Doctorate Regulations

General provisions

Article 1

These regulations assume the following definitions:
the University: the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam
VU statute: the statute containing the regulations of the Vrije
Universiteit, laid down by the Board of the
Association for Christian Higher Education
(Vereniging voor christelijk wetenschappelijk
onderwijs) in accordance with Article 9.76, paragraph
2, of the Higher Education and Scientific Research
Act (Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk
onderzoek)
the Act: the Higher Education and Research Act
Faculty: the faculty within which the doctoral application is
made
Candidate: the person who qualifies for admission to the doctoral
programme or who has been admitted to the doctoral
programme as a special case by the College of Deans
Supervisor: the professor appointed in this capacity by the College
of Deans
Co-supervisor: the professor or doctor who assists the supervisor in
his supervision of the candidate, appointed in this
capacity by the College of Deans
Doctoral Examination Committee: the committee referred to in Article 13
Thesis Committee: the committee referred to in Article 12
Final degree examination: the final examination of a study programme with a
study load of at least 240 credits or, in the case of
study programmes with a study load of more than 240
credits, the examination concluding a part of this
programme which amounts to at least 240 credits
Doctoral thesis: the academic discourse in the form of a book or a
collection of papers which meets the requirements set
in these regulations
Doctoral: the adjective used to refer to matters pertaining to the
doctorate, for example ‘the public defence of the
doctoral thesis’, ‘the conferral of the doctoral degree’

Article 2

1. The doctorate may be obtained from the University after the candidate’s successful public defence of
his doctoral thesis.
2. The doctorate is conferred by the College of Deans.
3. The public defence of the doctoral thesis takes place in the presence of a Doctoral Examination Committee.
**Article 3**

Where these regulations make reference to the supervisor and/or co-supervisor, these terms should be read as supervisors and/or co-supervisors in cases where more than one person has been appointed in these capacities.

**Article 4**

The masculine form of the personal pronoun is used throughout these regulations and should be read as feminine in cases where the positions referred to are held by women.

**Article 5**

All participants in the closed sessions referred to in these regulations are required to treat all matters discussed in such sessions as strictly confidential.
The candidate

Article 6

1. The following requirements apply to every doctoral candidate:
   a. The candidate must have successfully completed his final degree examination within a university programme at Master’s level or have obtained an equivalent qualification at another Dutch institute of higher education.
   b. The candidate must have written a dissertation as proof of his ability to carry out independent academic research.
   c. The candidate must meet all other requirements set out in these regulations.
2. In special cases, the College of Deans may admit to the doctoral programme persons who fulfil the requirements stated under subsections b and c of paragraph 1 but who do not fulfil the requirements stated under subsection a.

Article 7

1. The person engaged in the preparation of a thesis is required to submit a written application to the College of Deans at an early stage, requesting admission to the doctoral programme and the appointment of a supervisor. This application must be made through the mediation of the intended supervisor and the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee of the faculty in which the intended supervisor is appointed.
2. The candidate is required to submit the application referred to in paragraph 1 on a form available for this purpose from the faculty office. His application must be accompanied by a certified copy of the certificate of the examination referred to in Article 6.
3. On the form, the candidate shall state his name and address, the nature of the examination and the subject of the thesis, as well as the name, address and field of specialization of the desired supervisor.
4. The form shall be countersigned by the proposed supervisor and submitted to the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee of the faculty in which the supervisor is appointed.
5. After consulting the proposed supervisor, the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall add the name of the co-supervisor (where applicable) and the relevant Doctoral Examination Committee to the form and, after signing it, shall forward it to the College of Deans.
6. In cases where the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee is not yet able to give the name of the co-supervisor (where applicable), the name of the supervisor and that of the relevant Doctoral Examination Committee shall suffice. Having completed the form, the chairperson shall sign it and forward it to the College of Deans, to be followed at a later date by an additional proposal for the appointment of a co-supervisor if necessary.
7. In cases where a Doctoral Examination Committee is proposed other than that of the faculty in which the supervisor is appointed, the chairperson referred to in paragraph 4 shall consult with the chairperson of the proposed Doctoral Examination Committee regarding the possible appointment of a co-supervisor.

