

## **DOCTORAL DEGREE REGULATIONS UTRECHT**

(The texts printed in grey refer to articles from the Higher Education and Research Act (*Dutch abbreviation: W.H.W.*))

### **Article 7.19 W.H.W. Doctoral Degree Regulations; the honorary doctorate**

1. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall draw up the Doctoral Degree Regulations with due observance of the provisions laid down in this Act. These Regulations shall provide for:
  - a. the procedures for obtaining a doctorate and for conducting a doctoral thesis defence ceremony, including the responsibilities and powers of all those who are or may become involved in either the doctoral programme or the doctoral thesis defence ceremony, and
  - b. the provisions for settling any disputes arising from either the doctoral programme or the doctoral thesis defence ceremony.
2. On the recommendation of the Executive Board of the Institution, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees is authorised to award honorary doctorates to natural persons in recognition of their outstanding merits.

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## CHAPTER 1 DOCTORAL DEGREE

### § 1 GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

#### Article 1 Doctoral Degree

1. Utrecht University provides the opportunity to gain a doctoral degree.
2. Doctoral degrees are awarded by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.
3. The chairperson of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees is the representative of the Board in and out of court.

#### Article 2

1. In these Regulations, the terms 'supervisor' and 'co-supervisor' shall include the plural forms in cases where two or more persons have been appointed supervisor or co-supervisor.
2. If the Rector Magnificus has been appointed supervisor or wishes to be a voting member of the Assessment Committee and/or the Doctoral Examination Committee, his or her responsibilities as described in these Regulations and as chairperson of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall be delegated to the deputy chairperson of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.
3. Those who participate in the deliberations as described in Articles 15, 16, and 24, as well as those involved in the procedures described in Paragraph 7, are bound to secrecy.

#### Article 3 Instructions to the doctoral candidate

In accordance with these Regulations, the doctoral candidate in the execution of his or her tasks shall observe the 'Instructions to the doctoral candidate' as laid down by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees, and he or she shall make use of the forms specified by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.

### § 2 ADMISSION TO THE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME; DOCTORAL CANDIDATE – SUPERVISOR – CO-SUPERVISOR

#### Article 7.18 W.H.W. Conferral of doctoral degrees; admission and graduation

1. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees of either a university or the Open University is authorised to award a doctoral degree on the basis of a doctoral research.
2. Admission to the doctoral programme shall be granted to any person:
  - a. who [...] has been awarded a Master's degree,
  - b. who has either written a thesis or developed a research design, as a demonstration of his or her capacity for the independent pursuit of research, and
  - c. who has satisfied all requirements laid down in the Doctoral Degree Regulations as referred to in Article 7.19 W.H.W.
3. In exceptional cases, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may admit to the doctoral programme any person who meets the requirements laid down in Section 2, Subsections b and c, but not the requirements laid down in Subsection a.
4. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall appoint to each doctoral candidate a university professor to act as their supervisor. The doctoral thesis defence ceremony shall take place in the presence of either the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees or a committee appointed by the Board. This committee shall consist of professors and others who the Board deems to be sufficiently capable of becoming a member of the committee, in compliance with the Doctoral Degree Regulations as referred to in Article 7.19 W.H.W.
5. For the purpose of Section 4, professors are held to include ecclesiastical and honorary professors at public universities.

#### Article 17a.18 W.H.W. Admission to the doctoral programme for candidates possessing a diploma 'oude stijl' (i.e.: a diploma gained before the introduction of the Bachelor-Master structure)

Any person who, on 31 August 2002 or before, fulfilled the condition as referred to in Article 7.18, Section 2, Subsection a, as this provision read on 31 August 2002, shall be considered equivalent to anyone who fulfils the condition as referred to in Article 7.18, Section 2, Subsection a.

**Article 7.18 W.H.W. Doctoral degrees; admission and graduation (as valid on 31 August 2002)**

1. [...]
2. Admission to the doctoral programme shall be granted to any person who:
  - a. has successfully completed a degree programme totalling at least 168 credit points or who, with regard to the programmes described in Article 7.4, Section 3, has successfully passed part of a programme totalling at least 168 credit points.[...]

