

□□□ **PROCEDURE** □□□
SCIENCE SHOP
PART 1: GENERAL

1.1. GENERAL

Science Shop Brussels is a service at the Vrije Universiteit Brussels that offers small-scale, exploratory and socially relevant student research.

A staff member of the Science Shop is responsible for establishing contact between the client, the supervisor of the study and the student-researcher and acts as a mediator once contact has been established. The Science Shop itself does not conduct research but assists the client in his search for a student-researcher and watches over the interests of both parties.

At the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, the coordination of the Science Shop comes under the cell Science Communication of the Department Research & Development. The R&D department is a rectorial service that is responsible for supporting and supervising the research policy of the university. The cell Science Communication puts in an effort to expand the social basis for science and technology, which will benefit future research and education.

This document is intended for making the procedure of the Science Shop Brussels more transparent. Agreements that are not mentioned in this standard document can be added as an appendix.

1.2. THE CLIENT

The client is a non-profit organization that does not have sufficient means nor expertise to conduct or pay for research.

Questions of individuals are only taken under consideration when the issue is important for a large group.

Questions of small and medium-sized companies (KMO's) or of governmental institutions are only taken under consideration when they cannot apply for contract research. In certain cases, substantial companies will be referred to an Interface cell (cf. 1.5.)

You qualify for becoming a Science Shop client if:

- you do not have the financial means to conduct or sponsor research
- you do not have the expertise to conduct research yourself
- the research is not intended for commercial ends
- your application is relevant for a large social group

1.3. THE APPLICATION

Applications are submitted through the central contact point of Science Shops.

Associations that are located in Flanders should contact the central contact point Wetenschapswinkel.be: www.wetenschapswinkel.be or telephone ++32 (0)2 629 22 24

Associations that are located in the Brussels Capital Region should contact the central contact point DISC: www.brudisc.be/wetenschapswinkel or telephone ++32 (0)2 629 18 35

The central contact points send the application to the associated Science Shops. The Science Shop Brussels is linked to both contact points.

Your question is screened by the advisory council on the basis of the following criteria:

- Is the question in line with the expertise of the Vrije universiteit Brussel;
- Is it possible to investigate the question in a neutral and objective way;
- Is there sufficient reliable research material available;
- Is the research socially relevant.

1.4. PROCEDURE

Intake interview: As soon as we receive your application, a staff member of the Science Shop Brussels will come to you for a first, exploratory interview

Intake report: The staff member makes up a detailed report of the intake interview and sends it to the advisory council after your approval.

Advisory Council: Within a period of 2 weeks, this council reports on the incoming applications (research questions) to the Science Shop. Their advice includes statements with respect to what questions can or cannot be dealt with by the Science Shop and with respect to what faculty's, research groups and researchers can be addressed. The advisory council consists of representatives of the institution.

Expert recruitment: After authorization of the advisory council, experts are addressed. Together with them we investigate how your question can be answered best.

For questions that require research, we look for students. The Science Shop is responsible for supervising this kind of student research (cf. Part 2).

If the research transcends the scope of student research, a research group is addressed. As soon as the research starts, the process is no longer supervised by the Science Shop.

Some questions might be answered through a consultancy interview. Contact is then established between the client and the expert. After contact has been established, the Science Shop does not supervise the communication.

1.5. SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT

Some questions can be answered quickly and briefly. Others require research. For each question, experts investigate how the research question can be answered.

➔ STUDENT RESEARCH

DISSERTATION

A dissertation is written by a master student based on a question of a client and within the period of the academic calendar (October until July/September). The dissertation meets the standards laid down by the faculty and the supervisor. This means that it is a scientific paper, that generally consists of a scientific study of the literature and an empirical research. The comments of the client are integrated in the dissertation to the extent in which this is possible. The final decision in this matter is taken by the student in consultation with and under the supervision of the supervisor.

INTERNSHIP

A research question of a client can also be investigated during an internship. The results of the research are written down by the student in the internship report or in a separate research report, depending on the demands and expectations of the faculty, the study programme and the client. The duration of the internship period also depends on the faculty and the study programme of the student.

➔ PROCEDURES OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THE SCIENCE SHOP

CONTRACT RESEARCH

Assignments that transcend the scope of a typical Science Shop project (low budget student research) can be carried out by means of contract research. This means that an experienced researcher conducts a research by order of an association within a certain period of time, which is not determined by the academic calendar. The modalities are determined together with the client and the researchers and an agreement is drawn up.