The supervisor and the co-supervisor

Article 8

1. For each doctorate the College of Deans, having heard the advice of the Doctoral Examination Committee which submitted the application, shall appoint a professor at the University as supervisor. In addition the College, having heard the advice of the Doctoral Examination Committee, can decide to appoint a professor at the University as a second supervisor.
2. In cases where two supervisors are appointed, the conditions pertaining to the supervisor in these regulations shall apply to both supervisors.
3. Having heard the advice of the Doctoral Examination Committee, the College of Deans may depart from the conditions stated in paragraph 1 and appoint a professor from another Dutch university, the
Open Universiteit (the Dutch Open University) or an institute of higher education outside of the Netherlands as supervisor.

4. In cases where the Doctoral Examination Committee proposes the appointment of a professor at an institute of higher education outside of the Netherlands as supervisor, this professor must occupy a position equivalent to that of professor at a Dutch university.

5. In cases where more than one supervisor is appointed, the supervisors shall consult one another to determine their respective tasks and responsibilities, having heard the wishes of the candidate.

Article 9

1. If a professor appointed as supervisor is given an honourable discharge subsequent to his appointment, the decision to allow the candidate in question to proceed to the public defence of the thesis shall be taken within five years of the date of said discharge.

2. If this decision is not taken within the period specified in paragraph 1, the appointment expires. Having heard the candidate and the Doctoral Examination Committee, the College of Deans shall appoint another supervisor, except in cases where more than one supervisor was appointed and where the College therefore does not deem a new appointment necessary.

Article 10

1. The supervisor shall be responsible for the supervision of the candidate and shall ensure that the thesis meets the requirements which apply to it in accordance with these regulations.

2. During this period of supervision and the production of the thesis, periodic consultation between supervisor and candidate shall take place.

Article 11

1. Having heard the Doctoral Examination Committee, the College of Deans may appoint one or, if necessary, two co-supervisors on the recommendation of the supervisor. The supervisor shall ascertain the willingness of the individual(s) in question to accept the appointment as co-supervisor.

2. The co-supervisor shall assist the supervisor in the supervision of the candidate and shall make his assessment of the quality of the thesis known to the supervisor.

The Thesis Committee

Article 12

1. For each doctoral thesis, the Doctoral Examination Committee shall appoint a Thesis Committee on the recommendation of the supervisor and subsequent to the supervisor’s approval of the thesis. As a part of this process, the supervisor shall ascertain the willingness of the individuals in question to accept their appointment to the Thesis Committee.

2. In addition to the supervisor, a Thesis Committee shall consist of a minimum of four members, at least one of whom shall be a member of the faculty in question. Only one committee member may come from the supervisor’s department or working unit.

3. The committee members are required to hold the title of doctor and/or have the ius promovendi (i.e. the authority to supervise a doctoral candidate). The co-supervisor is not eligible for appointment as a member of the Thesis Committee.

4. The supervisor shall act as chairperson and convenor and shall issue a written recommendation to the Doctoral Examination Committee on behalf of the Thesis Committee.

5. The Thesis Committee shall assess the quality of the doctoral research as a whole, with regard to the research question as defined and agreed upon by the supervisor and candidate, the treatment of the subject, the command of the literature and the systematic presentation of the research.
6. At least one member of the Thesis Committee shall assess the manuscript as a whole; the evaluation of the other members of the committee may be limited to parts thereof.

7. The Thesis Committee does not attach conditions to its decision. However, the individual members of the committee are free to add suggestions and/or recommendations to their assessment.

8. Decisions shall be taken on the basis of a majority vote. In cases where the votes are equally divided, the Thesis Committee shall advise the Doctoral Examination Committee not to allow the candidate in question to proceed to the public defence of his thesis.

The Doctoral Examination Committee

Article 13

1. Each faculty has a Doctoral Examination Committee, made up of the professors of the faculty in question.

2. The Doctoral Examination Committee decides whether the candidate shall be allowed to defend the thesis and decides on the conferral of the doctorate.

