PhD Package
for candidates and supervisors
WELCOME TO OUR GRADUATE SCHOOL ................................................................. 3
DOCTORATE REGULATIONS .................................................................................. 5
  DOCTORATE REGULATIONS (ENGLISH) .............................................................. 5
  PROMOTIEREGLEMENT (NEDERLANDS) ............................................................ 5
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES ............................................. 6
  INSTRUCTIONS FOR (EXTERNAL) PHD CANDIDATES .................................... 6
  INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUPERVISORS ................................................................. 7
TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PROGRAMME ...................................................... 8
  MANDATORY COURSES (11-12 EC) .................................................................... 8
  ELECTIVES (18-19 EC) ...................................................................................... 9
SUPERVISION ......................................................................................................... 12
FEES ....................................................................................................................... 13
STAFF ................................................................................................................... 15
CHECKLIST APPLICATION DOCUMENTS .......................................................... 16
  PHASE 1: MEMBERSHIP GRADUATE SCHOOL ............................................... 16
  PHASE 2: APPLICATION TO DOCTORAL PROGRAMME .................................... 16
DOWNLOADS .......................................................................................................... 17
  TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PLAN ............................................................... 17
  NETHERLANDS CODE OF CONDUCT .............................................................. 17
  SUPERVISION RECORD (FORM) ................................................................. 17
  RECORD OF ATTENDANCE (FORM) .............................................................. 17
  REASONS FOR SUBSTITUTION / EXEMPTION (FORM) .................................... 17
  FORM I (APPLICATION FORM) ................................................................. 17
  PHD PACKAGE (ALL-IN-ONE DOWNLOAD) .................................................. 17

Please note that the most up-to-date version of our programme can always be found on the website of the Graduate School.
Do you want to obtain a PhD degree and write a doctoral dissertation in the field of theology or religious studies? With more than 300 PhD candidates, our Graduate School of Theology and Religious Studies offers excellent opportunities for high-level academic research and doctorate studies, both residential and non-residential.

Our aim is to provide you with first-class personal supervision by leading experts in an exciting and stimulating research environment. We offer a challenging PhD training and supervision programme and organize expert meetings and seminars in which you can present your work in progress, interact with fellow students and scholars from all over the world, and build your own network for an academic career and profession.

Our supervisors represent a wide range of academic disciplines, brought together in the domains of Texts and Traditions and Practices and Beliefs. These domains cover academic research in theology and religion in its wide variety (Biblical studies, history of Christianity, systematic theology, ecumenics, practical theology), Islamic studies, Buddhist, Hindu and Jewish studies, ethics, philosophy of religion, comparative religion, and so on and so forth. Our research projects serve the academic community, society and faith communities all over the world.

This website will help you find information on admission procedures, training programmes, fees, and much more. If you need more information, please send an email to our office (grad.school.the@vu.nl). We are happy to answer your questions. Of course, you can also contact one of your prospected supervisor(s) or pay a visit to our theological faculty. Our faculty's agenda provides many opportunities to come over to Amsterdam and taste the atmosphere of our faculty.

Dr A.W. (Arie) Zwiep
Director of the Graduate School of Theology and Religious Studies

E-mail: grad.school.the@vu.nl
Meet Us Links (for website):

*Why study at VU Amsterdam?*

Meet our University (video).

Meet our Faculty (video).

See further [Practical Information](#).

See also [ProVU](#) (PhD & Postdoc Organization of VU & VUmc)

Go directly to:

- [Admission Requirements and Procedures](#)
- [Training and Supervision Programme](#)
- [Application Forms](#)

[Disclaimer](#)
# Doctorate Regulations (English)

Doctorate Regulations

# Doctorate Regulations (Nederlands)

Promotiereglement

## Doctorate Regulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>General Provisions</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Admission to the PhD Programme</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>The Supervisor and Co-supervisor</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>The Thesis Committee</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>The Doctorate Board</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>The Training Programme</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>The Dissertation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>The PhD Ceremony</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>The Distinction of Cum Laude</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Double and Joint Doctorate Programme</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Deposits</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The Degree of Doctor Honors Causa</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Final and Transitional Provisions</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Procedural Regulations</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROCEDURES

To be admitted to our PhD programme, you must be in possession of a Master's degree or have successfully obtained an equivalent qualification at a foreign institute of higher education (see Doctorate Regulations, 8.1-4). If you are in doubt about your qualifications, please consult the website of Nuffic or send an email to our Graduate School.

