

The logo for EMGO+ features the lowercase letter 'e' in a dark blue color, followed by the uppercase letters 'MGO' in a light blue color, and a plus sign '+' in the same light blue color. The letters are bold and sans-serif.

Institute for Health and Care Research

On the way to your PhD graduation

Tips and tricks!

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Dear PhD / PhD candidate,

This document contains guidelines for the last year of your PhD-trajectory and was written by and for PhD candidates affiliated with the EMGO + Institute.

First, a timeline is presented. Secondly, important aspects are explained in detail. Finally, a timetable for the day of the defense is included in the appendix. Throughout the manual, links to important documents are provided (e.g. the Doctorate Regulations).

Information can also be found at the [PhD portal VUMC](#) and the [VU website](#).

NOTE: The guidelines described in this document may vary per candidate depending on:

- The type of contract that you have: PhD candidate (AIO/OIO)/ junior researcher/bursary PhD candidate;
- Appointment at the VU or VUMC;
- Department / faculty where you are employed.

Therefore we recommend you discuss the content of these guidelines with your (co) promotors. Addresses, web-addresses and phone numbers are provided where possible. Relevant addresses and phone numbers can also be found on the VU and VUMC websites.

If you have any additions, corrections or suggestions for these guidelines, you can send them to the PhD committee: phdcommittee@vumc.nl

Good luck with the final phase of your PhD-trajectory!

PhD committee

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1. Timeline

When?	What?	Who?	Links
	<p>For PhD candidates who started from April 2015 onwards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After the doctoral supervisor has approved the thesis, the PhD candidate submits a request with the authority that signed their training and supervision plan (TSP) to ascertain that the educational requirements (minimum of 30 ECTS) have been met. 2. Read the Doctorate Regulations VU / VUmc . 3. Read NFU Guidelines for PhD tracks in biomedical sciences. 4. Plan your final performance appraisal. 	<p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate/Doctoral supervisor</p> <p>PhD candidate/Doctoral supervisor</p> <p>PhD candidate</p>	<p>Doctorate Regulations</p> <p>NFU Guidelines</p>
6 months to go	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule a discussion with your doctoral graduation team. 2. Decide whether you are going to organize a symposium. 3. Think about a location for the party. 4. Choose and invite paranymphs. 5. Request offers from different printing company. 6. Write letters to grant funds for printing costs. 	<p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate/Doctoral supervisor</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p>	<p>Info on VUmc PhD Portal</p>
5 months to go	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setting up the Thesis Committee The Chair of the Doctorate Board (<i>in Dutch: promotiecommissie</i>) shall appoint the members of the Thesis Committee (<i>in Dutch: leescommissie</i>) for each PhD programme based on nominations from the supervisor and upon the supervisor's approval of the dissertation. 	<p>Doctoral supervisor</p>	

months to go	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Letter to the dean with the proposal for the Thesis Committee plus details of the Thesis Committee (also by email). 2. Mail the Thesis Committee to notify them when to expect the manuscript. 3. Letter plus manuscript to Thesis Committee 4. Wait (30 days) for response Thesis Committee 5. If needed send a reminder after 30 days. Optionally, the reading committee can extend the period by 30 days (see VU Doctorate Regulations). 	<p>Doctoral supervisor/Secretary's office</p> <p>Doctoral supervisor</p> <p>Doctoral supervisor/Secretariat of the dean of the faculty</p> <p>Doctoral supervisor</p> <p>Doctoral supervisor</p>	<p>Doctorate Regulations</p>
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	<p>After approval of the manuscript by all members of the Doctoral Examination Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Send a letter to the Dean that the thesis meets the requirements as well as the requests from the Council of Deans and the Registrar's (pedel) office; 7. Form II is sent by the dean, when the message of the promotor on the approval of the reading committee has arrived at the Dean's Office. 8. Set a date for the defense with the Registrar (pedel). Setting a date and time for a doctoral graduation is possible only after form II is provided by the Dean's office to the Registrar's office. At the moment, you have two options on a date, via the Registrar's office. 9. Currently, you usually get an information package from the Beadle stating what the dress code is for the defense, what should appear on the title page of your thesis (page 3 and 4) and how to submit the digital version to the UBVU 10. Once a date has been set: send a letter to the opposition 11. Once a date has been set: make reservations for a location for your reception/party 12. Ask two paranymphs to support you during the thesis defense ceremony 	<p>Doctoral supervisor</p> <p>Doctoral supervisor</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate/doctoral supervisor</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p>	<p>Form II</p> <p>pedel@vu.nl; 020-5985307/5309</p>
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	<p><u>Thesis</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permission Beadle(Pedel) for title page of your thesis (page 3 and 4). 2. Thesis to the printer. 3. Form for a large postal sending (or ask the mailroom VUmc, 42687 or the secretary at your department). 4. Prepare a list of people to send your thesis to; discuss with (co) promotors which people you should not forget. 5. As soon as the digital version of the thesis is completed, send an e-mail to colleagues to see whether there is interest in your thesis 6. Send the digital version (pdf) of your thesis to the EMGO secretary 	<p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate/Doctoral supervisor</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p>	
2 months until defense	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sending theses (optional cover letter). 2. Schedule a trial defense, 2-3 weeks before the defense. 3. Contact the opponents to identify questions (without forwarding the questions to the PhD candidate of course) 	<p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate/ co-doctoral supervisor</p> <p>Doctoral supervisor</p>	

