



Leiden University PhD Guidelines 2023

These guidelines apply to PhD candidates at Leiden University, namely (in accordance with the UNL [Universities of the Netherlands] classification of types of PhD candidates¹ for KUOZ [Key Figures on University Research] as from 2019) to:

- a. PhD candidates with employee status: employed PhD candidates (*werknemer-promovendi*) and employees in a PhD track (*promoverende medewerkers*) (UNL types 1a and 1b);
- b. contract (or 'scholarship') PhD candidates, who are not employed by Leiden University or LUMC. Contract PhD candidates receive funding from a scholarship funding body (UNL types 2a and 2b);²
- c. externally financed 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);
- d. external PhD candidates: 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).³

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

These guidelines apply to all PhD candidates with immediate effect. Some of these guidelines only apply to PhD candidates with employee status and contract PhD candidates and not to external PhD candidates and externally financed PhD candidates; and part of Article 11 only applies to PhD candidates who were admitted to the Graduate School on or after 1 January 2024. Any exceptions are stated in the relevant articles. Article 6 applies to external PhD candidates and externally financed PhD candidates who started their studies after 8 February 2021.

Provisions

1. Upon arrival, all PhD candidates are registered in the HRM employee registration system of either Leiden University or LUMC, as well as in the Graduate School's PhD candidate tracking system Converis GSM (Graduate School Management) module. External PhD candidates and externally financed PhD candidates must be registered as soon as possible, and in all cases no later than one year following the first contact with their prospective PhD supervisor, in either Leiden University's or LUMC's HRM employee registration system, and in the Converis GSM PhD candidate tracking system (see Chapter 2 of the PhD Regulations for an explanation of the start of the PhD track).

¹ See Appendix 1.

² Faculties have the power to determine a minimum value for a scholarship in order for the PhD candidate to be eligible for the rights associated with being a contract PhD candidate. If this minimum value is not met, the PhD candidate is not comparable to an employed PhD candidate and is treated as an external PhD candidate.

³ The Dual PhD Centre offers externally financed and external PhD candidates a range of facilities, for which it charges a fee.



2. All PhD candidates are entitled to a LU Card, which grants them benefits including access to the library. With the exception of external PhD candidates and externally financed PhD candidates, all PhD candidates may use copying and printing facilities without charge, in accordance with the faculties' rules for academic staff.
3. PhD candidates with employee status and contract PhD candidates are entitled to a workspace in the faculty. Wherever possible, institutes will make flexible workspaces available for externally financed and external PhD candidates.
4. PhD candidates with employee status and contract PhD candidates are given the opportunity, within reason, to attend at least two academic conferences during their period of appointment.
5. When offering prospective PhD candidates a place in the Graduate School, faculties must clearly inform them about the facilities that are – and are not – available to them (including courses, research costs, etc.) and the conditions for their use.

Training, supervision and preparation for entering the labour market

6. A training and supervision plan (TSP; *opleidings- en begeleidingsplan* OBP) must be drawn up for every PhD candidate at the start of the PhD track. PhD candidates with employee status and contract PhD candidates must draw up this TSP within three months following the formal start date of their PhD track (*aanstellingsdatum*, 'appointment date'). Externally financed and external PhD candidates must do this within a maximum of six months following admission to the Graduate School (see Chapter 2 of the PhD Regulations for an explanation of the start of the PhD track). The TSP is a living document and can be updated, when applicable. The TSP will in any case, but not exclusively, contain agreements about:
 - a. Who will act as the supervisor(s) and (if applicable) co-supervisor(s), for the PhD candidate, the further supervision and the content, responsibilities, scope and frequency of the supervision (see Article 7).
 - b. In any case for a PhD candidate with employee status, but preferably for all PhD candidates, the requirement that a performance and development interview (*resultaat- en ontwikkelingsgesprek* ROG) will take place every year (see Article 9).
 - c. The preparation for the 'go/no go' decision and the time when this decision will be made (see Article 10).
 - d. The required courses and training (see Article 11).
 - e. Teaching duties (see Article 12).
7. In addition to the first supervisor, each PhD candidate has at least one other supervisor or co-supervisor. The TSP records who the supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) are, the division of responsibilities between the supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s), agreements about when contacts will take place between the PhD candidate and the supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) and agreements about the time to be spent on supervision.