There are various ways in which you can get in contact with the Graduate School and get accepted as a PhD candidate. If you know already your specialization area and/or have a prospective supervisor in mind, the easiest way is to have an informal contact with him or her and explore the possibilities of a PhD trajectory. If you are not yet certain about the direction of your career, you can also contact the Director of the Graduate School or other staff members of our faculty.

Please note that for internal PhD positions (AiO's), who are employed by the faculty, other regulations may apply.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR (EXTERNAL) PHD CANDIDATES

■ Hopefully, informal contact with your prospective supervisor results in a PhD trajectory. This usually starts with a brief indication of your intended research area (about 200 words) and a provisional title and subtitle, or with a more elaborate Research Proposal (eventually to be approved by the promotion committee).

■ Together with your supervisor you need to make a Training and Supervision Plan (TSP), based on your previous qualifications and skills and focused on your research area.1

■ For a full list of required documents, see the checklist below. It is your supervisor who sends all the documents to the office of the Graduate School. You will be admitted as a member of the Graduate School as soon as your TSP has been accepted by the director of the Graduate School. You will receive a Letter of Confirmation with further instructions about payments and library access.

■ After your TSP has been accepted and you have presented your Research Proposal to a research group, your supervisor will send your Research Proposal to the Graduate School for approval by the Doctorate Board. After approval, you and your supervisor fill in Form 1 (Application for Admission to the Doctoral Programme), and, after all the required signatures have been provided, will send it to the office of the Graduate School for official registration at the beadle’s office.

You are now an official PhD candidate!

1 All PhD candidates who are admitted to the Graduate School after 1st April 2015 fall under the regulations specified in the university’s new doctorate regulations. Candidates admitted between 1st January 2015 and 1st April 2015 also fall under the new regulations, with the exception of article 15 specifying the training requirements, which does not apply. All other candidates fall under the doctorate regulations which were applicable until 31st December 2014 (see Regulations > 1.1.2015).
INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUPERVISORS

As a supervisor you are responsible for the content of your candidate’s training and supervision programme (TSP). To avoid a bureaucratic overload, please make sure that the files are complete and provided with all the necessary evidence (see the checklist below). Send the complete set to the office of the Graduate School. Note that incomplete sets will not be accepted and will cause a delay in the application process. If you have any questions about TSPs, please contact the Director of the Graduate School directly.

( Supervisor:) Send your complete set to grad.school.the@vu.nl

Go directly to:

- Training and Supervision Programme
- Checklist Application Documents
TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PROGRAMME

The training programme consists of at least 30 EC (840 hours) and prepares you for the rigorous research standards that apply to your doctoral research agenda and beyond. Its content is determined on an individual basis, depending on your previous education, academic competencies, work experience and area of specialization. In due course, we hope to be able to offer a significant part of the programme online. Topics must pertain to general research skills and to field-specific research skills and subject areas. The programme consists of both mandatory courses and electives. It is not required that you fulfil all the requirements before you start your dissertation, except that the course on Proposal Writing naturally needs to be done before your thesis proposal can be presented to the Doctorate Board.

If you have a Research Master degree of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (120 EC), you are normally exempted from the 30 EC requirements but nevertheless are encouraged to follow parts of the programme. Still, your supervisor may decide it is necessary to do some supplementary work to meet our standards. Requests for substitution and/or exemption need to be substantiated by you and your supervisor. Substitutions and exemptions are taken up in your Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) and are to be approved by the Director of the Graduate School, if necessary in consultation with the Dean of Research.

MANDATORY COURSES (11-12 EC)

1. **Academic Integrity** (2 EC)
   This is an online course offered by our University. At present, this is for 1 EC only. Please consult your supervisor to fill in the second (subject-domain related) required 1 EC. After acceptance, you will receive further instructions on how to proceed. On request, you will receive an access code to start the course.