6 weeks until defense	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Beadle wants to receive 5 theses. 2. Cover, title page, English summary, Dutch summary and the full thesis in PDF to UBVU. 3. Discuss the order of opposition and send a letter to Dean (no later than 14 days before the doctoral graduation takes place). 4. You will get a confirmation from the dean. 5. Send thesis to opponents with defense date, order of opposition and further details. 6. Organize travel and accommodation for foreign opponents. 7. Discuss who will do the speech (laudatio). 8. Think about whether you want to capture your defense on camera or video. 9. Order a Griffioen if necessary. This is the statue that you get from the VU. (<i>note: Costs for project or professor</i>) 	<p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>Doctoral supervisor/ Secretary's office</p> <p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate/ Secretary's office</p> <p>PhD candidate/ Secretary's office</p> <p>(co-) Doctoral supervisor</p>	
4 weeks until defense	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare try out defense. 	PhD candidate	
2/3 weeks until defense	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Try out defense. 	PhD candidate	
1 week until defense	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare for the questions of opponents 2. Learn your thesis by heart 	<p>PhD candidate</p> <p>PhD candidate</p>	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The defense → Good luck! 	PhD candidate	

2. Final performance appraisal

To complete your PhD trajectory successfully it is advisable to discuss the status of your thesis with your (co) supervisor in the last quarter of your third year during your performance appraisal (jaargesprek). Discuss, for example, whether the completion of the thesis within the contract time is feasible and, if that is not the case, discuss possible solutions. Also discuss the completion of articles (including revisions) and how you will approach this if you will be working elsewhere after the end of your contract. This conversation also provides opportunities to discuss the state of affairs with regard to education and training and to discuss future career possibilities. At the end of this document we give more attention to the continuation of your career in the section 'Graduated, and then?'

3. Thesis Committee

In the Joint guideline of the Graduate Schools of the Dutch University Medical Centres (NFU guideline), it is indicated how many (published) articles are needed to graduate ([see PhD portal](#)). NOTE: It is a guideline and may therefore be debated or deviated from. So, determine in consultation with your (co)supervisor the number of (published) articles in your thesis. Once you have selected the articles for your thesis, you compose the manuscript for your thesis. Your thesis consists of at least: your articles, general introduction, general discussion, and an English summary. At this stage you are advised to send the manuscript to your supervisor(s)/advisor and co-supervisor(s) one more time. From this point it will take about 6 months before your defense takes place, but this is hard to say precisely because you are dependent on the schedules of your (co)supervisors and the defense committee. Please note that there is a summer break from mid-July to late August.

Usually the thesis committee consists of at least five members. At least half of the members of the thesis committee should be professors. The thesis committee members are generally your opponents during the defense as well, but sometimes a member is absent and in that case the committee will be expanded with two or three other members. For more information see the [VU Doctorate Regulations](#).

3.1 Preparing the thesis for the thesis committee

Compulsory parts of your manuscript are:

- Official title page; the Beadle will provide an example and instructions
- Introduction;
- Your articles;
- General discussion;
- English summary.

What is not required, but what is highly valued:

- Dutch summary.

Alternatively you can also add the following:

- Acknowledgements;
- About the author;
- List of publications.

The thesis manuscript is accompanied by a letter stating by which date the thesis committee should have assessed the manuscript. Do not only send this version of your thesis manuscript to the thesis committee, but give your (co-) supervisors a copy of this manuscript as well. Within 30 days of receipt of the manuscript, the chair of the thesis committee shall inform the chair of the Doctorate Board of the Thesis committee's assessment. The chair of the Doctorate Board shall inform the

supervisor, and the supervisor shall inform the PhD candidate. The Doctorate Board may extend the period by a single additional period of 30 days (see Doctorate Regulations).

