

Protocol for PhD Programmes 2026



Universiteit
Leiden

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Preamble

This document replaces the Leiden University PhD Guidelines 2023. The Protocol is an independent scheme that contains information about the policy, arrangements and facilities available with respect to the PhD programme. See also the Leiden University PhD Regulations 2026, which contain the rules and procedures relating to the dissertation and PhD programme.

The Protocol provides an overview of what PhD candidates can expect in terms of training, supervision and facilities. The Protocol is binding. Attention is also paid to facilities that apply not only to PhD candidates but to a broader group of (guest) employees. Where applicable, this is indicated.

The Protocol applies to all types of PhD candidates (see 1.1). Where there are exceptions, this is indicated. The (legal) position of the PhD candidate is governed by the articles in the Collective Labour Agreement (CAO NU) that relate to a PhD candidate with employment status.

1. General

1.1 Types of PhD candidates

Leiden University has the following types of PhD candidates (in accordance with the UNL (Universities of the Netherlands) classification of types of PhD candidates, as from 2019):

1. PhD candidates with employee status: employed PhD candidates (*werknemer-promovendi*) and employees in a PhD track (*promoverende medewerkers*) (UNL types 1a and 1b);
2. Scholarship-funded PhD candidates, who are not employed by Leiden University or LUMC. Scholarship funded PhD candidates receive funding from a scholarship funding body (UNL type 2);
3. Externally funded PhD candidates, who are not employed by Leiden University or LUMC and do not receive a scholarship. These PhD candidates may be employed by external research organisations or may be dual PhD candidates who are writing a PhD dissertation with the support of their employer (UNL type 3);
4. External PhD candidates (self-funded), not employed by Leiden University or LUMC. External PhD candidates study towards a PhD in their free time and use their own funds (UNL type 4).¹

See Appendix 1 for a more detailed explanation of the types of PhD candidates.

1.2 Regulations, procedures and codes of conduct

The Leiden University PhD Regulations 2026 contain the most important rules and procedures relating to the PhD track, such as who is permitted to defend a PhD, what the tasks of the supervisors and co-supervisors are and what requirements the dissertation must meet. PhD candidates and supervisors/co-supervisors are required to read the PhD Regulations.

At Leiden University, the [Golden Rules for PhD supervision](#) serve as a code of conduct for both the PhD candidate and the supervisors and co-supervisors. These

¹ The Dual PhD Centre offers externally funded and external PhD candidates a range of facilities, for which it charges a fee.

rules emphasise the shared responsibility of the supervisor/co-supervisor and the PhD candidate, and make clear what their mutual expectations may be.

In addition, the PhD candidates must comply with the relevant general laws and regulations, conditions and guidelines that apply within the university, LUMC, faculty, Graduate School and institute, and those that focus specifically on the PhD track and conducting PhD research. These relate to aspects including, but not limited to: education requirements, academic freedom, [academic integrity](#), [open science](#), [data management](#), [ethics review](#), [environmental regulations](#), [privacy](#) and [personal, public and knowledge security](#).

2. Admission and registration

2.1 Admission

See Chapter 2 *Procedure for admission to the PhD track* of the PhD Regulations. Institutes/faculties may impose additional requirements, such as a language requirement for international PhD candidates. A [knowledge security check](#) applies to the admission of international (guest) employees.

Admission of new PhD candidates takes place in consultation with the intended supervisors and co-supervisors and others with responsibility within the institute and/or faculty. New PhD candidates are only admitted if sufficient supervision time and resources will be available throughout the entire envisioned PhD track.

Scholarship-funded PhD candidates may only be admitted if their monthly scholarship is at least the 'required income amount' stipulated by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND). See the [website of the IND](#) for the current required amount. Both the scholarship and monthly salary/bonus/supplements of a facilitating employer or university may be counted in order to reach the required amount, but the PhD candidate's own funds, such as savings, may not be counted.

