

# Regulations for PhD Research at The Hague University of Applied Sciences

THUAS, adopted by the Executive Board on 6 October 2020, modified on December 7 2021

## Earning a PhD at THUAS

The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS) wants to encourage and facilitate its staff members to conduct PhD research. THUAS offers yearly vouchers for this purpose. During PhD research, a staff member will work on an in-depth knowledge question, under the guidance of a professor and supervisor. This knowledge question contributes to a research programme of a research group or a Centre of Expertise at THUAS.

PhD research provides the opportunity to develop professional skills as a practice-based researcher. In addition, these skills and knowledge can also be used in their functions such as lecturer or policy advisor at THUAS.

## Opportunities for PhD candidates

Via the NWO Doctoral Grant for Teachers, lecturers can apply for external funding for their PhD research. Since this is a national competitive grant, it's important for staff members to prepare their application as well as they can. We recommend the timely involvement of the Funding Support Office ([fso@hhs.nl](mailto:fso@hhs.nl)) to assist with the application and evaluation process. For more information on applying for a NWO Doctoral Grant for Teachers, go to [www.nwo.nl/en](http://www.nwo.nl/en)

In addition, THUAS staff members may apply for a pre-PhD voucher to obtain an exemption of 0.2 FTE for up to a year, to properly prepare their external application. The purpose of the pre-PhD voucher is to develop the research proposal into a complete grant application for external funding.

The ambition of THUAS is to fund PhD research as much as possible with external funding sources. Staff members who are not eligible for the NWO Doctoral Grant for Teachers (staff members without any teaching responsibilities) – or employees whose proposal has been rejected by NWO - and are also not eligible for any other grants, have a limited opportunity to apply for a THUAS PhD voucher. This voucher will provide a staff member with a 0.4 FTE exemption for a maximum of five years to conduct their PhD research. The aim is to award at least 1 PhD voucher each year (which at least meets the basic quality requirements).

## Who can apply for a pre-PhD or PhD voucher?

Staff members with a permanent employment contract at the university of applied sciences or who will be employed permanently (D3) may submit an application. The scope of employment must be such that if the voucher is awarded, the staff member still has at least 0.4 FTE available to perform other activities for the faculty or the department. The candidate has also obtained a master's degree (Higher Education and Research Act, Section 7.18) or has obtained a University of Applied Sciences-diploma (HBO) prior to 1 September, 2002, which allows the candidate to engage in PhD research (Higher Education and Research Act, Section 18.37) or has written permission of an authorised person at the university with which the supervisor is associated, to confirm that the candidate is allowed to start their PhD research track.

The research project must fit into the agreements made during the R&D cycle and have the approval of the candidate's manager. The dean or director of service department and the manager agree to a dispensation for research activities (0.2 FTE in case of pre-PhD research and 0.4 FTE in case of PhD research).

The research project fits within the research program of a THUAS research groups or Centre of Expertise. The application has been coordinated with a THUAS professor who will be responsible for supervising the research if the voucher is awarded. The professor finds the candidate capable of conducting the proposed research activities. The leading professor of the Centre of Expertise will be informed about the application for a pre-PhD or PhD voucher.

### **Application and evaluation procedure**

Depending on the available budget, there will be one or two application rounds a year. The deadline for a round will be announced via the employee network at least two months before the deadline. The number of available vouchers per round depends on the available resources and prior funding allocated. The available budget and what this means for the number of vouchers to be awarded will be announced prior to a round. The start date of the vouchers are also communicated prior to a round.

Applications can be submitted in writing via [promotiecommissie@hhs.nl](mailto:promotiecommissie@hhs.nl). See Appendix 1 for the format of voucher applications. Applicants will receive confirmation of their application within one week after the deadline. The application will also be verified for completeness and the subject matter will be reviewed. The applicant will also receive a written confirmation.

#### *PhD Committee*

The content of the applications will be evaluated by an internal PhD committee, consisting of at least three THUAS professors. The committee members are nominated by the Research portfolio holder of the Executive Board. The composition of the committee takes into account a variety of expertise and methodological backgrounds. The PhD committee is supported by Team Research (OKC) and can be contacted via [promotiecommissie@hhs.nl](mailto:promotiecommissie@hhs.nl).