Often, the outline will be approved. Small comments can still be processed, but you don't need to return the adjusted manuscript to the thesis committee. It may also happen that chapters have to be rewritten, but your supervisors will try to avoid this. Substantive suggestions/comments will be given to the supervisor or directly to you.

3.2 Approval by thesis committee

When the thesis committee approves your manuscript, then form II will be completed by the dean. Then you can approach the Beadle(pedel) for planning your graduation date. The email address of the Beadle(pedel) is: pedel@vu.nl

Think in advance about which days you definitely do not want to do your defense and list the vacations of your (co-) supervisors. The Beadle will offer you two preliminary dates and if they are not suitable for you, you will get two new ones, just as long until you find a suitable date. If it is difficult to get all supervisors and co-supervisors together, you can fix the date on which they are available immediately before you inform the thesis committee. If one member is absent, he/she can possibly be replaced in agreement with (co-) supervisor. Also, additional members can be asked to participate in the opposition. You can announce changes in the opposition to the secretariat of the dean of your department. Often your supervisor organizes this with the dean, so check this with you supervisor to avoid duplication.

3.3 Tips

- Bring your thesis, if possible, to the thesis committee yourself. Most committee members will appreciate this.
- The layout of your manuscript for the thesis committee does not have to be perfect but preferably place the tables in the right place.
- Prepare yourself for the opponents: get familiar with their expertise (e.g. read their latest articles on the subject).
- Your supervisor probably identifies what the opponents are probably going to ask, to prevent overlap in the questions of your opponents. It is advised to schedule an informal meeting with your supervisors a few days before the defense to ask whether there are specific things that you should keep in mind or study before your defense.

4. Printing your thesis

4.1 Printing offers

Once you have submitted your manuscript to the committee, you can start looking for a printing company. You can print the manuscript once you have received approval from the thesis committee and you have processed their feedback. It is advisable to request multiple (identical) printing offers from different companies. Make an estimate of the number of pages and number of copies you will need, and do not forget to ask the additional costs of extra pages and copies. Many printing companies have a website where you can apply for an (free) offer. You could also invite different printing companies to present their work to you. Some well-known printers are Proefschrift All In One (AIO), Mostert & Van Onderen, Ponsen&Looijen, and Gildeprint or Ipskamp. Ponsen&Looijen gives 10% discount if you have been present at one of their presentations. When you send Gildeprint a list of email addresses of up to 12 people/colleagues, you can get a 12% discount, 1% per person on

your list. Always try to negotiate (for example, you can arrange a group of fellow PhD candidates that will have their thesis printed by the same company and arrange a group discount). Take a careful look at the offers you receive. It may be that printers seem very cheap but they have budgeted the costs of a black and white title page instead of a colour print. In addition, you can get some discount because you are a doctoral candidate at the VU and/or because your research is funded by NWO. This does not automatically mean that the invoice will be lower compared to other printers. Also ask explicitly for any additional costs (e.g. delivery).

It is also advisable to check the costs for making changes in your document. Some printers allow you to submit a number of pages or even a complete trial file, which they then check for page numbering, footnotes, fonts, etc. Any errors may often be changed free of charge at this stage, as opposed to errors in the official printing proofs.

You can also request an offer from VU publishers. They make a cover for you in the style of the faculty, ask for an ISBN number, provide a template for the inside, and print your thesis and sell it in the VU bookstore or make it available for sale in stores. Delivery time is 3 weeks. They are slightly more expensive, but the advantage is that your thesis will be on the market as a book and thus remains available (printing on demand).

4.2 Layout

- Request an ISBN number from the printer or the University Library. The price is about 25 Euros.
- You can do the formatting yourself but you can also outsource it, for example by asking a graphic designer. The costs will vary between 500-1500 Euros (incl. formatting the cover). For example, experienced and relatively inexpensive designers are for example Guus Gijben (Proefschrift-aio.nl), Esther Ris (www.proefschriftomslag.nl), Menno Hoop (www.mennohoop.nl) or Jeroen van Wijngaarden (www.proefschrift-opmaken.nl).
- Make sure that you know exactly what program you need to format the thesis in order to properly deliver your files.
- You often need to format your cover in a special software program (please check with your printing company!). If you do not have this program and / or are not familiar with it, you need to find someone who can help you, or you can outsource the layout of the cover. Some printers have various software programs files with default settings for the cover.
- You can place the tables in between in text, but you can also choose to place them after the results and before the discussion in every chapter.
- You can format your manuscript to the actual size of your thesis or you can deliver it to your printing company in A4 size (= size of your manuscript for the reading committee) which is then reduced by the printing company to the proper size. If you opt for the latter, please check if everything is still readable.
- Ask the printer for advice on the width of the margins (or look at their information on thesis printing), have a look at other theses to see what you like and mirror the margins of the left and right pages. Sometimes the advice of printing company's on margins is very spacious (the wider the margin, the more pages you need, the more they earn!).
- When you are formatting your thesis one chapter at a time, please make sure that the settings of all chapters are exactly the same (so always insert page numbers in the same way, same margins, etc.).
- Do not make PDF files with the Adobe Writer, but with Adobe Distiller! Procedure is as follows: make a print file in Word via your own postscript printer / print file and then create a PDF with Adobe Distiller of the print file. Only then you will be sure that the right settings and font are included For this last step you need a file from the printing company, so you can use their font and settings. When you are making your thesis one chapter at a time, make

