WELCOME TO YOUR AMSTERDAM UMC PHD JOURNEY

Onboarding Information



Amsterdam UMC

WELCOME TO THE AMSTERDAM UMC DOCTORAL SCHOOL!

We are delighted to welcome you to the start of your PhD journey at Amsterdam UMC. Pursuing a PhD is an exciting and challenging adventure that will stretch your abilities, deepen your expertise, and shape your future as a researcher and professional. While the process can be demanding and feeling uncertain at times is completely normal, please remember that support is always available. **You are not alone**.

Our Mission
The Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School supports you throughout your entire trajectory: from your initial research steps to the day you defend your thesis. Our mission is to foster your growth into a highly skilled professional, both within and beyond academia.

How to Use This Guide
This flyer serves as a concise reference guide. All underlined words and phrases are clickable links that lead directly to relevant websites, documents, and sources of detailed information. Use these shortcuts to find exactly what you need.

We look forward to being part of your PhD journey!

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Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School

STARTING YOUR PHD



WHO IS WHO?

Amsterdam UMC

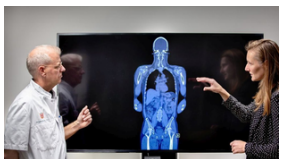
Amsterdam UMC is a leading medical center integrating patient care, research, and education across two main locations in Amsterdam: *AMC* and *VUmc*.

Amsterdam UMC hosts eight research institutes: thematic networks of departments and research groups offering specialized courses, events, and networking. When registering with the Doctoral School, you select up to two institutes and two programmes aligned with your research. CCA and Amsterdam Neuroscience provide additional training via their own graduate schools.

Amsterdam institute for Immunology and Infectious diseases



Amsterdam Gastroenterology Endocrinology Metabolism



Amsterdam Cardiovascular Sciences



Amsterdam Reproduction & Development



Amsterdam Public Health

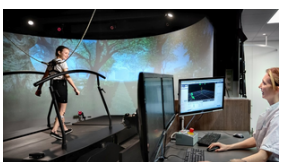


Amsterdam Neuroscience



ONWAR - Graduate School Neurosciences Amsterdam Rotterdam

Amsterdam Movement Sciences



Cancer Center Amsterdam



OOA - Oncology Graduate School Amsterdam

Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School

The Doctoral School supports PhD candidates from the UvA and VU Faculties of Medicine through centralized administration, policy, information and advice. It provides funded courses, workshops, and coaching to facilitate doctoral training and professional development.



University of Amsterdam

VU Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Your main supervisor's (promotor) affiliation determines whether your degree is awarded by the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) or Vrije Universiteit (VU). We recommend reviewing the specific Doctorate and Supplementary Regulations (UvA or VU) early to understand the thesis and defence requirements.