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 course. 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. This course can be followed via HR Learning and Development.

The quality of the supervision of PhD candidates is a recurring topic in the performance and development interview (ROG) conducted with each supervisor/co-supervisor by their own manager.

8. In contacts between supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) and PhD candidates, the [Golden Rules of PhD supervision](#) (see Appendix 2) will be observed.
9. A performance and development interview (ROG) will take place each year with every PhD candidate with employee status. It is also recommended that an annual interview should take place with the other types of PhD candidates (contract, external and externally financed PhD candidates). In these interviews, it is advisable to observe the [Golden Rules for PhD Supervision](#) and to give attention to progress with implementing the training plan (see Article 11), in addition to standard topics.

A review or monitoring meeting with one or two independent staff members will take place each year for every PhD candidate (in the case of externally financed and external PhD candidates: at least every two years); the supervisor(s)/co-supervisor(s) are not present at this meeting. 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.

10. At the end of the period set out in the TSP, a 'go/no go' decision will be made and recorded in writing for each PhD track. In the case of PhD candidates with employee status and contract PhD candidates, this decision will be made no later than the end of the first year. For externally financed and external PhD candidates, the decision will be made no earlier than one year and no later than two years after their start date. The go/no go decision must be substantiated and must be part of a longer and transparent assessment process.
11. Training plan.

Every PhD candidate produces a training plan as part of the TSP.

For PhD candidates who were admitted to the Graduate School on or after 1 January 2024, successful completion of the agreed training plan is a condition for admission to the PhD defence.

See Chapter 1, Article 3c of the PhD Regulations:

A condition for admission to the PhD defence: the PhD candidate has successfully completed a training plan agreed with the PhD candidate at the start of the PhD track and funded by the institution, which meets the following requirements:

- I. the plan covers the entire PhD track;



- II. for PhD candidates with employee status and contract ('scholarship') PhD candidates (not employed by Leiden University or LUMC), the plan comprises at least:
 - i. 140 hours of academic training activities (specialisation-related training courses, attending conferences and suchlike)
 - ii. 140 hours of training activities in the area of transferable skills (such as giving presentations, academic English, time management, career orientation, entrepreneurship, teaching (a maximum of 20 hours may be included for this), obtaining the University Teaching Qualification (BKO) partial certificate), including at least one training course in the area of academic integrity
 - iii. the Dean can impose additional requirements (for example, taking BROK (Basic Course on Regulations and Organisation for Clinical Investigators) courses;
- III. for external PhD candidates and externally financed PhD candidates, the plan includes at least the Academic Integrity course and courses that are specified as compulsory for the faculty and/or institute;
- IV. the plan leaves space for exemptions from specific parts of this obligation, after submission of a reasoned request; the exemption will be granted by the Dean on behalf of the Doctorate Board.

The following stipulations are applicable in this regard:

- the contents of the training plan were agreed with the PhD candidate (stating any applicable exemptions) at the start of the PhD track and were set down in the TSP (the TSP is recorded in Converis GSM); the progress of the TSP is discussed in every annual interview;
- the PhD candidate is always given the opportunity in good time to actually follow the elements of the training plan.

For externally financed and external PhD candidates, it must 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 and in consultation with the first supervisor, they will be given the opportunity to follow two other training courses funded by the faculty/institute, in addition to any compulsory training courses.

12. 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. 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).
13. Each institute or faculty organises periodic events for its own PhD candidates to explore their prospects on the labour market. Multiple institutes and/or faculties may also organise such events jointly.