each chapter a PDF with Adobe Distiller, and then add these together using e.g. Adobe Writer.

- When planning your graduation date you get a date by which the Beadle (Pedel) should receive five printed copies of your thesis (approximately 5 weeks before your defense). Take this into account when planning the preparation and printing of your thesis (ask the printing company to also take this into account).

4.3 Delivery by the printing company

Indicate clearly at which address you want the thesis to be delivered. Check whether they deliver themselves or for instance use DHL/Post-NL services. If you have given your private correspondence address to the printing company it is possible that the dissertations will be delivered there. This is not convenient, so be sure to check the delivery address with the printing company. Call the day before delivery is scheduled to check if you can indeed expect the theses the next day and at what time. It is wise to ask them to put a sticky note with the following message on the box with dissertations: "Call (your mobile number) upon receipt", then it is less likely to go wrong.

4.4 Planning

Discuss your timeline with the printing company carefully. Most companies need at least 3 weeks to print and send your thesis. Count on 4 weeks from the moment you send the test files. The timing of printing is generally very tight. Give your private (email) address for correspondence with the printer; VU-mail sometimes has a few days delay or if your contract is expired it may be that your VU-mail will be shut off suddenly. Especially sending the files with your cover design can cause delays: due to their size and/or the extension of the files they do not always go through the firewall. Furthermore the upload tool of the printing company may be temporarily off. Of course you can also send these files on a CD/by post/via dropbox/wetransfer. To be sure, count on a few extra days in your schedule for the printing. Also make sure you schedule time for proofreading and correcting proofs. Sometimes you only get 48 hours to do this.

4.5 Tips

- Ask friends and colleagues to read one chapter each to check lay-out/text/tables etc.
- At the annual ProVU PhD day printers' representatives are often present and they usually give away discount cards.
- Ask for a timeline at the printing company, so that you can make a schedule. Often at least one thing does not go according to plan, so keep this in mind when you are planning.

5. Sending your thesis

5.1 The mailing list

Together with you doctoral supervisor/daily supervisor you will put together the mailing list for sending your thesis. The list consists of two parts:

1. Relations of the EMGO⁺ Institute:

To draw attention to your thesis, the management of EMGO created a mailing list consisting of internal and external relations (e.g. directors of EMGO, deans of the VU University and VU University medical centre, relevant department deans and heads from other universities, and organisations like RIVM, TNO, NIVEL etc.). Please hand in a digital copy of your thesis (in pdf) to the EMGO secretary's office (secretariaat.emgo@vumc.nl), they will take care of the digital distribution of your thesis to the mailing list together with the notice that hard-copy versions can be requested from the author. It is

advised to reserve about 25 hard copies of your thesis for these requests. Of course, you may send as many hard-copies as you would like, but this is on your own expense. When you have a hard copy of your thesis, the director of EMGO+ would like to receive two copies. These can be delivered to the EMGO+ Secretary.

2. A self-specified selection, for example:

- a. All staff involved in the project (± 25);
- b. A selection of the other EMGO academic staff (± 10);
- c. A selection of national or international experts on the specific topic of the thesis (± 10);
- d. Also consult with your (co) supervisors about other relevant contacts.

5.2 Sending a (digital) version of your thesis

At least five weeks prior to the PhD ceremony, five copies of the thesis should be submitted to the Beadle(pedel) of the University. The registrar/pedel will send the thesis to the Rector Magnificus, to the Doctorate Board, to the Executive Board and to the University Library at least four weeks prior to the PhD ceremony.

You are obliged to send the digital version of your thesis to the VU and for this you have to sign a license agreement (it is present in the information that you receive from the registrar/pedel). If you have not done this, the defense of your thesis cannot take place. To obtain it you should send the Dutch summary, English summary, title page and cover in separate files and in addition your entire thesis. Furthermore, you should make arrangements with publishers of the scientific articles in your thesis regarding embargoes.