All information about these kinds of research agreements can be obtained by contacting the Interface department through Sonja Haesen: shaesen@vub.ac.be or telephone 02/629 21 08.
<http://www.vub.ac.be/infvoor/bedrijven/contractonderzoek.html>

RESEARCH SUPERVISION

In some cases the research can be carried out by the client himself under the supervision of an expert.

➔ CONSULTANCY

Some questions can be answered quickly and briefly by means of a consultancy interview, a study of the literature or by looking for scientific information in the own university library or on the

internet and by sending scientific articles. If this procedure is required, university experts are contacted by the Science Shop.

1.6. COST

The research is carried out at the lowest rate possible.

The client is requested to partly or entirely remunerate the expenses of the research. The fee depends on the scientific support. The financial agreements between the client, the Science Shop and the researcher are determined by a budget estimate and a contract.

Student research: No fixed fee. For most student-research the client does not have to pay. But if necessary an appendix with extra costs will be made up prior to the start of the research. All parties need to agree on this document. (for example if the client wants that a survey is sent to 1000 persons, the client must also pay for it).

Other procedures of consultancy: Expenses are determined in a budget estimate together with the client

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PART 2: STUDENT RESEARCH

2.1. PROCEDURE

Recruitment of students: If research is required, the application is promoted towards all students that have to write a dissertation. Dissertation subjects are announced to the students through the on-line database, the notice boards or the dissertation fair.

Take an option: The student notifies the Science Shop which subject he/she wants to investigate. We put "an option" on it. The subject is then no longer available for other students.

Find a supervisor: The student has to find a supervisor. It is possible that a supervisor is already suggested in the database. Students are still free to work with another supervisor.

First meeting: The student, the supervisor, the client and the Science Shop come together for the first time to discuss the research question, the design and the planning of the study.

Work out research question, study design and planning: As soon as these aspects are worked out, the student sends them to all the parties involved (supervisor, client and Science Shop) for approval.

Signing of statement of agreement: When research question, design and planning are approved, practical agreements are written down and added to the statement of agreement as appendix. The statement is signed by all parties. At this point, the dissertation research has officially started.

During the research:

The **student** keeps close contact with the **supervisor** who watches over the scientific and content-related aspects of the research.

The student regularly reports (once a month) to the client about the progress of the research. The **client** can help finding research material (e.g. literature, respondents, experts, ...)

The **Science Shop** is also kept informed about the progress. The Science Shop supervises the process-related aspects of the research. This means that they monitor the planning of the research and that they act as a mediator in case of problems.

After the research: When the student has successfully finished his dissertation (= minimum score of 10/20), the dissertation is presented to the client.

Final evaluation: We come together with all the parties to make a final evaluation and to plan possible promotional actions.

Fee: Unless there was a prior agreement on extra costs (appendix), the student will not be paid for the research.

Promotion: Publicity can be made in various ways: through a press release, article, event, ... As authors of the research, student and supervisor are as closely involved as possible with these activities.

2.2. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

Input Science Shop: supervising the process

- Writes a report of the first meeting with the client;
- Decides together with the experts and the advisory council whether an application is fit for research;
- Tries to find one or several supervisors in the universities and the associated higher education institutions and looks for (a) student researcher(s) who is/are prepared to take on the implementation and scientific supervision of the research;
- Establishes contact between the client, the student researcher and the supervisor;

- Mediates between supervisor and association with respect to turning the application into an appropriate research proposal and with respect to the choice of an appropriate research method;
- Makes sure that, before the start of the research, agreements have been made about: the research question, the research method, the planning and the expenses (budget);
- Presents the statement of agreement to be signed by the client, the student researcher and the supervisor in which they state to agree with the procedure of the Science Shop, the research design (question and method) and the budget if applicable;
- Supervises the degree of satisfaction of the client and the student researcher during the research. Possible problems in the cooperation are identified, which allows the Science Shop to execute its task as a mediator more effectively.
- If the client or the Science Shop, student or supervisor desires it, interim oral or written reports about the research are produced.
- Assists the client, if necessary, with the exploitation of the results and supports the promotion of the research; **taking into account the agreements with respect to copyright and valorization (cf. 4.4.2.)
- Is responsible for managing the financial aspect of the research, which implies participating in the approval of the budget (if applicable), paying the student-researcher (if applicable) and reclaiming the expenses from the client (if applicable).