Rules



14. The rules relating to PhD defences are laid down in the Leiden University PhD Regulations. Additionally, all PhD candidates – like all staff members – must comply with the applicable rules and guidelines imposed within Leiden University, LUMC, the faculty, graduate school and/or institute, including but not limited to those pertaining to personal, public and knowledge safety, environmental requirements, data management, open access publishing and academic integrity.

The Leiden University PhD Guidelines were adopted by the Executive Board on 25 October 2023.



Appendix 1: Types of PhD candidates

There are many different ways to obtain a PhD. Universities and UMCs recognise four types. Universities can use the type definitions to register the PhD candidates correctly and to provide high-quality information. A flow chart is available to help register PhD candidates in the correct types.

The statistics are ultimately always based on a candidate's primary type (the first registration), regardless of any other status gained later. Employed PhD candidates retain that classification, even if they spend a period of time working on their dissertations without being employed by the university or the UMC; PhD candidates who receive no money or resources from the university or the UMC will remain that type, even if resources are temporarily made available to enable them to do research at the university or UMC.

Category 1: PhD candidate with employee status

These PhD candidates receive funding and/or time to obtain a PhD from the university/UMC. This group also encompasses medical specialists whose UMC has exempted them from some of their regular duties. An employee who is in a PhD track, but is financing the PhD privately and does not have a time allocation from the university or UMC falls into type 4.

There may be a second UFO (university job classification system) code with the 'PhD candidate' designation for the same appointment. It is also possible for the same person to have two employment relationships, one of which is as an employed PhD candidate.

The algorithm used by the UNL to determine the primary employment relationship is as follows:

- a. The employment relationship with the most contracted hours takes precedence.
- b. Where two employment relationships have the same contracted hours, a permanent appointment takes precedence over a temporary appointment.
- c. Where employment contracts are the same, the higher salary scale takes precedence over the lower.
- d. Where salary scales are equal, the numerically lower UFO position takes precedence over the other UFO position.
- e. If the above fails to produce a decisive outcome, the employment relationship that appears first in the WOPI (higher education personnel information) list takes precedence; this is the relationship with the earliest start date.

Type 1a Employed PhD candidate

An employee who has an employment contract and an agreement regarding a PhD track at their own university or UMC.

Indicators:

- a. Agreement to work towards a PhD defence (access to Graduate School, training and supervision plan, research plan, supervisors appointed).
- b. Staff number and salary from university or UMC > 0.



- c. The first university job classification system (UFO) code is that of PhD candidate, or the UMC equivalent.

This group also includes all PhD candidates who had this employment contract at any time before the PhD defence, even if the contract ended before the PhD defence took place.

Type 1b Employee in a PhD track

An employee who has an employment contract and an agreement regarding a PhD track at their own university or UMC.

Indicators:

- a. Agreement to work towards a PhD defence (access to Graduate School, training and supervision plan, PhD plan, supervisor appointed).
- b. Staff number and salary from university or UMC > 0.
- c. The first UFO code is NOT that of PhD candidate or the UMC equivalent.

Category 2: PhD candidate WITHOUT employee status

Type 2 Contract ('scholarship') PhD candidate

A person who does not have an employment contract with the university where the PhD defence is to be completed, but who has the primary aim of obtaining a PhD and receives resources to that end from a scholarship funding body.

Indicators:

- a. Agreement to work towards a PhD defence (access to Graduate School, training and supervision plan, PhD plan, supervisor appointed).
- b. No salary from university or UMC (or only a supplement to the scholarship).
- c. PhD funding made available by scholarship funding body.

2a Contract PhD candidate: own university or UMC. Scholarship granted by the candidate's own university or UMC (this includes PhD candidates in the 'PhD scholarship' programme (*promotieonderwijs*) experiment).

2b Contract PhD candidate: other/external scholarship provider. Scholarship granted by an organisation other than the university referred to under 2a, such as: NUFFIC, European Union, university outside the Netherlands, grant-awarding organisations and foundations (Fullbright, banks). The scholarship may be supplemented by the PhD candidate's own university or UMC.

