- **Always** contact [the Central PhD Office](#) when you are considering starting a Joint PhD
- The PhD Office will inform you of and provide you with the agreement to be used:
 - Between Flemish institutions a pre-agreed template in Flemish and English exists
 - VUB also has model agreements for use outside Flanders (e.g. used by incoming PhD-students, if the partner institution does not have an agreed upon template with VUB ...)
 - Outgoing PhD students can submit the documents provided by the guest institution for approval
 - If any changes are required, [the Central PhD Office](#) will negotiate them with the partner institution and obtain the necessary internal approvals.

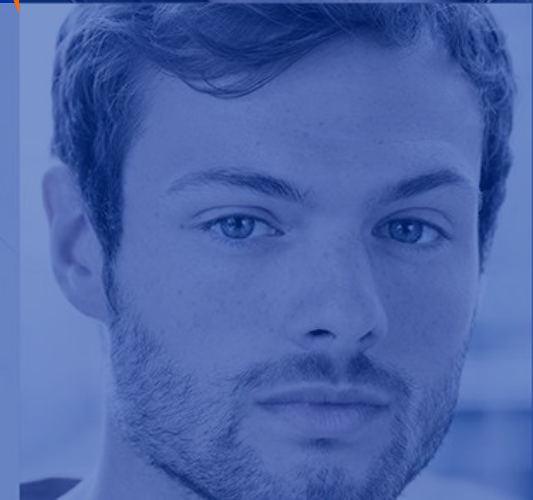
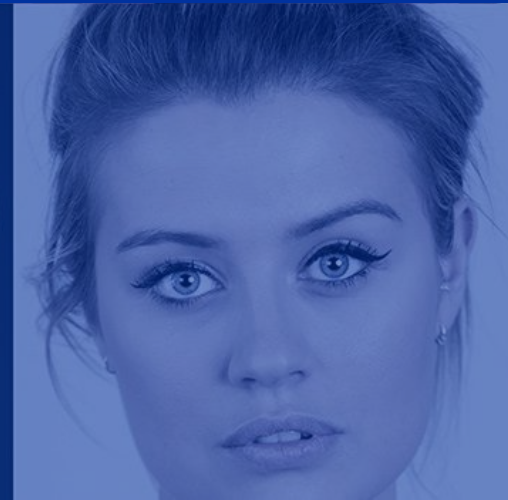
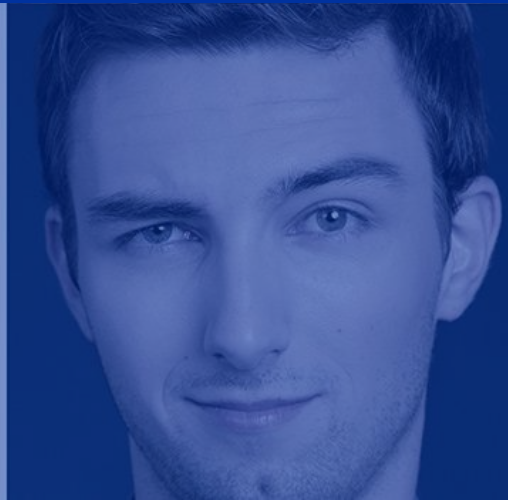
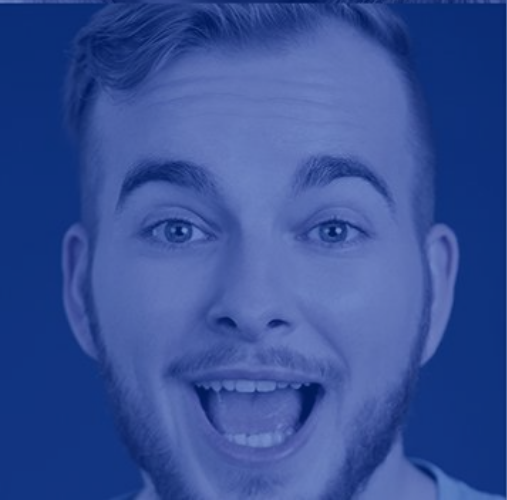
JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

PROCEDURE

- Please note: the contract may not conflict with the Central Regulations regarding the Conferment of PhD degrees of the VUB, nor with the supplementary faculty regulations of the relevant VUB faculty, nor with legislation.
- ***The final version completed by the student and its promotor needs to be approved by the Central PhD Office before it can be signed: agreements negotiated and/or signed without the Central PhD Office's knowledge and approval are not accepted.***
- The candidate also has to be ***enrolled as a PhD student*** at VUB before the agreement can be signed
- A joint PhD can take effect at any time in the course of the PhD trajectory, but the thesis cannot be submitted before individual joint PhD agreement is signed.