Scholarship funding bodies are expected to endorse Leiden University's values regarding academic freedom, academic integrity, open science, respectful culture and knowledge security, and to provide transparency in relation to contracts between the PhD candidate and the scholarship funding body, so that no conflicts can arise between obligations towards the scholarship funding body and Dutch laws and regulations and university regulations.

External PhD candidates from non-EEA countries must demonstrate that they have sufficient personal funds (= 12 times the monthly [IND required amount](#)).

Graduate School

See Chapter 2, article 8 *Admission to the Graduate School* of the PhD Regulations. The various Graduate Schools are:

- [Graduate School of Archaeology](#)
- [Graduate School of Humanities](#)
- [Graduate School of Legal Studies](#)
- [Graduate School of Science](#)
- [Graduate School of Social and Behavioural Sciences](#)
- [Graduate School of Governance and Global Affairs](#)
- [Graduate School LUMC](#) (PhD candidates of LUMC can also log in to [Albinusnet](#) for more information)

2.2 Registration

At the start of their PhD track (starting date of employment contract or before or immediately after the appointment of the supervisors and co-supervisors; articles 7.2 and 11 of the PhD Regulations), all PhD candidates are registered in the HRM employee registration system of Leiden University or LUMC, as well as in the PhD candidate monitoring system LUCRIS/Converis Graduate School Module (Converis GSM). It is important that the applicable type of PhD candidate is entered here. The categories of PhD candidate are described in 1.1.

LUCRIS/Converis GSM

This system is used by the PhD candidate and supervisors/co-supervisors to keep a record of the various steps of the PhD track and to store relevant documentation in one place. The Graduate School informs the PhD candidate how to register, what information is required for this and how to log in. Please note that Leiden University and LUMC each have their own Converis GSM system.

Manuals are available for PhD candidates and supervisors/co-supervisors:

- [Supervisor's Manual](#)
- [Researcher's Manual](#)
- [FAQ](#)

LUMC staff can make use of the information in Converis GSM: [User manuals and information – LUMC Research Information System](#)

2.3 Payment of a fee

Leiden University has a central fee policy for scholarship providers. For externally funded and external PhD candidates, fee policy may apply within the institute or faculty. Contact the relevant For details and information on possible discounts or waivers, please contact the relevant faculty or Graduate School for more information and possible discounts or waivers.

2.4 PhD research at two universities

In some cases, PhD candidates may conduct research and be supervised at two universities during their PhD track. It is important to formalise this collaboration as early as possible in the process of the PhD track. More information can be found [here](#).

2.5 Duration of PhD track

For full-time PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship-funded PhD candidates, the duration of a regular PhD track is in principle four years. In the case of part-time employment, the employment contract will be extended proportionally, as stated in the Collective Labour Agreement (CAO NU).

PhD tracks of externally funded and external PhD candidates may have a different timeframe. They must have been registered with the Graduate School for at least two years before the PhD defence takes place.

3. Training and supervision plan and data management plan

3.1 Training and supervision plan

At the beginning of the PhD track, all PhD candidates must draw up a training and supervision plan (TSP; *opleidings- en begeleidingsplan* OBP) in consultation with their supervisors/co-supervisor(s). This will contain agreements about *inter alia* supervision and academic and personal development. The TSP must be approved by the supervisors/co-supervisors and uploaded in Converis GSM. PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship-funded PhD candidates must do this within three months following the formal start date of the PhD track (appointment date/registration date). Externally funded and external PhD candidates must do it within a maximum of six months following registration with the Graduate School.

The TSP can be updated, where applicable. At least once a year, the agreements in the TSP, including training agreements, and the progress made in relation to these, will be discussed during a progress interview or GROW interview (Conversations on Performance, Development and Well-being).

