

Essentials of being a PhD candidate in the VU Graduate School of Social Sciences

GS Induction
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- The Graduate School
- Landing and starting
- Education, training, other 'school' activities
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- Supervision and assessments



The Graduate School



Who is who?

Management

- Academic director: prof.dr. Theo van Tilburg
- Program director: dr. Naná de Graaff
- Program manager: drs. Saskia Jans
- Management assistant: Alexandra Filius MSc

Graduate Council: Nadia bij de Vaate (CW), Karin Kee (ORG), Caroline Slobbe (SCA), Wenhui Ding (B&P), Bradley Good (SOC)

Advisory board: Haebin Lee (SOC), Ewa Miedzobrodzka (CW)

PhD Trustee & Faculty Trustee

- dr. Ida Sabelis & dr. Marjo de Theije



Facts & figures

- Since 2009 20-30 graduations yearly
 - Currently: ~180 projects in progress
 - 48% of candidates born outside the Netherlands
 - 62% female
 - Mean age 37
 - 35% with PhD contract, 10% fellowship
 - Academic departments: B&P, ORG: ~35; SCA, SOC: ~45, CW ~15
- (updated February 2019)



Recent developments

Doctorate regulations 2015

- 30 EC education and training (mandatory)
- Assessment Committee independent from supervisor
- Supervisors: to be approved (timely)

Hora Finita 2018

- Central database; registration, tracking and other procedures
- Improved procedures registration (admission via web form)

Bridging program 2018

Updated go / no go assessment 2019

Halfway Risk Inventory 2019



Landing and starting



Soft landing and starting

- Access to VU services
- Bridging program
- Induction program
- Buddy system
- Ask Saskia & Alexandra
- Meeting Nana on Educ/training
- Trustee / confidential counsellor

Use your supervisors and your fellow PhD candidates!

University Library: free help and training

- www.ub.vu.nl/en/education-research

IT helpdesks (main building, W&N)

Computer software

- ~Free: download.vu.nl (from VU campus)
- Very cheap: www.surfspot.nl

Financial support

- Graduate Fund (from 2nd year onwards)

HRM online courses

- www.goodhabitz.com



Soft landing and starting (2)

Topics to discuss early with your supervisors

- Frequency of contact /w supervisors
- 'Open door'? Always with paper?
- Form and 'size' of dissertation
- Publication strategy
- Co-authorship
- How to finish in time
- What do YOU want to achieve with your PhD?



Access to Hora Finita after registration



After registration in Hora Finita:

- Own course administration
- Optional: Other planning activities
- Questions or problems: ask Saskia or Alexandra



Education, training, other 'school' activities



Education and training: principles

- To support the PhD candidate in project progress and individual development
- To enhance the academic knowledge and skill development of the PhD candidate
- To enable a successful completion of PhD project
- To prepare for a career as an applied or postdoctoral researcher or Assistant Professor thereafter
- Tailored to serve the needs of the PhD candidate at different stages of the project, regardless of their topic or methodological approach



Education and training: three areas

- *Social scientific content, theory building and application*
Proposal Design & Writing; Advanced Theory Construction; Theoretical tutorials; summerschools and specialised courses elsewhere
- *Social scientific research design and methodology*
Research Designs in the Social Sciences; Selected Quantitative Methods; Selected Qualitative Methods; Collecting, Analysing and Writing Qualitative Data; Methodological tutorials
- *Academic skills*
Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship; Writing Academic English; Intensive Course in Attractive Academic Writing; Teaching Practice and Supervision; Popular science writing; Science Blogging; PhD Induction Conference; PhD Career Day



Basic program for 1st year PhD candidates

- Bridging Program (if applicable) (period 1: Sep)
 - PhD Induction Conference (period 1: Sep)
 - PhD Induction Light (March) + Time Management (April/May 2019)
 - Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship (period 2: Oct/ Nov)
 - Proposal Design & Writing (period 1-4: Oct-March)
 - Writing Academic English (period 4-5: Febr)
- (program for full-time PhD Candidate)



Additional program for all PhDs

- Pizza sessions!
- Short intensive tutorials (e.g. Narrative research in organizations, Q-methodology, Proposal design & writing, Meta analysis, Analysis in R, How to present your research, ... visualize your data, ... write a world class article, ... valorize your research)
- PhD Gatherings, Career Thursdays, HR courses

Council activities

- Writing marathon
- Christmas diner
- PhD Day



Pizza sessions



**VU Graduate School
PhD Pizza Session**

'Quality of Supervision'

During this session we will discuss what makes a good supervisor, talk about the frequency of your meetings, how feedback is organized, and more.

Thursday 6 February 2018 17:00-18:30
Venue: HG-10A28

Please bring your own laptop or phone for the interactive part of this session!