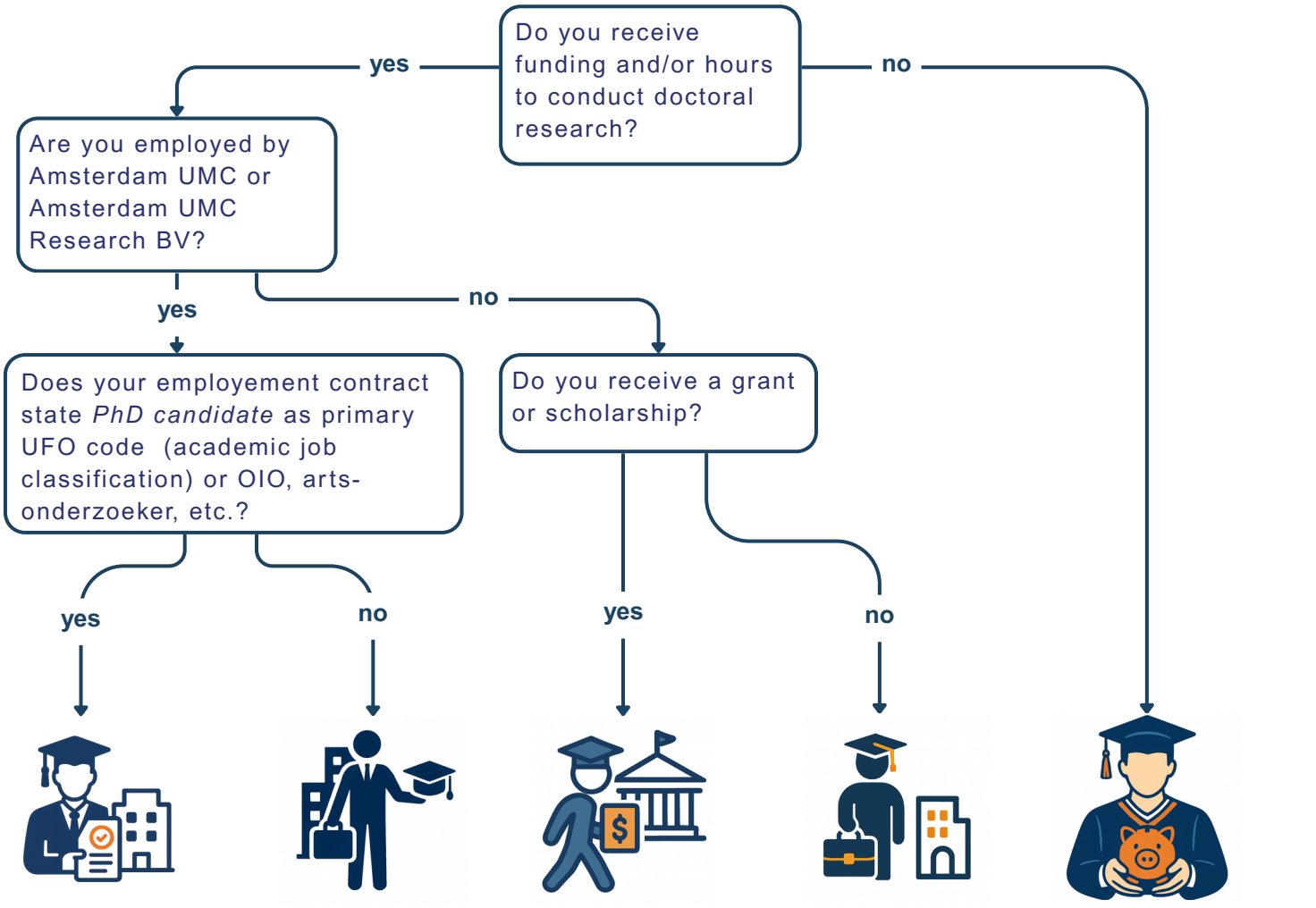
ASAP

ASAP (Association of Amsterdam UMC PhD Candidates) is a professional and social network organizing social events, workshops and networking opportunities. ASAP represents the rights and interests of PhD candidates across Amsterdam UMC, UvA, and VU, as well as on a national level within the Netherlands.

TYPES OF PHD TRAJECTORIES

PhD trajectories in the Netherlands fall into five funding categories. Because these paths are not ''one-size-fits-all'', your funding or contract type determines the facilities and support available to you. Use the decision tree below to identify your category and see what applies to you.

All PhD candidates are expected to make clear agreements regarding research costs and expectations, and to record these in their PhD plan. This is particularly vital for PhD candidates without a contract with Amsterdam UMC or Amsterdam UMC Research BV, or those without any formal contract at all.



* Employed PhD candidates (Type 1A) must comply with the standard Amsterdam UMC guideline for PhD contracts.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is an essential pillar of a successful PhD trajectory. A healthy supervisory relationship fosters a positive research climate, supports scientific growth, and ensures a realistic path toward completion. At Amsterdam UMC, both supervisors and PhD candidates are expected to invest in **open communication**, **mutual respect**, and **clear agreements** so that expectations and responsibilities are understood from the start.

This section highlights key principles from the Amsterdam UMC Research Code.

Supervisory team
According to UvA and VU Doctorate Regulations, PhD candidates must have **2–4 supervisors**. Typically, this includes two supervisors (full or associate professors with *ius promovendi*), one serving as the main supervisor (promotor), and up to two co-supervisors (anyone holding a PhD). While the main supervisor (promotor) must be affiliated with the awarding Faculty of Medicine (UvA or VU), other team members may be external. This multi-supervisor model ensures broader support and expertise.
Discuss roles and expectations early and record them in your PhD Plan.