3. Notwithstanding paragraph 1, in cases where there are fewer than eight professors in a faculty, the College of Deans shall decide upon the constitution of the Doctoral Examination Committee.

4. On the recommendation of the Doctoral Examination Committee, the College of Deans may install one or more subcommittees within a faculty, to which the authority of the Doctoral Examination Committee can be transferred. Such a subcommittee shall have at least eight members.

5. For each doctorate, a maximum of five additional members may be appointed to the Doctoral Examination Committee.

6. For the defence of each doctoral thesis, the Doctoral Examination Committee shall be augmented by the supervisor, the co-supervisor (where applicable) and those members of the Thesis Committee who are not already members of the Doctoral Examination Committee. The chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee is responsible for this process.

7. For the defence of each doctoral thesis, the relevant Doctoral Examination Committee may recommend that the College of Deans appoint other additional members to the committee. These shall be individuals who, in the opinion of the College, possess sufficient expertise to serve on the Doctoral Examination Committee.

Article 14

The committees and subcommittees referred to in Article 13 shall be chaired by the dean of the faculty in question. He may arrange for his replacement in this capacity by the Rector or a vice-rector, a member of the College of Deans or the vice-dean of the relevant faculty.

The doctoral thesis

Article 15

1. The thesis shall consist of either a single academic discourse on a given subject or a collection of a number of separate academic discourses, all or part of which have been published, on condition that these separate discourses demonstrate sufficient cohesion in relation to a specific subject.

2. In accordance with Article 2.25, paragraph 4 of the VU Statute, the thesis may not contain anything that is contra Deum aut bonos mores.

3. In cases where the thesis consists of a collection of papers as referred to in paragraph 1, the required cohesion between these papers shall be made clear in an introductory and/or concluding chapter.

Article 16

The thesis shall demonstrate the ability of the candidate to carry out independent academic research.
Article 17

1. In the case of joint research conducted by two or three candidates, the results of the research may be expressed in a joint thesis, provided that the following conditions have been observed:
   a. Each of the authors must have made an independent, clearly identifiable contribution which merits the award of a doctorate. These conditions must be fulfilled to the satisfaction of the supervisor.
   b. Each of the authors shall bear personal responsibility both for a clearly identifiable part of the thesis and for the cohesion of the whole.
   c. The thesis shall clearly state the part played by each of the authors in the production of the thesis.

2. In the case of a joint thesis, the supervisor shall submit to the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee a written declaration as to the contribution of each of the authors. The chairperson shall forward this declaration to the College of Deans. This declaration must be signed by the supervisor and all the authors of the thesis.

3. In the case of a joint thesis, the procedures and rules laid down in these regulations shall apply to each candidate individually.

Article 18

1. The thesis shall be written in Dutch, English, French or German, or in another language subject to the approval of the College of Deans.

2. In cases where the thesis is written in Dutch, a translation of the title and a summary of the content shall be appended in English, French or German.

3. In cases where the thesis is written in English, French or German, a translation of the title and a summary of the content shall be appended in Dutch.

4. In cases where the thesis is written in a language other than Dutch, English, French or German, a translation of the title and a summary of the content shall be provided in Dutch, as well as a translation of the title and a summary of the content in English, French or German.

Article 19

1. The thesis shall include a title page in accordance with the model stipulated by the College of Deans. This title page requires the approval of the Rector before the thesis may be reproduced.

2. The name of the supervisor and (where applicable) the co-supervisor shall be stated on the page following the title page of the thesis.

3. In cases where the candidate was given appreciable assistance by another member of the academic staff in the preparation of the thesis, this person’s name may be included on the page referred to in paragraph 2, subject to the approval of the Doctoral Examination Committee.

4. In cases where the doctoral research was partly made possible by support from outside the University, this may be mentioned on the page referred to in paragraph 2, subject to the approval of the Doctoral Examination Committee.

Article 20

1. Responsibility for the reproduction and distribution of the thesis lies with the candidate.

2. The thesis may be printed or reproduced in some related way, at the discretion of the candidate, as long as the requirement of reasonable legibility is met.

3. The thesis shall be produced in a conveniently sized format and in glue-bound or spiral-bound form, or with a stitched binding.