To make sure there are enough pizzas for everyone, please let us know if you attend before 4 February (send an email to: graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl)

VU VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM **VU Graduate School of Social Sciences**

- 19-10-2017 PhD Trustee
 - 30-11-2017 Life after PhD: Career trajectories of doctorate holders
 - 6-2-2018 Quality of supervision
 - 28-3-2018 Form of dissertation, co-authoring
 - 8-11-2018 How to get to the finish? (with the beadle)
 - 7-2-2019 Ho to find research funding?
 - TBA Valorization
 - TBA PhD rights
- 5 – 6.30 pm, with pizza and beverages



The PhD trajectory



Basic PhD trajectory plan

- 4 years fulltime, or stretched within 5 or 6 calendar years
- Research: ~ 5500 hours
- Education and training: $30 \text{ EC} * 28 \text{ hours} = 840 \text{ hours}$
- Teaching (if PhD contract): 336 hours
- Note: ~6 months between approval by supervisor and graduation



Form of the dissertation



A PhD is possible via two forms of a thesis:

- A monograph written by the PhD candidate
- A coherent collection of articles (or edited book chapters, or ...)

Both are equivalent: one is not considered as better than the other. A form may be chosen depending on

- the nature of the project,
- the preferences of those concerned,
- the terms that are agreed (e.g. with the funding organization),
- cooperation (including cooperation between disciplines), and
- the PhD candidate's career prospects.



Basic PhD trajectory plan (two examples)

Option A: monography

- 1 Develop Training and Supervision Plan (TSP)
Formalize research proposal and theoretical framework

- 2 Revise the research proposal
Data collection
- 3/4 Data analysis
Write, write, write
Finalize the PhD thesis

Option B: four empirical chapters

- 1 TSP; brief research proposal; chapter/article #1 submitted, #2 in progress, #1 R&R

- 2 #2 submitted, #3 in progress
- 3 #2 R&R, #3 submitted, #4 submitted
- 4 #3 R&R, #4 R&R, introduction and discussion



Calculating milestones in Excel

starting date	1-9-2018							
type PhD trajectory	4 year fulltime				5 year 4 days/week			
go/no go assessment	1-5-2019				1-7-2019			
end labor contract #1	1-9-2019				1-12-2019			
number of milestones	8	7	6	5	8	7	6	5
milestone 1	1-3-2019	1-4-2019	1-5-2019	1-5-2019	1-5-2019	1-6-2019	1-7-2019	1-7-2019
milestone 2	1-9-2019	1-11-2019	1-2-2020	1-5-2020	1-1-2020	1-3-2020	1-7-2020	1-11-2020
milestone 3	1-4-2020	1-7-2020	1-11-2020	1-4-2021	1-10-2020	1-1-2021	1-6-2021	1-12-2021
milestone 4	1-11-2020	1-3-2021	1-8-2021	1-2-2022	1-6-2021	1-11-2021	1-3-2022	1-10-2022
milestone 5	1-6-2021	1-10-2021	1-3-2022	1-9-2022	1-1-2022	1-6-2022	1-12-2022	1-8-2023
milestone 6	1-12-2021	1-4-2022	1-9-2022		1-8-2022	1-1-2023	1-8-2023	
milestone 7	1-5-2022	1-9-2022			1-2-2023	1-8-2023		
milestone 8	1-9-2022				1-8-2023			
type PhD trajectory	5.7 year 3.5 days/week				3 year fulltime			
go/no go assessment	1-8-2019				1-5-2019			
end labor contract #1	1-2-2020				1-9-2019			
number of milestones	8	7	6	5	8	7	6	5
milestone 1	1-6-2019	1-8-2019	1-8-2019	1-8-2019	1-2-2019	1-2-2019	1-3-2019	1-4-2019
milestone 2	1-5-2020	1-8-2020	1-12-2020	1-6-2021	1-6-2019	1-7-2019	1-9-2019	1-11-2019
milestone 3	1-3-2021	1-8-2021	1-1-2022	1-7-2022	1-10-2019	1-1-2020	1-3-2020	1-7-2020
milestone 4	1-1-2022	1-5-2022	1-11-2022	1-7-2023	1-3-2020	1-6-2020	1-10-2020	1-3-2021
milestone 5	1-8-2022	1-2-2023	1-9-2023	1-6-2024	1-8-2020	1-12-2020	1-4-2021	1-9-2021
milestone 6	1-4-2023	1-10-2023	1-6-2024		1-1-2021	1-5-2021	1-9-2021	
milestone 7	1-11-2023	1-6-2024			1-5-2021	1-9-2021		
milestone 8	1-6-2024				1-9-2021			



Phase of current PhD candidates

	B&P	CW	ORG	SCA	SOC	Total	
Start project	0	6	7	11	7	31	17%
2nd quart	9	2	4	5	3	23	13%
About halfway	5	1	2	7	9	24	13%
3rd quart	3	0	5	2	2	12	7%
Close to due date	7	3	9	4	12	35	19%
Over time*	12	5	10	14	15	56	31%
Total	36	17	37	43	48	181	100%

* Time = contract duration, duration as discussed and approved, or eight years when no time is set



Final stage (~6 months)



