

NOTES ON THE LEIDEN UNIVERSITY PHD REGULATION 2008

Amendments to the PhD regulation are needed to take into account the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Graduate Studies Task Force dated 25 January 2008. The PhD track will acquire a more programmatic character within the graduate schools. The graduate schools will in future also become the portal for PhD candidates. This means that a number of steps in the PhD procedure have to be brought forward, and the role played by the Dean in these steps has to be strengthened : a number of decisions which are currently the responsibility of the Doctorate Board will in future be mandated to the Dean of the relevant faculty on behalf of and under the responsibility of the Doctorate Board. The Dean can further mandate the Scientific Director of the relevant institute to take such decisions in his place. Also, the approval of the manuscript by the referee has been discontinued in order to reduce the waiting times for the PhD defence once the manuscript has been approved by the supervisor, and a number of the time spans have been shortened in order to speed up the overall process. The opportunity has also been taken to improve the text of the PhD regulation. A number of redundant stipulations and repetitions have been removed and the text has been improved in terms of consistency and readability. The Dutch text of the amended regulation and an English translation will be published on the website.

In line with article 7.18, paragraph 3, of the Higher Education and Academic Research Act (*WHW*), the PhD Regulation stipulates under article 3, paragraph 1, who has right of admission to the PhD programme: a person who has the required preliminary education, who has written a thesis and who meets the requirements of the PhD Regulation may be admitted to the PhD programme. At a certain point in time, the Doctorate Board, or a body representing the Doctorate Board, is required to establish whether the candidate has this right of admission. The question of the thesis and whether the requirements of the PhD Regulation have been met can be addressed at a later stage in the procedure (article 23). The same does not apply to the question of the candidate's preliminary education. This issue must be determined at the start of the PhD procedure. It must not be possible for a graduate school to admit a candidate to a PhD programme only to discover later in the procedure that the candidate does not have the required previous education, and therefore cannot be admitted to the PhD defence.

A person who wishes to study for a PhD should discuss this with an appropriate professor for the field of research (article 6, paragraph 1). The graduate school is expected to facilitate this and to put the candidate in touch with a potential supervisor. Once the professor who has been petitioned has confirmed his

willingness to act as supervisor, the PhD candidate should request the Dean to appoint the supervisor as such (article 6, paragraph 3). The appointment is made by the Dean in the name of and under the responsibility of the Doctorate Board.

In the interests of safeguarding academic integrity, it is expressly stipulated that certain persons may not be appointed as supervisor: the partner of the PhD candidate, a blood relative or first or second-degree relative of the candidate, or any other persons whose relationship to the candidate precludes them from making an assessment (article 6, paragraph 8). The same applies for membership of the PhD committee (article 21, paragraph 3), and for that of the Opposition Committee (article 25, paragraph 3).

Before the Dean appoints the supervisor, he should verify whether the candidate has the required preliminary education, i.e. that he has acquired a master's degree from a government-funded or -appointed university in the Netherlands, or has passed the *doctoraal* examination (article 6, paragraph 4). If this is not the case, the candidate can ask for exemption from this requirement, by submitting the documents mentioned in article 4, paragraph 1, including copies of relevant diplomas or certificates. The Dean is authorised to reach a decision on this on behalf of the Doctorate Board. Advice will be sought from the International Office regarding the standing of (foreign) diplomas or certificates. If it is not possible to grant the exemption requested on the basis of the diplomas or certificates submitted, the Dean can nonetheless grant the exemption if it can be demonstrated to his satisfaction that the applicant is considered capable of carrying out independent scientific research (article 4, paragraph 2).

This procedure ensures that at the start of the PhD programme the candidate is known to the graduate school, it has been established that the candidate has the required preliminary education or has been exempted from this requirement, the subject of the dissertation is known and the supervisor has been appointed. The graduate school will register these details, inform the Secretary of the Doctorate College and monitor the progress of the preparations for the PhD defence. If insufficient progress is made, the Dean will call the supervisor to account on this. This applies both for the PhD candidate who is following a PhD programme, either as an employee or at his own cost, whether or not financed by a subsidy, and for the external PhD candidate.

The supervisor's task is to supervise the candidate to the best of his ability in the realisation of the dissertation. To this end, he is required to draw up a teaching and supervision plan tailored to the individual candidate, in discussion with the candidate. Within the graduate school, this will be monitored by the Dean, or by a deputy on his behalf. The plan should be structured such that the PhD can be completed within the time agreed between the candidate and the supervisor, and should in any event include regular discussions between the candidate and the supervisor and a written report of these discussions (article 7, paragraph 1). The

discussions should take place once every three months. There should be a progress discussion every year.

The supervisor is responsible for the manuscript being accepted as a dissertation. He is expected to ensure that the dissertation meets the standards which can generally be required of a dissertation. He should test the manuscript for a number of requirements formulated in the PhD Regulation, in particular for the requirement that the dissertation is a description of the research carried out independently by the candidate or of research to which he has made an essential contribution (article 10, paragraph 1). Should more than one supervisor be appointed, all are equally responsible for the dissertation as a whole (article 6, paragraph 5).

