

Amsterdam Public Health
research institute



APH PhD Handbook (VU/VUmc)

Version 14 - February 14, 2023

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1. Aim of this handbook

A Training Plan that is designed by the PhD candidate and supervisors is an important and mandatory aspect of each VU/VUmc PhD trajectory, and should be submitted at the beginning of the PhD trajectory. The main aim of this handbook is to provide an overview of relevant topics pertaining to the training of a VU/VUmc PhD candidate affiliated to the Amsterdam Public Health (APH) research institute. This handbook provides information on procedures concerning doctoral regulations and Hora Finita, Training Plans, supervision (recommendations), Portfolio and 30 ECTS Certificate.

2. VU/VUmc Doctorate regulations

The VU Doctorate regulations apply to APH PhD candidates having an appointment at VU or VUmc. The Doctorate regulations contain information about the access to promotion, the procedure with regards to preparations for the promotion, the tasks and authorities of those involved in the promotion (supervisor, Doctorate Committee, etc.), and dispute regulations. Regarding the education and training of PhD candidates, the Doctorate regulations define that ‘The PhD candidate shall devote at least 30 ECTS (840 hours) to training’. Please click [here](#) for the full version of VU Doctorate regulations. For additional thesis requirements for VUmc candidates we refer you to the [addendum Amsterdam UMC doctorate requirements](#) specified by the Amsterdam UMC Executive Board (by decision on July 7, 2021).

3. HORA FINITA

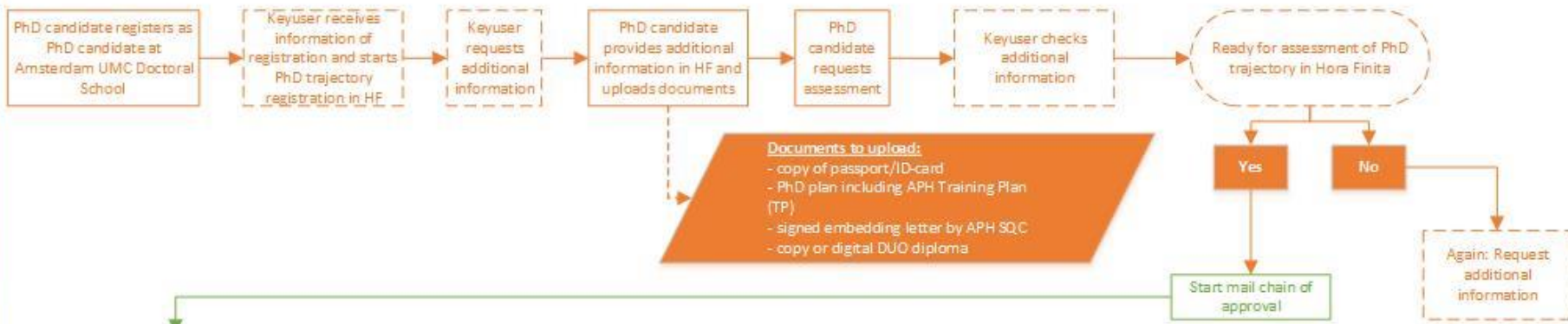
All VU and VUmc PhD candidates have to register their PhD trajectory in Hora Finita. Hora Finita is the registration system for PhD candidates of all faculties of the VU Amsterdam. All processes related to the PhD trajectory, from the admission to and keeping track of the trajectory to the submission of the dissertation, run through this system. This also includes the submission and approval of the Training Plan, and the approval of the Portfolio at the end of the PhD trajectory. Please click [here](#) for the general Hora Finita manual.

Hora Finita has been implemented throughout the campus (VU/VUmc), but the work flow sometimes varies slightly per faculty and research institute. The workflow of the Hora Finita registration for VU APH PhD candidates is comparable to VUmc APH PhD candidates, however some details vary, for instance the key user contact person to start your registration in Hora Finita, or the procedure to get an assessment of your Training Plan by the APH PhD Education Committee. VU APH PhD candidates from Faculty of Science (department Health Sciences) must request review of the Training Plan (accompanied by the APH SQC embedding letter) by sending an email to the APH PhD Education Committee. VU APH PhD candidates of other Faculties must request review of the Training Plan at their own faculty contact person. **Please read the [APH website](#) carefully to see which work flow applies to you.** The specific work flow for VUmc APH PhD candidates, can be found in the flow chart below (also as download on the APH website).