- Final review by supervisors
- Submission dissertation (Hora Finita)
- Assessment by PhD committee members (5-6 weeks)
- Start administrative procedure public defense; contact with Beadle
- Printing (and submission) final version dissertation
- Public PhD defense (Aula, Auditorium, other room)
 - Presentation research (10 minutes)
 - Q&A (50 minutes)
 - Deliberation by Assessment Committee (closed session)
 - Graduation
 - Reception and/or party ?!?! Up to you



Coming graduations

Ruijter, HA (Hans)	Veenswijk, MB	ORG	27-3-2019
Boeynaems, A (Amber)	Konijn, E	CW	2-4-2019
Kok, AAL (Almar)	Huisman, M; Deeg, DJH	SOC	16-4-2019
Sungur, H (Hande)	Hartmann, T	CW	10-5-2019
Wieringen, M van (Marieke)	Groenewegen, P; Broese van Groenou, MI	ORG	17-5-2019

Language

- Q&A is often in English, but not always
- Presentation research by Dutch candidate is often in Dutch



Content and size of dissertation

- Few written rules
 - Candidate should decide
 - Supervisor(s) and assessment committee decide on quality
- Within FSS: wide variety
- Supervision/coaching might result in co-authoring
 - Should be negotiated in advance (TSP)
 - Should be shown in dissertation
 - Contribution of each author should be made explicit
 - Should follow ethical and other rules, e.g.

www.apa.org/gradpsych/2006/01/cover-code.aspx





Supervision and assessments



Dutch supervision style and PhD system

- PhD candidates are considered fellow researchers, not students
- You have a strong role and voice in research groups
- Supervisory team will in most cases advise you what to do or what to look further into, rather than tell you explicitly what to do or how to do it
- You are expected:
 - to make and share notes of meetings and agreements,
 - hand in written work in time
 - formulate concrete questions for supervisors
- Always critically assess and respond to feedback
- It is up to you to indicate when feedback is not clear or if you require more guidance on a particular issue



Variation in supervision



- Four styles: instructing, convincing, coaching, delegating
- *Communication and feedback*

Which kind of communication and contact is most helpful for your progress? With what frequency would you like to meet and for how long? How much feedback and what kind of feedback is most helpful for your progress (e.g. written, spoken, how detailed, in which style)?

- *Elements of supervision*

This includes many aspects: disciplinary knowledge, expertise on particular topic(s), networking, academic practices (e.g. attending conferences, publishing), writing and research process, methodological and analytical knowledge, career orientation beyond PhD, overall wellbeing at work, etc.



Monitoring, evaluation and assessments

- Assessment of quality on entry (admission)
- Establishing starting documents; Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) (needs approval)
- (5 month assessment done in talk between candidate and supervisors)
- Go / no go assessment of quality and progress: after 8 months full-time
- TBA: half-way monitoring (Risk Inventory)
- 2nd and 3rd year: personal development; after PhD plans
- Annual assessment progress and process (formal when PhD contract)
- Final assessment by supervisor, assessment committee, GS, dean
- Have regular talks with supervisors on progress and process!



Go / No Go Assessment

- Substantive product (see next slide)
- (Updated) time schedule
- (Updated) budget plan
- Data management plan
- Results of ethical test of research
- (Updated) plan doctorate education and training + 10 EC completed (or deviating # EC and agreed in TSP; or discuss it)
- Letter of the supervisors: candidate has sufficient capacities; research progress and results are convincing; candidate is on track; candidate will finish in time (nominal is normal); candidate is on route to become an independent researcher, suggests three external and two FSS reviewers



Go / No Go Assessment: Substantive product

- (Revised) brief research proposal in combination with one draft chapter of dissertation (i.e. introduction; literature review; empirical chapter)

or

- A full research proposal

Procedure

- Submission after eight months fulltime
- Review by two external and one FSS researchers
- R&R possible
- Final decision by supervisor, HoD and Academic director



Yearly monitoring

- For employees: 'jaargesprek', i.e. monitoring, assessment, plans, personal development plan
- Non-employees: Ask for similar meeting (form is available on GS-site)
 - 2nd year: talk about your future
 - 3rd year: how to finish asap
- For all: GS sends a brief questionnaire
- In case of problems
 - Talk with supervisors
 - The trustee is available
 - GS will help you; report or talk !!!!



Halfway Risk Inventory

- (in progress)
- Self-monitoring
- Using a Risk Inventory (questionnaire) developed and successfully applied at another Graduate School
- Aims
 - To assess your state of affairs halfway your PhD trajectory
 - Inquire whether there are certain difficulties that have occurred
 - Helping you to improve your project and your project progress



Final assessment

- Current situation: generally formulated (i.e. no explicit) criteria
- To achieve: application of a ‘rubric’
- Approval in four steps
 - Education/training certificate (30 EC; GS)
 - Supervisor(s)
When is it ‘good enough’? ‘Having desirable/positive qualities suitable for the candidate and her/his situation’
 - Doctoral examination committee (mainly external members)
 - Dean (in most cases formal)



Thanks! Questions?
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