

# PhD Guide of the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

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## 1. Introduction

This PhD Guide of the Leiden University Institute of Political Science outlines the Institute's policies regarding the PhD programme. The Guide covers matters such as the recruitment of PhD candidates, the Training and Supervision Plan, the structure and format of PhD dissertations, and opportunities for training and teaching by PhD candidates. The Guide does not have legal status: it provides guidelines, but no rights can be derived from it. The Guide is intended for (prospective) PhD candidates, supervisors and other Institute members, and is regularly updated by the Institute's PhD coordinator, in consultation with the Institute Board.

This Guide should be read in conjunction with university and faculty level regulations regarding the PhD. The most important university-level and faculty-level regulations regarding the PhD are:

- [PhD regulations Leiden University](#). This provides formal rules on the PhD trajectory, focusing mostly on the final stages of this trajectory.
- [PhD guidelines](#). These university-wide guidelines set some additional rules and specify the level of support that all PhD candidates should be able to rely on.
- [Handbook for PhD Candidates](#) at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. This is a rich source detailing faculty policy. We recommend that PhD candidates and supervisors read this in full before the start of the PhD trajectory.

### 1.1 Questions

For prospective PhD candidates, the PhD coordinator will be the (initial) main point of contact for any questions they might have. For current PhD candidates, the PhD supervisors are the first point of contact in case they have questions about their PhD trajectory. PhD candidates and supervisors can also ask questions to the PhD coordinator. The current PhD coordinator is dr. Wouter Veenendaal ([w.p.veenendaal@fsw.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:w.p.veenendaal@fsw.leidenuniv.nl)).

Also, see the chapter 'Who can I contact for advice' in the Faculty Handbook for PhD Candidates and the sections on mental health and confidential counsellors below (sections 3.7 and 3.8).

## 1.2 PhD coordinator

The Institute's PhD coordinator has the following tasks:

1. Acting as a go-to person for PhD candidates, supervisors, and other Institute members for questions related to the PhD trajectory.
2. Ensuring the continuity of the monitoring process and the PhD community.
3. Checking on an annual basis with supervisors if all information on PhD candidates' progress recorded in LUCRIS is up to date.
4. Keeping the Institute PhD Guide up to date, in coordination with the Institute Board.

## 2. Before the start of the PhD project

### 2.1 Types of PhD candidates

The Graduate School distinguishes between four types of PhD candidates: (1) PhD candidates with employee status, (2) members of staff working on a PhD, (3) contract PhD candidates and (4) external PhD candidates.

While there are some structural differences between these types of PhD candidates (for example regarding office space) that cannot be ignored, the Institute of Political Science aims to treat all PhD candidates as similar as possible. When necessary, we distinguish between PhD candidates that are funded by the university or by a project and those who are self-funded.

### 2.2 Procedures for starting a PhD trajectory

For project-funded PhD candidates, positions are awarded on a competitive basis in an open competition for the position of *promovendus*. The PI of the project forms, in consultation with the Institute Board, a job search committee of at least three members (at least one male and one female member), which makes a recommendation to the Institute Board. Some funding agencies require applicants to already mention the name of prospective PhD candidate(s) in the grant application; if that is the case an exception to this policy is permitted.

For university (first-money stream) funded PhD candidates, an open competition for the position of *promovendus* is held. Prospective candidates present their draft research proposal as part of this procedure. These procedures are in principle open to all subdisciplines and methodological approaches (unless the Institute Board decides otherwise, for example if university finances are earmarked). A job search committee consisting of staff members representing diverse subdisciplines (normally at least four members, of which at least one male and one female member) makes a recommendation to the Institute Board.

For prospective self-funded PhD candidates, including those financed by scholarships or by a salary from an external employer, the procedure is as follows:

1. A prospective candidate finds a member of staff who is willing to act as daily supervisor for the PhD project: this is not necessarily a staff member with *ius promovendi*. A good match in substantive terms is required and the prospective supervisor has to be available. If the staff member is open to the possibility of supervision, they will work with the PhD candidate to find a second member for the supervision team, ensuring that the supervision team consists of at least one member with *ius promovendi*.
2. The prospective candidate develops a short draft research proposal of 5-10 pages, including at least a research question and a short outline of the theory and methods to be used, in cooperation with the prospective supervision team.
3. The supervision team sends a letter to the Institute Board requesting registration of the PhD candidate with the Graduate School. This letter should explain why the supervision team thinks the candidate should be accepted. The CV of the prospective PhD candidate and the draft research proposal are attached to this letter
4. The Institute Board asks the research committee for advice on the feasibility of this research proposal. The research committee asks two staff members, normally research committee members, to assess the proposal's feasibility (upon disagreement a third staff member will provide advice). Research proposals are evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:
  - a. Does the proposal convincingly outline the scientific (and eventually societal) relevance and contributions of the proposed research?
  - b. Does the proposal formulate a clear research question that is answerable with the proposed research design / methods / analysis?
  - c. Is the candidate qualified to execute the proposed research?
5. The Institute Board decides on the registration request. Note that the candidate also has to meet the formal requirements laid out in the Faculty Handbook (section I.5) before registration with the Graduate School can be finalised.

Irrespective of the type of PhD candidate, a PhD trajectory starts at the moment that the PhD candidate is admitted to the Graduate School.

## 2.3 The composition of the supervision team

Supervision teams of three Institute members are the general rule at our Institute. Exceptions, such as the inclusion of external supervisors in the supervision team, are possible pending approval by the Scientific Director.

The composition of the team should depend on the type of project and/or funding. Moreover, if possible, it should be finalised after consultation with the PhD student. We strive for a balance of expertise, seniority and gender on all supervision teams. Members of supervision teams who do not have *ius promovendi* are required to follow, or to have followed the Leiden University course on supervising PhD candidates (or an equivalent course).

The third member of the supervision team can be added before the start of the PhD or during the first year, as the exact needs of the PhD candidate and the project become clear. Note, however, that in line with Faculty rules, the Dean will have to approve a change in the supervision team after registration with the Graduate School.

There is no single model for PhD supervision. Each PhD student and each supervisor have their styles and needs. Specific agreements regarding the supervision style and the frequency of supervision meetings should be mentioned in the Training and Supervision Plan (discussed in the subsequent section).

## 3. During the PhD project

### 3.1 The Training and Supervision plan

A Training and Supervision plan is required for all PhD candidates. This document contains at least:

- Goals and steps for the research project, including a specification of the research product required for the go/no go decision (see below).
- Details about the training/courses PhD candidates are expected to take. This includes required training hours by the university, the coursework required by the Institute (see section 3.4 below), as well as any other training/courses that is deemed necessary for the successful completion of the PhD.
- A statement on the roles and responsibilities of various supervisors and frequency of supervision meetings.
- Details about teaching responsibilities of the PhD candidate.

The Training and Supervision Plan should be submitted to [LUCRIS](#) within three months of the start of the PhD trajectory (six months for self-funded candidates). This Training and Supervision Plan is drawn up after a discussion between supervisors and the PhD candidate. The candidate uploads the plan to LUCRIS and the *promotor* approves it.

The Graduate School website [hosts a template](#) that can be used, but supervisors and candidates can modify this as they see fit.

The Training and Supervision Plan should set clear goals and include intermediate steps for the PhD candidate to take, also *after* the first year. The Training and Supervision Plan should be discussed annually, and if necessary amended or updated, during the PhD candidate's Performance and Development (P&D) interview or, in case of self-funded PhD students, a similar annual meeting.

### 3.2 Structure and format of the dissertation

The dissertation must adhere to the rules set in the PhD regulation. The specific form and content of each dissertation are determined by the supervision team, in consultation with the PhD candidate. Dissertations typically take one of two forms: a monograph in which the various parts together constitute a single piece of work, or a collection of independent, scientific papers on a common theme, bound together by an introduction and conclusion. Combinations between these two alternatives are also possible. However, irrespective of their

form, dissertations completed at the Institute of Political Science should adhere to the following rules:

1. All dissertations must contain a minimum of three (3) substantive papers or chapters (excluding the introduction and conclusion). Literature reviews or handbook chapters in which there are no substantive original contributions can be included in dissertations, but do not count toward the minimum of three papers or chapters. The PhD supervision committee is responsible for determining if substantive contributions are made.
2. At least half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of the papers (in the case of an article-based dissertation) or substantive chapters (in the case of a book manuscript dissertation) must be single-authored.
3. A maximum of one paper or substantive chapter can be co-authored with a member of the PhD supervision committee. In this case, the dissertation should consist of a minimum of four (4) substantive papers/chapters.
4. PhD candidates must include a statement of contributions for co-authored parts of the dissertation, see the [CreDiT statement](#) for an example.