**Article 4 Request for admission / Exemption**

1. At the start of the research that will serve as the basis for his or her doctoral degree, the doctoral candidate shall submit to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees a request for admission to the doctoral programme. This request may not be submitted without prior approval of the Dean.
2. At the applicant's request, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may grant admission to the doctoral programme to anyone who does not possess the required degree in order to be admitted, but who does fulfil the provisions of Article 7.18, Section 2, Subsections b and c W.H.W., provided the applicant can clearly prove to have sufficient knowledge. This request shall be accompanied by a recommendation from a professor at Utrecht University.

**Article 5 Appointment of supervisor**

1. Together with the request for admission to the doctoral programme, the doctoral candidate shall submit to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees a request for the appointment of a supervisor who, in his or her opinion, is most suitable. This request requires the Dean's prior approval. If the intended supervisor is related to the doctoral candidate, prior consultation with the Rector Magnificus will be required. If the doctoral candidate should request the appointment of two supervisors, the candidate shall indicate their preferred order of ranking.
2. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees, having received the request as referred to in Article 4, shall specify the scientific area of the doctoral research, and shall appoint at least one but not more than two professors to act as supervisor. In exceptional cases only, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may decide to appoint more than two supervisors.
3. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may appoint a professor from Utrecht University or from another Dutch or international university or institute of higher education to act as supervisor.
4. If the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees should appoint a supervisor from another higher education institute, a supervisor from Utrecht University will be appointed as well.

**Article 6 Honourably discharged professors**

For five years after the termination of their employment, honourably discharged professors retain the right to act as supervisors to doctoral candidates to whom they were assigned by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees before their discharge.

**Article 7 Co-supervisor**

At the request of the supervisor, and after approval by the Dean, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may appoint one or a maximum of two co-supervisors.

In order to arrange this, the supervisor should first submit a written request to the Dean including the proposal to appoint a co-supervisor. After approval by the Dean the supervisor may then submit the request to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.

Anyone who holds a doctorate, who is an expert in the relevant scientific area, and who is not a professor, may be appointed co-supervisor. The co-supervisor should be involved in the daily supervision of the doctoral candidate. The co-supervisor is entitled to act as such until five years after he or she has been honourably dismissed.

**§ 3 DOCTORAL RESEARCH AND THESIS MANUSCRIPT**

**Article 8 Research conditions**

The research that will serve as the basis for the doctoral thesis shall fulfil the following conditions:

- a. The doctoral candidate either carries out the research independently or contributes to a substantial part thereof;
- b. The research is conducted in compliance with either the code of conduct or the professional code, which are applicable to professional activities in the relevant area of research;
- c. The research is conducted in compliance with legal and university regulations.

**Article 9 Joint research**

Joint research may serve as the basis for a doctoral thesis written by two or three doctoral candidates, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a. Each of the doctoral candidates contributes to the research independently and sufficiently, to the satisfaction of the supervisor;
- b. Each of the doctoral candidates is author of a separate part of the thesis, while at the same time they are jointly responsible for the overall coherence of the thesis.

**Article 10 Coaching of the doctoral candidate**

1. The supervisor shall coach the doctoral candidate when writing his or her thesis, and shall arrange meetings on a regular basis.
2. If two or more supervisors have been appointed, they shall divide the various tasks between them after consultation with the doctoral candidate. They shall document this division of tasks if either of them or the candidate so requires.
3. The co-supervisor shall coach the doctoral candidate when writing his or her thesis, following instructions of the supervisor.

**Article 11 Thesis manuscript assessment**

1. The doctoral candidate may ask the supervisor to assess his or her manuscript in order to decide whether it meets the requirements of a thesis.
2. The supervisor shall assess all manuscripts submitted to him or her on the basis of at least the following criteria:
  - a. relevance of the subject;
  - b. formulation and distinctiveness of research subject;
  - c. originality of the scientific discussion;
  - d. scientific level of the structuring, analysis and processing of the research data;
  - e. methodological soundness of this analysis;
  - f. derivation of new insights and concepts;
  - g. critical confrontation between the candidate's conclusions and existing theories or concepts;
  - h. creativity of the candidate's approach to the scientific area covered by the thesis;
  - i. level of restraint exercised in the production of the text;
  - j. well-balanced structure and clarity of style.

The supervisor shall also assess whether the manuscript meets all other requirements laid down in the Doctoral Degree Regulations.
3. After consulting with the doctoral candidate and, if applicable, the co-supervisor, the supervisor may instruct the candidate to make specific alterations to the manuscript.