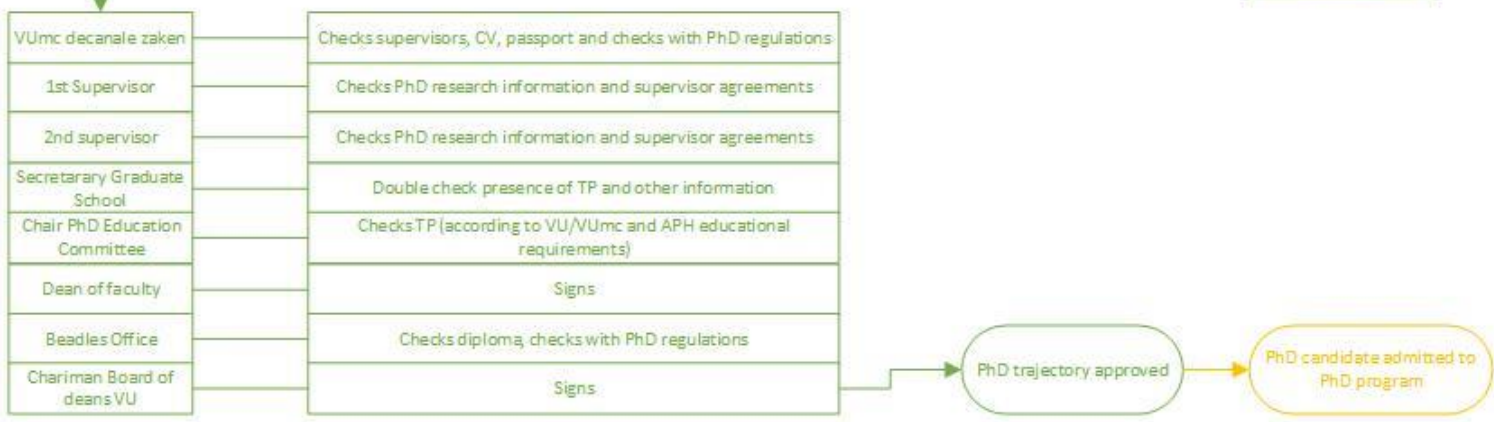


VUMC HORA FINITA FLOWCHART

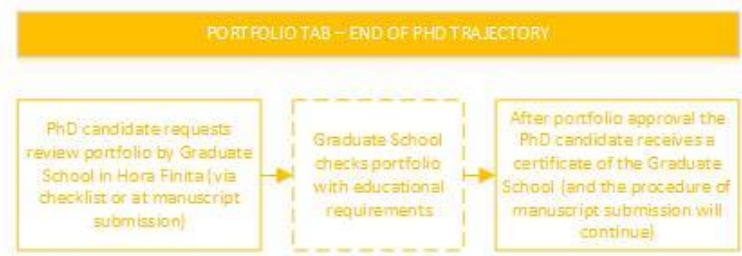
REGISTRATION
ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK



CHAIN OF APPROVAL
CONTENT CHECK



PHD PROGRAM PHASE



The flowchart as presented above is divided in three phases: Registration, Chain of approval, and PhD Program. The Training Plan should be submitted during the registration phase.

Phase 1: Registration

After the initial registration in Hora Finita, VUmc PhD candidates are requested to provide additional information (e.g., personal information, diploma, PhD trajectory information and supervision) and to upload both the officially signed research embedding letter provided by the APH Scientific Quality Committee and the Training Plan in APH template.

Research embedding letter

Every (PhD) research project that will be carried out within APH needs to be registered at the APH Scientific Quality Committee (SQC). The submitted research project will be judged by the corresponding APH program leaders on suitability and relevance to the preferred research program. Following positive judgement, the submitter will receive a signed research embedding letter from the SQC (including a SQC-number: year-xxx). To ensure that the PhD research project is embedded within APH, the signed research embedding letter must be submitted in Hora Finita in the box 'overig' (see Figure 1). For more information regarding the embedding procedure, please click [here](#).



Figure 1. Uploading your research embedding letter in Hora Finita

Phase 2: Chain of approval

When the VUmc PhD candidate has completed all required information and has submitted both the research embedding letter and the Training Plan, he/she can request assessment by clicking the submit button. After an administrative check, the information will be automatically submitted to the 'chain of approval'. Then, a number of actors (~7) involved have to grant approval for the information that has been submitted before the registration becomes an official PhD trajectory. The Training Plan will be reviewed by the APH PhD Education Committee (fourth actor in line). This process can take up to a few weeks. The whole chain of approval can take up to a few months.