If a committee member is involved in the content of a pre-PhD application or PhD application, this member shall recuse himself or herself from the application in question. If this results in an insufficient number of evaluators to evaluate the content of the application, the committee may ask an expert (THUAS professor or senior researcher) to evaluate the application. The expert cannot be involved in the content of the application.

The PhD committee evaluates the application in writing and has the option of inviting candidates to provide a verbal explanation of their application. The content of the application will be evaluated based on the assessment criteria described below. The committee may solicit independent advice from an (external) expert if a proposal falls outside of the committee's area of expertise. The committee will determine the final evaluation of each application on its own merits, based on the project proposal and, if applicable, the additional verbal explanation provided by the candidate. If more applications than can be funded with the available resources receive a positive evaluation, the committee will rank the applications based on their quality. Because of the preference for external funding sources, pre-PhD vouchers have priority over a PhD voucher if the quality is comparable. We strive to award at least 1 PhD voucher annually (meets at least basic quality).

### *Decision-making and announcement*

Based on the recommendation of the PhD committee and the available resources, the Research portfolio holder of the Executive Board will decide on awarding the pre-PhD vouchers and PhD vouchers. The goal is to make a decision on awarding research funds within six weeks after the application deadline. The candidate will be notified of the decision in writing.

In case of rejection, the candidate will be allowed a one-time opportunity to submit a revised application in the next round. The revised application will outline how the proposal has been revised based on the earlier evaluation.

### **Assessment criteria**

The committee evaluates the applications according to the following criteria:

- The candidate's profile: the candidate's CV, motivation and research experience demonstrates affinity with the research topic and sufficient quality and potential to conduct a successful PhD research.
- Composition of the supervision: the professor involved and other supervisors have specific expertise to provide subject-matter supervision for the PhD research.
- Quality of the research proposal:
  - o The proposal contains a clearly defined problem definition and substantiated central research question.
  - o The intended research methods are aligned with the central research question\*
  - o The relevance for education, society and knowledge development are clearly described\*
  - o The application contains realistic planning, including concretely defined intended (interim) results\*
- Alignment with the Centre of Expertise: the application is aligned with the research programme of the Centre of Expertise. Results from the research are knowledge products that contribute to the issues that the Centre of Expertise addresses.
- Alignment with education and/or other activities within the university of applied sciences: lecturers and students engage in research whenever possible. Results of the research contribute to the connection with education and/or external partners.

*\* ) These components of the research plan will only receive a positive/negative assessment in case of a research proposal; the committee does provide feedback on these components in case of a pre-PhD application*

### **Implementation**

After awarding the voucher, the candidate contacts the Funding Support Office ([fso@hhs.nl](mailto:fso@hhs.nl)) to plan an initial meeting. This initial meeting will be held with a staff member of the Funding Support Office, in the presence of the candidate, the supervising professor and the manager. During this meeting, the start date of the voucher and any other agreements will be determined.

The dean or director of service department signs the report and the RIO request form in agreement to activate the voucher.

The following expenses can be claimed under the RIO number: conference and accommodation expenses, expenses for courses or external support for the purpose of research skills, material costs required to conduct the intended research methods. For orders, reservations and assignments, regular procedures for ordering and purchasing must be followed. Expense claims must be submitted to and be approved by the budget holder of the RIO number. The Funding Support Office will verify all expenses afterwards. If the expenditure exceeds the available budget, the Funding Support Office will book any additional costs against the cost centre of the budget manager.

The PhD candidate will be supervised by an (external) supervisor and a THUAS professor. It is preferred that the professor acts as co-supervisor and the daily supervision is provided by the professor. During the research project the PhD candidate will be provided education and support. Where possible it will be coordinated and/or implemented within the research group or the Centre of Expertise where the research project is housed. Any agreements about the content and cost of external supervision and education must be made explicit and be part of a degree programme agreement with the institution where the candidate is conducting their PhD research.

