

Appendix E: TEXT SPOKEN DURING THE DOCTORAL THESIS DEFENCE CEREMONY

Rector Magnificus or Chairperson:

I hereby open the session.

Madam/Mister doctoral candidate,
the Board of the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees (*college voor promoties*) of Utrecht University now grants you the opportunity to defend your dissertation in public. I invite the first opponent to speak.

...

The discussion will be continued by ...

After the Beadle has proclaimed 'hora est':

The Committee will now withdraw for further deliberation. The session is adjourned.

When the Committee has returned:

I hereby reopen the session. Madam/Mister doctoral candidate, this committee, installed by the Board of the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees (*college voor promoties*), has considered your dissertation and has heard your defence. The committee has decided to confer on you the title of Doctor. I now kindly ask the supervisor, Professor ..., to invest you with the honours in the traditional fashion.

Supervisor:

By virtue of the authority conferred on us by law and according to the decision of the Doctoral Examination Committee present at this session, I hereby confer upon you ... (*doctoral candidate's first and surname*) the doctoral degree (*if applicable: to which, due to your outstanding merits I may add the designation 'cum laude'*) to which are attached all rights and obligations* towards science and society as laid down by law and custom. 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:

Then I present you with the diploma, signed by the rector, [and] supervisor(s) [and co-supervisor(s)] and bearing the great seal of Utrecht University.

Speech delivered by the supervisor or co-supervisor.

Rector Magnificus or Chairperson:

Very learned Madam/Sir, on behalf of the Board of the Conferral of Doctoral Degrees (*college voor promoties*), I congratulate you on the honours which have been bestowed on you. I hereby conclude this session.

* *A frequently asked question concerns the scope of these rights and obligations.*

Rights

The doctoral degree will be conferred on anyone complying with the relevant requirements laid down in or pursuant to the Higher Education and Research Act (Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek, hereinafter: W.H.W.). Graduates may choose to either use the degree and put 'PhD' after their names or use the title and put 'Dr' in front of their names (Article 7.22 W.H.W.).

Anyone not authorised to use the title of Doctor is punishable under Article 435 of the Penal Code.

ARTICLE 7.22 W.H.W.

1. Anyone who has been conferred the doctoral degree pursuant Article 7.18, or Article 7.19, Section 2, is authorised to use this degree when stating their name.
2. Anyone who, based on Section 1, is authorised to use the degree referred to in that Section when stating their name is also authorised to use the title of Doctor.
3. The degree referred to in Section 1, indicated as PhD, is put after bearer's name. The title referred to in Section 2, abbreviated as Dr, is put in front of bearer's name.
4. The person or persons involved may choose to either use the degree, in accordance with Section 1, or to use the title, in accordance with Section 2, when stating their name.

A doctoral degree is often a necessary precondition to be able to hold certain scientific positions or for instance, to be appointed co-supervisor.

Obligations

Obligations towards science: anyone holding a doctoral degree and pursuing a career in science or scientific teaching will have to comply with the written and unwritten principles of proper scientific research. For staff affiliated with universities represented by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) these principles have been laid down in the Nederlandse Gedragscode Wetenschapsbeoefening (Dutch Code of Conduct for Scholarly Activities, VSNU 2005/2012/2014). Staff members will have to refrain from actions or behaviour contravening scientific integrity.

Obligations towards society: these refer to unwritten principles that relate to the fact that doctors also hold positions outside the field of science and because of their doctoral degrees are respected by society and considered trustworthy. Bearers of the title should be aware of this in general and be expected to refrain from actions or behaviour contravening scientific integrity. In this sense, doctors fulfil an unwritten part as 'ambassador' of science. To further this the oath/pledge is introduced in 2015.

Withdrawal of the doctoral degree

Can the doctoral degree be withdrawn if a person does not comply with the aforementioned obligations? This is not known ever to have happened in the Netherlands.

It is, however, possible to have a doctoral degree withdrawn, as is the case with exam results, if afterwards it transpires that the degree was conferred on mistaken grounds (fraud, plagiarism, etc.). Such instances must involve proven fraudulent behaviour. In practice this will rarely be the case as the obligation to involve several experts from the relevant field of science involved in the assessment of the thesis provides a proper safeguard against fraudulent behaviour.