

# Leiden Law School, Graduate School of Legal Studies

## Additional guidelines PhD research

1 January 2026

*(In case of differences between the Dutch and English versions, the Dutch version takes precedence)*

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Leiden Law School has different categories and types of PhD candidates, for whom different rules and guidelines apply. This document is intended to supplement and elaborate on the [regulations and guidelines of Leiden University](#), the [Collective Labour Agreement \(CAO\) of Dutch Universities](#), and the information on PhD research on the [website of Leiden University](#).

### 1. Appointment

For PhD candidates with an employment contract applies:

- PhD candidates have an intended PhD duration of 4 years. They receive a temporary appointment of one year (and in the case of a positive evaluation, an extension of 3 years). In principle, the appointment includes: research (77.5%); training (12.5%); teaching (10%).
- PhD fellows have an intended PhD duration of 6 years. They receive a 6-year temporary appointment (and have an evaluation around the 18th month after appointment). In principle, the appointment includes: research (58.33%); training (8.33%); teaching (33.33%).
- If these PhD candidates work part-time, the appointment period will be extended proportionally, keeping the research/training/teaching ratio the same.

For PhD candidates without an employment contract:

- Contract PhD candidates, externally financed PhD candidates and external PhD candidates (in a 'track')<sup>1</sup> are given a guest appointment of 1 year. This appointment may be extended annually upon positive evaluation.

### 2. Dissertation

For all types of PhD candidates applies:

- The PhD track is designed to culminate in a dissertation within the established duration of the PhD track.
- The dissertation may consist of a monograph or a collection of articles. This will be determined at the start of the PhD track.
- The size of the dissertation should, in principle, not exceed 100,000 words including footnotes and bibliography. If this limit is expected to be exceeded, the supervisor can request (with motivation) the Dean for an exception.

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<sup>1</sup> External PhD candidates in a track are external PhD candidates who conduct their PhD research in one of the following departments: *Grotius Center for Legal Studies*, Institute of Air and Space Law, Van Vollenhoven Institute.

### **3. Training and Supervision Plan (TSP)**

For all types of PhD candidates applies:

- At the start of the PhD track, the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) is drawn up.
- The TSP contains in any case the training plan, agreements on supervision, and (if applicable) teaching activities. Annexes are (1) the research proposal or – if not (yet) existing – a brief description of the research and (2) the timeline of the research.
- The training plan includes compulsory and non-compulsory components.
- The TSP is prepared by the PhD candidate and supervisors and submitted to the PhD Dean for approval, after which it is adopted.
- The PhD candidate and supervisors are responsible for compliance with the TSP. The TSP is a living document and may be adjusted and supplemented during the PhD track.

For PhD candidates with an employment contract and contract PhD candidates applies:

- Within 3 months of appointment, a starting interview is held between the PhD candidate and PhD Dean during which the TSP is discussed. These PhD candidates send their TSP to the PhD Dean within 3 months after the starting interview.

For externally financed PhD candidates and external PhD candidates (in a track) applies:

- No starting interview will take place. These PhD candidates send their TSP to the PhD Dean within 6 months of admission. External PhD candidates in a track have a meeting with the track coordinator within 2 months of admission.

### **4. Data Management Plan (DMP)**

For all types of PhD candidates applies:

- At the start of the PhD track, a Data Management Plan (DMP) is drawn up. This DMP can be updated during the PhD track.

### **5. Evaluation**

For all types of PhD candidates applies:

- The purpose of the evaluation interview ('go/no-go' moment) is to determine whether the PhD track can be continued or terminated. The evaluation interview can be physical, hybrid or fully digital.
- The evaluation committee consists at least of the supervisors, the PhD Dean and an external evaluator from outside the department to which the PhD candidate belongs. The evaluation committee is chaired by the PhD Dean. The PhD Dean may invite others to participate in the evaluation committee.
- No later than 10 working days before the evaluation interview, the PhD candidate sends at least the following **documents** to the evaluation committee:

1. The (updated) research proposal (description of the research, e.g. problem statement, research questions, methodology) with a provisional table of contents (division into chapters/articles) and a short description of the activities undertaken so far;
2. The (updated) timeline of the research;
3. A portion of the dissertation already written (such as a (draft) chapter and/or article);\*
4. The (approved) TSP;
5. The DMP;
6. Teaching commitments already fulfilled (if applicable).

\* For PhD candidates doing largely empirical research, a comprehensive research proposal and thorough preparation for data collection, can replace a written portion of the dissertation.

- The evaluation committee bases its judgement on the following **criteria**:
  1. Is the research proposal of sufficient quality?
  2. Is the timeline of the research realistic?
  3. Is there a (draft) chapter or article and is it of sufficient quality (see above)?
  4. Is there an (approved) TSP?
  5. Is there a DMP?
  6. Is there – considering 1, 2 and 3 – sufficient confidence that the PhD candidate will be able to complete the research within the intended PhD duration?
- During the evaluation interview, the PhD candidate is invited to reflect on these criteria and the evaluation committee may ask questions. After the evaluation interview, the evaluation committee withdraws. After a brief deliberation, the PhD Dean provides feedback to the PhD candidate.
- If the outcome of the evaluation is different from continuing the PhD track, the PhD Dean will make a report describing the reasons for terminating the PhD track. If the decision (whether or not to continue) is upheld, this report contains concrete points for improvement and a deadline by which they must be implemented. If the points for improvement are such that a new evaluation is necessary, a new evaluation interview is scheduled. The outcome of the evaluation will be considered in any decision on whether or not to renew the (guest) appointment of the PhD candidate.

For PhD candidates with an employment contract and contract PhD candidates applies:

- The evaluation interview takes place in the 9th month after appointment (for PhD candidates and contract PhD candidates) or around the 18th month after appointment (for PhD fellows).

For externally financed PhD candidates and external PhD candidates (in a track) applies:

- The evaluation interview takes place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

### Questions?

For questions regarding PhD research, please contact the Graduate School: [graduateschool@law.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:graduateschool@law.leidenuniv.nl). For questions about appointment, extension, employment conditions, etc., please contact the [Human Resources department](#).