The following table explicates the authorship requirements for dissertations of a given length (based on the above rules):

<b>Number of substantive chapters/papers</b>	<b><u>Minimum</u> number of single-authored chapters/papers</b>	<b><u>Maximum</u> number of chapters/papers co-authored with member(s) of the supervision team</b>
3	2	0
4	2	1
5	3	1
6	3	1
7	4	1
8	4	1

### 3.3 The go/no go decision

Near the end of the first year, the supervisors will decide if the PhD candidate will continue in the program (go) or end their candidacy (no-go). This decision is based on a research product. For those working on the PhD part-time (i.e. self-funded PhD candidates), a later deadline may be specified in the Training and Supervision Plan (according to the PhD guidelines, between 1 and 2 years after the start of the PhD).

The go/no-go decision is not competitive, but 'no-go' is a realistic outcome.

The Training and Supervision Plan will clarify the kind of product that is expected of the PhD candidate.

To evaluate this research product, supervisors should adhere to the following evaluation procedure. The product should be submitted 9 months after the start of the project. Revisions are possible but the final decision needs to be made at least 1 month before the end of the first year. In principle, everyone on the supervising team needs to agree on the go/no-go decision. For non-EEA PhD candidates, the submission of the research product and its evaluation might need to occur earlier because of visa reasons.

### 3.4 Performance and Development Interviews and Monitoring meetings

The PhD Guidelines specify that all PhD candidates who have an employment contract with the university have an annual Performance and Development (P&D) interview with their supervisor (*leidinggevende*). Normally, the supervisor will invite the PhD candidates for such a meeting. A report of this meeting is submitted by the supervisor as specified in [the regular procedure](#) for P&D interviews. During the P&D interview, the PhD candidate's Training and Supervision Plan should be discussed and if necessary amended or updated.

In addition, all PhD candidates participate in a monitoring meeting with an impartial member of staff ('the PhD monitor'), who is normally a staff member at another Institute and thus not involved in the supervision of PhD candidates at the Institute of Political Science. The aim of this meeting is not to evaluate the PhD candidate but to assess the quality of the supervision. University/project-funded PhD candidates have such a monitoring meeting every year, self-funded PhD candidates every two years. PhD candidates can always request an extra meeting with the PhD monitor.

The procedure for the monitoring meetings is as follows:

1. The PhD coordinator initiates the process every year by contacting the monitor and providing him or her with a list of PhD students that require a monitoring interview.
2. The PhD monitor holds individual meetings with these PhD candidates. PhD candidates subsequently register in LUCRIS that a monitoring meeting has been held.
3. The PhD monitor provides an anonymized report to the Institute's Scientific Director, Director of Research and PhD coordinator. The PhD monitor can also, with the explicit approval of the PhD candidate concerned, confidentially discuss an individual case with the Scientific Director.

### 3.5 Coursework and PhD training

The university PhD guidelines specify that all PhD candidates (with the exception of external PhD candidates, as per the definition of the Graduate School), must follow a training programme consisting of at least 140 hours of academic training and 140 hours of transferable skills training. Completion of this training programme is a requirement for admission to the

PhD defence. External PhD candidates can be required by their supervisors to follow courses that are necessary to properly carry out their PhD research (see PhD Guidelines).

All PhD candidates, including external PhD candidates, are required to take a 'research integrity course'.

To complement courses that are freely accessible to PhD students (see Faculty PhD Guide), the Institute provides a research budget (primarily intended for costs related to training and conference visits) of up to € 6250 for the entire duration of the PhD project. This amount is available to all PhD students.<sup>1</sup> The use of this research budget is subject to a spending plan drawn up by the PhD candidate and the supervisors (using a standard template template). This spending plan needs to be submitted for approval by the institute manager within 6 months of the start of the PhD project (12 months for self-funded PhD candidates).

## Coursework and training within the Institute

PhD candidates are required to participate in one-Master level course, preferably a relevant core seminar (if capacity allows). Participation in this course (including submitting the required assignments) counts as part of the 140 hrs required for academic training. This course should preferably be followed in the first or second year of the PhD trajectory. This needs to be detailed in the Training and Supervision Plan (see above). If the supervision team considers this necessary or useful, PhD candidates can follow additional Master-level courses.