Phase 3: PhD Program

After the Training Plan has been approved and all other actors have granted their approval for all other submitted information, the PhD trajectory is official and the PhD Program phase starts. During this phase, the VUmc PhD candidate should register educational activities in the portfolio tab in the Hora Finita dashboard. At the end of the PhD trajectory, the portfolio will be reviewed by the chair of the APH PhD Education Committee. **Important:** as soon as you complete the 30 ECTS, review of your portfolio can already be requested. This will prevent delay at the end of your PhD trajectory.

4. APH PhD Education Committee

The APH PhD Education Committee consists of three senior researchers (one chair and one vice-chair), one postdoc researcher, one PhD candidate and a policy officer of APH, who are responsible for reviewing the Training Plans and Hora Finita Portfolio's according to the VU/VUmc- and APH-specific requirements. You can contact the APH PhD Education committee by using the general email address: aph.phdcommittee@amsterdamumc.nl.

5. Training Plan

5.1 Introduction

The Training Plan includes mandatory, elective mandatory and elective courses that the PhD candidate must complete alongside the PhD trajectory for the amount of at least 30 ECTS. This means that all educational activities must be followed between the start and end date of the PhD trajectory. If you want to get exemption for mandatory courses read the frequently asked questions (see 7.2). The European Credit Transfer and accumulation System (ECTS) is a standard for comparing the study attainment and performance of students of higher education across the European Union. In the Netherlands, 1 ECTS is equal to 28 hours of workload. The overall aim of the agreement is to ensure a course program that is tailored to the minimal requirements of VU/VUmc and APH, and to the needs of the individual PhD candidate and research. The Training Plan must be submitted in Hora Finita in the APH template. VUmc PhD candidates fill in the APH Training Plan as part of the total PhD plan as requested by the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School. VU PhD candidates fill in the basic APH Training Plan template. Both templates can be found on the [APH website](#).

The VU/VUmc and APH educational requirements of the Training Plan are explained below (see 5.2). The Training Plan must be approved by the APH PhD Education Committee during the first months of the PhD trajectory (see 5.3). Following approval, the Training Plan should be regularly discussed during the annual progress meeting and might be adjusted if necessary (see 5.4). The PhD candidate needs to keep track of his/her educational activities him/herself in the Hora Finita portfolio (see 5.5). At the end of the PhD trajectory, the portfolio will be checked for the courses, right amount of ECTS and proof documents. After approval the PhD candidate receives a 30 ECTS certificate (see 5.6).

5.2 Training Plan requirements

5.2.1 Mandatory and elective courses

Courses required by the VU/VUmc and APH research institute are categorized as follows:

1. Mandatory courses (VU/VUmc specific) (Total: 3-5.5 ECs)

- Course on **scientific integrity** (2 ECs)* (preferred organizer is VUmc Academy, in case you want to follow a scientific integrity course externally you need to ask approval from the APH PhD Education Committee. The course needs to be comparable by scope and time investment to the VUmc Academy course)
- **BROK** (if necessary, mandatory for research projects that are covered by the Human Research Act (WMO)) (1.5 ECs, re-registration equals 0.5 ECs)*
- At least one conference or symposium (1-2 ECs)**

2. Elective mandatory courses (APH specific) (Total: 6-8 ECs)

- Courses focused on advanced (methodological) research skills in public health*** (a preferred minimum of 6 ECs and absolute minimum of 4 ECs). The APH prefers and encourages you to obtain 6 ECs. Acquiring methodological skills is fundamental to becoming a successful public health researcher)
- Transferrable skills**** (a minimum of 1 EC, see table 1 below)
 - o (For VUmc PhD candidates: it is highly recommended to follow the course Amsterdam UMC World of Science offered by the **Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School**)
- Research department meetings, expert meetings, seminars etc. (1-2 ECs)

3. Elective courses/activities (16.5-19 EC)

- E.g. additional courses focused on advanced (methodological) research skills
- E.g. additional transferrable skills**** (see table 1 below)
- E.g. additional conference and symposium attendances (max. 10 ECs, in total)**
- E.g. courses that are subject-specific and related to the PhD research project

Exemptions (max. 15 ECs) can be granted for Advanced (Methodological) Research Skills courses (of an official Research Master) and the Scientific Writing course (transferable skills) followed up to 5 years before the start of the PhD trajectory. For more information see 7.2.

** The Scientific Integrity course and if applicable the BROK course are allowed to be completed up to 1 year before the PhD trajectory until the end of the PhD trajectory. However, it is recommended to follow the course during the first phase of the PhD trajectory.*

*** National conferences without presentation are counted based on duration (1 EC = 28 hours) and with (oral or poster) presentation as 1 EC. International conferences without giving a presentation are counted as 1 EC, and with (oral or poster) presentation as 2 EC. International conferences are typically held by international professional associations. Note that this can also be held in the Netherlands. For conferences a maximum of 10 EC in total, except for APH (spring/junior/annual) meetings, **CaRe days** and Amsterdam UMC Science Exchange Days. These latter do count for the total ECs in your Training Plan but they do not count in this limitation of*

maximal 10 EC.