The TSP will in any case, but not exclusively, include:

- Who will act as the supervisor/co-supervisor and who will provide any further supervision, and also the content, scope and responsibilities of the supervision and frequency of supervision contact occasions;
- The progress interviews and their scheduling:
 - The [GROW conversations](#) for PhD candidates employed by the university (the annual Conversations on Performance, Development and Well-being). These are compulsory for PhD candidates employed by the university. Other types of PhD candidates affiliated to the university have at least one progress interview per year;
 - PhD candidates registered with the LUMC GS have at least an annual progress interview. For PhD candidates who are also employed by the LUMC, this may coincide with the annual interview (if the timing is somewhat the same).

- The preparation for the ['go/no-go' moment](#) and the time when the 'go/no-go' decision will be made (see 6.4);
- The timeline of the research;
- Agreements about the structure of the dissertation;
- The individual training programme and the funding for this (courses, training courses and conference attendances, see 5 in this protocol and article 3 of the PhD Regulations);
- Teaching duties (if applicable, see 5.2).
- Agreements about intellectual property and what will happen with the research data/results after the end of the PhD track (especially in case of early termination).

The TSP may be different per faculty and/or institute.

3.2 Data management plan

All PhD candidates draw up a data management plan (DMP) for the PhD research, following the guidelines of the faculty's data management protocol. The [faculty \(or other\) data steward](#) can provide support in this regard, and will also say where and how the DMP should be kept. The DMP must be adjusted, when necessary.

The DMP contains a description of how the research data and software will be managed, shared and documented during the PhD track, and the agreements and conditions relating to their subsequent filing in a repository for long-term management and storage. Leiden University has its own [DMP template](#) and we recommend that you use it. This template is also accepted by most of the grant-awarding bodies. Data management training courses are offered in the faculties and at the [Centre for Digital Scholarship](#). The faculty's data management protocol must be followed with regard to data management.

During the completion of the PhD track, the DMP must be supplemented with a statement of what will happen to the research data at the end of the PhD track. When research data from the PhD research has been published as a dataset in a data repository, this dataset must be registered in Converis PM.

4. Facilities

The facilities offered may be different per type of PhD candidate and faculty/institute. When admitting PhD candidates and during the PhD track, the Graduate School and supervisors/co-supervisors should inform them about the facilities that are (and are not) available to them, and the conditions for their use.

4.1 LU-Card

All PhD candidates are entitled to an LU-Card, which gives them, *inter alia*, access to the library. See [LU-Card](#) for more information.

4.2 Copying and printing facilities

PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship-funded PhD candidates may use copying and printing facilities without charge, in accordance with each faculty's rules for academic staff.

4.3 Workspace

PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship-funded PhD candidates are entitled to a flexible (or regular) workspace in the faculty. Externally funded and external PhD candidates can only be offered a workspace if the capacity of the relevant faculty or institute permits this.

4.4 Conference attendance

PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship-funded PhD candidates are given the opportunity, within reason, to attend at least two academic conferences during their PhD track (with time and funding made available for this).

4.5 Insurance

All employees and guest employees are covered by Leiden University's liability insurance while within the buildings and grounds of Leiden University. If they are

on a mission/fieldwork as part of their work (on behalf of the University and with the permission of their supervisor), they are insured under the University's business travel insurance. PhD candidates must coordinate their mission/fieldwork with their supervisor(s).

4.6 Research support

The [Leiden Research Support Portal](#) gives access to information about research support during all phases of the PhD (or other) research. A few important kinds of support are highlighted here:

- The [Leiden University Libraries](#) offer a wide range of support to PhD candidates in the areas of data, research and publishing.
- Each faculty has one or more [ethics committees](#). PhD research must in any event be submitted for ethical review if it will involve working with human participants or respondents and/or if personal data will be processed.
- A privacy officer (or privacy contact person) can help with questions about privacy and data protection when processing personal data. A security officer (or LISO) can help if you have questions about information security. See the [list of privacy and security officers](#).
- Within Leiden University we work according to the [Knowledge Security policy framework](#). If you have any questions in this area, please contact the [knowledge security contact person in the faculty](#) or the Knowledge Security Advice Desk at adviespuntkv@bb.leidenuniv.nl.
- Information about [ICT and research](#) can be found here.
- You can contact the graduate school to check whether the PhD candidate is eligible for a contribution towards costs related to the PhD defence.