4. At least four weeks prior to the public defence of the thesis, the thesis shall be sent to the Rector, to the Doctorate Examination Committee, to the Executive Board and to the University library. The number of copies to be supplied shall be determined by the College of Deans.

5. At least four weeks prior to the public defence of the thesis, an electronic version of the thesis shall be published by the University library. In cases where the thesis or part of the thesis is subject to an embargo, the electronic publication of the thesis will take place once the longest embargo has expired.
In that case the electronic publication of the thesis shall be limited to the cover, the title page and the summary of the thesis in Dutch and in English.

6. With regard to the provision of copies of the thesis, the following stipulations apply.
   a. For the purposes stipulated in Paragraph 4 and for other purposes of the University, apart from the electronic archive of the University library, the candidate shall submit a number of copies to the beadle (pedel) of the University at least five weeks prior to the public defence of the thesis. The College of Deans shall determine the number of copies to be submitted.
   b. For the purposes of the electronic publication of the thesis as stated in Paragraph 5, the candidate shall submit an electronic version of the thesis, in its definitive form and layout, according to a procedure to be determined by the University librarian. This version of the thesis shall be submitted at least six weeks prior to the public defence of the thesis.

7. With a view to arranging the electronic version of the thesis as stated in Paragraph 6 subsection b, the following conditions apply:
   a. At least eight weeks prior to the public defence of the thesis, the candidate shall provide the University with a licence for non-exclusive publication of the thesis in electronic form, if necessary with a temporary embargo.
   b. With regard to the provision of this licence, the candidate is obliged to sign the standard licensing agreement drawn up by the Executive Board.
   c. The licensing agreement specifies a reimbursement for the candidate in exchange for the provision of the thesis in accordance with the stipulations of Paragraphs 4 and 5.

The appraisal of the thesis

Article 21

1. The thesis shall be subject to the appraisal of the supervisor.
2. Where applicable, the supervisor shall take into account the assessment of the co-supervisor in his appraisal of the thesis and shall evaluate the thesis in the light of the requirements stated in Articles 15, 16, 18, 19, 20 and, where appropriate, Article 17.
3. If the supervisor has been appointed in accordance with Article 8, paragraph 3, the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall ensure that the thesis fulfils the requirements stated in Article 15, paragraph 2.

Article 22

1. When the supervisor is satisfied that the thesis meets the requirements of the doctorate, he shall give his approval to the thesis.
2. The supervisor shall immediately notify the Doctoral Examination Committee and the candidate in writing, to inform them of the assessment of the thesis as referred to in paragraph 1.
3. The supervisor shall submit the thesis to the members of the relevant Thesis Committee for assessment.
4. Within 30 days of the receipt of the thesis, the Thesis Committee shall issue its recommendation to the Doctoral Examination Committee and the candidate shall be informed of this recommendation by the supervisor.
5. Should circumstances so dictate, the Doctoral Examination Committee may extend the period referred to in paragraph 3 by a single additional period of 30 days.

Article 23

1. Having taken due notice of the supervisor’s approval of the thesis and the recommendation of the Thesis Committee, the Doctoral Examination Committee shall decide whether the thesis provides evidence of the candidate’s ability to carry out independent academic research sufficient to allow him to proceed to the public defence of the thesis.
2. The decision on whether the candidate may proceed shall be taken by majority vote in the Doctoral Examination Committee. If the votes are equally divided, the permission to proceed referred to in paragraph 1 shall be withheld.

3. The chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall ensure that the College of Deans and the candidate are directly informed of the Committee’s decision either to permit the candidate to proceed or to withhold this permission.

**Article 24**

In cases where the Thesis Committee’s recommendation regarding the thesis is not in agreement with the approval given by the supervisor, the Doctoral Examination Committee shall take the final decision on whether to permit the candidate to proceed to the public defence of the thesis, having consulted the supervisor and the Thesis Committee. The Doctoral Examination Committee shall make its decision known to the College of Deans, the supervisor, the co-supervisor (where applicable), the Thesis Committee and the candidate.