**Article 12 Approval of manuscript**

1. Following the doctoral candidate's request, the supervisor shall decide if the manuscript merits approval on the basis of the criteria described in the Doctoral Degree Regulations.
2. The supervisor shall allow the co-supervisor enough time to assess the manuscript. The co-supervisor shall supply his or her opinion in writing. The supervisor shall attach the co-supervisor's assessment to his or her own assessment.
3. The supervisor shall decide on the request for approval within three months of receipt of the manuscript, unless the doctoral candidate consents to a longer assessment term. If the assessment term stated in the first sentence is exceeded, the candidate may request the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees to instruct the supervisor to make a decision before a specific date. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall decide within 30 days of receipt of this request.

**§ 4 ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE**

### **Article 13 Establishment**

1. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall establish an Assessment Committee within two weeks of notification of approval of the thesis manuscript.
2. The committee members shall be recommended by the supervisor and approved of by the Dean.
3. The supervisor shall ensure that both the chairperson and the members of the Assessment Committee receive copies of the approved manuscript.

### **Article 14 Committee members**

1. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall appoint four or five members to be voting members of the Assessment Committee. At least four of the voting members shall be professors of a Dutch or international university, or emeritus professors who are still authorised to award doctoral degrees.
2. The Rector Magnificus chairs the committee and has an advisory role. He or she may be substituted by any professor who is not a voting member. The chairperson represents the Assessment Committee in and out of court.
3. The supervisor and the co-supervisor are members of the Assessment Committee and both have advisory roles. The supervisor acts as the secretary of the Assessment Committee.

### **Article 15 Admission to the doctoral thesis defence**

1. Within one month of receipt of the manuscript, the Assessment Committee shall decide whether the manuscript demonstrates the candidate's capacity for the independent pursuit of research to such an extent that the candidate shall be admitted to defend his or her thesis. In exceptional cases, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may extend this term by a specific number of days.
2. The decision whether to admit the candidate to defend his or her thesis shall be taken by majority vote. If the votes are equally divided, admission is deemed to be withheld.
3. The Assessment Committee does not propose alterations of or additions to the thesis, and it does not attach any conditions to that effect to the decision.

### **Article 16 'Cum laude' doctorates (i.e. 'with distinction')**

1. The Assessment Committee, after approval by the Dean, may recommend the Doctoral Examination Committee to confer upon the doctoral candidate a degree with a 'cum laude' designation.
2. Before deciding on the recommendation, as referred to in Section 1, the Dean shall seek the advice of at least one external expert in the relevant scientific area who was not involved in the research that serves as the basis for the thesis. The Rector Magnificus shall be notified of the name(s) of the expert or experts at least four weeks before the graduation date.
3. The Assessment Committee's recommendation to award a degree with a 'cum laude' designation shall be made unanimously and with the supervisor's approval. Beforehand, the supervisor shall consult with the co-supervisor about this recommendation.
4. The Dean shall notify the Doctoral Examination Committee at least five working days before the graduation date of the recommendation to award a doctorate with a 'cum laude' designation.

## **§ 5 DOCTORAL THESIS**

### **Article 17 Scientific content**

1. The doctoral thesis shall either be a scientific treatise of on a particular subject, or a number of separate, sufficiently coherent scientific treatise, all or some of which have already been published as articles.
2. An article written by more than one person may be accepted as part of the thesis if the candidate made a vital contribution to the article, as confirmed in writing by the supervisor.
3. If a thesis consists of a number of separate scientific treatises, the candidate shall add either an introduction or a conclusion in which he or she explains the coherence between the various treatises.

### **Article 18 Technical requirements**

1. The thesis shall be written in Dutch, German, English or French or, subject to the approval of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees, in another language. If the thesis is written in Dutch, an English translation of the title and an English summary shall be appended. If the thesis is written in German, English or French, a Dutch translation of the title and a Dutch summary shall be appended. If the thesis is written in a language other than Dutch, German, English or French, both Dutch and English translations of the title and Dutch and English summaries shall be appended.
2. The thesis shall contain a concise curriculum vitae of the doctoral candidate.
3. The thesis shall be available both in print and in digital form for the purpose of the doctoral thesis defence ceremony and for public distribution according to the 'Instructions to the doctoral candidates'.
4. The thesis shall be made up and printed in compliance with the regulations in the 'Instructions to the doctoral candidates' as laid down by the Board for the Conferral of the Doctoral Degrees.
5. Subject to the approval of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees, the thesis may include additions that strictly speaking fall outside the scope of a scientific treatise.
6. In the case of a joint thesis, this article shall equally apply to each of the doctoral candidates.