### **Monitoring**

Any requests for changes during the period of the voucher must be evaluated by the PhD committee ([promotiecommissie@hhs.nl](mailto:promotiecommissie@hhs.nl)). A request to temporarily interrupt the voucher must be accompanied by an explanation. In case of an interruption in the research track, an agreement must be made regarding the expected length of the interruption. In case of an interruption longer than six months, the supervising professor and direct manager will discuss with the candidate if the research can be resumed. After an interruption of more than a year, the voucher will be void. If the candidate wishes to resume the research after an interruption of more than a year, the candidate must submit another application, according to the regular evaluation procedure.

If the PhD committee agrees to the change request or request for temporary interruption, the Funding Support Office will implement the change.

### *Pre-PhD voucher*

The pre-PhD voucher is valid for a maximum of one year for no more than 0.2 FTE.

During this year, the candidate works on an (external) funding application for a PhD project. During the pre-PhD year, it's decided together with the professor who will be the intended supervisor and who will act as co-supervisor. The intended supervisor signs a statement of intent to provide subject-matter supervision if the PhD research application is awarded.

The candidate contacts the Funding Support Office in a timely manner to ask for support in an external funding application, such as the NWO Research Grant for Teachers.

The candidate informs the PhD committee, the dean or the director of service department and the leading professor as soon as the proposal has been submitted to the NWO or another funder and will inform if the application has been awarded or denied.

Two months before the end date of the pre-PhD voucher, the candidate will submit a written progress report to the PhD committee, consisting of a (draft) funding application and an overview of the planned timeline for the research project. If the candidate forgoes a funding proposal, the committee will be informed of this.

#### *PhD voucher*

The PhD voucher is valid for a maximum of five years for up to 0.4 FTE.

The progress of the research project is part of the R&D meetings with the manager of the PhD candidate. A PhD candidate who is funded by a PhD voucher will also submit a yearly progress report (see Appendix 3 for the format) to the PhD committee.

If the progress report raises any concerns about the progress of the research project, it will be evaluated if the project can be adjusted, possibly with additional support, within a reasonable period. The PhD committee will advise the Research portfolio holder of the Executive Board on the viability of the project, including any additional agreements on adjusting the project. If the PhD committee issues a negative recommendation about the viability of the project, the Research portfolio holder of the Executive Board may decide to stop the voucher of the PhD research project based on this recommendation.

When the graduation date has been determined, the PhD candidate will inform the PhD committee of the date. The PhD committee will also receive a digital version of the dissertation (via [promotiecommissie@hhs.nl](mailto:promotiecommissie@hhs.nl)). The dissertation will include the following acknowledgement: "This dissertation was partly made possible by The Hague University of Applied Sciences." THUAS will also promote the graduation in its internal and external communication channels.

## Appendix 1 Format for voucher applications

### General information

1. Information applicant: title, name, telephone number, email address
2. Information manager: title, name, faculty/department, function (degree programme manager, unit manager), telephone number, email address
3. Information professor: title, name, faculty, centre of expertise, research group, telephone number, email address
4. Information supervisor: title, name, organisation, faculty/institution, telephone number, email address [*mandatory for PhD voucher, optional for pre-PhD vouchers*]
5. Information co-supervisor and/or other supervisors: title, name, organisation, faculty/institution, telephone number, email address [*Optional*]

### External funding

#### *Pre-PhD application*

What external funding is being requested? If possible indicate when the intended application will be submitted.

#### *PhD application*

#### Employees with teaching duties

Explain why external funding is unavailable. In case of rejection for the NWO Doctoral Grant for Teachers, provide the NWO assessment report with the application.

#### Employees without teaching duties

Provide an explanation of why external funding is not possible. In addition, the PhD committee requests an external review of the PhD voucher application from a lector, senior researcher, professor or associate professor (within or outside of HHs) who is not substantively involved in the application but has knowledge of the research area. To ensure independence, two names (including contact information) should be submitted to the PhD committee **no later than two weeks before the deadline**.

**The PhD committee will ask one of these persons to write a review**, and will share the research proposal with this reviewer on the day of the deadline. In addition to the two names, please provide your name and working title of the research proposal.