**JOINT AND DOUBLE PDH
DEGREE – OBLIGATIONS**



JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

OBLIGATIONS SUPERVISORS

- Jointly supervise
 - Counsel (offer expertise, guidance) and stimulate (encourage, coordinate, assess) the PhD candidate as he/she prepares the PhD thesis
 - Consult with other supervisor(s)
 - Observe the rules and regulations of both institutions (e.g. "Charter for Researchers", ...)
 - Monitor progress: Annual progress reports at both institutions: approval → re-enrollment
- Organization of and timely (at least 3 weeks in advance) communication towards all institutions re:
 - Completion of the doctoral training programme and the admission to defend
 - Official title of the doctoral thesis
 - Date of private and public defense
 - Composition of the jury (minimum 6: 2 supervisors, 1 each institution, 2 external)
- Organization of award of diploma

JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

OBLIGATIONS STUDENTS

- Be enrolled at each institution for the entire duration of the joint PhD
 - At VUB the joint PhD student only pays tuition fees in the year of the defense
- Observe the rules and regulations of each institution
 - E.g. IP, publications, confidentiality, ...
- Observe rules re doctoral training at main institution
 - At VUB this has become an obligation
 - Submit annual progress reports at each institution:
 - On the supervision of the supervisor, the activities (conferences, teaching tasks) of the last year, the progress and research completed and the plans for the upcoming year(s)

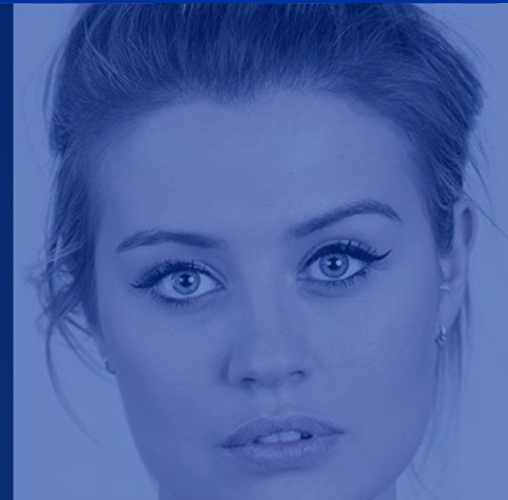
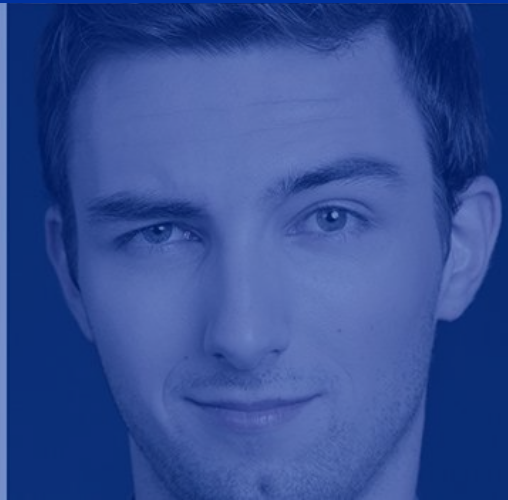
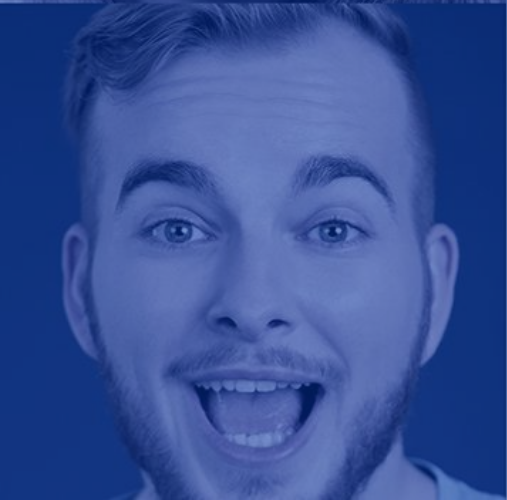
JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

OBLIGATIONS STUDENTS

- Spend at least 6 months conducting research at each institution
- Submit and defend a thesis in language agreed upon in contract + abstract (in Dutch)
- Arrange health (and travel) insurance
 - Through the annual enrolment as PhD student at VUB, s/he is covered against physical injuries and third party liability whilst performing his/her duties within the framework of the doctoral research
- Organization of and correct and timely (at least 3 weeks in advance) communication towards all institutions re:
 - Completion of the doctoral training programme and the admission to defend
 - Official title of the doctoral thesis and the date of defense
 - Date of public and private defense
 - Composition of the jury (minimum 6: 2 supervisors, 1 each institution, 2 external)



