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Healthy practices in the *Dutch PhD system* 2.0

National working group on PhD policy
17 April 2025

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Introduction

This advisory document offers tools for quality assurance to support a healthy and high-quality PhD system in the Netherlands. On 17 April 2025, the rectors of the universities expressed their support for the principles and agreed to adopt the recommendations, allowing room for local adaptation in their implementation. Ultimately, universities remain responsible for ensuring the quality of their own PhD programmes.

This document is based on *Healthy practices in the Dutch PhD system*, published in 2019 on behalf of the steering committee on PhD programmes of the Council of Rectors of Universities of the Netherlands (UNL). Since then, the situation of PhD candidates has changed considerably, giving rise to the need for agreements to ensure that all candidates are supervised and assessed according to the same principles.

The 2019 recommendations aimed to support PhD candidates in completing their programmes successfully and on time. Following those recommendations, universities have introduced various policy changes, including the UNL categorisation, the default appointment of two (co-)supervisors and improved access to courses.

In light of new developments and local variations in practices, the UNL working group on the PhD system—comprising local policy advisers on PhD-related matters—has revised the original document. Recommendations that remain relevant have been retained, some have been refined and a new theme, psychological wellbeing, has been added. This revised document enables universities to jointly establish a foundation for the minimum requirements needed to maintain a healthy and high-quality PhD system.

This document is structured around the timeline of a PhD programme. Each theme includes a description of the topic, key points of attention and recommendations. Suggestions from the Promovendi Netwerk Netherlands (PNN) have been taken into account wherever possible.

Every two years, universities will evaluate how the recommendations have been applied. To facilitate this, the national working group on the PhD system will send out a request for information to the universities.

1 Start of the PhD programme

In principle, PhD candidates have four years (full time) to complete their research and write their dissertation. They may spend some of this time teaching and attending courses. Three-year programmes should be avoided,[1] except for certain clinicians within UMCs. In all cases, funding for the entire intended contract period must be secured before the PhD programme begins. It is important that international candidates in particular are well prepared to undertake a PhD in the Netherlands.

Recommendations

1. Every university should provide clear and accessible information for prospective Dutch and international PhD candidates on its website.
2. All PhD candidates should be offered an onboarding programme to familiarise them with the Dutch research environment.
3. If funding is available for less than four years, the university, faculty and/or department must arrange funding for the final year before the programme begins.
4. At least 0.8 FTE of a full-time appointment should be dedicated to PhD research.

1.1 Registration

In the Netherlands, PhD candidates are classified into four main types based on contract type and funding source (see Appendices 1 and 2). By distinguishing between these types and registering candidates accordingly, it is possible to track how they are embedded, supervised and monitored, and to make national comparisons across universities.

UNL distinguishes the following types:

1 PhD candidates employed by a university or UMC
  1a Employed PhD candidate
  1b Employee obtaining a PhD

PhD candidates not employed by a university or UMC

2 Scholarship-funded PhD candidates supported by an external scholarship provider[2]
3 Externally funded PhD candidates funded in the form of time and/or financial support from their employer
4 Self-funded PhD candidates who conduct research in their own time and at their own expense.

The initial category in which a PhD candidate is registered will apply throughout the entire process, regardless of any subsequent changes in their actual status. For example, an individual who begins as an employed PhD candidate will remain registered as such, even if they spend a period working on their thesis without an employment contract at the university or UMC. Similarly, a PhD candidate who initially receives no funding or resources from the university or UMC will remain in their original category, even if they are temporarily offered an employment contract.

[1] Part-time programmes may vary in duration. Examples include combined teaching and research contracts, combined medical and research contracts, or part-time programmes for externally funded and self-funded PhD candidates. As with full-time programmes, funding for the entire contract period must be secured in advance.
[2] The former category 2a (PhD student) is being phased out, as no new tracks of this type may be started. In overviews of recent years, this category remains visible for evaluation purposes.

Points of attention

- Correct and consistent use of UNL classification: PhD candidates must be assigned to the correct category and type during registration. Further, it is important to use precise terminology: employed PhD candidates should not be called 'regular' PhD candidates, and externally funded PhD candidates should not be confused with self-funded PhD candidates.
- Late registration of non-employed PhD candidates: Self-funded PhD candidates in particular are often registered late, with agreements on supervision and training arranged at a later stage.

