Dear Deans,

I would like to use the formal extension of the ius promovendi for associate professors to ask for your attention regarding a number of aspects of the doctoral degree procedures.

1. **Extension of the ius promovendi**

   As from 1 January 2018, as a Dean you are entitled to nominate to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees an associate professor to be given permission to apply the *ius promovendi* at Utrecht University. Prior consultation with the professor involved is required and the associate professor must indeed have a concrete opportunity to supervise a PhD. This extension of the ius promovendi has been laid down in the *Utrecht University regulations on the granting of the ius promovendi to associate professors*. The doctoral degree regulations have been adjusted accordingly. Both documents can be downloaded [here](#).

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. The extension of the scope of the ius promovendi has no consequences for the composition of the Doctoral Examination Committee.

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 the Admissions Office 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, prior to the start of the doctoral degree track.
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 delivered 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. If the supervisor is an associate professor who obtained the ius promovendi, the associate professor will be entitled to deliver the congratulatory address.

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. If the supervisor is an associate professor, the dress code for members of the doctoral examination committee who do not hold the title of professor will apply: dark suit and tie for men and the female equivalent for women.

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. As from 2017, the new Regulations for obtaining a joint doctorate apply. A joint doctorate programme is understood to mean a long-term doctoral degree collaboration between more than one cohort of doctoral candidates and the concrete participation of at least two doctoral candidates. The partner organisations obtain the approval of their respective Boards for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.

5.b China Scholarship Council

In the past few years, Utrecht University has welcomed dozens of doctoral candidates from China on a China Scholarship Council (CSC) grant. This exchange is based on the collaborative contract between Utrecht University and the CSC. This ‘cooperation channel’ contract expired last December and we have not (yet) been able to agree on a new contract. We regret this as our experiences with Chinese PhDs are very positive. The most important issue involves the amount of the grant (1200 euro per month), which Utrecht University for tax and legal employment reasons cannot increase. It turns out that it has become an increasingly tough challenge for these grant PhDs to make ends meet, particularly in view of the extreme pressure on the Utrecht housing market. Furthermore, the CSC grant will very soon no longer be sufficient to meet the statutory normative amounts, which are conditional to obtaining a visa. Outside of the institutional contract framework, Chinese PhDs still can get access to a CSC grant on an individual basis via the ‘personal channel’, which allows for direct agreements between the student and the supervisor.

In view of these developments, we advise you to exercise caution when opting for this alternative route (and perhaps take a critical look at the level of the PhD’s English). If you should accept a personal channel CSC PhD, we ask you to register them with the secretary of your Graduate School. At this stage, we are looking into the facilities that the Executive Board will continue to provide in the absence of a new institutional contract, e.g. English-language courses provided by Babel. Please keep in mind that when you accept a CSC PhD, this means that the Graduate School will have to grant a fee waiver. As soon as there are further developments with regard to the institutional agreement, the Graduate Schools will be further informed.

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