*** For courses the amount of ECs as presented on the certificate is valid. For certain courses, in particular EpidM courses, different certificates are handed out: based on attendance (28 hours = 1 EC) or attendance including exam (full course EC). Be sure you provide the valid amount.

**** Within transferable skills max. 5 EC for teaching activities (e.g., giving courses, supervision of student (= 1 EC)). Courses taken in the context of teaching (e.g., BKO) do not count in this limitation of maximum 5 EC. Site visits abroad/external work placements (other than secondments), max 6 EC.

5.2.2 Types of education

Advanced (methodological) research skills

i.e., advanced statistical analysis, methodological training, advanced quantitative and qualitative research skills.

Courses can be followed at every university, as long as they meet requirements as mentioned above. Connected to APH is EpidM, which is a part of the Department of Epidemiology & Data Science at Amsterdam UMC. EpidM organizes advanced Master's courses in epidemiology. PhD candidates whose research project is embedded within APH will receive a discount of 25% on the course fee of the courses and/or the Master program in Epidemiology. This discount arrangement does not apply to the costs for exams. For more information, and a list of courses, please visit the [EpidM website](#). Note: when courses are only attended, the earned ECs can be counted based on the duration of the course attendance (1 EC = 28 hours). When courses are attended and exams have been passed, you can count the full ECs corresponding to the course.

Other master programs from interfaculty research institutes of VU or Amsterdam UMC are mentioned on the [Doctoral School website](#).

The online courses on advanced (methodological) research skills of [Coursera](#) are recommended since they offer online, high-quality courses, that are free of charge or can be followed for affordable prices.

The APH research program Methodology organizes 'monthly methodological tutorials' in which methodological experts of different backgrounds share their knowledge on a topic of choice. For visiting 4 tutorials including the time of preparation, PhD candidates can earn 1 EC.

Are you a junior or PhD researcher interested in making your health research diversity-responsive? Do you enjoy interaction, reflection, collaboration and challenging discussions? Or do you just want to make this world a better place? Then the (online) training developed and organized by APH researchers about intersectionality and health is recommended for you! This training 'Intersectionality & I' is for junior researchers or PhD students, that can earn 3 EC. The main focus will be public health, but the topics covered are relevant for other health-related fields. APH researchers get a 25% discount!

Participatory action research (PAR) offers starting points for involving people (patients, citizens, experts by experience, professionals, policy makers, etc.) in research in a meaningful way. PAR is about research with and for practice and people whose lives or work are the subject of study. In this 4-day Dutch training ‘**Participatory action research**’ (3 ECTS) of the School for Participation we pay attention to the underlying principles and values of PAR, the theoretical background, quality criteria, ethics, and the influence of the (organizational) context on the research process and the role as an academic. Knowledge of qualitative research is required. Preferably by having followed a training course, but submission of a written motivation is also possible. APH researchers get a 25% discount.

At the [APH website](#) you can find an overview of mandatory and other recommended PhD courses, including the courses described above. See the [Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School website](#) for an overview of the PhD courses offered (free of charge for a selection) by the Doctoral School.

Transferrable skills

i.e., are the skills you acquire and transfer to future employment settings within or outside academia. Examples of transferable skills are:

Table 1: Types of transferrable skills	
Personal development courses described on the Doctoral School website (also accessible for VU PhD candidates)	Number of ECs based on number of hours
Courses/ workshops provided by Taalcentrum-VU (including Dutch for foreign PhD candidates, course on academic writing, course on presenting in English)	Ask at Taalcentrum, depending on course
Workshops focusing on entrepreneurship and/or valorization, e.g., courses provided by IXA	Number of ECs based on number of hours
Courses on Project management, writing a Data Management Plan , etc.	Number of ECs based on number of hours
Courses on Grant writing	Number of ECs based on number of hours
For teaching activities (e.g., giving courses, supervision of students**) a maximum of 5 EC can be included in the training plan. For courses taken in the context of teaching (e.g., BKO), there is no maximum for the number of EC.	Number of ECs based on number of hours, Max. 5 ECs*
Organizing PhD activities, e.g., joining organization committee of events within a research institute	Number of ECs based on number of hours, Max. 1 EC
External work placements (other than secondments) or site visits abroad (e.g., travel grant)	Number of ECs based on number of hours, Max. 6 ECs
Participating in an APH PhD intervision year group (5 meetings = 0.5 EC, see below)	Max 0.5 EC
Peer review of scientific papers	0.25 EC/paper, Max. 2 EC
Developing/updating guidelines or standard operation procedures of the research institute or other (governmental) organizations	Number of ECs based on number of hours, Max. 1 EC

Participating in the Junior Council of an APH research programs (see below)	1 EC per year, Max. 2 EC
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* If a maximum is given, this means that the number of EC must at least match the number of hours invested (1 EC = 28 hours).