Recommendations

1. If there is an employment contract with the main UFO code being *PhD candidate* or UMC equivalent, or a different contract/agreement with the university or UMC, the effective date of the contract/agreement should be used and the end date registered. The official end date of the PhD programme remains the date of the defence. The submission of the dissertation to the assessment committee should also be recorded.

2. If there is no employment contract or other agreement with the university or UMC, the date of enrolment at the university should be used.

3. a. All PhD candidates should be registered with the university no later than six months after the start of the programme, to ensure supervision is secured and can be properly monitored.
   b. PhD candidates who are not employed and do not yet have a research proposal must first draw up a draft research proposal. This proposal should be assessed based on the following criteria:
      1) feasibility of the timeline
      2) feasibility of the study design
      3) quality of the proposal.

   If the proposal is approved, the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) should be drawn up and the PhD candidate enrolled at the university.
   c. The start date cannot be changed once set and must be included in the TSP.

1.2 Embedding in the organisation

Proper embedding contributes to the quality of research, the satisfaction and wellbeing of PhD candidates, and their involvement in the university or faculty. All PhD candidates belong to a community, such as a Graduate School, Research School or Institute (hereafter referred to as the 'Graduate School') with a relevant academic network. The Graduate School supports both the professional and personal development of PhD candidates. Although their training is academic, many candidates will pursue careers outside academia after their PhD. It is therefore important that PhD candidates are able to explore and prepare for careers beyond the university. The Graduate School can support them in this process.

Proper embedding brings the following additional benefits:

- Quality standards: PhD candidates develop within the existing quality culture and take part in the internal system of peer feedback. They receive training within this community, learn about research integrity, and are introduced to data management, open science and privacy. This also helps them to navigate relevant facilities and services more easily.
- Exchange with other PhD candidates: It is beneficial, both personally and academically, for PhD candidates to work together, engage in debate and be part of a network. Within such a community, candidates support and inspire one another and, when necessary, offer constructive feedback. Being part

of a network also enables PhD candidates to better represent their interests within the university as a whole.

Points of attention

- PhD candidates not employed by the university or UMC: Sometimes, non-employed PhD candidates (types 2, 3 or 4) are poorly embedded within the organisation, lack access to research facilities or are unable to attend training courses.

Recommendations

1. In principle, non-employed PhD candidates should have access to the same provisions and facilities as those employed by the university or UMC, unless legally restricted. This includes:
   a. An independent point of contact at the university or UMC for reporting issues such as possible violations of research integrity, undesirable behaviour or discrimination, as well as problems with supervision, work pressure or wellbeing (these may be separate contacts).
   b. Online facilities and services of the university or UMC. At a minimum, PhD candidates should have a university or UMC email address and access to the library and the internal information system (e.g. intranet). Universities and UMCs decide which additional physical or digital facilities and services are offered. Access to these facilities should be agreed in the TSP.
   c. Provisions and facilities that support their wellbeing, such as access to a coach or psychologist.
   d. The development opportunities offered by the university or UMC.

2 Monitoring of progress

2.1 Training and supervision

Four-eyes principle and the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP)

For all types of PhD candidates, the four-eyes principle forms the basis of supervision: every candidate is supervised by at least two people, including the supervisor, second supervisor and/or co-supervisor. The total number of supervisors should not exceed four. All PhD candidates must:[3]

- meet with one of their (co-)supervisors at least once a month
- prepare a TSP shortly after starting their PhD programme.

The TSP is reviewed regularly during supervisory meetings between the (co-)supervisor and PhD candidate, at least once a year during the progress evaluation. It should include, at a minimum, the requirements set out in Article 6.9 of the Collective Labour Agreement (CAO) for universities:

- the composition of the supervisory team
- the scope of personal supervision, and
- the training and development programme.

Training and development offer

Universities and UMCs provide training and courses that are, as far as possible, accessible to all PhD candidates. The training and development offer complies, at a minimum, with the relevant agreements in the CAOs of the universities and UMCs and is designed to enhance both academic skills and transferable skills.

[3] See Article 6.9, Collective Labour Agreement of Dutch Universities.

The training and development offer should focus on preparation not only for an academic career but also for careers outside the university. In accordance with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, PhD candidates are also required to complete training in research integrity. UMC PhD candidates must also complete the Basic Course on Regulations and Organisation for Clinical Investigators (BROK).