2. **Methodology** (2 EC)
   A course/tutorial in research methodology of the area of your project’s topic, e.g. historical, conceptual/systematic, or empirical methodology. Its content, aims and output depend on your field of research and are discussed with your supervisor(s).

3. **Proposal Writing** (2 EC)
   This course/tutorial should be completed before your definitive proposal is handed in for approval by the Doctorate Board, i.e. in the first year for internal PhD candidates (AIoS) and in the first two years for external candidates.

4. **PhD Research Design** (6 EC, residential or online) (as an alternative to 1-3)
   This is a course offered in our regular Research Master programme (G_RMARESD) and consists of two-weekly seminars in semester 1, periods 1-3 (September-January). Please contact Dr [M. Wisse](mailto:M.Wisse@vu.nl) for further information and registration.
From September 2017 onwards this module will also available as an online course as a substitute for the courses on Academic Integrity, Methodology and Proposal Writing. If you have any queries about this or other online courses of the Graduate School, please contact Dr. L. van den Broeke.

5. Two visits to academic conferences (3-4 EC)
The conferences must stretch over several days. One conference visit must include a presentation of your research (2 EC), the other can (but does not have to) include a presentation (without presentation: 1 EC, including presentation 2 EC). (Thus, in total, 3 or 4 EC). Please use the Record of Attendance Form.

6. Transferable skills (2 EC)
Transferable skills are the personal skills you have acquired during your previous education and professional life, such as leadership skills, teaching, project management and organization, research and information management, written and oral communication skills, and so on, with an emphasis on career development and professional development (see some of the courses instanced below). Please note that requests for exemption need to be substantiated from your CV and/or relevant certificates.

ELECTIVES (18-19 EC)
The remaining credits of your 30 EC training programme can be chosen from PhD-level courses in the subject area of your specialization, either at our University or at one of our partner institutions. The supervisor decides which courses are required in your specific case in consultation with the director of the Graduate School. The list below is exemplary, not exhaustive. Please note that in some cases a fee is required.

7. MA course(s) at the Faculty of Theology (6 EC each)
This entails residential MA courses (esp. Research Master level) relevant to your research field (usually courses of six weeks). For a brief description of the courses available, please consult the faculty’s website. In due course, some of these courses will be offered in a blended learning/long-distance trajectory.

8. Successful Dissertation Writing (2 EC)
See the VU website for more information.

9. Writing a Scientific Article (3 EC)
A course/workshop offered on a regular basis by Taalcentrum-VU. For details and agenda, click here.

10. Presentation and Voice (1 EC)
A course/workshop offered on a regular basis by Taalcentrum-VU focused on training of the ability to present papers and to speak in public. For details and agenda, see the website.

11. Training PhD Success and Personal Efficacy (2 EC)
This training is a part of the training programme of the division Human Resources, Health, Safety and Environment for VU University staff. The training is for all first-year PhD candidates at VU University with three months to one year experience. For more information, see Training Programmes.
12. **Grant Writing** (1-6 EC)
Workshop and courses offered on a regular basis by the VU Subsidiedesk. See the various options under *begeleidingstrajecten* (Dutch webpage) and esp. *ERC workshops* (English).

13. **Project Management** (3 EC)
A course/workshop offered on a regular basis. Training of the ability to manage (academic) projects. See the VU website for more information.

14. **Career Orientation** (2 EC)
See the VU website for more information.

15. Participation in **Research Seminars** at the Faculty of Theology (1-3 EC). Presence plus presentation, e.g. the two-weekly *Amsterdam New Testament Colloquium* (Nieuwtestamentisch Werkgezelschap), activities in the context of *ACCORD*, the research group Doing Theology in an Ecumenical Way, and other such activities. For more information, see the list of *institutes and research centres*.

16. Course(s) offered by **NOSTER** (variable)
NOSTER (Nederlandse Onderzoeksschool voor Theologie en Religiewetenschap / Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion) offers regular seminars and training for PhD students. The current programme can be found at the website of Noster (www.noster.org). Please note that NOSTER offers a full 4 year training programme for PhD students of 10 EC (2,5 EC yearly). See NOSTER’s *curriculum* for more details.