### The research proposal

1. Working title of the research proposal
2. Centre of Expertise, research group
3. Describe the research theme with no more than 5 keywords
4. Summary of the research proposal (max 50 words)
5. Research proposal according to the structure below

*Pre-PhD application (max 3000 words):*

- Introduction: describe the research theme, the main problem and the theoretical framework
- The main research question
- Intended research methods: describe the research methods required to answer the research question
- Relevance of the research results for: education, society and knowledge development
- Relevance to the Centre of Expertise
- Relevance to the degree programme and/or other activities within the university of applied sciences

*PhD application (max 4000 words):*

- Introduction: describe the research theme, the main problem and the theoretical framework
- The main research question

- Intended research methods: describe the research methods required to answer the research question. Name and substantiate the research tools to be used.
- Relevance of research results for: education, society and knowledge development. Name where possible tangible intended outcomes (knowledge products, tools, publications).
- Relevance for the Centre of Expertise: describe how the proposal is relevant for the research programme of the Centre of Expertise.
- Relevance to the degree programme and/or other activities within the university of applied sciences: Describe how the PhD research project adds value to your activities within the degree programme or the service department. Describe the agreements made with the degree programme or service department around the intended added value.
- Planning

*PhD application that has been submitted before to an external funder (such as NWO)*

The research proposal may be submitted according to the structure of the external funding programme. Describe in an addendum:

- Relevance for the Centre of Expertise: describe how the proposal is relevant for the research programme of the Centre of Expertise.
- Relevance to the degree programme and/or other activities within the university of applied sciences: Describe how the PhD research project adds value to your activities within the degree programme or the service department. Describe the agreements made with the degree programme or service department around the intended added value.
- If applicable, adapted planning

### **Motivation**

What is your personal motivation for doing PhD research within the university of applied sciences? (maximum of 200 words)

### **Appendices**

1. CV (maximum of two pages), including list of relevant publications, presentations and knowledge products
2. Statement of intention signed by the professor, in which he or she states responsibility for supervising the content of the research activities in case of the voucher being awarded
3. Statement of intention signed by the intended supervisor, in which he or she states responsibility for supervising the content of the PhD research track [*mandatory for PhD vouchers, optional for pre-PhD vouchers*]
4. Approval letter signed by the dean or the director of service department and the manager, providing dispensation for research activities in case the voucher is awarded
5. Recent publication of a knowledge product by the candidate (referral to an open access online document preferred)
6. Letter of permission signed by the candidate for requesting information from HRM for the purpose of diploma requirements and appointment. Include the employee number (as stated on the payment stub).

## Appendix 2 Evaluation form for applicants

Candidate's name:

Title of application:

Voucher: Pre-PhD/PhD

Meeting with the committee: [date]

Final assessment: **Positive/negative**

General explanation:

Assessment criteria	Evaluation	Explanation
Profile of the candidate		
Composition of the supervision		
Problem definition/research question		
Theoretical Framework		
Research Methods	*	
Relevance for education, society and knowledge development	*	
Planning and attendance results	*	
Relevance for Centre of Expertise		
Relevance for degree programme and/or other THUAS activities		

*\* ) These components of the research plan will only receive a positive/negative assessment in case of a research proposal; the committee does provide feedback on these components in case of a pre-PhD application*

## **Appendix 3 Format for progress report for PhD vouchers**

### **General information**

Name of PhD candidate:

Title of PhD research project:

Start date of PhD voucher:

Supervising professor:

Supervisor:

Co-supervisors (if applicable):

### **Progress of PhD research project\***

- Provide a reflection on the progress of the PhD research project (by the PhD candidate)
- If sub-questions and/or methodology of the research has changed: provide an explanation and argument for changes to the research content
- Overview of (interim) results, including publications, presentations and other knowledge products
- Overview of degree programme followed and/or courses taken
- Actualised planning: indicate which activities have already been completed, which activities are still planned and the intended completion date of the PhD research project.

### **Feedback from supervisors**

- Reflection on the progress of the PhD research project
  - o by the supervising professor
  - o by the supervisor
  - o by the manager
- Agreements: if applicable, indicate which additional agreements have been made around the progress of the PhD research project
- Monitoring PhD committee: if applicable, indicate how earlier feedback by the PhD committee in the application process and/or earlier progress report has been included in the PhD research project

\*) If the university and/or an external funder also request an annual progress report, the report can be submitted according to the structure of this external party.