### **Article 19 Postponement of the doctoral thesis defence ceremony**

If the doctoral candidate fails to submit his or her thesis in compliance with Article 18 and the 'Instructions to the doctoral candidates', the chairperson of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may decide to postpone the doctoral thesis defence ceremony.

## **§ 6 DOCTORAL THESIS DEFENCE CEREMONY**

### **Article 20 Ceremony date**

At the suggestion of the supervisor, the Rector Magnificus shall set the place, date and time of the doctoral thesis defence ceremony.

### **Article 21 Doctoral Examination Committee**

1. The candidate shall defend his or her thesis in the presence of a Doctoral Examination Committee, which shall be established by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.
2. The members of the Doctoral Examination Committee are appointed at the recommendation of the supervisor and with the approval of the Dean.
3. The Doctoral Examination Committee shall consist of:
  - a. all voting members of the Assessment Committee;
  - b. the supervisor and, if applicable, the co-supervisor;
  - c. other professors and senior lecturers of Utrecht University, provided that, in addition to the chairperson and the supervisor, at least three members of the Doctoral Examination Committee are professors at Utrecht University. If the Assessment Committee has submitted a recommendation to award a degree with a 'cum laude' designation, at least five members of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall be professors at Utrecht University, in addition to the chairperson and the supervisor.
4. The Rector Magnificus chairs the Doctoral Examination Committee and has an advisory role. He or she may appoint predecessors, deans, former deans, or professors, to act as his or her deputy. The chairperson represents the Doctoral Examination Committee in and out of court.
5. The supervisor acts as secretary of the Doctoral Examination Committee.
6. Both emeritus professors and guests may be invited to become members of and advise the Doctoral Examination Committee.

### **Article 22 Objections**

1. All members of the Doctoral Examination Committee have the right to raise objections. The supervisor shall ensure that a sufficient number of committee members have expressed their willingness to voice their objections.
2. Subject to the Rector's consent, anyone who holds a doctorate and is an expert in the subject area of the thesis is permitted to voice objections.
3. Subject to consent from the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees, recognised experts in the subject area of the thesis who do not hold doctoral degrees are permitted to voice objections.

4. Joint theses shall be separately defended by each candidate, if possible successively on the very same day.

#### **Article 23 Graduation session**

1. The chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall structure the discussion in such a way that the candidate is given the opportunity to respond each time an opponent has voiced his or her objections.
2. The session shall be adjourned 45 minutes after its commencement, unless the chairperson decides otherwise. The Beadle shall announce that the 45 minutes have expired by proclaiming 'Hora est' (*Latin: 'it is time'*). The chairperson thereupon adjourns the session, after which the Doctoral Examination Committee retires for closed-door deliberations.

#### **Article 24 Deliberations**

1. During the deliberations referred to in Article 23, Section 2, the secretary and the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall present their findings, taking into account any minority opinions.
2. The Doctoral Examination Committee shall decide on the conferral of the doctorate, taking into account the candidate's defence of his or her thesis. If any member of the Doctoral Examination Committee so desires, a poll shall be taken. All committee members have voting rights. If the votes are equally divided, the doctorate shall not be awarded.
3. If the Assessment Committee has recommended to award a degree with a 'cum laude' designation, a poll shall be taken. If more than one member of the Doctoral Examination Committee votes against this proposal, the 'cum laude' designation shall not be awarded.
4. If the doctorate is awarded, both the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee and the supervisor shall sign the doctoral degree certificate. The co-supervisor also signs the certificate. The 'cum laude' designation, if awarded, shall be added to the certificate.

#### **Article 25 Announcement of doctorate**

1. After the deliberations referred to in Article 23, Section 2 have been concluded, the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee shall reopen the session and announce the Committee's decision.
2. If the doctorate is awarded, the supervisor, under the authority of the chairperson of the Assessment Committee, shall confer on the candidate the doctoral degree and present him or her with the certificate as referred to in Article 24, Section 4. If the 'cum laude' designation has been awarded, the supervisor shall announce this.
3. The supervisor or, subject to permission of the chairperson of the Doctoral Examination Committee, the co-supervisor, shall express his or her opinion about the thesis and, if desired, the scientific qualities of the doctoral graduate. He or she may add some words of appreciation.