Points of attention

- Non-employed PhD candidates: Candidates of types 2, 3 or 4 are sometimes treated differently in terms of supervision and training than type 1 candidates, who are employed by the university or UMC.
- Mutual expectations: Formal expectations for supervision during the PhD programme are sometimes unclear to PhD candidates or communicated only informally.

Recommendations

1. Training and development offer
   PhD candidates should be treated equally wherever possible, unless legal restrictions apply. Before the start of the programme, the required training and courses for each candidate to carry out their research effectively should be identified and provided. This is particularly important for non-employed PhD candidates (types 2, 3 and 4). Throughout the programme, PhD candidates and supervisors should regularly review and, where necessary, update the training and development plan.

2. Supervisory team
   One member of the supervisory team should be appointed as the daily supervisor. This person serves as the primary point of contact for the PhD candidate for questions and support. It is important that the daily supervisor is part of the supervisory team to enable the institution to monitor the quality of supervision.

3. Drafting and amending the TSP
   The TSP should be adopted and approved within three months of the start of the PhD programme[4] by the dean or a delegate. Once approved, the TSP may be amended to reflect any changes agreed between the (co-)supervisor and the PhD candidate. The TSP should be reviewed regularly during meetings between (co-)supervisors and PhD candidates.

   In addition to the requirements set out in the CAOs of the universities, the working group recommends that the following be included in the TSP:
   1) Classification within a Graduate School and/or Institute
   2) Supervision
      a. Composition of the supervisory team, including the division of tasks
      b. Scope of personal support
      c. Mutual expectations

[4] This applies to full-time PhD programmes. For part-time programmes, exceptions may be made, and the period can be extended to six months.

3) Training and development
   a. Training and development programme
   b. Access to the training and development programme
   c. Agreements on the available development budget
4) Timeline
   d. Study design
   e. Scheduled date of the go/no-go interview
   f. Multiyear planning and intended end date
   g. Quality and quantity expectations for the dissertation, with quality taking precedence over quantity
5) Other agreements
   h. Teaching commitments (if applicable)
   i. Access to facilities required for the PhD programme.

4. Teacher training
   PhD candidates assigned teaching duties must complete a teacher-training course.

5. Go/no-go interview
   All PhD candidates have a go/no-go interview with their (co-)supervisor(s) after the formal start of the PhD programme. During this meeting, both the candidate and (co-)supervisor(s) either confirm their commitment to continuing the programme, expressing confidence in successful completion, or decide to discontinue. A 'no' should never come as a surprise to the candidate; they must be informed in good time about any areas of insufficient progress and what is required to receive a 'go.' If the decision is to discontinue, this will generally be made by the supervisory team. The institution must clearly explain how the candidate can appeal this decision if they disagree. For employed and scholarship-funded PhD candidates (types 1 and 2), the interview should preferably take place within the first year. For other candidates, the timing depends on the research schedule, but ideally the interview should be held no later than 18 months after the start of the programme.[5]

6. Planning to completion
   At the start of the planned final year, the (co-)supervisor(s) and PhD candidate should agree on a schedule in the TSP for completing the dissertation. The main aim is to ensure timely completion and assess the feasibility of finishing within the final year. An external perspective can be useful to evaluate this and ask critical questions, such as whether all planned tasks are genuinely necessary. Career plans may also be discussed during this stage.

7. Professionalisation of supervision
   Universities offer training to professionalise the supervision of PhD candidates. Those without an existing course are developing one for (co-)supervisors and will make it mandatory for novice supervisors. Experienced (co-)supervisors can also benefit from training, and institutions will endeavour to provide courses or workshops for this group. Experienced supervisors may be involved as mentors. Examples of topics to be covered include situational leadership, guiding candidates towards timely completion of their PhD, managing mutual expectations between supervisor and candidate, intercultural supervision, social safety (including awareness of the dependency relationship) and mental health.

[5] At the UMCs, a contract is usually issued for the entire duration of the PhD programme from the outset. In the event of a 'no-go' decision, an improvement process is initiated. If there is no or insufficient progress during this period, the programme may be terminated.

8. Annual appraisals with supervisors
   All PhD programmes supervised by an individual (co-)supervisor should be discussed in regular annual appraisals. During these meetings, the dean or a delegate of the dean or manager meets with the (co-)supervisor to review all their PhD candidates, the progress being made, the time available for supervision, any candidates not yet registered, and any deviations from the planned defence date compared to the schedule in the TSP. It is recommended that this discussion be integrated into the annual appraisal cycle, with the quality of supervision included as part of the assessment. This is in line with initiatives such as the Recognition and Rewards programme.