Supportive research climate
Supervisors should foster an environment of integrity, open communication, and constructive feedback. You should feel comfortable discussing challenges, exploring new ideas, and addressing setbacks within your project.

Motivating leadership
Strong supervisors:

- Show active interest in your work and progress.
- Encourage independent thinking and academic growth.
- Provide constructive feedback and welcome yours in return.
- Help you build networks and research skills.

Clear project organization
From the start, supervisors help set realistic goals and timelines, ensuring:

- A clear research plan.
- Transparent authorship and publication agreements.
- Regular meetings and timely feedback on drafts.
- Access to necessary resources and facilities.

Your Role as a PhD Candidate
To make the most of this partnership, you are expected to:

- Communicate openly about progress and hurdles.
- Take ownership of your research and professional development.
- Prepare effectively for meetings and feedback.
- Ask questions whenever expectations are unclear.
- Respect agreements regarding timelines and feedback processes.



If you feel your supervisory environment is not meeting these standards, you are encouraged to utilize the **Amsterdam UMC Social Safety & Support System** to discuss your concerns in a confidential space.

SUPERVISORY MEETINGS

Regular meetings between you and your supervisory team are essential for checking in, aligning goals, spotting bottlenecks early, and receiving support (rather than serving primarily as progress evaluations). Both candidates and supervisors share the responsibility of prioritizing these meetings.

Frequency and role distribution

- **Daily Supervisor:** Meet at least once every two weeks for primary guidance and day-to-day support.
- **Promotor (if not daily supervisor):** Meet at least once a month (unless covered by team meetings).
- **Full supervisory team:** Gather with the entire team to keep everyone aligned. This can replace individual promotor meetings, but must happen at least once a quarter.

Key Discussion Topics

Meetings provide dedicated space to discuss:

- Research content and results
- Timeline and planning
- Candidate well-being
- Personal and professional development needs
- Quality of supervision and the overall working/learning environment

Tip: You can use the documents under ''Downloads'' here to prepare effectively and structure your conversations.

FIRST STEPS

After your registration with the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School, several processes are set in motion. While some steps are administrative, others require your direct attention. Use the timeline below to see what applies to you and when to take action.

VU VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

0-1 months

1

Registration with the Doctoral School

- After registration:
  - You are automatically registered with your selected research institute(s) and programme(s).
  - The Dean's Office will create your **Hora Finita account.*** You will receive a confirmation email with instructions to complete your account.
  - **Upload all required documents** to Hora Finita. This includes your Training Plan (TSP) (Addendum of the PhD Plan, see below).

Registration with the Doctoral School

- After registration:
  - You are automatically registered with your selected research institute(s) and programme(s).

0-3 months

2

Writing & discussing your PhD Plan

- Send your completed and signed PhD Plan to both the Doctoral School and your research institute.
- Ensure your Training Plan (TSP) (Addendum of the PhD Plan) is uploaded to your Hora Finita account (see above).
- You'll then receive a link to plan a meeting with the PhD Advisor to discuss your PhD Plan.

Writing & disucussing your PhD Plan

- Send your completed and signed PhD Plan to both the Doctoral School and your research institute.
- You'll then receive a link to plan a meeting with the PhD Advisor to discuss your PhD Plan.