Eight weeks before the date of your defense you should return the license in an envelope to the University Library. Six weeks before the date of your defense you need to send cover, title page, Dutch summary Dutch, English summary and the complete thesis in PDF to the University Library. You will get an access code (*in Dutch: promotie ID*) from the registrar/pedel.

In the license agreement, you will have to indicate which of the following three situations are applicable to every chapter in your thesis:

- You are in possession of the full copyright of a chapter: there is no obstacle in making this chapter available through the University Library website (for instance papers published in BMC journals);
- You have transferred the copyright of a chapter to a publisher. In this case check with the publisher whether you are allowed to make the chapter available to a University Library and under what embargo period. You can find this information in the agreement with the publisher or visit: www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo.php (an overview of the policies of many leading publishers regarding copyright);
- The chapter is not published yet; you can specify how long you want an embargo period to last. The license agreement states that you must eventually deal with the publisher on the embargo when your paper is accepted. A copy of the agreement on the embargo should be sent to the University Library, because of the embargo duration on your complete dissertation.

5.3 Tips

- Be prepared: make mailing lists, print invitations for a party, arrange envelopes and get some help to put everything together. When everything is ready in envelopes, make an appointment with the transport service to send off your mail items.

- Make sure that the invitation for your defense/party is ready to assemble immediately with your thesis.
- Arrange colleagues or your assistants/ paronymphs, for packing the theses and invitations.
- Send your thesis to the members of the Thesis Committee (*in Dutch: leescommissie*). The Beadle (Pedel) will send copies to the Doctoral Examination Committee of your faculty (*in Dutch: promotiecommissie*).
- The theses for your opposition members should be accompanied by a standard letter on behalf of you and your (co) supervisors.
- NOTE: some people may be on multiple mailing lists. You can send your dissertation at your own discretion. Others you may decide not to send it to because the subject of your research really has no relevance for their own research.

6. Compensation for printing costs

6.1 Compensation from your department

At EMGO, no budget is available for the reimbursement of printing costs of your thesis. Some departments/professors have a budget to compensate you for the printing costs of dissertations you have sent to employees of the EMGO institute. Check this with your professor. The claim for compensation may be made in the way you are normally reimbursed for your expenses (for employees VUmc via the PIL form). The signature of the responsible professor should be on the form because he/she provides the funding. The form must be accompanied by supporting documents (a photocopy of the bill from the printing company and a print out of the mailing list used for the declared ones). The fee is calculated in the following manner: € 0.03 per printed page times the number of theses required for the EMGO + Institute times 1.5, to a maximum of € 750, -.

6.2 Funds

Once the manuscript has been sent to the reading committee, you may approach funding agencies to raise money for the printing costs of your dissertation. If you start at this point in time with raising money, the name of funders can still be included in your thesis. You might think of the Heart Foundation, Kurt Lewin Institute, KWF, the Anna-fund, or pharmaceutical companies. Check other theses or nuffic grantfinder to get ideas for possible funding agencies. On the EMGO website you can find a sample letter (in Dutch) you can use to approach funding agencies. It is wise to call an agency first to enquire whether you have a chance, because it will save you a lot of time. Only names of funders can be included in the thesis, logo's or symbols are not allowed, make sure you communicate this to the funders.

6.3 Dissertation remuneration

Until the end of 2016, each PhD candidate will receive a dissertation remuneration of € 500, - from the College of Deans as a contribution towards the costs. Information at:

Beadle's office VU (pedel), Room 2D-05
 De Boelelaan 1105
 1081 HV Amsterdam
 Tel. 020 – 5985309 / 5985307
 Email: pedel@vu.nl

From 2017 onwards, this remuneration will be covered by the faculties. All faculties will include an amount for the dissertation remuneration based on the estimated number of PhD defenses in their budgets.

6.4 Promotion bonus

The collective agreement of academic hospitals states (Article 17.4.4) that PhD candidates who successfully finish their thesis within their employment period are entitled to a one-time promotional bonus of 750 euros gross. Finishing your PhD within your employment period means obtaining approval from the thesis committee before the end of your contract.