9. Number of PhD candidates per supervisor
   The institution monitors whether the number of PhD candidates per supervisor allows for high-quality supervision. If a (co-)supervisor is responsible for an excessive number of candidates, this should be addressed, with particular focus on how to ensure high-quality individual supervision. The dean or their delegate can intervene if necessary. It is undesirable for the supervisory team to meet only with groups of PhD candidates; individual supervision remains essential.

2.2 Wellbeing of PhD candidates

The wellbeing of PhD candidates deserves explicit attention, equal to that paid to other staff and students. PhD candidates form a vulnerable and diverse group, and all aspects of the PhD programme—including the high demands placed on the outcome, alongside personal developments—can affect wellbeing. Support provisions should be equally accessible for all PhD candidates, including non-employed candidates, international scholarship holders and self-funded candidates. It is also important to recognise that, beyond the designated (co-)supervisors, various other individuals may play a significant role in supporting PhD candidates.

Points of attention

- Unclear expectations between (co-)supervisors and PhD candidates: It is not always clear what PhD candidates can expect from their supervisors, and vice versa. Supervisors serve an important function throughout the PhD programme and are required to take on different roles at different times, such as researcher, coach and assessor. This makes PhD supervision a complex combination of tasks, responsibilities and (often implicit) expectations.
- Different types of PhD candidates receive varying levels of support: Non-employed PhD candidates (types 2, 3 and 4) sometimes have limited or no access to the support offered by universities. Research by PNN and UNL working groups shows that PhD candidates experience difficulties if they lack proper access to support provisions.

Recommendations

1. Clarify mutual expectations regarding supervision of the PhD programme:
    a. Training offered by universities to professionalise PhD supervision should address the shared responsibility of PhD candidates and supervisors throughout the programme, and promote clear communication about mutual expectations. This can be based on guidelines such as *LERU's view on holistic doctoral supervision*, the *Golden Rules for PhD Supervision* or the *MSCA Guidelines on Supervision*.
    b. Mutual expectations regarding supervision should be set out in the TSP.
    c. The annual performance assessments of (co-)supervisors should include consideration of all PhD programmes they supervise, including the progress of each.

2. Broaden and deepen the care provision for PhD candidates
   Universities are committed to improving social safety by raising awareness and offering support. They should provide a safe learning and working environment, regardless of whether the PhD candidate is an employee. The available support infrastructure should be accessible and easy to find for all PhD candidates, potentially via the research community. Universities can assign the following roles:
    a. A *PhD adviser* or *PhD coordinator* (at institute, faculty or university level) as an accessible point of contact for PhD candidates of all types. The adviser or coordinator engages with PhD candidates (e.g. at the start of the programme), is familiar with the institution's infrastructure and knows how to guide candidates to the available support services.
    b. A *career adviser* who offers PhD candidates the opportunity to receive career guidance from the university during their programme. Attention should also be paid to expanding these services for non-employed PhD candidates.
    c. A *confidential adviser* (at faculty or university level) whom all PhD candidates, including non-employed candidates, can approach with questions or concerns. Ideally, this is someone specifically appointed for PhD candidates, who understands the pathways to additional support and can assist with reporting problems or abuses.
    d. The o*mbuds officer* holds an independent position with a duty of confidentiality, and supports all PhD candidates in analysing, resolving and assessing issues or complaints.
    e. A *psychologist* who provides (preventive) support for PhD candidates. Ideally, all PhD candidates, including non-employed candidates, should have access to this support.
    f. The *company social worker* and *company doctor* provide guidance to employed PhD candidates (and, where possible, to other candidates as well) who are experiencing psychosocial difficulties related to their PhD or personal circumstances.

3 Completion of the PhD programme

3.1 Exit interviews

PhD candidates who have completed or left the programme may feel more at ease sharing their honest experiences than those still enrolled. Their insights can provide valuable contributions to the university as a learning organisation.

Recommendation
Departing PhD candidates, whether leaving the programme before completion or after a successful defence, should be asked to reflect on their experiences and provide feedback on possible areas for improvement. Ideally, this should be done through exit interviews conducted by an independent party. If this is not feasible, candidates can be asked to complete an exit form.

3.2 Assessment of the dissertation

The high quality of Dutch dissertations is ensured through the PhD regulations of each university. This includes the rules governing the assessment procedure. Each university is responsible for designing its own quality assurance and dissertation assessment processes.