### **§ 7 SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES**

#### **Article 26 Arbitration by the Dean**

1. At the request of any of the parties involved, the Dean shall offer to arbitrate if:
  - a. a professor refuses to accept his or her appointment as supervisor or withdraws his or her acceptance;
  - b. a dispute arises between the supervisor and the co-supervisor or between the supervisor and the candidate while the candidate is writing his or her thesis;
  - c. a dispute arises between the supervisors, between the supervisor and the co-supervisor or between the supervisor and the candidate about the approval of the manuscript;
  - d. the Assessment Committee does not admit the candidate to defend his or her thesis.
2. If the Dean himself is the supervisor of the doctoral candidate involved or a voting member of the Assessment Committee, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall appoint a professor to be arbitrator.
3. The arbitrator shall hear the parties involved, in order to reach an amicable solution. The arbitrator shall present his or her findings and reasoned conclusions in a written report, which he or she shall discuss with all parties involved. The report and a written summary of this discussion shall be sent to the parties involved and to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.

**Article 27 Ruling by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees**

1. If arbitration, as referred to in Article 26, fails to settle the dispute within one month, either or both parties may submit a written request to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees to settle the dispute.
2. Within one month of receipt of the request, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall establish a committee to advise the Board on the presented dispute. The committee shall be composed of three professors who have not been involved in the doctoral research.
3. The committee referred to in Section 2 shall hear all parties involved and is authorised to consult any experts. The committee shall present its findings in a written report.
4. Within two months of its establishment, the committee referred to in Section 2 shall submit its recommendations to the Board of the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees in the form of a well-reasoned draft decision, accompanied by the report referred to in Section 3.
5. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall settle the dispute within one month of receipt of the recommendations referred to in Section 4.

## **CHAPTER 2 HONORARY DOCTORATE**

### **Article 7.19 W.H.W. Doctoral Degree Regulations; honorary doctorate**

1. [...]
2. On the recommendation of the Board of the Institution, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees is authorised to award honorary doctorates to natural persons in recognition of their outstanding merits.

### **Article 28 Honorary doctorate**

An honorary doctorate can be awarded to anyone:

- a. who has conducted research which proved to be of exceptional significance to the academic practice at the university or to science in general;
- b. who has made, either academically, culturally, or socially, an outstanding contribution, directly or indirectly, to academic education and research.

### **Article 29 Consultation with the Board of the University**

1. If the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees intends to accept a recommendation to award an honorary doctorate as submitted by a Dean, it shall consult confidentially with the Executive Board.
2. Following notification by the Executive Board, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees decides whether the honorary doctorate shall be awarded.

### **Article 30 Decision on honorary doctorate**

1. If the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees has decided to award an honorary doctorate, it shall also appoint one or more university professors to act as supervisor/supervisors.
2. The candidate, the supervisor, and the Dean of the faculty concerned shall be informed of the Board's decision. This information is confidential.
3. The decision shall only be made public after the candidate has declared his or her willingness to accept the honorary doctorate.

### **Article 31 Public session**

1. The honorary doctorate shall be awarded in a special public session of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.
2. By order of the Rector Magnificus, the supervisor shall award the honorary degree, while expressing words of praise and appreciation.
3. In evidence of the honours awarded, the honorary doctor shall receive a 'cappa' (*i.e. a small honorary gown*) and a degree certificate signed by the Rector Magnificus, the Dean of the faculty concerned, and the supervisor.

## **CHAPTER 3 OTHER PROVISIONS**

### **Article 32**

1. In all cases not covered by the Doctoral Degree Regulations, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees shall decide.
2. In exceptional cases, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degree may deviate from the Doctoral Degree Regulations.

### **Article 33**

These regulations shall take effect on the date of adoption.

The Doctoral Degree Regulations will take effect on 1 February 2006.  
As laid down by order of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.

**The official language of the Doctoral Degree Regulations is Dutch. In the event of discrepancies or ambiguity between the original Dutch version of these Regulations and this translation, the Dutch text shall prevail.**