This applies only to candidates with a PhD / OiO appointment at the VU or VU Medical Centre, not to junior researchers. You can claim the money by letting your doctoral supervisor/co-supervisor fill out a change form and to sign for approval (see P&O intranet VUmc). For more information:

<https://www.vumc.com/branch/phd/>

6.5 Tips

- Be on time with applying for grants to cover printing costs, this allows you to include names of the funders in your thesis. Only names of funders can be included in the thesis, logos are not allowed, make sure you communicate this to the funders.
- Check the website of VU and VUmc for possible funding agencies.
- At the NUFFIC website (almost) all scholarships / funds in the Netherlands are listed. Perhaps there is also a funding agency that is applicable to you. <https://www.epnuffic.nl/en>

7. Defense

7.1 Beadle/Pedel

When the date for your defense has been set, the Beadle(pedel) will send you a folder including information on:

- Number of dissertation copies that the Beadle expects from you;
- Date at which dissertation copies should be delivered;
- Example of a title page;
- Leaflet with the formula to use at the defense ceremony;
- Attire/ clothing rental addresses, addresses photographers;
- Forms to order a reception;
- Form for the audio-visual services;
- Writing a "press release";
- Statement regarding scientific integrity.

You can set a date for your defense at the beadle. Take into account the fact that the completion of the thesis (layout, abstract, sponsorship, etc.) and preparing your defense are time-consuming.

7.2 Paranympths

The paranympths are usually friends, colleagues, and sometimes family members. Paranympths may also answer questions from the opponents. This never happens, but it is allowed. During the reception and party the paranympths are the ones that make sure everything runs smoothly, as an example, they can label and secure received gifts.

7.3 Defense try-out

Usually about 2 to 3 weeks before your defense you'll arrange a try-out defense. Ask colleagues and supervisors to read a chapter of your dissertation and to ask difficult questions. Try to provide variation in the 'type/background' of opponents. Make sure your laymen's talk is ready to present to

your try-out opponents. Pay attention to style, pace, whether or not you are repeating questions, not being defensive, being to-the-point etc. Make an appointment with the audio-visual department to test your presentation in terms of readability (font size, contrast) and make arrangements for the defense itself (put file on computer, handing CD with music if necessary). Also you can schedule a meeting to brainstorm with your (co)supervisors about 'all' possible questions chapter by chapter. Also have a look at reviewers' comments on your articles, questions at earlier presentations, comments from the opponents on your manuscript, and be aware of the favourite subjects/chapters of opponents, etc.

7.4 Symposium

You may choose to organize a symposium. Discuss this with your (co) supervisors. Often, a (co)supervisor brings it up herself. For any foreign opponents this will make their visit more attractive and they can also give a presentation themselves. As a PhD candidate it is usually not necessary to present during the symposium.

7.5 Promotion

The committee that will question you during the defense consists of the thesis committee (at least 5 members) and 2-3 additional members. Make sure you know your thesis by heart! Every member will probably have his/her own favourite subject, so you can know in advance where everyone's question will be about.

From about 45 minutes before the ceremony on the day of the defense a preparation room is available for you and your paranymphs (appropriately called 'the sweatbox'). About 20 minutes before the ceremony the Beadle (pedel) will come in to tell you about the defense protocol. A precise description of the programme during the defense can be found in the appendix. Often, the professor who chairs during your defense will contact you in advance for a short interview. Try not to worry too much. According to many persons that preceded you, it is easier than it looks!

7.6 Reception

In the information you received from the Beadle (pedel) there is a form with four standard reception packages from the caterer of the VU (Sodexo), but you can also specify your own specific package. In the latter case you can download a form from the Internet (VU -> facility service -> catering facilities). There is also a pdf document with the total list of bites and drinks, including pricing.

There are two rates: one with and one without assistance from catering personnel, if you order catering without personnel you are responsible to clean up yourself and leave the room tidy. Sometimes there is confusion regarding which pricing is applicable for the reception, therefore it is important to check this in advance and preferably by e-mail so you won't get into a discussion afterwards. For more information please check the caterers website or contact them through email or phone (www.vu.sodexoeducation.nl/en/)

Regarding the quantities: order coffee / tea 'economical' (often there is something more in the can). When it comes to soft drinks/wine you might count on higher quantities, because you'll only pay what you used during the reception. It is not mandatory to have your reception at the VU, you can also have it elsewhere, The Basket or the Boeletuin for example, is a good alternative.

7.7 Dinner

It is a tradition is to treat your project-team and family members to a dinner on the day of the defense. Obviously this is not mandatory and you can also choose to do things differently. For example, by inviting a broader selection of people to a buffet-style dinner.

7.8 Party

Be on time with searching for a party location, especially when your defense is on a Thursday or Friday. When you arrange the location before printing your thesis the invitation for dinner/party can be printed at the same time with the right location on a 'bookmark' which you can insert in copies of your thesis.