**JOINT AND DOUBLE PDH
DEGREE – BENCH FEE**



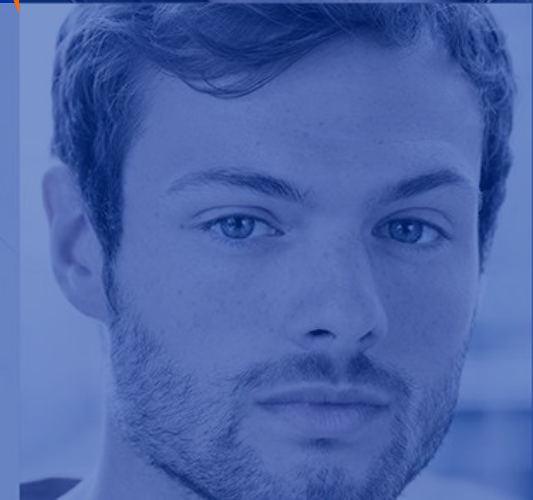
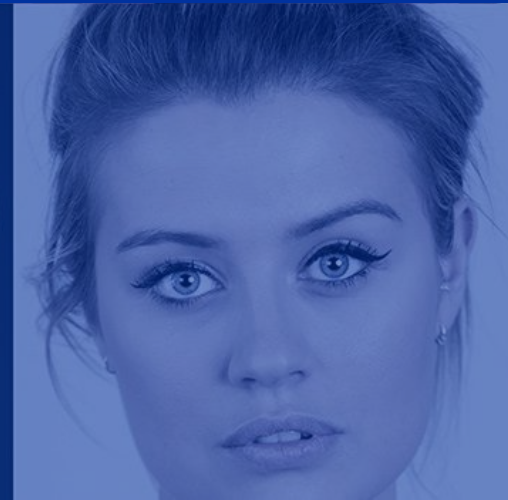
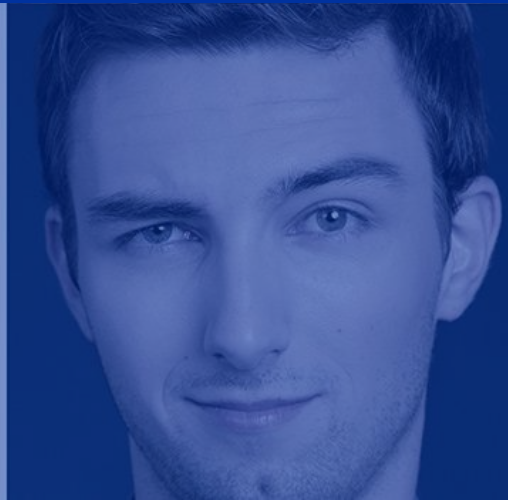
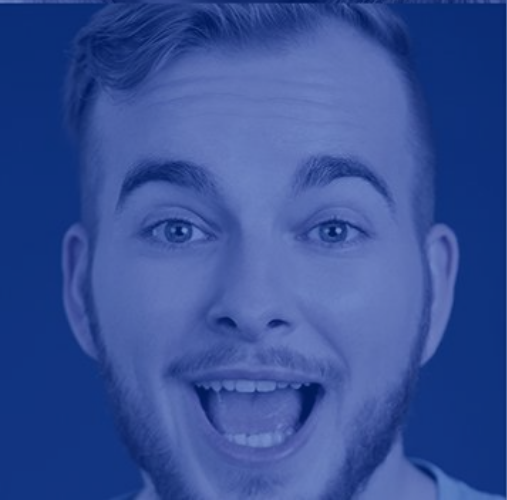
JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

ONE-OFF BENCH FEE

- Provided by Research Council for:
 - Joint PhD students enrolled as such
 - Joint PhD agreement fully signed and one fully signed copy returned to the Central PhD Office
- Amount varies depending on the area where the partner university is located:
 - Benelux: € 2000
 - North America: € 5000
 - Remaining countries: € 4000
- A contribution towards extra costs a joint PhD entails:
 - To be used towards travel and accommodation expenses and/or study or research materials...
 - Paid into a special account of the VUB department and managed by the VUB supervisor



**JOINT AND DOUBLE PDH
DEGREE – FIGURES**



JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

FIGURES – NUMBER OF JOINT PHD'S PER YEAR

Number of joint PhD's with international institutions in 2020-2021: 26

Top 5 countries (other than Belgium) with which there are joint doctorates (since 2016):

1. The Netherlands
2. United Kingdom
3. Brazil
4. France
5. Italy

JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

MORE INFORMATION

Joint PhD Guide

<https://student.vub.be/en/phd/joint-phd#about>

Regulations

<https://student.vub.be/en/regulations-and-forms#research>

Enrollment

<http://www.vub.ac.be/en/phd/enrolment>

JOINT AND DOUBLE PHD DEGREE

CONTACT

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Hilde Willems (Flemish Joint PhD Agreements)

Klara Swalus & Petra Courjaret (Non-Flemish Joint PhD Agreements)

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QUESTIONS?