Type 3 PhD candidate with external financing

A PhD candidate with external financing differs from an external PhD candidate in that the PhD candidate in some way receives funding for the PhD research, or is permitted to obtain a PhD 'on the boss's time' (this also includes researchers employed/funded by FOM, NWO-I and M2i).

Type 4 External PhD candidate (own funding)



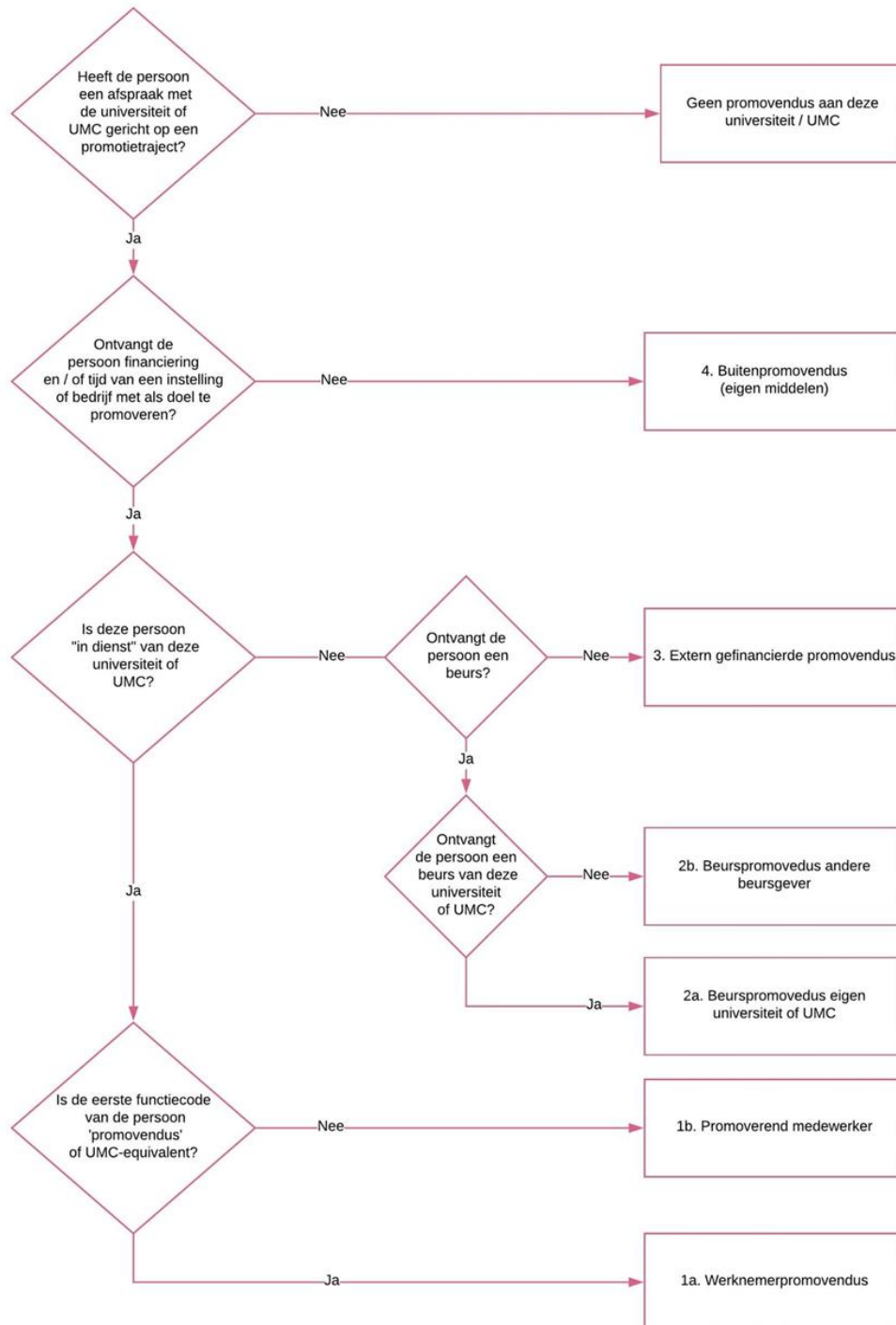
A person who is not allocated any time or money by an external party to obtain a PhD, but who does intend to obtain a PhD. These candidates may use their own funds, or family members may make funds available. For example: pensioners who work towards a PhD; company employees who work on a PhD in their own time alongside their job; or medical specialists whose UMC has not granted an exemption from their regular duties.