Input client: proposing research question and providing research material

- The client provides sufficient input concerning the content in order to concretize and define the research question;
- The client provides research material and carries out the necessary activities to prepare the research (for example assisting in the search for respondents);
- The client is responsible for the accuracy and the completeness of the data provided by himself;
- If necessary, sufficient time, man power and available facilities are put at the disposal of the student researcher;
- If the client or the Science Shop, student or supervisor desires it, interim oral or written reports about the research are produced;
- The client should at least 3 times actively participate in the meetings with all the involved parties: before, during and after the research;
- If the successful dissertation is delivered, and there were extra expenses (if agreed on in a budget) an invoice will be sent to the client. The invoice will be sent by the Science Shop.

Input supervisor: scientific support

- The supervisor is responsible for the scientific support and the content of the research;
- The supervisor checks the research design, the research method and the planning of the student research before the research begins;
- Actively participates to the meetings, and this at least 3 times, with all parties: before, during and after the research;
- If the client or the Science Shop, student or supervisor desires it, interim oral or written reports about the research are produced;
- Evaluates the scientific quality of the research in accordance with his/her responsibilities in the department;
- If the dissertation results in a press release, the supervisor is asked to read it and give his approval;
- In case of press actions, the supervisor functions as a contact person and is responsible for the content and scientific value of the research;
- The supervisor can take the initiative to further investigate the research question in an elaborate doctoral research or as a long-term research to render services. In order to do this, the supervisor can look for extra financial means (or grants) to sponsor the research. This does not mean that the original research question cannot be investigated in the context of a dissertation or a short-term research project first.

Input student researcher: conducting the research

- The student defines the problem and develops the research design, the method and the planning, which is presented to the supervisor, the client and the Science Shop for approval;
- If necessary, a budget is drawn up together with the supervisor;
- The research is conducted to the best of the student's knowledge and ability and within the foreseen time period (=first or second session);
- The student reports regularly to the supervisor, the client and the Science Shop;
- The student actively participates to the meetings, and this at least 3 times, with all parties: before, during and after the research;

- If the client or the Science Shop, student or supervisor desires it, interim oral or written reports about the research are produced;
- The student keeps a log of all the agreements he/she has made and meetings he/she has had with the client and the supervisor;
- Ensures the production of high quality reports, in accordance with the demands of the department and by taking into account the suggestions of the Science Shop;

2.3 THE RESEARCH

Statement of agreement

Based on the question of a client, a problem is defined, and a research design, a research method, a planning and, if relevant, a budget are agreed on. This forms the basis of the research. Agreements about these issues are made in consultation with all the parties involved. They are put in writing and added as an appendix to the agreement made between the Science Shop – client – student-researcher – supervisor.

During the research it might occur that the method or the design has to be adjusted. The student and the supervisor take the final decision in this matter. If the client does not agree with the changes, the statement of agreement is terminated.

Obligation to put an effort into it and no obligation to achieve results

The Science Shop, the supervisor and the student researcher will put every effort into delivering a scientific and for the client useful result.

If unexpectedly, for any reason whatsoever, finishing the research project seems to become impossible, the Science Shop preserves the right to cancel the research project and this without any liability for the Science Shop. There is thus no obligation to achieve results for the Science Shop or the student. Engaging students to carry out research always implies the potential risk that the research project is not completed successfully. This is after all not a matter of formal employment.

The research report

Formal aspects

In the final phase of the agreement, a written report is produced in the form of a 'dissertation'. The client can never stop the dissertation from being printed. This would jeopardize the graduation of the student.

Stylistic aspects

In the first instance the final report is written by the student researcher following the standards of the group or the department in which he/she receives his/her training.

The Science Shop gives suggestions to the student researcher about how the research should be written down. These tips are accessible through an on-line manual. It ensures the production of an comprehensible final report, without undermining its scientific character.

Issuing of dissertations

Every research that results in a report will be offered to the client in 1 hard and 1 electronic copy (in pdf and/or on CD-ROM), unless agreed otherwise. The Science Shop also receives an electronic version of the final report and puts it on the website.

Copyright

Dissertations are protected by copyright laws (Belgian law of 30 June 1994). In order to reproduce the data and/or results of the research project (e.g. in a scientific publication,...) or in order to reveal them to the public (e.g. in classes, conferences, ...), the explicit permission of the student researcher/author has to be obtained beforehand. Each author has to give his/her permission individually.

Through the statement of agreement the student gives his/her permission to the Science Shop and the client to apply the property rights that are determined by the copyright laws among which, but

not restricted: the reproduction of the dissertation, revealing the results to the public and using them in a publication.

