



A PhD in Architecture: what, how and why?

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What is a PhD/doctorate?

- A doctoral degree (or PhD) is the highest academic degree awarded.
- It typically requires four years of study (doctoral training) and research (project), and is awarded after a public defense of the results.

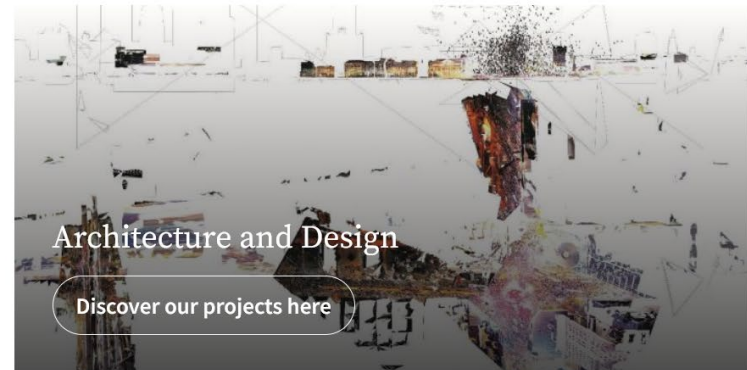
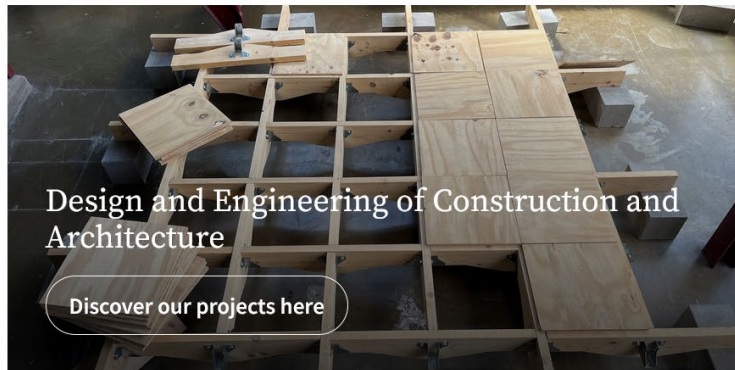
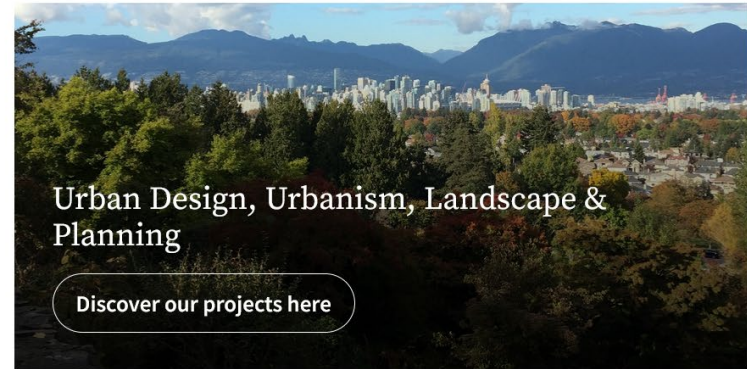
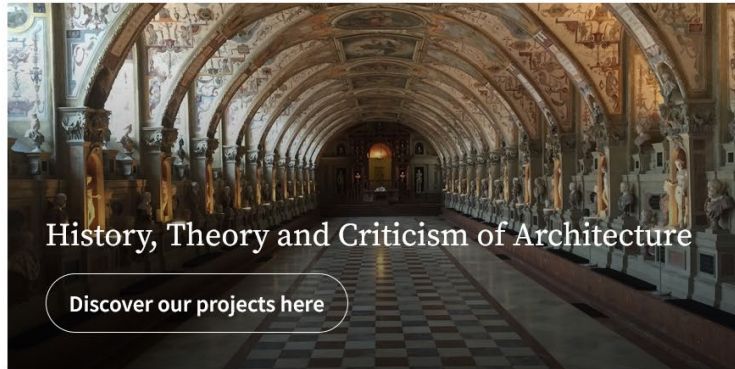