Although there may be local differences, universities share many fundamental similarities. The following applies to all PhD programmes in the Netherlands:

- The dissertation is assessed by an independent committee, which also advises on admission to the defence.
- A committee composed of appointed members provides opposition during the public defence and decides on the awarding of the degree.

Points of attention

- Completion within the specified period: It is not uncommon for employed and scholarship-funded PhD candidates to continue to work, often unpaid, on their dissertation for months or even years after their contract has ended. It is undesirable for PhD programmes to exceed the agreed duration or for candidates to complete their dissertation under unfavourable circumstances, such as insufficient supervision or relying on unemployment benefits for funding.

Recommendations

1. The dissertation should be submitted within the specified timeframe. Employed PhD candidates should submit their dissertation within the term of their contract and extensions should only be granted in exceptional cases. The (co-)supervisor and PhD candidate share responsibility for completing the dissertation on time. In case of delay, it must be clear where PhD candidates can seek support.

2. Recommendations for the dissertation committee:
   a. The committee assessing the dissertation should consist of at least three members, preferably four or five.
   b. At least one, and preferably two, members should be unaffiliated with the university awarding the doctorate.
   c. Ideally, the committee should include at least one woman and at least one man.
   d. To ensure transparency, the members of the dissertation committee should be listed in the dissertation.

3. To facilitate the independent assessment of *cum laude* and avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest, the verdict of the dissertation committee members on awarding the designation *cum laude* should only be shared with the chair of the committee and/or the dean, not with the (co-)supervisors.

4. Institutions should each establish clear criteria for awarding *cum laude*.

5. The PhD regulations should set out the (appeal) procedure in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome of the dissertation or defence.

Appendix I. Types of PhD candidates

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 PhD candidates on a grant[6]
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).
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

[6] 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.

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.

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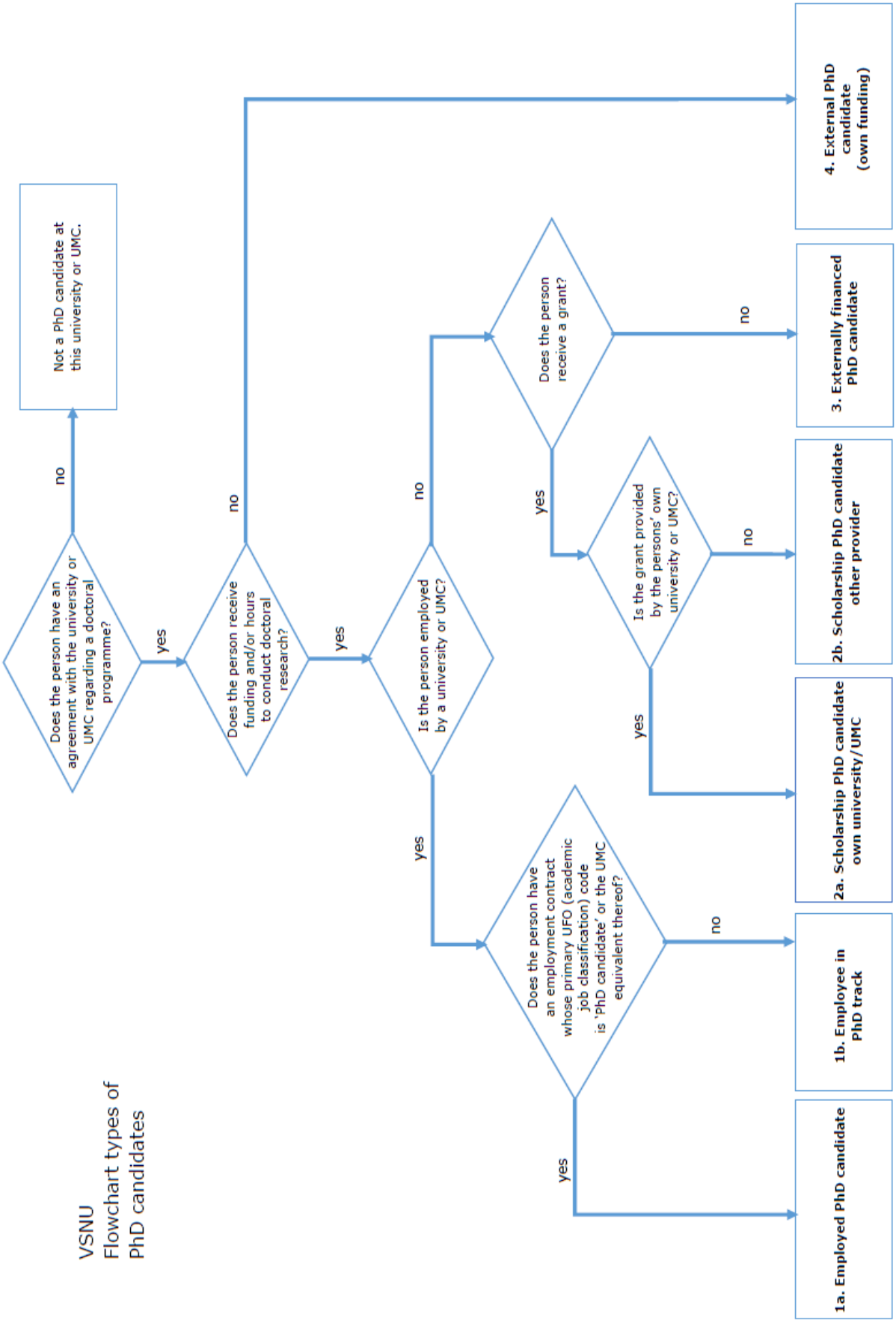

