

**Faculty of Humanities**  
**University of Amsterdam**

**PhD Regulations**

*Adopted on 7 July 2008*  
*Amended 2011, 2015, 2018, 2021*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

These Regulations governing PhD Candidates are applicable to all types of PhD candidates within the Faculty of Humanities (FGw). Although there are various types of PhD candidates (PhD candidates directly funded by the FGw, externally financed PhD candidates, self-funded PhD candidates), the FGw is of the opinion that there should be as little difference as possible between these various types. Because differences will always exist – especially from an employment-law perspective – it will be specified in this document when different rules apply to different types of PhD candidates.

As of 1 September 2018, the standard option for appointment as a PhD candidate (directly funded and externally-financed) is a full-time appointment of four years 1.0 FTE.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Within the appointment, it is possible, in principle, to teach for a maximum of 0.2 FTE in years 2 and 3. This amendment to working hours per week in the regulations has no consequences for the appointment of PhD candidates who are already employed.

The position of the PhD candidate within the organisation, the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP), the progress report and assessment, the conclusion, extension, material benefits and facilities, participation in decision-making and the dispute settlement procedure will be addressed in succession in these revised regulations. A model for the TSP is included in the appendices, and the tasks and responsibilities of the director of the Graduate School for Humanities, the director of the research school, the Faculty research director, the principal supervisor/daily supervisor, the PhD candidate, the department chair and the personnel advisers respectively are specified.

## 2. THE POSITION OF THE PHD CANDIDATE WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

### *Recruitment and selection of directly funded PhD candidates*

As a rule, the recruitment of PhD candidates takes place in three ways: by advertising on the website of the UvA, Academic Transfer and by making the vacancy known via the relevant email lists and online forums. The candidate applies with a research proposal that is in line with the programme of the research school concerned in terms of content. The Amsterdam Institute for Humanities Research (AIHR) provides guidelines for the structure of the research proposal.

The overall selection process is carried out in close coordination with the research schools, under the ultimate responsibility of the Faculty research director or the director of the interfaculty research institute IILC.

The selection committee draws up a list of candidates and also ascertains the feasibility of the project, as well as the willingness of a supervisor to act as principal supervisor.<sup>2</sup> If the procedure is carried out at the level of the research school, the director submits the list of

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<sup>1</sup> Three-year programmes, as in some European subsidy instruments, are supplemented from Faculty funds to a four-year programme.

<sup>2</sup> Each doctoral programme has at least two supervisors, of which at least one has the *ius promovendi*. Please see the UvA Doctorate Regulations 2021 for the provisions.

candidates for assessment to the Faculty research director.

The faculty research director passes on the list of candidates (furnished with the candidate's CV), in dealing with the appointment procedure and through the head of the research department, to the P&O department of the Faculty Office. The appointment decision is signed by the dean.

The selection committee is composed as diversely as possible and must have a well-balanced composition. An employed PhD candidate also serves on the selection committee.

The guiding principle for these regulations is that the FGw would like to attract excellent candidates – regardless of where they obtained their Master's degree, or equivalent qualification – as PhD candidates. If such candidates do not exist, the positions concerned will not be filled.

#### *Recruitment and selection of externally-financed PhD candidates*

In the case of externally-financed projects including PhD candidate positions (funded by the Dutch Research Council NWO or the EU) an advert will be drawn up on the basis of the application including the project proposal described therein. Analogous to the directly funded PhD candidates, a vacancy will be advertised. The selection must take place through open recruitment, in which both the research school and the department, where the PhD candidate will be placed, are involved.

Also in the case of Matching PhD candidates, where an external party bears part of the costs, open recruitment is preferable.

#### *Selection of self-funded PhD candidates*

Self-funded PhD candidates can approach the research school which they wish to join with a research proposal that is in line with the programme of the school concerned, a letter of recommendation from the principal supervisor, and a CV. The director of the research school will assess the quality and feasibility of the proposal and decide whether the proposal should be accepted or rejected.

Self-funded PhD candidates may be eligible for a finishing grant if they are completing their thesis. These grants are offered annually where possible. The selection round for these grants is only open to registered PhD candidates who have not received multi-year funding for their doctoral research.

#### *Appointment*

The appointment (in the case of directly funded and externally-funded PhD candidates) takes place in accordance with the provisions of the Collective Labour Agreement Dutch Universities (*CAO Nederlandse Universiteiten*) applicable at that time, initially for a period of 16 months based on an employment contract of 38 hours per week.

Personnel & Organisation (P&O) will alert the director of the research school and the research department when the appointments expire. At the beginning of the appointment, P&O will refer the PhD candidate to the policy officer who is charged with PhD matters for the registration with the Doctorate Board (see Doctorate Regulations 2021 of the University of Amsterdam).