The student receives no fee for this. The permission is not limited to the Belgian territory nor is it limited in time. This means that the Science Shop does not have to ask the permission of the student every time they want to reproduce or reveal the results of the research project.

The Science Shop and the client are however obligated to refer to the author of the results. References are written down as follows:

NAME AUTHOR (first name). Title book. Type of work, Place, year, pages.

Promotion, accessible publication and public nature

Dealing with the promotion or an accessible publication about a research project and its results (dissertation) is always done in consultation with the parties involved, being the student researcher, the supervisor, the client and the Science Shop.

With promotion is meant the writing of an article

With promotion is meant: writing a press article, organizing a press conference, advertising the research through an info day etc. The Science Shop can have an advisory function, but can also play an active role in approaching the press and other target groups

If the explicit permission of the student researcher is obtained, the results of the research can be used in the production of accessible publications: a brochure, a website or a report. The Science Shop can provide support with this by revising the content, giving addresses of graphic designers and printers, taking care of the distribution.

Premature ending of agreement by the student-researcher

In case the student prematurely ends his education, drops out of the research or gets a negative score on his dissertation (minimum score is 10/20), no report will be delivered.

2.4. THE COST

Expense summary of the dissertation

If the research method involves high expenses, an agreement will be made in close consultation with the association, the student and the supervisor about compensation by the association or about changing the research method. Expenses that are the result of the specific methodological demands are laid down in an expense summary. In order to do this, in the first instance, an agreement between student researcher and supervisor has to be reached in which the budget estimate of the Science Shop serves as an indication. If the Science Shop makes a realistic estimate of the expenses, the summary is presented to the client. The expense summary will be the subject of an appendix to the statement of agreement, approved and signed by both parties. This appendix is signed before the research begins.

Conditions:

- Only when the research method involves high expenses;
- An expense summary is drawn up before the research begins;
- The expense summary is approved by all parties.

The following expenses cannot be charged:

- Transport costs from and to the university or supervisor
- Transport costs in the Brussels Capital Region
- Costs for copying and for binding the hard copies of the dissertation intended for the faculty or for own use
- Variable work expenses such as ink for the printer, paper, ...
- Fixed equipment costs such as: purchase of a laptop, printer, scanner, camera,...
- On appointment, the student can make use of telephone, fax, computers, conference room and other facilities of the Science Shop, which are therefore not reimbursed.

Payment of the student

If an expense summary was made up before the start of the research, the Science Shop will pay the student. (And the Science Shop will send an invoice to the client)

The payment of the amount of the expense summary is only carried out based on original proofs of payment. Expenses for which no approval was given beforehand, are not remunerated. This is also the case for expenses for which there are no original proofs of payment.

Payment by the client

If an expense summary was made up before the start of the research the client will receive an invoice of the Science Shop at the same time the report is delivered.

The invoice is free from taxes according to article 2 of the law book V.A.T.

If a dissertation has been delivered, the client cannot refuse the invoice. When the Science Shop does not get any complaints, it is assumed that the client gets sufficient information about the proceedings of the research.

2.5. PROCEDURE IN CASE OF COMPLICATIONS

Circumstances beyond one's control

If one of the parties who co-signed this document, is not able to keep the agreement due to circumstances beyond one's control, the Science Shop needs to be informed about this immediately. The Science Shop will deal with the complaint as a mediator and will try to formulate a solution that is acceptable for everyone.

None of the parties can be held liable for not keeping the agreement if this is caused by circumstances beyond one's control. Circumstances beyond one's control have to be interpreted in accordance with the Belgian law.

Liability

The Science Shop can never be held liable for:

- Damage to the client or to third parties that would directly or indirectly be caused by the use of the results.
- Consequences of decisions and/or advice formulated and/or implemented by the client based on the results that come from this assignment.
- Indirect or consequential damage
- Not abiding the legal provisions by the client
- Points of view or utterances in the final report or in publications that have resulted from the research.
- Termination of the agreement by the student researcher or the supervisor.

The client agrees to protect the Science Shop against and compensate for all damage, expenses and claims that the Science Shop receives of third parties and that resulted from the use of the results by the client.

The student researcher agrees that the role of the Science Shop is limited to supervising the process as it is described in this part. The Science Shop can therefore not be held liable by the student for any problem whatsoever, delays and damage suffered by the student while carrying out the research.

Disputes

Every dispute that cannot be settled by mutual agreement comes under the authority of the Court in Brussels and only the Belgian Law is applicable.

APPENDICES

Blank statement of agreement