**Article 25**

In the event that the supervisor does not approve the thesis, the College of Deans, at the request of the candidate and having heard the supervisor and the Doctoral Examination Committee, may appoint another supervisor, except in cases where more than one supervisor was appointed and the College therefore does not deem a new appointment necessary.

**The defence of the thesis/conferral of the doctorate**

**Article 26**

1. The defence of the doctoral thesis and conferral of the doctorate shall take place in public in the presence of the relevant Doctoral Examination Committee.

2. The public session at which the thesis is defended and the doctorate is conferred shall be chaired by the Rector. He may arrange for his replacement in this capacity by a vice-rector or a member of the College of Deans, in most cases the dean of the faculty in question or the vice-dean of that same faculty.

3. The time and place of this session shall be determined by or on behalf of the Rector after consultation with the supervisor, the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee and the candidate.

4. The College of Deans shall determine the protocol for the public session, as well as the official pronouncements by the candidate prior to and after the public defence of the thesis, and the official pronouncement by the supervisor upon the conferral of the doctorate.

**Article 27**

1. The candidate shall defend the thesis for one hour against the objections raised by the Doctoral Examination Committee, and in particular by the members of the Thesis Committee referred to in Article 12 of these regulations, as well as by any other person present who has been given leave to do so by the Rector.

2. The Doctoral Examination Committee, or the supervisor acting at the behest of the committee, shall be responsible for ensuring that a sufficient number of opponents are present in order to provide adequate opposition for the candidate.

3. The raising of objections and the defence of the thesis shall be conducted in Dutch. Use of another language is subject to the approval of the Rector.

4. In the case of a joint thesis as referred to in Article 17, each candidate shall be called upon to defend the thesis separately in accordance with paragraph 1.
Article 28

1. The decision regarding the conferral of the doctorate is taken in a closed session of the Doctoral Examination Committee immediately after the defence of the thesis.
2. This session shall be chaired by the Rector, a vice-rector or a member of the College of Deans, in most cases the dean of the relevant faculty or the vice-dean of that same faculty. In this capacity the chairperson is a member of the Doctoral Examination Committee.
3. The supervisor shall act as secretary. In special cases, another member of the Doctoral Examination Committee may be appointed as secretary.
4. The chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee, in consultation with the supervisor, shall ensure that at least five members and/or additional members of the Doctoral Examination Committee attend the session. Other professors at the University have the right to attend the session.
5. The following persons may participate in the deliberations at the session: the regular members and additional members appointed to the Doctoral Examination Committee, the professors referred to in the last sentence of paragraph 4, and the individuals who have been granted permission by the Rector to participate in the opposition as part of the Doctoral Examination Committee.
6. The decision regarding the conferral of the doctorate is taken by majority vote of the regular members and additional members of the Doctoral Examination Committee, taking into account the candidate’s defence of the thesis.

Article 29

1. After the closed session, the chairperson shall reopen the public session and shall announce the result of the deliberations.
2. The supervisor shall then confer the doctorate, using the official pronouncement for conferral of the degree, and shall present the candidate with the doctoral certificate.
3. The supervisor or, subject to the permission of the chairperson, the co-supervisor shall then address the newly invested holder of the doctorate.

Article 30

1. The candidate upon whom the doctorate is conferred shall receive a certificate as proof thereof signed by the Rector and the professor acting as secretary, and bearing the seal of the University.
2. In cases where two supervisors have been appointed, both shall have the authority to sign or countersign the certificate.
3. In addition to the supervisor, the certificate can also be signed by the co-supervisor (where applicable).
4. In the event that the doctorate is conferred with the distinction of *cum laude*, this shall be stated on the certificate.

The *cum laude* distinction

Article 31

1. In cases where the supervisor or (where applicable) the co-supervisor is of the opinion that the candidate has demonstrated outstanding ability in his thesis, he shall submit a written and reasoned request to the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee for the conferral of a doctorate with the distinction of *cum laude*. This request must be submitted at least three weeks prior to the public defence of the thesis. A request to this effect may also be submitted by each member of the Doctoral Examination Committee within one week of receipt of the thesis.
2. Once a request for the conferral of the *cum laude* distinction has been submitted, the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall, without delay, bring this request before the Thesis Committee for approval.
3. The Thesis Committee shall issue its written recommendation to the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee within seven days. The chairperson shall then submit the request and the
Thesis Committee’s recommendation to all members of the Doctoral Examination Committee by return of post.