4.7 Career support

PhD candidates and supervisors/co-supervisors are expected to regularly exchange ideas on the next career steps within and outside the academic world. Leiden University also has a [PhD Career Platform](#), offering self-reflection and personality tests, online courses, tips and alumni's experiences. The Graduate Schools regularly organise PhD Career Events. Leiden University also has several career coaches who can assist PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship-funded PhD candidates.

4.8 Well-being

PhD candidates who have questions or problems may contact, for example:

- A supervisor/co-supervisor (e.g. for questions/problems about the PhD programme);
- Colleagues (e.g. for sparring and advice);
- In some faculties: counsellors, coordinators or mentors for PhD candidates (e.g. to discuss problems within the PhD process);
- The [confidential counsellor for PhD candidates](#) and other [confidential counsellors](#) (e.g. in the event of problems with supervision or colleagues, disagreement about the direction of the research, an unsafe working atmosphere, concerns about work-life balance);
- The [psychologist for PhD candidates](#) (in the event of psychological complaints that are caused by the PhD process or have an effect on the PhD process, e.g. stress complaints, burnout, motivation problems);
- The [Ombuds Officer](#) (in the event of problems within the working environment).

The PNN (network for PhD candidates in the Netherlands) has developed a roadmap.

4.9 Sick leave

PhD candidates with employee status

PhD candidates with employee status can find information [here](#) about reporting sick and guidance during sick leave. In the event of illness, the employment contract is not automatically extended. Supervisors must inform the PhD candidate of any available possibilities.

PhD candidates without employee status

PhD candidates without an employment contract should report their absence to their supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) in the event of sickness. They will then discuss the expected duration of absence, cancellation of/approach to planned arrangements, which tasks can perhaps still be performed, and maintaining

contact. If the sick leave continues for more than eight weeks, the supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) are asked to inform the institute. In the case of long-term sickness, the PhD candidate and supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) will together look at the possible options for completing the PhD track. After recovery, the training and supervision plan will be revised, if necessary.

It should be noted that supervisors/co-supervisors are also not permitted to ask PhD candidates without an employment contract about the nature or cause of the sickness.

4.10 Pregnancy

PhD candidates with employee status are entitled to maternity leave. More information can be found [here](#). An application for maternity leave should be submitted via the [Service Portal](#).

5. Training

5.1 Training plan

Every PhD candidate produces a training plan as part of the TSP in consultation with the supervisor(s) (see 3.1c). The TSP, including the training plan, is approved and adopted by the supervisor.

All PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship-funded PhD candidates are required to complete a minimum of 140 hours of funded scientific training activities and 140 hours of funded transferable skills training activities, including at least one training course in the area of scientific integrity.

Externally funded and external PhD candidates are required to follow at least a scientific integrity course and any courses that are specified as compulsory for the faculty and/or institute. It must also be established, in consultation with the supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s), whether and, if so, what additional training is needed to enable them to properly carry out their PhD research. If necessary they will be given the opportunity to follow two other training courses funded by the faculty/institute, in addition to any compulsory training courses.

Completed training hours must be recorded in Converis/GSM.

Transferable skills

There is not an exhaustive list of training courses, activities and skills that are classed under 'transferable skills'. As long as the training course or activity can make a clear contribution to the PhD track and/or developments after obtaining the PhD, within or outside the academic world, it may be regarded as a transferable skill. The range can be very wide. A non-exhaustive list of examples is given here; training courses in the areas of:

- Resilience;
- Leadership skills;
- Various forms of oral and written communication;
- Writing grant applications / funding acquisition;
- Project management;

- Time management;
- Data management;
- Academic integrity;
- Open science;
- Job application skills;
- Publishing, copyright, IP, etc.;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Networking;
- Career support / career planning;
- Language training;
- Active bystander;
- University Teaching Qualification (BKO) and 20 hours of teaching;
- Introductory and onboarding activities.