Appendix II. PhD candidate registration

Objective
The objective was to arrive at nationwide agreements with regard to the registration of PhD candidates and their progress towards their doctorates. The main question to be answered was what data must be recorded and for what purpose. The registration of PhD candidate data must be in line with the annual questionnaires issued by Statistics Netherlands (CBS), UNL, the annual Academic Research Performance Indicator (KUOZ) reports and the SEP reports.

Given the objective, the working group chose to focus on doctoral research projects currently being undertaken. Generally speaking, PhD candidates will be recorded in a PhD candidate monitoring system (Hora Finita or a similar system). Unlike KUOZ reports, this system will not include dissertations as an output indicator. Typically, those data are obtained from a different source (Metis/Pure/Converis). The working group recommends that the revised categorisation system be used for the annual UNL questionnaire, KUOZ reports and SEP tables, so as to arrive at uniform categories of PhD candidates.

It has been agreed that all universities and UMCs will record the following data at the very least:

1. Full name (in external reports: ID number)

2. Gender
   Registration may no longer be allowed under the General Data Protection Regulation. The universities and UMCs will be asked how they are dealing with this type of registration.

3. Date of birth
   Registration may no longer be allowed under the General Data Protection Regulation. The universities and UMCs will be asked how they are dealing with this type of registration.

4. Nationality
   Registration may no longer be allowed under the General Data Protection Regulation. The working group suggests that the universities and UMCs be asked how they are dealing with this type of registration.

5. UNL position type
   Use the revised categorisation system. The UNL questionnaire has a separate column for 'PhD candidate at UMC'. The working group is not sure what the added value of this column is; no such separate category is used in reports. The working group suggests that this column be eliminated.

6. FTE count
   The FTE count of the PhD's employment contract must be registered as part of the SEP (table no. D3d). The underlying question is whether a PhD candidate is conducting doctoral research full time or nearly full time. 'Contract' must here be understood to refer to an agreement between the PhD candidate and their university or UMC -- i.e., more than just an employment contract. In other words, international PhD candidates on a grant must be included here, as well. The working group proposes that the following distinction be made: 1) ≥0.8 FTE 2) <0.8 FTE and ≥0.3 FTE 3) <0.3 FTE.

7. HOOP field and/or ISCED categorisation (linked to faculty or group)
   The Ministry of Education uses the categorisation by HOOP field, whereas Statistics Netherlands uses the internationally acknowledged ISCED categorisation method. These categorisation methods are so different that it is impossible to create a table that directly links both. There is not a single HOOP field that fits in its entirety into an ISCED category, or vice versa. We expect that universities and UMCs will be asked to submit both sets of data, so both will have to be registered.