4. If one third of the members of the Doctoral Examination Committee submit a written objection to the proposal within seven days of the dispatch of the chairperson’s letter, the proposal shall be regarded as having been rejected and shall no longer form part of the decision-making process with regard to the conferral of the doctorate.

5. All members of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall be informed of the result of these deliberations in writing.

**Article 32**

1. The Doctoral Examination Committee takes the decision regarding the conferral of the *cum laude* distinction in the closed session referred to in Article 28, paragraph 1, following the public defence of the thesis.

2. The manner in which the candidate defends the thesis shall be taken into account when deciding whether to confer the *cum laude* distinction.

3. A two-thirds majority of the members and additional members of the Doctoral Examination Committee present at the public defence of the thesis and the subsequent closed session must lend their support to the proposal before the distinction may be conferred.
Disputes

Article 33

The supervisor and the candidate may appeal to the College of Deans within 60 days against the decisions taken by the Doctoral Examination Committee as referred to in Articles 23 and 24. Having heard the supervisor, the candidate, the Thesis Committee and the Doctoral Examination Committee, the College of Deans shall decide whether to permit the candidate to proceed to the defence of the thesis.

Article 34

1. In the event of a dispute during the preparation of the thesis or regarding the approval of the thesis, the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall act as mediator.
2. If the chairperson is also the supervisor, co-supervisor or a member of the Thesis Committee, the College of Deans shall appoint a member of the Doctoral Examination Committee as mediator.

Article 35

1. If the mediation referred to in Article 34 does not lead to agreement within eight days, any of the parties involved may refer their case to the College of Deans.
2. The College of Deans shall then appoint a committee, made up of three professors not involved in the preparation of the thesis, to make a recommendation regarding the dispute.
3. Having heard all parties involved, this committee shall submit a reasoned written recommendation to the College of Deans within 60 days of receipt of the application referred to in paragraph 1.
4. The College of Deans shall settle the dispute and make its decision known to the parties involved within 30 days of the receipt of the recommendation.
5. Should circumstances so dictate, the College of Deans may extend the periods stipulated in paragraphs 3 and 4 by a single additional period of 30 days.

The honorary doctorate

Article 36

1. Having heard the University’s Executive Board, the College of Deans shall take its decision concerning the conferral of an honorary degree in accordance with Article 2.28 of the VU Statute, on the basis of a nomination by a faculty board.
2. The College of Deans shall determine the time at which and the manner in which the doctorate referred to in paragraph 1 shall be conferred.

Other provisions

Article 37: Double doctorate conferrals

1. In this provision, conferral of a double doctorate refers to the simultaneous granting of a doctoral degree by both the University and a foreign university.
2. The conferral of a double doctorate at the University can only take place with the prior written permission of the Rector.
3. Applications for the conferral of a double doctorate shall be submitted in writing to the Rector by the supervisor and the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee of the faculty in which the supervisor was appointed. This application must demonstrate that the thesis was prepared within the context of a formal collaboration between the two universities concerned and as part of a joint research programme.
4. The requirements which apply to the conferral of a doctorate at the University are fully applicable, in addition to the following stipulations:
a. a professor at the University and a professor at the university participating in the formal collaboration referred to in paragraph 3 shall be appointed as supervisors

b. the thesis requires the approval of the relevant Doctoral Examination Committee at the University and the relevant Doctoral Examination Committee or equivalent body at the foreign university in question

c. the thesis shall be defended at both the University and the foreign university in question within a period of four months.
Final and interim provisions

Article 38

1. In cases not covered by these regulations or in cases where a given article is open to various interpretations, the final decision shall rest with the College of Deans.
2. A Doctoral Examination Committee has the authority to impose additional regulations with regard to the process of obtaining a doctorate. These regulations shall be subject to the approval of the College of Deans.

Article 39

Decisions regarding changes to these regulations shall be taken by a majority vote of the College of Deans.