For transferable skills, PhD candidates can make use of the courses offered by [HR Learning & Development](#). See the [Transferable Skills Programme Page](#). They can also take training courses outside the university (for instance at National Research Schools), as long as funding is available for this within the relevant faculty or institute.

5.2 Teaching duties

For PhD candidates with employee status, the agreements relating to the PhD track may include teaching duties. Agreements about teaching, and following training courses in this area, must be included in the TSP. According to the Collective Labour Agreement (CAO NU), the teaching effort of a PhD candidate with a four-year employment contract may not exceed 20% of the employment. PhD candidates who teach have the opportunity to obtain the [Partial University Teaching Qualification \(BKO-deelcertificaat\)](#). In some cases, if it fits into the planning of the PhD programme, a full University Teaching Qualification can also be obtained. This must be determined in consultation with the supervisors. Only PhD candidates with an employment contract are permitted to perform teaching duties. PhD candidates without an employment contract are only permitted to give guest classes (and only a few of these).

6. Supervision

6.1 Supervisory team

Each PhD candidate has at least two supervisors. See Chapter 3 of the PhD Regulations for the tasks of the supervisor and co-supervisor. The TSP includes the division of tasks between the supervisors. When the supervision is provided by two institutes or two faculties, unambiguous agreements are made about the distribution of the costs and benefits.

6.2 Supervision

In contacts between supervisors/co-supervisors and PhD candidates, the [Golden Rules for PhD Supervision](#) will be observed.

The advice offered in the UNL document [Healthy Practices in the Dutch PhD System 2.0](#) is that PhD candidates should meet with one of their supervisors/co-supervisors at least once a month. However, supervision needs to be specifically tailored to individuals. Supervisors/co-supervisors and PhD candidates agree together how this should be designed. The form, content and intensity of the supervision may be different per discipline, phase in the PhD track and type of PhD candidate. The minimum requirement specified is that PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship funded PhD candidates will have a supervision meeting with one of their supervisors/co-supervisors at least ten times a year, and with the whole supervisory team twice a year. This may also be in the form of a progress interview. External PhD candidates and externally funded PhD candidates will have a supervision meeting with one of their supervisors/co-supervisors at least four times a year, and with the whole supervisory team once a year. This may also be in the form of a progress interview.

Email communication between a supervisor/co-supervisor and PhD candidate must take place via the university email address.

The quality of the supervision of PhD candidates is a recurring topic in the GROW interview conducted with each supervisor/co-supervisor by their own manager.

6.3 Training for supervisors

Everyone who will be supervising PhD candidates for the first time is required to follow or have followed the *Supervising PhD Candidates* course or a comparable training. Additionally, everyone who is promoted from university lecturer (UD/assistant professor) to senior university lecturer (UHD/associate professor) is required to follow this course within a year. Completing this course is a precondition for senior university lecturers who wish to obtain *ius promovendi*. This course can be followed via HR Learning & Development. The course is also available for other supervisors. There is a separate course for more experienced supervisors.

6.4 'Go/no-go' interview

A ['go/no-go' interview](#) is conducted with each PhD candidate, focusing on the decision regarding whether or not the PhD track will continue (possibly under certain conditions). The expectations of the PhD candidate and supervisors/co-supervisors will also be further discussed. The decision must be substantiated and must be part of a longer and transparent assessment process. The decision should therefore never come as a surprise for the PhD candidate. It will be based on the (updated) research proposal, the progress of the PhD track up to that time, and the level of confidence in its successful completion. The decision and substantiation will be set down in writing and carefully archived.