** Please note that the supervision of 1 student equals 1 EC.

APH PhD intervision year group

The APH PhD Education Committee organizes intervision meetings for PhD candidates and junior researchers. These are conversations between PhD candidates and juniors from all departments within the APH research institute. Daily issues of each PhD candidate or junior researcher are discussed. PhD candidates or juniors can attend these meetings for free. The focus of the meetings is to develop insight and problem-solving skills of our PhD candidates and junior researchers. One may think of planning of work, motivation, cooperation with supervisors etc. Discussing these themes with other young researchers within APH can provide the understanding and the other point of view to strengthen oneself as a skilled researcher. Taking part in the intervision meetings provides the PhD candidate or junior researcher also with a network to discuss practical or methodological issues with others from within the Institute. Send an e-mail to aph.phdcommittee@amsterdamumc.nl if you are interested.

APH Junior Council of research program

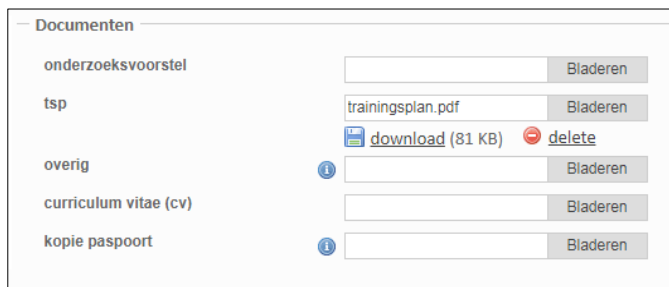
The APH research programs have installed Junior Councils in which early career researchers can provide the APH program leaders with solicited and unsolicited advice on the strategic direction of the research program and help them with the organization of research program-specific activities or events. The Junior Council consist of 4-8 early career researchers that meet a couple of times per year to discuss strategic topics for the research program or support with organizing program-specific events. To join send an email to aph@amsterdamumc.nl.

Research department meetings, expert meetings, seminars etc.

e.g., research department meetings, workshops, colloquia, journal clubs, or similar inside or outside your department. Regular research meetings are typically considered to be 1 to 2 EC (depending on frequency and duration of the meetings, 28 hours is 1 EC). Consortia meetings must be at organizational, national or international level. Meetings with your direct and internal research project group are not valid.

5.3 Training Plan assessment

The Training Plan needs to be submitted in the box 'tsp' in Hora Finita (see Figure 2).



Documenten	
onderzoeksvoorstel	<input type="text"/> Bladeren
tsp	trainingsplan.pdf Bladeren download (81 KB) delete
overig	<input type="text"/> Bladeren
curriculum vitae (cv)	<input type="text"/> Bladeren
kopie paspoort	<input type="text"/> Bladeren

Figure 2. Uploading your Training Plan in Hora Finita

The VUmc PhD candidate* can request assessment of his/her registration, including the Training Plan, by clicking the submit button (make sure all other required information is submitted, e.g., your research embedding letter). As part of the 'chain of approval' the APH PhD Education Committee will in its turn receive an email that the Training Plan is ready for assessment. See the flowchart as presented above for the order of actors giving approval. The APH PhD Education Committee assesses the Training Plan against the following criteria:

- The education program consists of a minimum of 30 ECs;
- The education program meets the minimum requirements set by VU/VUmc (see 5.2);
- The education program meets the minimum requirements set by APH (see 5.2).

* VU PhD candidates (Faculty of Science, Health Sciences) can request assessment of their Training Plan, by sending an email to the APH PhD Education Committee (aph.phdcommittee@amsterdamumc.nl).

Meetings of the APH PhD Education Committee take place once every two weeks on Tuesday. After the meeting, the committee will approve the Training Plan or provide the PhD candidate with instructions to amend the Training Plan (via Hora Finita for VUmc and via email for VU).