Indicators:

- a. Agreement to work towards a PhD defence (access to Graduate School, training and supervision plan, PhD plan, supervisor appointed).
- b. No salary or scholarship from university or UMC.
- c. No funding and/or time allocated by employer/scholarship funding body (including the PhD candidate's own university) to obtain a PhD.



Flow chart



Source: VSNU (2020) Definitieafspraken Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek toelichting bij de KUOZ
The Hague: VSNU



Appendix 2: Golden Rules of PhD supervision

Golden Rules for PhD Supervision

	Supervisor	PhD Candidate
Be professional	<p>Be aware that all PhD candidates are different, with their own individual story, culture, competences and needs.</p> <p>Being a supervisor is a demanding job. There is no template for supervision. Keep an open mind and adapt to the PhD candidate.</p> <p>Co-supervision can be difficult. Ensure that you come to a joint view on the process so that the PhD candidate is not left in a quandary.</p>	<p>Be aware that all supervisors are unique human beings with their strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>You will need to adjust to certain ways of behaving and, if something bothers you, address it.</p>
Be committed	<p>Be aware that doing a PhD is a lengthy process that requires long-term commitment from both sides.</p> <p>PhD candidates need to feel that you care about the project's progress and outcome. Even if the project is meant to develop the candidate's competences, you are also involved in this journey, and your input on the project, topic or execution is essential. Take responsibility for the project. Be up to date and collect material with which you can give your PhD candidate valuable scientific input.</p>	<p>Be aware that the PhD journey will be lengthy and not always easy, and that your initial motivation can be hard to maintain.</p> <p>If things are tough, don't despair. Carry on and talk to your colleagues or supervisors. It is a stage most PhD candidates go through.</p>
Be available	<p>Be aware that your regular availability is key to the success of the project.</p> <p>As part of your responsibility as a supervisor, you are to take initiative in planning regular supervision meetings.</p> <p>You are also expected to, in general, be sufficiently available to the PhD candidate in a way that is mutually beneficial, as well as professional. You should consider that, due to personal circumstances, individual PhD candidates may have different needs/ restrictions, e.g., in terms of meeting hours.</p>	<p>Be aware that the success of your project is a joint responsibility.</p> <p>Be aware that it is <u>your</u> PhD project and it is also your responsibility to arrange meetings with your supervisor.</p> <p>Be well prepared when meeting with your supervisor and ensure that your supervisor can be prepared, too.</p> <p>Make sure that you get the time you need from your supervisor while being aware of his/her time constraints.</p>
Be consistent and clear	<p>Be aware that the (perception of) research progress should be addressed. It is crucial to be open about your expectations from each other.</p> <p>Doing research is, by definition, charting unknown territory. Thus, it is unavoidable that the research evolves, including the supervisor's view of what the next step(s) should be. Be honest about this and show ownership of your changing views. Remember what you say and advise.</p>	<p>Be aware that being honest about your progress and your expectations is key to the success of your project. Use wisdom and tact to address possible issues.</p> <p>Be clear and honest about your research progress and struggles. For instance, prepare the meeting with your supervisor by sending him/her a list of discussion points beforehand. Use the meeting with your supervisor to clarify your research problems. Make notes of the discussion and what next steps to take.</p>
Be time aware	<p>Be aware that realistic planning is essential for a PhD candidate.</p> <p>Obviously, the plan as initially foreseen, will change during the course of the project. Be prepared for a change by thinking about a plan B when the original plan needs revision.</p> <p>Set short term goals and celebrate the successes with the PhD candidate.</p> <p>Make certain that the PhD candidate knows what, in terms of thesis content, is sufficient to graduate.</p>	<p>Be aware that planning is one of the harder things to do in research and that the original plan is almost certainly going to change.</p> <p>Keep track of the time you spend on a particular issue. On a regular basis, discuss this with your supervisor and what next steps to take. Discuss short term goals with your supervisor and celebrate your success together.</p>