The format, input and timing of the go/no-go interview may be different per Graduate School. The interview for PhD candidates with a four-year appointment and scholarship funded PhD candidates usually takes place nine months after the start of the PhD track. For PhD candidates with a longer appointment, externally funded and external PhD candidates, it is usually half-way through the second year, but no later than the end of the second year. In some Graduate Schools the interview may also be attended by the PhD dean or PhD coordinator and/or an external evaluator, in addition to the PhD candidate and supervisors/co-supervisors. In view of the sensitivity and importance of the interview, and the emotional implications for the PhD candidate, it is advisable to always ensure that a neutral person is present (who is not a member of the supervisory team). This role is fulfilled at the LUMC by the Guidance Committee.

If the decision is made to terminate the PhD track, at least the following actions must be taken:

- The supervisor sends written confirmation to the PhD candidate.
- The supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) schedule and conduct an exit interview. This will include discussion of what will happen with the research data.
- The supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) inform HR.
- The supervisor(s) inform the Graduate School about the termination and the reason for the termination.
- The supervisor changes the PhD track in Converis GSM to 'early termination'.
- If a scholarship is involved, the funding body needs to be informed. Who will do this (PhD candidate or (co-)supervisor) depends on the applicable agreements with the funding body.
- The PhD candidate should be given enough time to prepare for departure, such as cancelling rent and insurances, organising the return journey, etc.
- If applicable, the supervisor/co-supervisor can write a recommendation letter.

6.5 Progress interviews

A progress interview will take place at least once a year with every PhD candidate. This will also include discussion of progress with the training programme. Agreements that are made in this interview should be carefully documented and archived (for instance in Converis GSM). In some institutes/faculties this interview is also attended by a Supervision Committee/Guidance Committee. For PhD candidates who have a GROW interview, this can be combined with the progress interview. The [Golden Rules for PhD Supervision](#) are a useful resource for this interview.

The way in which the progress interview is organised may be different per type of PhD candidate and institute/faculty. It is a shared responsibility of the supervisors/co-supervisors and the PhD candidate to ensure that progress interviews take place.

6.6 Monitoring meeting

All PhD candidates are given the opportunity to have a review meeting/monitoring meeting with one or two independent staff members (at which the supervisors/co-supervisors are not present). The quality of the supervision will be an important

topic in this meeting. The independent staff member(s) will take follow-up action if the meeting gives cause for this. This role is fulfilled at the LUMC by the Guidance Committee.

PhD candidates with employee status and scholarship-funded PhD candidates must be invited to a monitoring meeting every year. Externally funded and external PhD candidates must be invited at least once every two years, although it is not compulsory for them to accept this invitation.

6.7 Major change in supervision during the PhD track

The PhD Regulations provide for the possibility of making major changes in the supervision during the PhD track. The basic principle is that, as soon as possible, clear agreements should be made, set down in writing and shared with the Graduate School. When making these agreements, the PhD candidate's interest has substantial weight.

There are two standard situations that we regard as major changes in the supervision structure, namely if the **first supervisor retires (becomes emeritus) or accepts a chair at another university**.

In these two cases, it is always essential to discuss whether a change in the supervision structure is desirable or necessary. The deliberations should in any case take account of the expected duration of the remaining PhD track and who will be appointed to the chair. The departing professor will draw up a plan, based on discussions with the people concerned, and discuss this plan with their own manager. If the professor supervises several PhD tracks, all the various arrangements should be discussed at the same time. After an agreement has been reached, the Graduate School and the Dean of the faculty must be informed.

A further aspect of accepting a chair at another university is that agreements about scholarships or research funding will be made. Financial agreements of this kind may not be detrimental to earlier agreements between the supervisor and PhD candidate. The PhD candidate has an employment contract or guest appointment at Leiden University or LUMC that continues to be applicable and the PhD candidate retains the opportunity to continue the PhD track within that employment contract. If the PhD candidate expresses a wish to follow the professor who is departing, the Graduate School will cooperate with this.

New agreements on guidance will be included in the TSP.

Another consideration if the professor becomes emeritus is that the period of emeritus status is intended for finalising current PhD tracks. Although presented as a possibility in the PhD Regulations, starting new PhD tracks as the first supervisor during the final period before becoming emeritus is not recommended. See [policy on professorial appointments](#).