7.8 Tips

- Organize a symposium for your defense.
- Is there an international participant in your committee? Offer to help with finding a hotel, flight, and recommend nice restaurants, things to do etc. in Amsterdam.
- Start early with thinking about who you want to ask as paranymphs during your defense.
- Book tip: 'Klaar in vier jaar' by: De Bruin and Hertz (in Dutch).
- Consider buying presents for supervisors, research assistants, and possibly opposition members.
- Think of music you want to play before, during breaks and after your defense ceremony. You can test your music and presentation a few days before the ceremony. To do this contact the VU audio-visual support at algemeen.avc@vu.nl.
- Think about whether you would like to hire a photographer and sound recording/film recordings (provided by the audio-visual service).
- Please note that certain times of the year (just before the summer and Christmas holidays) and certain days (Friday) are extra popular for defense ceremonies and that there are limited options available.
- Remember that it is not possible to have your defense in July and / or August (summer break).
- Think of a reply to the 10 questions that you would not want to get during your defense.
- For guests with hearing impairments the VU can provide headsets. The hostesses distribute these approximately 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony at the hall.

- In the Aula of the VU the projector is widescreen. This means that candidates can make their PowerPoint presentation in with 16:9 settings. Then there will be no black bars down the side of the slides, which has a more professional appearance. PowerPoints' standard settings are 4:3, but can be easily changed in "Design" and "page-design"
- It is more appropriate to say "learn-it" opponent, than "learned opponent".

8. What are the costs?

You are in control of the costs, but it is inevitable that you are going to make some expenses. As mentioned earlier, you may approach funds to cover (part of) the printing costs. A rough indication of the costs based on the experience of former PhD- candidates:

- Dissertation: printing the thesis 2500-3500 euro's. This depends on you're the quantity, layout and whether you hire a graphic designer for your layout and cover.
- Clothing: 150-450 Euros;
- Reception: 350-700 Euros;
- Dinner: 20-40 euro per person;
- Party: 1200-4500 Euros.

8.1 Tax

The costs for the defense are tax deductible as "training costs". This is because the defense leads to an improvement in the financial position of the candidate. The costs surrounding the ceremony are also tax deductible, such as the rental of clothing for the occasion for yourself and / or your paranymphs. The costs of your reception are also included. For more information see the IRS: <http://promotiewijzer.nl/financiele-zaken/promoveren-en-de-belastingdienst.html>

9. General tips and tricks

- Plan days off or a vacation for yourself during the busy times.
- Send your introduction, general discussion and summary in English to a native speaker for a language-check.
- During the 4 years of your PhD, keep your planning in mind.
- Remember that the delivery of the final reports for funder(s) of your project is the responsibility of the project leader (as well as providing progress reports).
- If you have an appointment at the VU medical center you have a personal budget (this can be found on your pay check), make sure to use this budget before the end of your contract, or it will expire (unless you immediately continue with another job at the VU University Medical Center or at another UMC then you can keep your personal budget).

10. What do you do after your graduation?

Well, you have your thesis printed, sent and defended. The reception and the party are behind you. Congratulations, you've earned a doctorate! And now ...?

Hopefully during your PhD you have thought about it and discussed this question extensively with senior colleagues, for instance. You may already have taken some concrete actions to secure your career within or outside the scientific community. Possibly your supervisor helped you here, or maybe not at all, and you now have no idea on how to proceed. To ensure that you do not get disillusioned and end up in unemployment needlessly, we recommend that at the beginning of your

last year of your PhD you reflect on the question of what you want to do after your promotion. We recommend you to discuss the topic with you (co) supervisors. What opportunities does he/she see for you? And if there is no scientific career for you, what kind of job fits your interest and skills beyond the research community? Do you even know what kind of knowledge and skills you have? Which competencies have you developed during your PhD? And which skills do jobs outside of the scientific community require?

You will usually be able to discuss these topics with your (co)supervisors. In addition, you can discuss this topic with fellow PhD candidates. Further, both the VU and VUmc offer various tools for career orientation.

ProVU organizes career days; the Amstel Academy offers trainings especially for PhD candidates; and career counsellors offered for instance by VUmc can help you finding the answers to a specific question or explore the possibilities of your future career.

10.1 Career orientation

The VUmc offers every employee a career orientation program once every 5 years. You can sign up at the career center yourself for this program (intranet/afdelingen/thema/carrierecentrum/) but you should discuss signing up for this career orientation program beforehand with your (co) supervisor. This program starts with an interview with the career counsellor: What are your questions and problems and will an orientation program be able to answer it? If so, the counsellor draws up an action plan with you.. In this process your get assignments, you will have some networking conversations to improve your network and you learn the skills to find job openings. The career counsellor supports you through coaching and teaches you practical skills. The career center can help you find either more motivation to continue your current job or to get a new position. This career orientation program is freely available for you!