Article 40

Applications for admission to the doctoral programme under consideration at the time these regulations come into force shall be dealt with in accordance with these regulations.

Article 41

These regulations came into effect on 1 September 2002, last updated 12 July 2006 – with effect from 1 January 2007.
Procedural regulations

1. In cases where a professor is approached by a potential candidate, and especially when this candidate is not from the professor’s own department or working unit, the following guidelines shall be observed: once it has been established that the project in question constitutes a serious piece of research and that the professor judges the potential candidate capable of producing work of sufficient quality to serve as a thesis and is willing to accept the person as candidate, matters should be formalized in an application for admission to the doctoral programme, including the appointment of a supervisor, and the subsequent decision on admission as a doctoral candidate to be taken by the College of Deans. If the candidate is a trainee research assistant, application for admission to the doctoral programme must take place as soon as the trial period (of 9 or 12 months) has been successfully completed.

2. On Form I, which is the application form for admission to the doctoral programme and appointment of the supervisor and the co-supervisor (where applicable), the full work address(es) of the person(s) in question shall be stated. The address of the University shall take precedence over any other address or work address.

3. The College of Deans shall inform the candidate in writing of the decision regarding admission to the doctoral programme and send copies to the Doctoral Examination Committee, the supervisor, the co-supervisor (where applicable) and the beadle of the University. The addresses of the supervisor and (where applicable) the co-supervisor shall also be stated on the form referred to in Article 7, if these addresses are outside of the University.

4. The Committee of the Rector and Vice-rectors (Rectorium) shall carry out the appointments stipulated in Article 13, paragraph 7, on behalf of the College of Deans. For this purpose, the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall state the name of the person or persons nominated to serve on the Doctoral Examination Committee for a given doctorate on the form referred to in Article 23, paragraph 3.

5. Arrangements with the beadle regarding the date of the public defence of the thesis may only be made once the College of Deans is in possession of Form II, which gives notification of the decision by the Doctoral Examination Committee of the faculty in question to permit the candidate to proceed to the defence of the thesis, in accordance with Article 23 of the Doctorate Regulations.

6. As a rule, the public session of the Doctoral Examination Committee or the College of Deans shall begin at 1.45 p.m. or 3.45 p.m. If necessary, a starting time of 10.45 a.m. may be arranged.

7. As stated in Article 27, paragraph 1, the candidate shall defend his thesis for one hour. After consultation with the candidate, the Doctoral Examination Committee may give the candidate a maximum of 10 minutes at the beginning of this hour in which to present a general explanation of the research which forms the basis of the thesis.

8. Professors at the University, professors from other universities and those who are taking part in the closed session may walk in the procession. The professors shall wear the ceremonial cap and gown. Non-professors are required to wear dark clothing in keeping with the occasion.

9. During the public defence of the thesis, a male candidate is required to wear a dress suit. A female candidate is required to wear clothing in keeping with the occasion. In special cases, the Rector may honour a written request from the candidate and grant permission to wear a dark suit instead of a dress suit. The candidate may only make such a request after obtaining permission from the supervisor and the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee. In such cases, the public defence of the thesis shall be held in the auditorium.

10. During the public defence of the thesis the candidate shall be accompanied by two supporters (paranimfen). The supporters are required to observe the same dress code as the candidate. If the public defence of the thesis is held in the auditorium, the candidate may dispense with the support of paranimfen if he so wishes.

11. The sessions at which doctoral candidates defend their thesis are announced in the University’s weekly newspaper and in the monthly bulletins issued by the Communication Department.

12. The professors at the University receive a monthly schedule from the College of Deans in which the doctoral defences are listed.

13. The acknowledgement of support which helped to make the doctoral research possible and which came from outside the University shall only take place in written form, after consultation with the
supervisor and with the approval of the Doctoral Examination Committee. Commercial statements shall not be permitted in the thesis.

14. The equivalent status of the foreign professorship to the professorship at a Dutch university as stipulated in Article 8, paragraph 4, is intended to ensure that both the academic level of the persons in question and the nature of their academic work are comparable with those of a Dutch supervisor. Accordingly, posts such as visiting professor and honorary professor shall not be considered sufficient in this respect.