Public Defense of Robin Schaefferbeke,
2016

Research

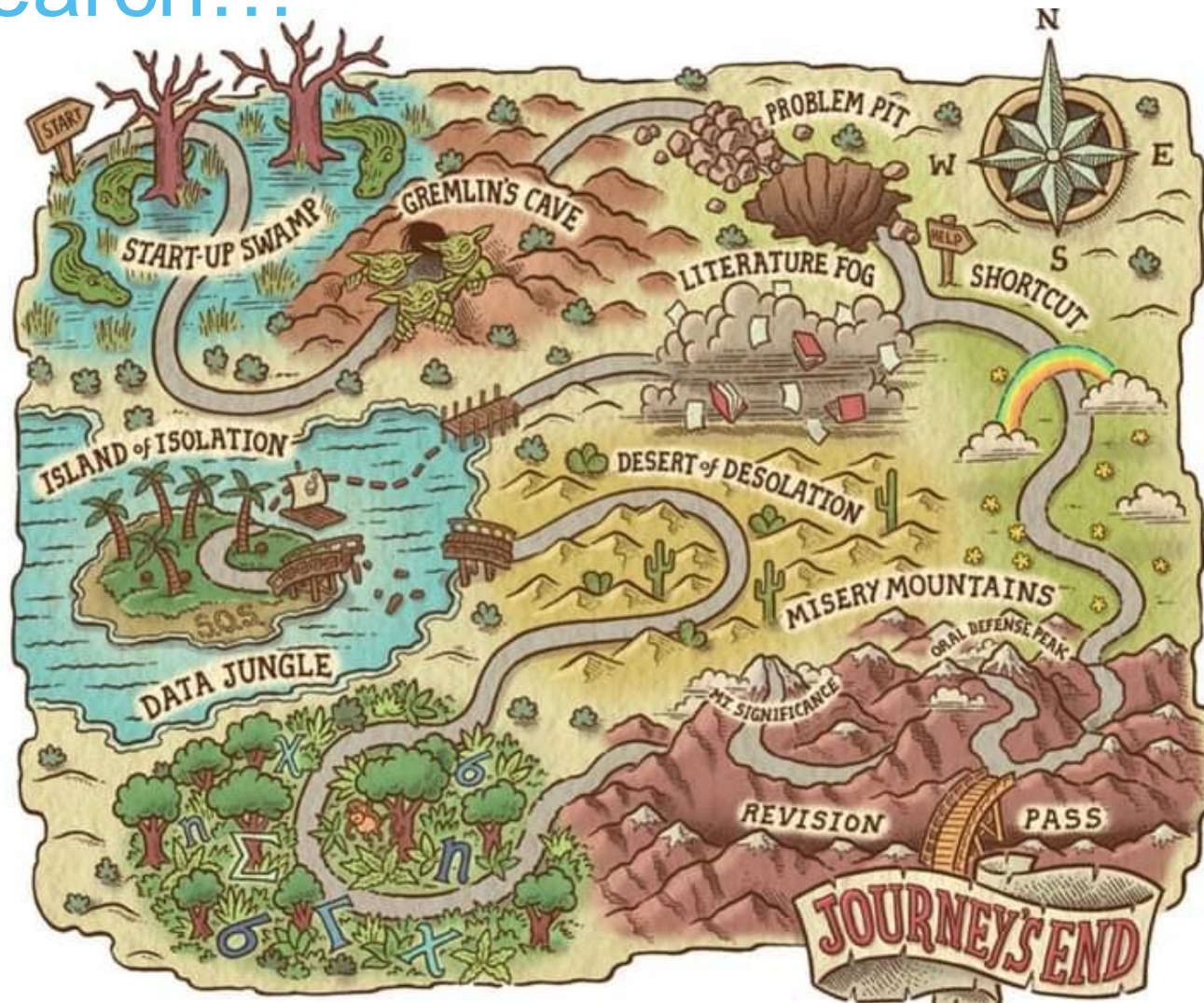
- In-depth exploration of one specific topic in the field of (interior) architecture, planning or design
- Guided by a supervisor + supervisory committee
- Adds substantial and innovative insights to the domain
- Complies to the highest academic and/or artistic standards
- Results in the public defense of a doctoral thesis: book, installation, art work, performance, ...