5.4 Training Plan annual monitor

During the annual progress meeting (see paragraph 6.1), the supervisor(s) and the PhD candidate are strongly recommended to also discuss the progress regarding education requirements. Only in case of significant adjustments, a second assessment of the Training Plan by the APH PhD Education Committee is needed. There is no need, however, to inform the committee on attending a different conference than planned, or attending another advanced methodological course than planned. Make sure though that the VU/VUmc and APH requirements are still met. If there are any doubts, feel free to contact the APH PhD Education Committee with your questions.

5.5 Portfolio

After the Training Plan has been approved, the VU/VUmc PhD candidate should register educational activities according to the Training Plan in the portfolio tab in the Hora Finita dashboard during the

PhD trajectory. Please note that for each completed activity the PhD candidate must upload a (signed) **proof document**. Without adequate proofs your portfolio cannot be approved. Make sure that the amount of time investment or number of ECs is presented on the proof documents. In case this is not provided on a certificate or proof documents, you must add a print screen of the followed course information describing the time investment or corresponding ECs. Please find in Table 2 a list with examples of proof documents. Important: as soon as you complete the 30 EC, review of your portfolio can already be requested via Hora Finita. This will prevent delay at the end of your PhD trajectory.

Table 2. Examples of proof documents	
Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of attendance (signed) • Certificate of passing the course exam (signed) • A document with statement of attendance signed by the course coordinator • Print screen of followed courses from digital badge
Conferences (in case you gave a presentation, (additional) proof of this is needed, see examples)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificates of attendance (signed) • Certificates of (oral/poster) presentation (signed) • Program booklet with proof of your oral/poster presentation • A confirmation e-mail of the organization committee for oral/poster presentation • Proof of registration for the conference
Research meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A document with statement of attendance signed by first promotor
Teaching activities / student supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of your supervision by means of your name on thesis of student • A document with statement of supervision signed by first promotor
Internal / external committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A document with statement of attendance signed by first promotor
Intervision group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of attendance (signed)
Peer review activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print screen of email, proof of peer review listed in Publons • A document with statement of peer review signed by first promotor
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A document with statement signed by first promotor

Approval by first promotor

After the registration of educational activities in the Portfolio by the PhD candidate, an automatic task will be generated that is sent to the supervisor's tasks list in his/her Hora Finita dashboard. The supervisor needs to log in to his/her Hora Finita dashboard and will find the educational activities that need approval in the tasks list. After the approval of the first promotor the activities in the portfolio will be locked, which means that the PhD candidate cannot make changes anymore.

5.6 Review of Portfolio and 30 EC certificate

In order to obtain the degree of Doctor from the Vrije Universiteit, the PhD candidate must have an approved portfolio. Once the supervisor has approved all registered educational activities, the PhD candidate can request a review of the Portfolio from the APH PhD Education Committee via the checklist in Hora Finita or at the start of the manuscript submission procedure. The chair of the APH PhD Education Committee will determine whether all educational (training) requirements have been

met as agreed upon in the Training Plan. This will be determined by checking the registered educational activities of the PhD candidate in the portfolio tab. Checking the proofs (see Table 2) is an important part of this. Make sure that these are adequate and uploaded for each course/activity separately.

It is possible that after review of the portfolio by the APH PhD Education Committee the activities do not (yet) comply with the education requirements as set by VU/VUmc and APH. Then the PhD candidate receives instructions of the committee about how to adapt the portfolio. New activities can be added directly to the portfolio, activities that need adjustment will be unlocked for the PhD candidate to be adapted. When all adaptations have been made, and the first promotor has again approved, you must request via Hora Finita another review of the APH PhD Education Committee.

When the PhD candidate complies to all educational (training) requirements in the portfolio, the PhD candidate is provided with an official 30 EC certificate and the manuscript submission procedure continues. Please be noted that the manuscript submission procedure in Hora Finita cannot be started without the official approval of the Portfolio.

Important: basically, the portfolio consists of the activities of the previously approved Training Plan. However, it is possible that the PhD candidate deviates from the original plan. This is allowed, but please be aware that you must still meet the VU/VUmc- and APH-specific training requirements. If in doubt, you may always request an additional review of your Training Plan or preliminary portfolio from the APH PhD Education committee (see email above).

6. The PhD candidate and the (co-)supervisor(s): a few tips

6.1 Supervision and annual progress meetings

The supervision of the PhD candidate is regulated in Hora Finita as well, and is part of the employment agreement. The supervision is the responsibility of the principal supervisor (i.e., first promotor) together with one or more (co-)supervisors. Note that the supervision is not part of the Training Plan, and therefore does not count for the number of ECs. There are no official rules for number of hours of supervision. However, the APH PhD Education Committee advises a minimum of 8 hours of co-supervision per month from co-supervisor(s), and 2 hours per month from the principal supervisor.