See also [Policy on Professorial Appointments](#).

7. Copyright, intellectual property and open access publishing

7.1 Copyright

The PhD candidate holds the copyright on the dissertation and other publications of the PhD candidate, regardless of whether the research was conducted individually by the PhD candidate or together with other Leiden University employees, including the supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s). If part of the dissertation (e.g. a chapter) is written jointly with other authors, the copyright on that part of the dissertation belongs to the PhD candidate and the other authors jointly. See [Employer Copyright Regulations - Leiden University](#).

7.2 Intellectual property

In the case of PhD candidates with employee status, all the intellectual property developed during the PhD track (other than the copyright referred to in 7.1) belongs to Leiden University as the employer. See [Employer Copyright Regulations - Leiden University](#).

For PhD candidates without an employment contract, all the intellectual property developed during the PhD track belongs to the PhD candidate, if the research was conducted individually. If the PhD candidate receives funding from an external party, the ownership depends on the agreements made with the funder.

With respect to an invention, a PhD candidate without an employment contract may choose to make use of the [Regulations on Knowledge Exploitation](#). For this, please contact Luris via ip@luris.nl.

If research is conducted together with researchers employed by Leiden University, all the intellectual property (including knowhow or an invention) that was developed in co-creation with Leiden University employees is owned by Leiden University.

7.3 Open access

Leiden University encourages PhD candidates to publish on an [open access basis](#), and facilitates this. Even if they do not publish with open access, the university expects PhD candidates to make short academic works openly available in the Leiden Repository six months after their online publication. The dissertation must be included in the Leiden Repository. This can be done via Converis GSM. The PhD candidate must give the university a licence for non-exclusive publication of the dissertation in digital format, if necessary under a temporary embargo.

Established by the Executive Board on July 14, 2026

Appendix Types of PhD candidates

[Source: Healthy practices in the Dutch PhD system 2.0](#)

UNL categorisation as of 2019

Each year, UNL asks the Dutch universities to submit their data on their PhD candidates. These data are used as benchmarks for the association's own member universities and for nationwide statistics and are published on UNL's website.

There are many different ways in which people can be awarded doctorates. The universities and UMCs distinguish four types of PhD candidates. Definitions of the various types of PhD candidates can help the universities correctly register their PhD candidates, thus allowing the universities to submit high-quality data. Categorisation involves a flow chart that helps universities assign PhD candidates to the right category.

The distinctions between the categories were defined in greater detail because there was some confusion as to the phrases 'contracted PhD candidates' and 'external PhD candidates' and as to the categorisation of candidates who are employed by a university or UMC but are not allotted any hours or funding to work on their dissertations. The new categorisation system comes with new, clearer names, and the distinctions between the various types of PhD candidates depend on the source of the funding the PhD candidate receives. This distinction does not always provide the right definition, but does largely determine the extent to which a university or UMC is aware of the PhD candidate.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that as far as statistics are concerned, PhD candidates are always assigned to their primary category (which is the one in which they were initially registered), even if their status later changes. Employee PhD candidates will continue to be registered as employee PhD candidates, even if they do some of their work on their dissertation outside the scope of an employment contract with the university or UMC, while PhD candidates who do not receive any funding or resources from a university or UMC will continue to belong to that category, even if, due to temporary funding, such PhD candidates are able to conduct research at a university or UMC for a while.

Category 1: PhD candidates employed by the university or UMC

1a Employee PhD candidates

An employee who has an employment contract with their own university, and for whom arrangements have been made designed to help them complete a doctoral research project.

Indicators:

- a. Arrangements designed to help the PhD candidate complete a doctoral research project (access to graduate school, training and supervision plan, research plan, the assignment of a supervisor and doctoral advisers).
- b. Employee ID number and salary paid by the university or UMC > 0.
- c. Primary UFO code is 'PhD candidate' or the UMC equivalent thereof.