Research: 4 domains



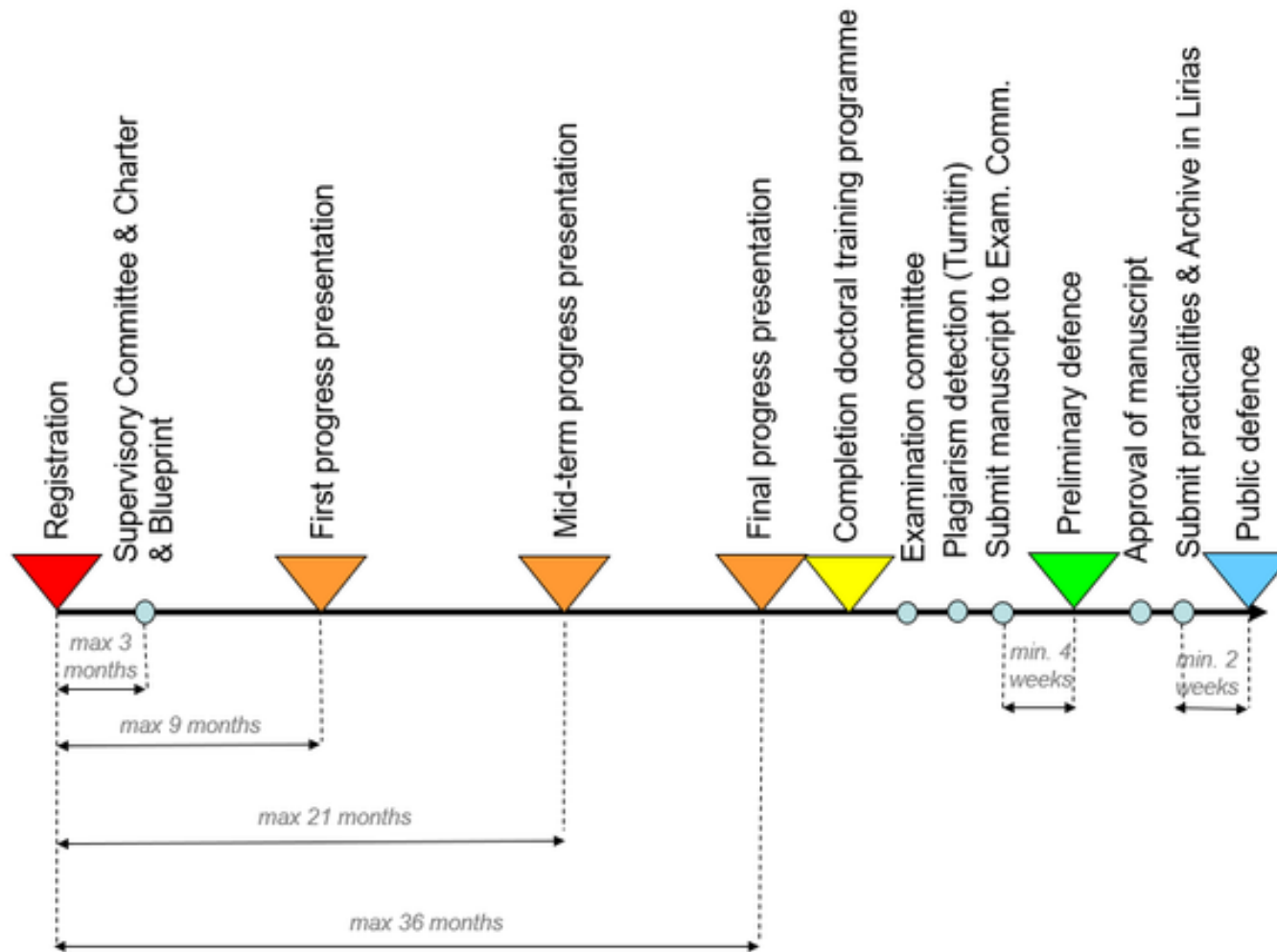
- Overview of current PhD students [here](#)

Research...



Source: Mario Zucca, 'The PhD Trajectory' (<https://mariozuccamaps.com/>)

Doctoral Training: Milestones



Doctoral Training: Requirements

- Publish one peer-reviewed publication
- Present at 2 seminars and 1 international conference
- Contribute to education
- Follow at least 6 ECTS of formal training

Why would I pursue a PhD?

Intrinsic Motivation

Ambition: “I like to work both independently and receive credit for my work, and be part of a larger collaborative led by experts in the field”

Personal development: “I want to develop essential and desirable skills such as independent reasoning, intellectual creativity, rigour and persistence.”

Curiosity: “I am really fascinated by my study domain and I like going beyond the obvious”

Social responsibility: “I want to address major societal challenges and contribute to developing new knowledge to this end.”

Why would I pursue a PhD?

Career perspectives

- Public sector: Flemish Heritage Agency, Ruimte Vlaanderen, WTCB, Flemish Architecture Institute (VAI), ...
- Private sector: R&D departments, building companies, private laboratories, ...
- Academia: pursue a career in teaching and research
 - ! On average only 10% of PhD's stay at university

Many PhD's occupy strategic positions as knowledge managers, innovation leaders and policy makers in the public and private sector

Why pursue a PhD at KU Leuven?

- Flanders' largest research department in Architecture
- International reputation
- Wide variety of research areas and methodologies
- Excellent guidance, (very) low registration fees



Number of PhD students @Faculty of Architecture, 2013-2023.

How to start a PhD?

Minimum requirements:

- Graduated in architecture or related discipline with (minimum) distinction or *cum laude* (at KU Leuven: > 68%)
- Proven ability in, or genuine interest in research
- Additional degree or study/work experience abroad = asset
- ! Strong motivation and commitment

How to start a PhD?

Scenario 1: A Professor hires PhD candidates

1. React to vacancy through [KU Leuven jobsite](#)
2. If succesful, become a full-time research assistent (2+2 years)
3. Apply for admission to the doctoral school
4. Start your PhD!

How to start a PhD?

Scenario 2: Develop a proposal of your own

1. Define your research interest(s)
2. Talk to potential supervisor(s) (ZAP) at the Faculty of Architecture
3. Together, draw up a research proposal
4. Apply for funding (FWO, Fullbright, EU, etc.), seek a partner (industry, architecture office, public body), or combine with day job.
5. Apply for admission to the doctoral school
6. Start your PhD!

Interested? Attend a public defense!

- Upcoming defence listed [here](#)



Interested? Need more information?

- Check these websites:
 - [Arenberg Doctoral School](#)
 - [PhD page](#) on Faculty website
- Contact PhD Admin (phd.architecture@kuleuven.be)
 - Sven Sterken, Annette Kuhk, Evita Piscador