According to the VU/VUmc regulations, every PhD candidate has an annual progress meeting with his/her superior. During this annual progress meeting, the following aspects could be discussed (but are not limited to): workload, collaboration with other (co-)supervisors within the same project, satisfaction with the supervision etc. There are special forms that could help guide the process and reporting of the annual progress meeting, which can be found at the P&O service websites (VUmc intranet and VUnet). There is a competence self-evaluation tool available for PhD candidates which

they can use e.g. to prepare for the meeting. At the first year of the PhD trajectory the PhD candidate and the supervisor must plan a go-no go meeting, in order to discuss the (dis)continuation of the PhD trajectory.

6.2 Responsibilities of a PhD candidate

The success of all research projects depends to a great extent on the PhD candidates themselves. A few tips are given here:

- The PhD candidate should state clearly what (s)he needs from the supervisor. When supervisors give contradictory advice, it is recommended to plan a discussion with the supervisors in question in order to achieve consensus.
- Explicit agreements must be made. It is wise to take minutes or to make a report, and to keep a log book throughout the entire research project.
- Persistent problems, or problems that have a negative influence on the research project, must be discussed. If you expect that nobody will take any action to solve your problems, then it is recommended that you discuss the problems with the chair of the APH PhD Education Committee: Maartje van Stralen (you can contact the chair directly, who will treat your case confidentially), or with someone who is higher in the hierarchy than your supervisor. If you mainly need someone to listen to you, then anybody you trust is suitable.
- Ensure the continuity of the research project, for instance by making accurate and realistic plans, and refer to your supervisors for comments.
- Make everything debatable - for instance, make an early decision about the (co-)authorship of articles.
- During the assessment discussions (after 10 months and 3 years) and the annual progress meetings, 'supervision and functioning of the (co)supervisors is always a specific topic. Use this official opportunity to discuss (again) any possible problems with supervision.

6.3 Guidelines of supervision

The nature of good supervision depends on the type of research, the content of the research project, and the personal wishes of both the supervisor and the PhD candidate. However, what is certain is that the aim of the supervision must be two-sided: on the one side, it must result in a good project and good quality scientific products, and on the other side it must result in a junior researcher who has learned how to carry out research independently and has been able to develop in the field of science. Note that not every PhD candidate will stay in science after the defense. Make sure that also other skills are focus of attention. We want to deliver excellent professionals both in research or other occupations within public health.

7. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

7.1 What should be provided in the portfolio?

Please include all certificates (proof documents) of the attended meetings and courses. When there is no certificate provided, for example for research meetings at the VU, please ask your supervisor to sign a document that you have attended these meetings (see 5.5).

7.2 Can I receive exemption from (mandatory) courses of the Training Plan?

Exemptions (to a maximum of 15 ECs) can be granted if the PhD candidate can prove that (s)he has completed these courses (or comparable courses) during preliminary education for the official start of the PhD trajectory. Exemptions can be obtained for the following courses:

- **Scientific writing course (transferable skills)** followed up to 5 years before the start of the PhD trajectory.
- **Advanced methodological research skill courses** completed up to 5 years before the start of the PhD trajectory and that were part of an official Research Master's or selected Master's program. Research Masters are designated master programs which usually specifically prepare for PhD trajectories. Below you can find a list of eligible Research Masters and selected Masters for exemption by APH. This list is not exhaustive, if you would like to get an exemption for another (Research) Master, please submit your motivated request for exemption, including certificates, to the APH PhD Education Committee.

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	University of Amsterdam	Others
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Movement Sciences: Sport, Exercise & Health (research)• Clinical and Developmental Psychopathology (research)• Cognitive Neuropsychology (research)• Genes in Behaviour and Health (research)• Social Psychology (research)• Business Data Science (research)• Global Health: Research• Cardiovascular Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global Health (research)• Social Sciences (research)• Psychology (research)• Urban Studies (research)• Master Evidence Based Practice in Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EpidM Master courses

To apply for exemption, the following procedure should be followed:

1. The PhD candidate and her/his supervisor make a written request for exemption from the course in question (letter or email);
2. The exemption should be listed on the Training Plan in the required field;
3. The reasons for the application for exemption should be explained in the letter;

4. Relevant proof documents must be added, i.e., course certificate and grades list of research master program;
5. The letter should be addressed to the chair of the APH PhD Education Committee (via aph.phdcommittee@amsterdamumc.nl).

Please contact the APH PhD Education Committee if you have questions regarding the exemptions or if you would like to lodge an appeal against the decision of the APH PhD Education Committee.