This category also includes PhD candidates who were already employed by the university or UMC at any point prior to starting their doctoral research, even if their contract had expired by the time they commenced their doctoral research.

1b Employees who are conducting doctoral research

An employee who has an employment contract with their own university, and for whom arrangements have been made designed to help them complete a doctoral research project.

Indicators:

- a. Arrangements designed to help the PhD candidate complete a doctoral research project (access to graduate school, training and supervision plan, research plan, the assignment of a supervisor).
- b. Employee ID number and salary paid by the university or UMC > 0.
- c. Primary UFO code is something other than 'PhD candidate' or the UMC equivalent thereof.

This will be a PhD candidate who has been allotted funding and/or hours by their university or UMC to conduct doctoral research. This category includes medical specialists whose regular hours at the UMC are reduced to allow them to conduct

doctoral research. Employees who are working towards a doctorate without funding and who are not allotted any hours by their university or UMC to conduct their doctoral research fall under category no. 4.

In some cases, a secondary UFO code pertaining to the same appointment may come with the 'PhD candidate' code. Or alternatively, one person may have two employment relationships, one of which is employee PhD candidate.

UNL uses the following algorithm to determine which is the primary employment relationship:

- a. Whichever employment relationship carries the greatest FTE allocation is considered the primary employment relationship.
- b. If both employment relationships have the same FTE allocation, a permanent contract takes precedence over a temporary one.
- c. If both employment relationships come with the same type of contract, the one with the higher pay scale takes precedence.
- d. If both employment relationships come with the same pay scale, the UFO code with the lowest number takes precedence.
- e. If none of these rules results in an outcome, the employment relationship that is first listed in the WOPI file (i.e., the employment relationship that commenced first) will be considered the primary employment relationship.

Categories 2, 3 and 4: PhD candidates NOT employed by the university or UMC

2 Scholarship-funded PhD candidates²

These are PhD candidates who are not on an employment contract with the university where they are completing their doctoral research, but whose main objective is to obtain a doctorate, and who have been awarded funding by a third party to do so.

Indicators:

- a. Arrangements designed to help the PhD candidate complete a doctoral research project (access to graduate school, training and supervision plan, research plan, the assignment of a supervisor).
- b. No salary paid by the university or UMC (except perhaps a supplement to the third-party grant).

² The former category 2a is being phased out, as no new projects of this type can be initiated. This category will remain visible in the overviews of past years for evaluation purposes

- c. The PhD candidate receives funding from a third party for the purpose of obtaining a doctorate.

The grant is provided by an organisation other than the university within the meaning of section 2a, e.g. NUFFIC, the European Union, a foreign university, granting agencies and foundations (Fullbright, banks). The PhD candidate may receive a supplemental grant from their own university or UMC.

3 PhD candidates who receive external funding

PhD candidates who receive external funding differ from external PhD candidates in that they either receive funding to conduct doctoral research or have been allotted time by their boss to conduct doctoral research (regardless of the amount of time they have been allotted).

4 External PhD candidates (self-funded)

These are PhD candidates who are not allotted any hours or funding to conduct doctoral research by an external party but do wish to obtain a doctorate. They fund their own research, or use funding placed at their disposal by their relatives. For example: a pensioner who conducts doctoral research, an employee of a company who conducts doctoral research on their own time on top of their regular job, a university employee

whose UFO profile does not say 'PhD candidate' and who is not allotted any hours or funding by the university to conduct their research either (formerly known as 'employees seeking to obtain a doctorate'), or a medical specialist whose UMC is not reducing their regular hours to allow them to conduct doctoral research.

Indicators:

- a. Arrangements designed to help the PhD candidate complete a doctoral research project (access to graduate school, training and supervision plan, research plan, the assignment of a supervisor).
- b. No salary or grant paid by the university or UMC.
- c. No funding and/or hours allotted by an employer or third party (including the PhD candidate's own university) to allow the candidate to conduct their research.

UNL Flowchart

VSNU
Flowchart types of
PhD candidates