Upon commencement of employment, the PhD candidate will be assigned to a pay scale in the first step of the scale intended for this position (P0). An assessment will take place no later than five months before expiry of the contract (see Chapter 4 concerned the progress report and the assessment). At the end of this period, a go/no go decision will be made. If the assessment is positive, the PhD candidate will be appointed for a further period of two years and eight months. In the second year of appointment, the PhD candidate will be assigned to pay scale P1, in the third year of appointment to pay scale P2 and in the fourth year of appointment to pay scale P3. In the case of appointments of a scope other than 38 hours per week, the periods of time mentioned will be adjusted accordingly.

The paid PhD candidate with a full-time appointment may be deployed within this appointment in years 2 and 3 for teaching for a maximum of 0.2 FTE, or develop other activities for a maximum of 0.2 FTE aimed at preparation for a career after the doctorate.

The PhD candidate is (generally) a member of the research school of which the principal supervisor or main supervisor is a member. The director of the research school takes the initiative for drawing up the TSP and arranging the appropriate supervision, as specified in the Doctorate Regulations of the University of Amsterdam (2021). Moreover, the director of the research school should monitor the progress of the doctoral process and intervene in the event of irregularities. The director of the Graduate School for Humanities bears ultimate responsibility for the training within the doctoral programmes.

The PhD candidate is (generally) given a position as staff member in the department of the main supervisor. The department chair is responsible for offering an appropriate workplace and infrastructure (equipment, PC, etc.).

### **3. THE TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PLAN (TSP)**

The Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) contains the individual plan that each PhD candidate must draw up at the beginning of the appointment. This plan stipulates which training the PhD candidate will follow, which agreements will be made about the supervision and the agreements about any teaching commitments in years two and three, or other activities. The TSP of the PhD candidate, for which a model is available (see Appendix 1), must be drawn up within a month after commencement of the appointment.

The TSP will be drawn up by the PhD candidate in consultation with the principal supervisor/main supervisor on the basis of the research proposal of the PhD candidate or the research projects that has already been defined, and signed by the PhD candidate, the principal supervisor/main supervisor and countersigned by the director of the research school and the director of the Graduate School for Humanities, who is ultimately responsible for the TSP. Before the TSP is signed, the official admission to the doctoral programme must be checked. The Graduate School registers the PhD candidate with the research school concerned.

#### *Training*

The skills training to be followed at the Graduate School for Humanities is laid down in the TSP, as well as the substantive training that will be provided by the national and local research schools. The PhD candidates must specify which national research school they will join following consultation with the principal supervisor. Any exemptions are the responsibility of

the Graduate School. Management and administrative duties, with the exception of possible membership to the Advisory Council of the research school, the Faculty Works Council, the PhD Council and the Graduate Studies Committee, do not form part of the duties of the PhD candidate.

#### *Supervision of directly funded PhD candidates and externally-financed PhD candidates*

Agreements between the principal supervisor and the PhD candidate made about the supervision of the PhD candidate must also be included in the TSP. The daily supervisor must meet with the PhD candidate at least once every 6 weeks in order to discuss the progress of the research of the PhD candidate.

#### *Supervision of self-funded PhD candidates*

The TSP for self-funded PhD candidates may be adjusted to the specific situation of the PhD candidate (as they also have a different position in addition to their research in many cases). The wishes with regard to teaching will be examined for each separate case. The training programme of the Graduate School also welcomes self-funded PhD candidates, as well as the most national research schools.

## **4. PROGRESS REPORT AND ASSESSMENT**

Frequent contact – at least every 6 weeks – between the PhD candidate and supervisor(s) is required. In the case of self-funded PhD candidates, a different frequency may be agreed for the time that is devoted to the doctoral research depending on the circumstances, but regular contact is also required and this must be laid down.

At the end of the ninth month of his/her appointment, the directly funded and externally-funded PhD candidates will submit a progress report in the form of a pilot study to the supervisors and to the director of the research school (or his/her authorised representative). The pilot study must be in line with the general doctoral research and must be a useful exercise for the PhD candidate: the pilot study may therefore, for example, consist of the first chapter of the thesis, an article in response to the doctoral research, a case study, or the theoretical framework.

Five months before the end of the appointment, the assessment will be set in motion. The PhD candidate will be asked to submit the pilot study to the director of the research school, the supervisors and one external reader, who is chosen in consultation with the supervisors. The research school shall convene a meeting in which the PhD candidate and the supervisors are invited. The pilot study will be discussed there. If the director of the research school, partly based on the assessments of the supervisors and the external members and partly on the basis of the meeting, is of the opinion that the pilot study meets the requirements, the contract will be extended by 2 years and eight months.