17. Course(s) and activities organized by **CLUE+** (variable)
Our Faculty participates in CLUE+, the interfaculty Research Institute for Culture, Cognition, History and Heritage of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. It brings together researchers from a wide variety of academic disciplines to work on joint projects, reflect upon societal challenges and formulate strategies for addressing those challenges. With interdisciplinary teams, working in novel ways and with innovative methodologies, CLUE+ aims to provide an inspiring research climate for talented young academics as well as for senior and top researchers. For more information, see the *CLUE+ website*.

18. Course(s) at the **Graduate Schools** of **partner institutes in the Netherlands** (variable)
E.g. **PThU** (Protestantse Theologische Universiteit) and **IBTSC** (International Baptist Theological Study Centre in Amsterdam).

19. Course(s) at the **Graduate Schools** of **partner institutes abroad** (variable)
E.g. **The Queen’s Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education** in Birmingham (UK), and partner institutes with which the faculty has a joint or double PhD agreement, such as **Duke Divinity School** (Durham, NC) and **Fuller Theological Seminary** (Pasadena, CA).

20. Visit of one **inaugural lecture and four dissertation defenses** at the Vrije Universiteit (3 EC) and/or, if applicable, participation in the annual Graduation Week at VU.

21. **Biblical Studies and Digital Humanities** (online) (6 EC)
Online course offered by our own Faculty.

22. **Advanced Biblical Hebrew** (online) (6 EC)
Online course offered by our own Faculty.

23. **Hedendaags islamitisch denken** (online, in preparation) (6 EC)
Online course offered by our own Faculty (Nelly van Doorn)

24. **Buddhism and Mindfulness** (online, in preparation) (6 EC)
Online course offered by our own Faculty (H.W.A. Blezer)

25. **Training University Teaching**
A programme offered by VU-Academic Centre for Human Behaviour and Movement (VU-UCGB in Dutch) in both Dutch and English leading to a Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs (BKO) or a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ).

26. **Intervision Groups** (1-6 EC)
The aim of this seminar is to connect PhD candidates to exchange ideas about academic skills and support each other in developing academic skills. During the course of a semester, candidates work together in supporting each other to finish a publishable piece of writing, by exchanging experiences about research processes and provide and receive adequate feedback. Each seminar (1 EC) consists of 10-12 one-hour sessions per semester, to a max of 6 EC. ([course description](#))

27. **Other individual trajectories**

Go directly to:
- **Training and Supervision (Form)**
- **Supervision**
- **Record of Attendance (Form)**
SUPERVISION

In accordance with article 3.10.2 of the university's Doctorate Regulations, every PhD candidate has at least one supervisor plus a second (co-)supervisor. The supervisor(s) is (are) from the Faculty of Theology. The College of Deans can appoint a professor from another Dutch university or a foreign institution as the supervisor. In this case, the College appoints a professor of the Faculty as the second supervisor. The main supervisor has the rank of full professor (hoogleraar), not that of assistant or associate professor (thus, not: universitair (hoofd)docent). A team of supervisors can consist of up to four members. Except for the main supervisor(s), the members of the team can consist either of assistant/associate professors or full professors. The function of the (team of) supervisor(s) is to supervise the process of writing, and to monitor your process regarding the requirements determined in your Training and Supervision Plan.

In order to monitor your progress, the supervisor(s) fill(s) in a Supervision Record. The Supervision Record plays an important role in the supervision process. The results of your Supervision Record will be checked by the supervisor(s) as well as by the Graduate School on a regular basis. The results of the Supervision Records determine the "go/no go" decisions which are common for evaluating PhD trajectories.

In order to get a "go," the results of your Supervision Records must be adequate. An adequate result implies that you have minimally twice scored "satisfactory" within the first two years of your trajectory (a different time-frame may apply to internal candidates). Candidates who score lower than this within two years, will receive a "no go": their PhD trajectory and their membership in the Graduate School will be terminated (please note the regulations under Fees).