A waiver is possible for those with relevant prior academic training or professional experience (for example, those who have already completed a Master's in political science). This will be decided by or on behalf of the Scientific Director, after consultation with the supervisors.

## Training within the Graduate School and University

The Graduate School offers relevant training courses, specifically on research methods (see Faculty PhD Handbook). The university also [offers transferable skills training](#).

## Summer and Winter Schools

Summer and winter schools offer further methodological and substantive training. PhD candidates should discuss with their supervisors which schools/courses suit their training needs. These schools/courses should be mentioned in the Training and Supervision Plan.

## Career training and advice

The Graduate School Handbook offers advice on further career orientation. The Faculty organises career events for PhD candidates, aimed both at careers inside and outside of academia.

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<sup>1</sup> Where possible, research grants should cover the costs of training and conference visits (i.e. the budget for training and conference visits mentioned above). However, some third-party funders do not allow for budgeting all of these costs. In these instances, the Institute of Political Science should bear these costs if it allows the grant proposal to be submitted.

Supervisors should, however, also discuss career possibilities - within and outside academia - at the Performance and Development Interview, three years into the PhD (or earlier).

## 3.5 Teaching

PhD candidates are primarily hired to do research. Teaching a seminar or a workgroup at our Institute will, however, help PhD candidates to develop a competitive CV. Teaching a course can be part of the transferable skills training programme (max. 20 hours) and can lead to a [partial University Teaching Qualification](#) (Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs, BKO) certificate, for which PhD students need to follow some academic courses offered within the Graduate School, which are again part of the 140 hours of required transferable skills.

The extent to which PhD candidates are required or allowed to teach courses depends on funder regulations. University (first-money stream) funded PhD candidates are normally required to teach 2 teaching tasks (3 tutorial groups in one course normally count as one teaching task). The PhD candidate, their supervisors and the Director of Studies or workgroup coordinator discuss which courses the PhD candidate teaches. In principle, PhD candidates should be given the opportunity to act as an instructor for a course on a subject related to their PhD research, for example a seminar, at least once during their PhD trajectory.

## 3.6 PhD Community

### PhD Seminar

PhD candidates, in cooperation with members of our Institute, run a PhD seminar series. The Institute is committed to practically and financially supporting this PhD seminar. Participation in this seminar is highly recommended for all PhD students. Furthermore, all PhD candidates are recommended to participate in informal PhD activities organised within the Institute and Faculty.

### Research clusters

PhD candidates are part of one or more [thematic research clusters](#) at the Institute. At the start of the PhD, supervisors discuss with the PhD candidate which cluster(s) is the most appropriate.

### Research presentations

In discussion with their supervisors, all university/project-funded PhDs present their work in either the PhD seminar or the Institute lunch seminar every year (at least once during the PhD trajectory they should present in the Institute lunch seminar). For lunch seminar presentations, this can be in the form of a session with one or two other PhDs. Self-funded PhDs should also be encouraged to present in PhD or lunch seminars at least twice during their PhD trajectory.

### PhD Platform

The faculty has a PhD platform: a network for all PhD candidates of the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences. They organise meetings to discuss common issues and share



knowledge about life as a PhD candidate. More information is available in the Faculty PhD Guide.

### 3.7 Mental health

The university offers staff members information and support on [mental well-being](#). If you have concerns about your mental health, you can also [find information here](#).

PhD candidates with concerns relating to their mental health are encouraged to discuss this with their supervisor, who can refer them to appropriate help within the university. PhD candidates can also directly approach the [PhD Psychologist](#), [Faculty Confidential Counsellor](#) or you can make an appointment with the [University Doctor](#).

### 3.8 Confidential counsellor

If there are issues regarding your PhD (for example, relating to supervision) that you would like to discuss with someone outside your supervision team, you can contact the [Faculty Confidential Counsellor](#).

If you experience unacceptable behaviour (bullying, sexual harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or violence), please report this to one of the [counsellors for unacceptable behaviour](#). These external counsellors will treat your case confidentially.

## 4. Finalising and defending the PhD

Rules regarding the procedure for finalising and defending the PhD are set in the PhD Guidelines. The Faculty PhD Handbook also provides an outline of the procedure.