If the director thinks the pilot study does not meet the requirements, the PhD candidate will be given four weeks' time to improve the text. After those four weeks, a meeting will be convened in the same way and the pilot will be assessed once again. If the assessment is positive, the contract will be extended. Should the assessment be negative, the PhD candidate will receive a written assessment that will be explained further in a meeting and discussed with the PhD candidate. If the opinion of the director does not change as a result of this, the

contract will be terminated. The PhD candidate will receive written notice of this a month before the end of the contract.

The director of the research school will organise an annual consultation with the PhD candidate and the supervisors at least once a year. The following topics will be discussed therein on the basis of an evaluation form to be completed beforehand: the progress of the doctoral project (i.e. the thesis), any publications of the PhD candidate, presentations at conferences, research trips, gaining teaching experience and/or organisation of research meetings, participation in the various training programmes and the assessment of the supervision.

A report will be made of this meeting by the director of the research school that will be saved in the digital personnel file in the usual way following approval and signature.

#### *Self-funded PhD candidates*

Self-funded PhD candidates will also be assessed on the basis of a pilot study by their supervisors and the director of the research school. This will happen after the first year unless a different agreement is made. If they are satisfied with the progress, their UvaNet ID will be renewed for three years. Subsequently, they will also be asked to report on the progress of their project.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The doctoral programme will be concluded with a public defence of the thesis chaired by the dean of the Faculty or his/her substitute. With this academic exam, the PhD candidate will qualify to conduct independent, academic research. The guidelines and provisions of the General Doctorate Regulations of the UvA (2021) are in force in that regard.

## **6. EXTENSION**

The appointment term of directly funded and externally-financed PhD candidates will be extended in the event of pregnancy and parental leave. The appointment term of directly funded and externally-financed PhD candidates may, in principle, be extended on the basis of (delay through) illness. In the event of illness, the delay incurred must be substantial, namely at least eight consecutive weeks in total.

When assessing each claim for extensions due to illness, the feasibility of the completion of the thesis within the term of the extension period will play a decisive role. This assessment must be drawn up by the director of the research school, after attention has been drawn to the possibility of extension by the P&O department, no later than 1 month before expiry of the appointment term and in consultation with the PhD candidate, the principal supervisor and supervisors. This will subsequently be submitted by the research department to the P&O department, which will assess the claim for extension based on the collective labour agreement. The director of the AIHR will take the ultimate decision.

Possible membership of the Works Council will also lead to extension after expiry of the appointment.

## **7. MATERIAL BENEFITS AND FACILITIES**

The PhD candidate will be informed by P&O about the facilities that will be made available to the PhD candidate.

The PhD candidate may claim reimbursement of the costs for performance of the research in accordance with the regulations applicable to the Faculty research institute. More information about the regulations in force can be found on the Faculty website and the website of the AIHR. Different agreements may apply to PhD candidates financed by the NWO, EU or third parties. Self-funded PhD candidates are entitled to a small research budget, access to the library, email facilities and supervision, and they have access to the programmes that are offered by the research school where they have been affiliated and to the programme of the Graduate School of Humanities.

## **8. PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**

PhD candidates are members of the research school and may serve on the advisory council of the research school and on the PhD council. The PhD council has an advisory function and exercise that function in practice in a six-yearly consultation with the Faculty research director and the head of research. Furthermore, PhD candidates are entitled to vote and to stand for election for the Works Council of the Faculty and for the Central Works Council.

## **9. DISPUTE SETTLEMENT PROCEDURE**

If differences of opinion exist between the PhD candidate and one of the supervisors, the PhD candidate must, in the first instance, address the director of the research school. The same applies to complaints about the training and the material facilities. If the complaints cannot be resolved satisfactorily by these parties, they can be submitted to the Faculty research director. If desired, the PhD candidate may turn to one of the Faculty confidential advisers, the ombudsperson or the University Complaints Committee  
<https://www.uva.nl/en/about-the-uva/about-the-university/social-safety/social-safety.html>



**Appendix 1 – The Training and Supervision Plan (TSP)**

**Faculty of Humanities**

**PhD Training and Supervision Plan**

**PhD Candidate**

Name:  
E-mail address:  
Title of project:  
Start of contract:

**Supervision**

Name supervisor 1:  
Name supervisor 2:

Division of tasks:

*(In principle, the supervisors have a meeting with the PhD candidate every six weeks. Please indicate if both supervisors are equally involved at all stages, or if one supervisor acts as daily supervisor and first reader, and the other as 'second reader', or if there is any other division of the work)*

**Pilot Study**

Title:  
Submission date:

**PhD Thesis**

Summary of the project (100 words):

**Work plan**

*(This work plan should be revised every year)*

Chapters/Articles/Field work/etc.	Date of completion
Year 1:	
Year 2:	
Year 3:	

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**Training**

*(Please indicate which seminars/courses you want to take)*

Training offered by the Graduate School of Humanities: see [link](#)