<p>Be willing to receive feedback</p>	<p>Be aware that for any professional relationship to work, feedback must be a two-way exchange.</p> <p>You should expect feedback from the PhD candidate just as the latter expects it from you. Be open to the feedback you receive and take it seriously. If no feedback is given, ask for it. You are encouraged to do so a couple of times a year, but in any case, during the yearly progress interview with the PhD candidate.</p> <p>Remember that your reaction on the feedback will have an impact on the openness of your discussions with the PhD candidate.</p>	<p>Be aware that receiving feedback is very helpful for your progress.</p> <p>Keep in mind that feedback is meant to help you and is not targeted against you as a person. Feedback is needed to advance your project. If it is not forthcoming, ask for it and use the feedback to your best advantage. Don't be afraid to ask for feedback in an early stage, this prevents you and your supervisor from going in separate directions. If you experience the feedback as unhelpful, reflect on it for a while (with others) and discuss it with your supervisor in a professional and inoffensive way. When your supervisor has helped you or has been complimentary, show your appreciation.</p>
<p>Be willing to give feedback</p>	<p>Be aware that a PhD candidate needs regular feedback that must be professional, objective, constructive, and balanced.</p> <p>Feedback may have a large (emotional) impact on the PhD candidate, thus you should be cautious in choosing where and when to give feedback, especially when the feedback is person-oriented and would not benefit others. You should be aware of the cultural/ethnic/gender/etc. variation in the research group and should employ language that is inclusive and not hurtful to people with different backgrounds and traditions. Positive feedback is as important as critical comments.</p>	<p>Be aware that feedback on supervision can always be helpful.</p> <p>Supervising a PhD candidate is a hard job. You can help your supervisors by giving open feedback about their supervision, always with respect and consideration.</p>
<p>Be aware of stressors</p>	<p>Be aware that as a supervisor you are a role model for the PhD candidate, and should set a good example in terms of stress management.</p> <p>Be aware that your (potentially unhealthy) work attitudes are easily seen as a professional standard. Stimulate the PhD candidates to take breaks. Be aware that the PhD candidate's personal life story can affect their work.</p>	<p>Be aware that your life involves more than your work.</p> <p>Manage your stress level and respect your boundaries. Also talk to your colleagues and peers about their struggles with doing research, sharing the same experience helps to manage the difficulties of life as a PhD candidate.</p> <p>Maintain the communication with your supervisor and remember that your supervisor has followed the same path before you and can also help you to put things in perspective.</p>
<p>Be future-oriented</p>	<p>Be aware that a PhD student might need stimulation to think about his/her career after graduation.</p> <p>Many PhD candidates do not think much about their next career step before their last year, nor do they know much about what comes after the PhD, especially outside academia. Having no prospects for future career development triggers and increases stress. Thus, it is very important to timely discuss this point with your PhD candidate. Make your professional network available to your PhD candidates.</p>	<p>Be aware that you need to think about your career after graduation.</p> <p>There are very few jobs in academia. Take this into account. Most PhD candidates start thinking about their next career step during their 3rd or 4th year, which is late. Spend some dedicated time on this issue already in your 2nd year. Your supervisor, who is the person who knows you the best professionally, can advise you. The university is regularly organizing events that can provide you with more information.¹ Work on your network. Let the outside world know who you are. Don't underestimate the time this takes.</p>