At the request of the supervisor and on behalf of the Doctorate Board, the Dean may appoint a co-supervisor (article 8). This co-supervisor will assist the supervisor in guiding the PhD candidate (article 9). In most cases a senior university lecturer (*UHD*) is appointed to this task. Although the co-supervisor can be appointed at any point in the PHD research, it is recommended that this appointment should be made at as early a stage as possible.

In the event the supervisor is of the opinion that the manuscript meets the required conditions and can be considered as evidence of competence in the independent practice of science, he will approve the manuscript as a dissertation (article 10, paragraph 3). Once this approval has been given, the PhD candidate will submit a number of propositions to the supervisor. The supervisor will assess the propositions to see that they can be defended with scientific arguments and, if this is the case, will notify the Dean (article 12).

The PhD candidate is responsible for his dissertation as a contribution to academic learning (article 13). This means that the PhD candidate cannot be compelled to include any changes to the content of the manuscript proposed by his supervisor if he believes this would be counter to his responsibilities. Naturally, the possibility of a clash between the responsibilities of the PhD candidate and those of the supervisor in particular circumstances cannot be avoided. Should the situation not be resolved through discussion, the disputes procedure described in Chapter 8 may offer a solution.

A message of acknowledgement is permitted in the dissertation provided the customary restraint is exercised (article 16, paragraphs 3 and 4).

Within three weeks after receipt of the decision of the supervisor approving the manuscript as a dissertation and the notification regarding the propositions, the Dean will appoint a PhD committee, on behalf of the Doctorate Board and at the request of the supervisor (article 20). The Dean or a professor appointed by him is chairman, and member, of the PhD committee. The supervisor and any co-supervisor(s) are members of the committee by virtue of their function. The other

members should in any event be experts in the subject of the dissertation. It is the task of the PhD committee to respond to the question of whether the PhD candidate's dissertation has provided sufficient evidence of competence in the independent practice of science for him to be permitted to defend the dissertation.

The PhD candidate may not duplicate the dissertation before the PhD committee has decided that he can be allowed to defend the dissertation and, pursuant to Article 23, it has been established that he has admission to the PhD defence (article 18, paragraph 2).

In addition to submitting a number of printed copies of the dissertation to the Opposition Committee and the archive of the University Library (*UB*), the PhD candidate should also submit a digital version of the dissertation to the *UB* (article 19). The PhD candidate is required to grant the University a licence for non-exclusive publication of the dissertation in digital form, for which the PhD candidate should sign a standard licensing agreement specified by the Executive Board. Before signing this agreement, the PhD candidate should have obtained the agreement of any co-authors and should have discussed this with the supervisor, and if appropriate, the co-supervisor. The University will grant the PhD candidate a one-off compensation of 500 euro in return for this licence. This compensation is also a contribution to the costs of duplicating the dissertation for the PhD committee, the Opposition Committee and the archive of the *UB*. The responsibility for implementing this financial arrangement rests with the *UB*.

The standard licensing agreement includes – should this be necessary – the possibility of a temporary embargo on the whole dissertation or on one or more parts of it. A temporary embargo may be necessary if the dissertation is to be published in a commercial edition, for example, or in order to avoid a reputable journal refusing the publication of an article because without such an embargo the journal would not be the first to publish the article. It is the policy of most publishers of journals to make it possible to offer worldwide access to the digital dissertation if this primarily consists of articles which have already been published or have yet to be published.

PhD candidates are given the opportunity to publish the dissertation by means of printing-on-demand (POD) with Leiden University press (LUP) in the form of a book. This allows the PhD candidate to have the required number of dissertations printed under the logo of the LUP, for the PhD ceremony, the archive of the *UB* and those interested in the PhD defence. Other interested parties can order copies at any point in time.

As soon as possible after receiving the copy of the decision of the PhD committee that the PhD candidate can be allowed to defend the dissertation, the Dean, on behalf of the Doctorate Board, determines whether the PhD candidate, pursuant to Article 3, can be admitted to the PhD defence. It was already established at the start of the PhD programme that the PhD candidate had the required prior education. Before the defence itself, it has to be established

whether the PhD candidate meets the remaining conditions. The Dean will notify the PhD candidate, the supervisor and the beadle of his assessment without delay (Article 23).

The date and time of the PhD defence are set by the Rector Magnificus or – in practice – by the beadle on his behalf, following discussion with the supervisor, the PhD candidate and the Dean. The time will not be published before it has been confirmed, on the grounds of Article 23, that the PhD candidate may be admitted to the defence (Article 24).

In the case of a dual ceremony, that is a PhD at Leiden University and at another university based on the same dissertation, the defence of the dissertation should first take place at Leiden University (article 2, paragraph 3).

The PhD is awarded by the Doctorate Board (Article 2, paragraph 2), or by the Opposition Committee on behalf of the Doctorate Board (article 27).

If the PhD candidate has given evidence of exceptional competence in his dissertation, the PhD can be awarded 'with distinction' (*cum laude*). This predicate can generally only be granted if the dissertation is considered to be among the very best dissertations in the particular field of science. The award of the PhD with this predicate takes place at the suggestion of the PhD committee or of one of its members in line with the relevant ruling established by the Doctorate Board, and requires the approval of the supervisor (Article 29).