Training offered by the National Research School: choose a relevant school  
[here](#) National Research School:

**Teaching**

*(In principle for funded PhDs teaching is included in the second and third year for a maximum of 0.2fte. including the opportunity to enrol in the short Faculty introductory course on teaching (facultaire startcursus didactiek)*

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**Signatures:**

Date:

Signature PhD Candidate

Signature Supervisor 1

Signature Supervisor 2

Confirmation:

Date:

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Signature Director Research School

Signature Director Graduate School

***Please make sure that this form reaches Margreet Vermeulen of the Graduate School no later than 1 month after the start of the contract: [phdskills-fgw@uva.nl](mailto:phdskills-fgw@uva.nl)***

## **Appendix 2 – Tasks and responsibilities**

### *1. The director of the Graduate School for Humanities*

The director of the Graduate School for Humanities bears ultimate responsibility for the training within the doctoral programme. The director is responsible for the organisation of the skills training and manages the associated funds. He/she also monitors the quality of the training.

The following specific tasks also form part of the responsibilities of the director of the Graduate School for Humanities or his/her authorised representative:

- Providing information about the relevant training courses on offer within and outside the University;
- Taking care of the participation in the national research school;
- Assessing and countersigning, as person with ultimate responsibility, the Training and Supervision Plan in which the doctoral plan is described;
- Taking care of the reporting and administrative handling of the training followed by the PhD candidates.

### *2. The director of the Faculty research institute (AIHR)*

The director of the research institute monitors the correct performance of the Faculty research schools with regard to the selection, supervision and evaluation of PhD candidates. The director also takes decisions in those cases in which no agreement can be reached at the level of the research school.

### *3. The director of the research school*

The director of the research school takes the initiative to draw up the TSP and monitors the execution thereof. He/she also monitors the quality of the supervision of the PhD candidate. The evaluation of the principal supervisor/main supervisor and other supervisors also falls within his/her competency.

The following specific tasks also form part of the responsibilities of the director or his/her authorised representative:

- Taking care of the reporting and administrative handling of the progress and assessment interviews;
- Terminating the project in the event of insufficient progress;
- Mediating any disputes between PhD candidates and supervisors;
- Acting as gatekeeper in the event of illness of PhD candidates.

### *4. Principal supervisor and/or main supervisor*

The principal supervisor must coach the PhD candidate, provide assistance and advice, and inspire and encourage. The principal supervisor is expected to supervise the PhD candidate with the writing of the thesis and development of an academic profile.

Furthermore, he/she must focus on the following:

- Drawing up the TSP in a timely fashion;
- Consulting the PhD candidate at least once every six weeks;
- Assessing the pilot study in terms of content;
- Discussing the annual progress reports;

- Encouraging visits to conferences and other activities focused on internationalisation;
- Helping to come up with ideas about the future career of the PhD candidate;
- Facilitating opportunities to gain teaching experience and possibly to obtain a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ);
- Helping to achieve one or two peer-reviewed publications, in addition to the timely completion of the thesis;
- Providing all relevant information concerning progress and performance of the PhD candidate to the director of the research school.

#### *5. PhD candidate*

The obligations of the PhD candidate include:

- Fulfilling all obligations for admission to the doctoral programme as outlined in the UvA Doctorate Regulations 2021, and if necessary exemption from the legal educational requirements;
- Conducting research;
- Drawing up and/or adjusting points 1 to 5 of the TSP in consultation with the principal supervisor/main supervisor;
- Drawing up a thesis plan;
- Reporting in writing on the progress of the research with a view to the pilot meeting and the (annual) progress interviews;
- Writing and publicly defending the thesis.

#### *6. The department*

The department chair has the staff mandate; the PhD candidate falls under his/her authority, legally speaking. However, given the specific requirements that are set for the performance of the PhD candidate within the context of the research institute, the Graduate School and the department, the Research department carries out the appointment and extension modalities and the department provides the standard facilities that are applicable to each staff member. The PhD candidates may turn to the relevant head of operations for this.

#### *7. The personnel advisers*

The personnel advisers provide advice – where necessary confidentially – to the director of the Faculty research institute and the individual staff members on matters regarding appointment, assignment to a pay scale, promotion, dismissal and performance.

#### *8. The policy officer charged with doctoral matters*

The policy officer charged with doctoral matters is responsible for the monitoring of the application of the Doctorate Regulations. This includes the procedures for admission to the doctoral programme (and if necessary exemption from the statutory training requirement of the PhD candidate) at the beginning of the doctoral programme. Upon completion of the doctoral programme, the composition of the doctoral committee, the formal aspects of the manuscript and the plagiarism check – as made compulsory in the Doctorate Regulations – fall under the responsibility of this policy officer.