15. In the case of the conferral of a double doctorate, as referred to in Article 37, a reference to the foreign university that is party to the double doctorate shall be included on the back of the degree certificate.
Form I – Application for admission to the doctoral programme

If you wish to obtain a doctorate, you should submit a written application to this effect to the College of Deans (Article 7 of the Doctorate Regulations). You can use the PDF form below for this purpose. Make a printout of the form and fill in the relevant details. You can then give the form to your supervisor. Remember to sign the form and to append a certified copy of your degree certificate (Dutch *doctoraal*, Master’s or equivalent).

When all the relevant parties have filled in their details, the form is forwarded to the Doctoral Examination Committee, in this case the dean of the faculty in which you wish to obtain your doctorate.

Alternatively, you can pick up a copy of Form I from the faculty secretariat.

Form II – Notice of admission to the defence of the doctoral thesis

The chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee sees to it that the College of Deans and the candidate are directly informed of the committee’s decision either to permit the candidate to proceed to the defence of the doctoral thesis or to withhold this permission (Article 23 of the VU Doctorate Regulations). The PDF form below can be used by the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee or the supervisor for the purpose of reporting this decision to the College of Deans.

Make a printout of the form and fill in all the relevant details. Sign the form and send it to:

Vrije Universiteit
College of Deans
Room 1D-02
De Boelelaan 1105
1081 HV Amsterdam

Alternatively, you can pick up a copy of Form II from the faculty secretariat.
STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

This guide is intended for the supervisor and the candidate. It covers the entire doctoral programme, from admission as a doctoral candidate to the public defence of the doctoral thesis.

1. Once the potential candidate and the intended supervisor decide that there are sufficient grounds to expect the successful completion of the doctoral degree, they submit Form I (Art. 7, 8 and if applicable 11 of the Doctorate Regulations) to the Doctoral Examination Committee*. In response to this application the College of Deans will then decide on admission to the doctoral programme, appointment of a supervisor and (where applicable) a co-supervisor. The College of Deans then informs those involved about the admission and the relevant appointments (Procedural Regulation 3, Doctorate Regulations).

2. When the supervisor has determined that the thesis meets the required standards, he approves the thesis and directly informs the Doctoral Examination Committee* and the candidate in writing (Art. 22, Doctorate Regulations).

3. The supervisor proposes the composition of the Thesis Committee to the Doctoral Examination Committee*. The Thesis Committee is appointed by the Doctoral Examination Committee; the supervisor acts as chairperson and convenor (Art. 12, Doctorate Regulations).

4. After the supervisor has approved the thesis, he then submits it to the relevant Thesis Committee for assessment. The Thesis Committee issues its recommendation to the Doctoral Examination Committee* within 30 days of receipt of the thesis. The supervisor informs the candidate of the recommendation. The aforementioned term of 30 days can be extended by a single additional period of 30 days (Art. 22, Doctorate Regulations).

5. The Doctoral Examination Committee* decides whether the candidate may be permitted to proceed to the defence of the thesis and directly informs the College of Deans and the candidate of this decision by means of Form II (Art. 23, Doctorate Regulations).

6. The candidate arranges the date of the public defence of the thesis with the beadle, in consultation with the Doctoral Examination Committee*, the supervisor and (where applicable) the co-supervisor. The beadle instructs the candidate as to the protocol and practical arrangements pertaining to the defence of the thesis (Procedural Regulation 7, Doctorate Regulations).

7. In cases where a supervisor or (where applicable) co-supervisor has been appointed from outside the University, the Rector sends them an invitation to the public defence of the thesis, at the request of the Doctoral Examination Committee* (Procedural Regulation 4, Doctorate Regulations).

* By virtue of his office, the dean is chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee (Article 14, Doctorate Regulations). Depending on the situation, which can vary per faculty, the dean has the formal or informal mandate of the Doctoral Examination Committee to deal with these matters directly. Due to possible procedural differences between faculties, it is advisable to formalize these and other matters of internal procedure in a protocol within the faculty.