7.3 What if I had an appointment as junior researcher or physician/medical specialist before officially starting my PhD trajectory?

When you are working on a research project as junior researcher or physician/medical specialist (i.e., not appointed as a formal PhD candidate) and this research project becomes an official PhD trajectory at a later moment, all courses or conference visits completed within this appointment can be included in the Training Plan. These are not exemptions, but regular PhD training activities followed in preparation of a PhD trajectory. To prove this, the candidate must provide the APH PhD Education Committee with a motivation letter describing the formal start date of the PhD trajectory and the preparation period in which PhD training activities has already been followed and completed. This motivation letter must be provided when the candidate request for approval of his/her Training Plan.

If you are doing a PhD and are in training to become a medical specialist, education activities that you must follow for your specialization that are in context of or are a contribution to your PhD trajectory, might be included in you Training Plan. Please ask the APH PhD Education Committee for approval. Internships that you follow in context of your specialization, are not valid for your Training Plan.

7.4 Is there a good example of a completed Training Plan?

Please click [here](#) for an example of a completed Training Plan. And if any questions remain, do not hesitate to contact the APH PhD Education Committee. To speed up the process, it is strongly advised that you obtain information from your supervisor or fellow PhD candidates from your department who already have a signed Training Plan, or from the APH PhD Education Committee before submitting it for formal assessment.

7.5 Who is financially responsible for the education that I receive during my PhD?

Finance for the education (training) of the PhD candidate is the responsibility of the principal supervisor (i.e., first promotor). The APH research institute cannot financially support individual training programs of PhD candidates. To avoid misunderstandings, we strongly recommend to discuss finance before each application for a course with your (principle) supervisor. Furthermore, not all

courses and conferences require a fee, and it might be worthwhile to explore the opportunities of free courses and conferences in your field of study. Finally, specific regulations may additionally differ per faculty, and detailed information can be obtained from the respective faculty. We suggest to double-check this with your supervisor before submitting your Training Plan.

7.6 If a disagreement with my supervisor cannot be solved, what should I do?

If there is a dispute between a PhD candidate and a (co-)supervisor(s) with regard to the supervision, the training and/or the research project, that cannot be solved, the principal supervisor (i.e., first promotor) should be involved in an early stage. If this is not possible, or if one of the parties so wishes, the chair, secretary (or another PhD representative from the APH PhD Education Committee) can be consulted. Do not hesitate to take action and approach us.

7.7 Can I obtain a Doctorate degree as a junior researcher?

In some cases you may be appointed as a junior researcher or equivalent positions such as a medical doctor with a research appointment. If, during your first year(s) as a researcher it becomes clear that there might be the opportunity to fulfill a PhD program along the same project, it becomes vital to register in Hora Finita and submit a Training Plan. Be aware that completing a Doctorate degree as a junior researcher comes with the same rights and obligations as being appointed a PhD candidate. Therefore, you must meet the 30 ECs requirement, as otherwise you are not allowed to obtain your Doctorate degree.

7.8 Can I obtain a Doctorate degree as an external PhD?

External PhD candidates are PhD candidates who are not employed by VU or VUmc. In principle, external PhD candidates have the same rights and obligations as 'internal' PhD candidates (i.e., PhD candidates that are employed by VU/VUmc). They likewise have to submit a Training Plan and an approved research plan setting out their PhD research and curriculum in advance. Similarly, external PhD candidates must meet the 30 ECs requirement, as otherwise they will not be allowed to obtain their Doctorate degree.

7.9 Which regulations Scientific integrity apply during my PhD appointment?

The VU Doctorate regulations specify that all PhD candidates, supervisors and co-supervisors must at all times observe the norms for scientific integrity as formulated in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice by the [VSNU](#). VU and VUmc operate a joint policy for the handling of academic integrity complaints. This complaints procedure outlines the various steps to be taken in the event of a complaint, the officers who play a role in this procedure and what you can expect once a complaint has been submitted.

7.10 Should I contribute to teaching at my faculty?

The nature and extent of this PhD candidate's task differs per faculty or department, and we recommend that this should be discussed together with you as a PhD candidate. Within APH an indication of the extent of teaching is 5-10% of the working time, however, it depends on your appointment and agreements made with your supervisor/department. You may include your teaching courses (partly) in your Training Plan (see 5.2). It is important to realize that providing education is a task that should not be underestimated. The time-investment that is needed to provide education is usually greatly underestimated. Moreover, not all PhD candidates have the necessary didactical qualities or the ambition to teach. Training could be an option in that case (e.g. basiskwalificatie hoger onderwijs - BKO, or related courses).