The career center is also available to employees who already know what they want. The career counsellors help you explore, create, network and to improve your resume. For employees of the VU, the workshop “apply effectively” is available (in Dutch only), it contains the modules: skills, networking, resume and cover letter, job interview.

10.2 Relevant training at VUmc Amstel Academy

Graduated and then?

This course deals with the question: What do I really want? And what do I need to get there? The course intends to help PhD candidates in the final phase of their PhD and staff who have recently finished their PhD.

- Guidance on policy and management
This is a course for scientists who want to familiarize themselves with policy and / or management, specifically suitable for 3rd and 4th year PhD candidates as part of their orientation to their future career. In this course you get an idea of the roles of policy and manager within and outside VU / VUmc, in order to make a good assessment of whether a job in policy or management suit you.
- Individual counselling for scientists
Many scientists report that they have trouble balancing work and private life and do not function optimally. Perhaps you recognize this. Whether your balance between work and private life is in jeopardy or you want to do something else, but do not know what, the Amstel Academy has coaches that can offer support. An individual coaching program generally consists of 6-10 sessions from 1 to 1.5 hours. The sessions are obviously

confidential. At the beginning an interview takes place to clarify your problems and questions.

- Career
PhD candidates are encouraged to think about their career after the PhD program. If you need help you can contact the career coaches of the VU. If you are interested in career advice, please include contact Leo Miller of the Study Course and Career.

See also: <http://www.vumc.nl/onderwijs/map/cat-ontwikkeling-academici/>

10.3 How to pay for your career activities

Some of the options mentioned before are free of charge; though others may cost quite a lot (e.g. individual coaching) Discuss with your (co) supervisors if this can be paid for by your project/department budget. If you have a personal budget it can be devoted to this. And if not, you can also invest in your future yourself.

Do not wait until the last minute to reflect on these career questions, talk about it with others, and especially make use of the opportunities available to you free of charge.

Appendix: Timetable for the day of the defense

11:15 / 13:15 / 15:15

- The PhD candidate and paranymphs will go to the “sweat room” and around 11:25 / 13:25 / 15:25 the registrar/pedel will come in to give an explanation about the ceremony.
- An employee of audiovisual services comes in to check if everything works ok.
- In the meantime your audience arrives .

Around 11.40 / 13.40 / 15.40

- the registrar/pedel will take the PhD candidate to the council (closed meeting). Here, the chairman, the supervisory committee (your promotors and co-supervisors) and the opponents are present and the PhD candidate will have a brief conversation with them.
- Next, the PhD candidate and paranymphs are directed outside to stand in procession in the hallway

11:45 / 13:45 / 15:45

- Together with the registrar/pedel, chairman, supervisory committee and the opponents the candidate will walk in procession into the auditorium.
- Audience in the auditorium will stand up when procession arrives.
- The candidate and paranymphs will turn left and go with the Beadle to the stage. The others will sit on the side, with the exception of the chairman.
- The chairman gestures that everyone can sit down again.
- The chairman invites the candidate to give a ‘layman’s’ presentation (takes about 10 minutes).

11:55 / 13:55 / 15:55

- Supervisory committee and opponents take place on the stage.
- The candidate speaks official formula prior to defense
- Start defense.

12:45 / 14:45 / 16:45

- Registrar/pedel enters through the aisle.
- Registrar/pedel interrupts the defense with the words " hora est '.
- The candidate speaks another official formula.
- Together with the supervisory committee and the opponents the candidate walks in procession through the aisle (candidate is last).

12:45 to 12:55 hours/14:45 to 14:55 hours/16:45 to 16:55 hours

- Chairman, advisory committee and opponents go into a room to discuss, candidate waits outside on a bench.
- Candidate gets called in (closed meeting)and signs the papers handed to him.
- Together with the supervisory committee and the opponents the candidate walks into the auditorium in procession.
- The audience has to stand up again.

12:55 to 13:05 hours/14:55 to 15:05 hours/16:55 to 17:05 hours

- The candidate walks to the left side of the stage.
- Supervisory committee and chairman sign the diploma.
- Official handover of the diploma.
- Speech by (co)supervisor.
- Chairman speaks votum and greeting (public should stand).
- Candidate walks out of the room: first registrar/pedel, then the candidate and paranympths, then supervisory committee and opposition, then family, then rest of the audience.

13.05 / 15.05 / 17.05 - ?pm
RECEPTION /DINNER/PARTY!

Furthermore useful to know:

- Family of the candidate is sitting on front row, on left side.
- In general, the candidate should stand when the committee is also (but if all goes well, the chairman will handle this).
- This is your day - You're going to graduate, so do not forget to enjoy yourself.

GOOD LUCK!