Go directly to:
- Supervision Record (Form)
Fees

As an external PhD candidate, you are responsible for the following costs:

- Membership fee of the Graduate School (yearly)
- VUnet-ID (not obligatory)
- The costs of following the training programme courses and activities (faculty online courses excepted)
- Travel and accommodation costs (if applicable)

The fee has to be paid beginning from the month following your acceptance to the Graduate School. You will receive instructions on how to pay the fee as soon as you have been accepted as a member of the Graduate School. Following VU regulations, the fee is determined on an annual basis and is to be received two months after acceptance at the latest.

- The fee for the academic year 2016-2017 is € 500,-
- The fee for the VUnet-ID is € 524,-

An academic year runs from 1st September to 31st August. If you are admitted during the academic year, you pay a percentage of the fee, depending on your starting date:

- starting between 1 July and 31 December: full fee
- starting in January, February or March: 50%
- starting in April, May or June: 25%

Please note that purchasing a VUnet-ID is not compulsory. It is, however, necessary for receiving a number of privileges at VU-University, such as access to the e-library. If you have access to the VU campus, you may consider buying a regular library card that is significantly cheaper and can be obtained via VU library. Yet, a regular library card does not provide access to the e-library. VUnet-IDs can be bought only for a full year. Should this lead to significant problems for your project, please contact your supervisors and the Graduate School. If you wish to obtain a VUnet-ID, please use this link and fill it in properly. After you have paid the fee, you will be notified how to initiate or extend your VUnet-ID.

Payments have to be received before a VUnet-ID can be obtained (via grad.school.the@vu.nl). Payments are for the full year, independently from when you apply for a VUnet-ID.

Fees for the Graduate School, the VUnet-ID and all other costs are non-refundable. If you should decide to discontinue your PhD trajectory, or the Graduate School decides to terminate your membership, you will not be refunded for any fees paid thus far.

Depending on the date of your PhD ceremony, a refund of your membership fee is possible under the following conditions:

- graduation between 1 July and 31 December: 50%
- graduation in January, February or March: 25%
- graduation in April, May or June: no refund
Different regulations and fees apply for internal candidates (AIO's) and for candidates who enter the PhD trajectory at the Faculty of Theology via one of the faculty’s recognized partner institutions or via some other agreement.
I. (Ingrid) Le Duc
Secretary

M.L. (Mirjam) de Leeuw
Secretary

Dr C. (Leon) van den Broeke
Blended/Online Learning

Dr A.W. (Arie) Zwiep
Director

For a list of potential supervisors, see our Faculty's website under Academic Staff.
CHECKLIST APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

PHASE 1: MEMBERSHIP GRADUATE SCHOOL

(to be turned in together with your Training and Supervision Plan - send to your supervisor!)

- A Letter of Application, indicating your intention and motivation to follow a PhD trajectory at the Faculty of Theology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, including a brief summary of your intended research area.
- A Curriculum Vitae including academic work carried out.
- Certified copies of relevant diploma’s (i.e. MA diplomas). A notary public, your university or another public institution can certify the copy. Copies must be posted by regular mail, not scanned, since the certification loses its validity if scanned.
- Certified summaries of the curriculum components which you have followed, certified diploma supplements or original transcripts, esp. with a view to determine the content (and exemptions) of your Training and Supervision programme.
- A copy of an identity document that is legally valid in the Netherlands (such as a passport, a driving license or an ID-card).
- A signed version of the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity (English version; Dutch version).
- Training and Supervision Plan (signed by you and your supervisors).

Send this to your supervisor. Your supervisor will send the complete package to the office of the Graduate School for approval of your TSP and further administrative action. If your TSP has been accepted (or full exemption has been given), you are officially accepted as a member of the Graduate School and receive a Letter of Confirmation.

PHASE 2: APPLICATION TO DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

(to be turned in with Form I by the supervisor to Graduate School)

- Form I (Application for Admission to the Doctoral Programme of the Faculty of Theology (English version; Dutch version).
- Research proposal as accepted by the Doctorate Board.

If these documents are not in Dutch, English, French or German, they must be accompanied by a certified translation in one of these languages.
DOWNLOADS

These downloads can be found on the website of the Graduate School.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION PLAN
NETHERLANDS CODE OF CONDUCT
SUPERVISION RECORD (FORM)
RECORD OF ATTENDANCE (FORM)
REASONS FOR SUBSTITUTION / EXEMPTION (FORM)
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