UTRECHT UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS ON USE OF IUS PROMOVENDI for associate professors

The legislative amendment on expansion of *ius promovendi* (right to propose a person for a doctorate) took effect following enactment of the *Wet bevordering internationalisering hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek* (act regarding promotion of internationalisation in higher education and academic research) on 1 September 2017. The regulations below, as adopted by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees on 16 October 2017, describe the practical application at Utrecht University. These procedures are in line with the VSNU guidelines: the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees will decide whether to grant an associate professor (i.e. senior university lecturer) *ius promovendi* prior to or at the start of their first doctoral programme supervision, following nomination by the Dean and recommendations from the relevant professor. The relevant assessment criteria concern the quality of the researcher and experience in the successful supervision of PhD candidates.

**Preface**

Utrecht University strives to maintain its current clearly-structured quality assurance system, for which final responsibility has been assigned to our professors and deans. The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees will thus take a highly selective approach when approving *ius promovendi* for associate professors. The interests of the doctoral programme and its quality will remain key at all times.

**1. Eligibility**

The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may grant *ius promovendi* at Utrecht University to associate professors (UHDs 1 and 2) who have been nominated by the Dean following consultations with the chair holder, and have the following minimum qualifications:

- Doctor of Philosophy degree;
- an appointment at Utrecht University or at UMCU;
- a Senior Researcher Qualification (SKOz);
- the prospect of a role as future supervisor during doctoral programmes starting after 1 January 2018.

Associate professors who have *ius promovendi* (the right to confer doctoral degrees) at another Dutch university will be assessed on the basis of these regulations by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees before being granted or denied permission to *ius promovendi* at Utrecht University.

**2. Assessment criteria applied by the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees**

a.) Quality of the researcher

We apply the Senior Researcher Qualification (SKOz) as an internal mark of research quality. The Senior Researcher Qualification contains specific conditions for each faculty, and is thus an effective minimum requirement. The Senior Researcher Qualification comprises:

- a doctoral degree or an equivalent research achievement (basic qualification);
- in-depth knowledge of the discipline;
- demonstrable high-level recognition of their academic publications;
- the development of research programmes;
- the ability to train researchers;
- the management of research alliances;
- in-depth insight into research quality assurance;
- knowledge of the interrelationship between disciplines.

Researcher quality can also be demonstrated as follows: the associate professor takes steps to be promoted to the position of full professor, or external and international quality accolades.

b. Quality of the Supervisor

In their capacity as co-supervisor, the associate professor has demonstrated the ability to successfully supervise multiple PhD candidates to the point of obtaining their doctoral degree, whereby:

- all doctorates were conferred within a determined relatively limited time period;

---

1 University Framework for the Utrecht University Academic Staff Qualification System, Version 1.0, September 2009.
supervision experience was gained recently: doctorates were conferred during the past decade; the dropout rate amongst the PhD candidates was low.

The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees will weigh any differences in terms of research culture when making its decision. The following case descriptions are not limitative: As regards the Arts & Humanities/Social & Behavioural Sciences domains, this could concern a senior researcher (with a Senior Researcher Qualification) who has a strong track record and has previously supervised two or three PhD candidates in their capacity as co-supervisor and is planning to expand their research group after having obtained an ERC or VICI grant. As regards the Sciences, this could concern a highly talented associate professor who has developed an exceptionally strong research profile, as evidenced by – at minimum – a Senior Researcher Qualification and the successful supervision of three to five PhD candidates. As regards the Life Sciences, this will most likely concern highly talented associate professors who have successfully supervised at least five PhD candidates. The decision of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees may also factor in the research positions obtained by the associate professor’s PhD candidates.

c.) Alignment with the research field
The added value offered by nominated associate professors is determined on the basis of alignment between the professional field and expertise of the proposed doctoral thesis supervisor and the PhD candidate’s research project and thesis.

3. Conditions for granting ius promovendi
- Utrecht University associate professors are granted ius promovendi for an indefinite period.
- Associate professors with ius promovendi at another university will be granted ius promovendi at Utrecht University for a limited period.
- At all times and in the event of complaints, the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees is entitled to revoke an associate professor’s ius promovendi.
- In the event of honourable discharge or retirement, an associate professor will retain the right to ius promovendi for a five-year period.
- In the event of dishonourable dismissal, the right to ius promovendi will be revoked.

Note that ius promovendi is also subject to a specific obligation: responsibility for ensuring the quality of the doctoral programme, as recorded in (among others) the description of the Supervisor’s role in the Doctoral Degree Regulations Utrecht:

The supervisor shall ensure that:
- the doctoral research is conducted according to the rules of conduct for academic practice within Utrecht University and according to the rules of conduct and/or the professional code which applies to professional conduct for the relevant academic field
- with the permission of the parties involved (e.g. trial subjects)
- insofar as the research involves the use of laboratory animals, in accordance with the applicable regulations
- with a minimum of restrictions, where funded by third parties
  - Assessment of the manuscript based on requirements established in the Doctoral Degree Regulations Utrecht (Article 12).
  - A proposal on composition of the Assessment Committee (Articles 13 and 14).
  - A proposal on composition of the Doctoral Examination Committee (Article 21).

4. Procedure
1.) The faculties will establish a procedure regulating the nomination process within their faculty before 1 January 2018. This procedure should take account of the relevant professor’s advisory role, as well as the Dean’s role as the party responsible for nominating candidates to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees. The procedure should also specify that the relevant professor’s recommendations are to be documented.

2.) If the Dean of the faculty in question is convinced that the candidate meets all necessary requirements, they must submit the nomination to grant ius promovendi to the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees prior to the start of the doctoral programme. This nomination should include:
- a letter from the Dean addressing at least the following subjects:
  - a motivation of the nomination: why is it necessary, why now
  - a motivation of the candidate’s suitability (assessment criteria a, b and c)
- a proposal for agreements on the division of tasks and responsibilities between the associate professor supervisor and chair holder
- a motivated request from the associate professor (which benefits/disadvantages does the associate professor expect to experience regarding *ius promovendi*)
- the associate professor’s detailed CV.

3.) The Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees will assess the candidate on the basis of the submitted dossier and these regulations in order to determine whether the candidate is sufficiently qualified in accordance with the applicable requirements and is eligible to exercise *ius promovendi* at Utrecht University.

4.) The Dean and associate professor will be informed in writing of the decision of the Board for the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees.

Entry into force: 1 January 2018. In accordance with the VSNU guidelines, existing agreements on the division of roles will remain unchanged during ongoing doctoral programmes.