Dear Deans,

I would like to use this part of the formal introduction of the oath-taking by our doctoral candidates to ask for your attention regarding a number of aspects of the doctoral degree procedures.

1. The doctoral degree oath

From October to December 2015, we have experimented with the taking of the doctoral degree oath or pledge during the doctoral thesis defence ceremony. After this pilot, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees evaluated the introduction of the oath/pledge taking ceremony. All the parties involved in the pilot were able to provide their feedback both on the content and the form of the oath/pledge.

The feedback can be summarised as follows. In general, the doctoral candidates are very positive about the introduction of the oath/pledge. Suggestions made predominantly concerned the length, pronounceability and translation of the text. Following up on this feedback, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees has now decided on the following final text and translation:

Dutch text:

- **Promotor:** “Belooft u dat u altijd volgens de beginselen van wetenschappelijke integriteit te werk zult gaan: eerlijk en zorgvuldig, kritisch en transparant, onafhankelijk en onpartijdig?”
- **Promovendus:** “Dat beloof ik.”
- **Promotor:** “Dan overhandig ik u nu het diploma, door rector, [en] promotor(en) [en copromotor(en)] ondertekend en van het grootzegel der Universiteit voorzien.”
English text:

- Supervisor: "Do you promise always to perform your duties according to the principles of academic integrity: honestly and scrupulously, critically and transparently, independently and impartially?"
- Doctoral candidate: "I promise."
- Supervisor: "I, therefore, present you with your diploma, signed by the Rector Magnificus, [and] supervisor(s) [and co-supervisor(s)] and bearing the great seal of Utrecht University."

For the full text and the explanatory notes, please refer to Appendix I (E and E1).

2. Prior to the doctoral thesis defence ceremony

2.a Time schedule

It is of the greatest importance that the time schedule is adhered to by the doctoral candidates as well as their supervisors and co-supervisors. The forms must be submitted for approval to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees according to the following schedule and deadlines:

Form 1 _ Request for Exemption and Admission to the Doctoral studies. 
The doctoral candidate is responsible for completing the form, having it signed by all the parties involved and submitting it upon commencement of the doctoral degree studies.

Form 2 _ Approval of Manuscript and Proposed Composition of Assessment Committee. 
The supervisor is responsible for completing the form, having it signed by all the parties involved and submitting it no later than four months before the date set for the doctoral thesis defence ceremony.

Form 3 _ Assessment Committee's Decision regarding Admission to the Thesis Defence. 
The supervisor is responsible for completing the form, having it signed by all the parties involved and submitting it no later than two months before the date set for the doctoral thesis defence ceremony.

Form 4 _ Assessment Committee's Proposal for the Conferral of a Doctoral Degree with the Designation 'Cum Laude'. 
The supervisor is responsible for completing the form, having it signed by all the parties involved and submitting it no later than one month before the date set for the doctoral thesis defence ceremony.

It is important for the procedures relating to the Cum Laude designation to be adopted accurately. This means that as soon as the Assessment Committee has decided unanimously that the doctoral defence thesis deserves the 'Cum Laude' designation, the Dean shall inform me of his intention to invite at least two external experts to offer their opinion on the thesis. As soon as these experts have been approved by the Dean, I will be informed of their names.

If the forms have not been submitted for approval to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees by the deadlines set in the time schedule, the result may be that no date for the doctoral thesis defence ceremony can be set or that the agreed date will have to be postponed.

2.b Maximum number of supervisors and co-supervisors

Each doctoral candidate may be assigned a maximum of two supervisors and two co-supervisors (see also: Doctoral Degree Regulations). Exceptions to this rule will have to be discussed with me. I will decide on each case individually.
2.c Composition of the Assessment Committee

The Assessment Committee consists of five members, of which at least four will be professors affiliated with a Dutch or international university or emeritus professors of the university entitled to the 'Ius Promovendi'. At least one voting member of the Assessment Committee must be a professor who is not affiliated with Utrecht University.

2.d Composition of the Doctoral Examination Committee

Prior to the doctoral thesis defence ceremony, the supervisor shall inform the Beadle and the Chair about:

a. The names and positions of the opponents and the institutions they are affiliated with;
b. The order of the opposition;
c. The reserve question.

During ‘regular’ doctoral thesis defence ceremonies, the Rector Magnificus and the supervisor(s) shall be joined at the table by three Utrecht University professors. During a Cum Laude ceremony, the Rector Magnificus and the supervisor(s) shall be joined by five Utrecht University professors.

2.e Ius Promovendi

All supervisors involved in the doctoral thesis defence ceremony and at least four of the members of the Assessment Committee shall possess the right to supervise doctoral candidates (the ‘Ius Promovendi’, as laid down in the Higher Education and Research Act, WHW).

2.f International diplomas

In the event of a doctoral candidate holding an international diploma, the supervisor may ask either Student Service or Nuffic for advice on the candidate’s entitlement to admission to doctoral studies at Utrecht University. If this advice does not lead to a clear decision as to the entitlement to admission to the doctoral studies, the diploma will be submitted to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees for obtaining a final decision.

2.g Family ties

Neither the supervisors nor the members of the Doctoral Examination Board can be first-degree relatives of the doctoral candidate or be engaged in any other close personal or business relationship. Second-degree relatives can act in those roles, but they are not allowed to be present during the preliminary consultations or the deliberations. They will have to wait outside and are not permitted to ask any questions.

3. Doctoral thesis

3.a Logo

The printing of logos in or on the doctoral thesis is not allowed. Sponsors can be addressed in writing on the back of the title page. In rare cases, exceptions can be made for existing series. Such exceptions will first have to be discussed with me.

3.b CV and summary

Each thesis shall include a CV and a summary in conformity with Article 18 A of the Doctoral Degree Regulations.
4. The doctoral thesis defence ceremony

4.a ‘Laudation’ (congratulatory address)

The congratulatory address shall be conducted by a single person and shall not exceed five or six minutes. The address is aimed at the doctoral candidate only and shall not have the form of a short lecture about his or her thesis. The address is not intended for thanking the committee members. Supervisors can thank external guests outside the ceremonial hall during the preliminary consultations or the deliberations.

In the event that the co-supervisor is to conduct the congratulatory address, the supervisor shall ensure that the co-supervisor is informed about the above-mentioned procedures.

4.b Deliberations

The deliberations of the Doctoral Examination Board shall not exceed seven minutes in a regular thesis ceremony or nine minutes in a ‘Cum Laude’ ceremony. Longer deliberations will cause the Beadle logistic problems. The deliberations are not meant to include a renewed discussion of the defence.

4.c Decorations

No decorations, such as royal decorations or honorary doctorates, are worn during the ceremony.

4.d Dress code

Professors are held to follow the dress code of cap, bands and gown. Supervisors of Utrecht University shall wear the Utrecht gown, even when they hold a position at another university as well.

Supervisors shall inform their – international or other – guests of the dress code: a white shirt and black shoes for professors, and a dark suit and tie or the female equivalent of this for others. Guests will also have to be carefully informed about the nature of the ceremony and the rules for the opposition, including the set time frame of their intervention.

5. Other procedures

5.a Joint doctorates

All information about the joint doctorate can be found on the UU website:

http://www.uu.nl/onderwijs/promoveren-aan-de-uu/regelingen/joint-doctorates

Applications shall be submitted to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.

I would like to ask you urgently to share all the information mentioned in this letter with all the professors at your faculty.

This letter will soon be published on the UU website. All other information about the doctoral degree studies can also be found here.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

The Executive Board

Professor G.J. van der Zwaan
Rector Magnificus