8. Commencement date
    a. If the PhD candidate has an employment contract or some other type of contract or agreement with the university or UMC, the commencement date of the contract will be considered to be the first day of their doctoral research.
    b. If the PhD candidate does not have an employment contract or any other type of contract or agreement with the university or UMC, the date on which they registered with the university will be considered the first day of their doctoral research.
    c. All PhD candidates are registered with the university no later than six months after the start of their trajectory, ensuring proper supervision and allowing the progress of the supervision to be optimally monitored.
    d. PhD candidates who are conducting research on their own time and without funding (type 4) must first draw up a dissertation proposal. The following aspects of this proposal must then be assessed by an independent committee:
        1) whether the proposed research project can be completed in the allotted time span;
        2) the feasibility of the study design;
        3) the quality of the proposal.
        Once the proposal has been approved, the PhD candidate's training and supervision plan will be drawn up and the candidate will register with the Graduate School.
    e. The commencement date of the PhD candidate's doctoral research cannot be revised after the fact and must be included in the training and supervision plan.

9. Doctoral graduation date

10. End date of the contract

11. Degree with distinction (y/n)
12. PhD candidate at UMC (y/n)
13. Date on which the candidate prematurely stopped conducting their doctoral research
    At present, UNL's questionnaire asks the universities and UMCs to indicate the date on which a PhD candidate's contract was prematurely terminated. If the idea here is to get a proper picture of the number of PhD candidates who drop out, this question must also be asked regarding PhD candidates who are not employed by their university or UMC. If a PhD candidate prematurely stops conducting doctoral research, it is vital that the name of the party who made the decision to stop the research project be recorded. The working group recommends that the following answer categories be used: 1) at the PhD candidate's own initiative 2) at the supervisors' initiative 3) by mutual consultation between the PhD candidate and the supervisors 4) other.

14. Post-doctoral careers
    These data will be collected as part of the SEP, and the answers will fit into the four following categories: research, business, government, not for profit.

Background
What types of data are currently being collected in the Netherlands?

- Statistics Netherlands (annually)

Number of doctorates conferred each academic year, subdivided into ISCED categories and gender.

- UNL (annually)

Data on employee PhD candidates (in accordance with UNL's own categorisation system)

- University
- Identification number
- Date of birth
- Commencement date

- Intended date of PhD viva
- Degree with distinction (y/n)
- Date of (premature) termination of contract
- HOOP field
- ISCED categorisation
- Nationality
- PhD candidate at UMC (y/n)

Data on contracted PhD candidates (in accordance with UNL's own categorisation system)

- University
- Identification number
- Date of birth
- Commencement date
- Intended date of PhD viva
- Degree with distinction (y/n)
- Date of (premature) termination of contract
- HOOP field
- ISCED categorisation
- Nationality
- PhD candidate at UMC (y/n)
- Sub-type
  - Grant awarded by university or UMC
  - Grant awarded by a different party
  - Other data on the contracted PhD candidate

Academic Research Performance Indicators (KUOZ)

- FTE allotted to research

The same subcategories used in the SEP and UNL questionnaires are used here: employee PhD candidates and contracted PhD candidates in accordance with UNL categorisation.

- Research output

Four types of PhD dissertations are distinguished:

- Doctorate conferred by the university itself; PhD candidate affiliated with the unit in question (DIV);
- Doctorate conferred by the university itself; the PhD candidate was not affiliated with the unit in question, but their PhD supervisor or doctoral adviser was (DEV);
- Doctorate conferred elsewhere; the PhD candidate was affiliated with the unit in question (EDIP);
- Doctorate conferred elsewhere; the PhD candidate was not affiliated with the unit in question, but their PhD supervisor or doctoral adviser was (EDEP).

In addition, Dutch universities and UMCs collect the following data pertaining to doctoral research projects as part of their SEP evaluations:

- SEP table no. D3a (Research staff) requires universities and UMCs to use KUOZ categories of PhD candidates and follows the UNL categorisation method:
  - Standard PhD (employed)
  - Contract PhD (externally or internally funded but not employed)
- SEP table no. D3b (Research output) requires universities and UMCs to use the KUOZ categorisation method to categorise dissertations. Universities and UMCs are not required to include this table in their self-evaluations.
- The following information must be provided in SEP table no. D3d (PhD candidate enrolment and success rates): All PhD candidates conducting research with the primary aim/obligation of obtaining a doctorate, based on a 0.8-1.0 FTE contract. This includes PhD candidates with employee status (AIO/promovendi) and contracted PhD candidates without employee status, receiving external

funding or a university scholarship, who are conducting research under the authority of the research unit with the primary aim of obtaining a doctorate (beurspromovendi)'.

- In their self-evaluations, universities and UMCs must provide information on their PhD candidates' subsequent careers, subdivided into four categories: research, business, government, not for profit.