3-12 months

3

Official admission to the PhD trajectory

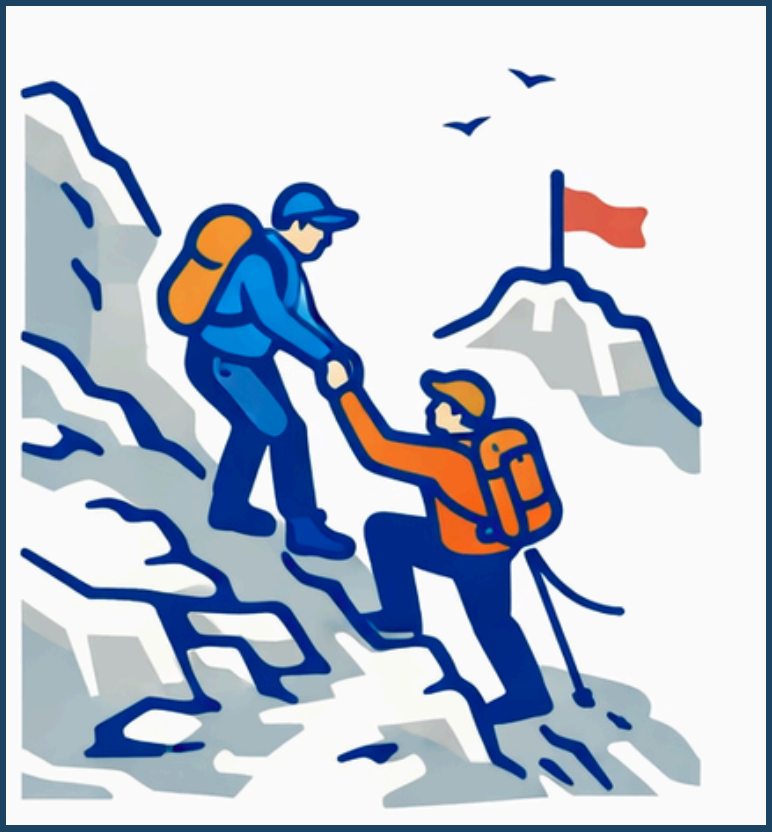
- The data in your Hora Finita account will be assessed through the 'chain of approval'. Once completed (it can take several months), your PhD trajectory is formally approved.

Official admission to the PhD trajectory

- **Non-Dutch Master's Degree:** Request an exemption from the legal educational requirements (Step 1).
- **Dutch Master's Degree (or Step 1 approved):** Request official admission to the doctoral programme (Step 2).

***What is Hora Finita?**
The registration and tracking system for all PhD candidates defending at the VU. It manages the entire trajectory, from admission to submission and approval of the dissertation. Click here for a manual.

DURING YOUR PHD



RESEARCH

Once settled into the organization and your trajectory, you will begin implementing your PhD Plan. This focuses on two core pillars: **research** and **education**.
Below are the key aspects to consider as you conduct your research.

Grant opportunities
While most projects should be fully funded, you may need additional support for travel or specific research costs.

- **Your research institute(s) and Young Talent Fund:** Check their websites for specific (travel) grants.
- **Stay informed:** Ensure you receive newsletters from the Doctoral School, your research institute(s) and subscribe to the Yellow Pages (the weekly newsletter of Research Grant Support - RGS).
- **Expert support:** Visit the Grants & Funding Sharepoint or contact the Amsterdam UMC Research Grant Support team for guidance on national and international grant applications.

Doing Research
Specific types of research require mandatory certifications, approvals, or facilities.

- **Animal studies:** Access to animal facilities requires registration with the IvD (Article 9 or 13). Candidates should complete the Laboratory Animal Science course.
- **Human subjects:** Research involving humans or biobanks requires METC approval. In this case, PhD candidates must complete the Basic Course Regulations and Organization for Clinical Researchers (BROK).
- **Core Facilities**: Take advantage of centralized expertise in Genomics, Metabolomics, Microscopy & Cytometry, and Human Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells.

Research Output

- **PURE Profile:** Your scientific work is tracked via the PURE system. Consult here how to update your profile and contact Output Registration for questions.
- **Publications:** You are expected to submit results to peer-reviewed journals. Review the graduation requirements early to plan your output.

Relevant Documents
Review these frameworks to ensure your work meets ethical and professional standards:

- Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity: Outlines general standards for ethical research.
- Amsterdam UMC Research Code: Defines local expectations for conducting research at Amsterdam UMC.
- Amsterdam UMC Code of Conduct: Ensures a safe and respectful working environment for all staff.

Sustainability in research
Amsterdam UMC aims to implement environmental sustainability in all research. To help you contribute, consult the Position Paper for case studies, practical approaches, and institutional ambitions. Utilize the Sustainable Research Cycle to integrate these goals into your daily work.
Questions regarding sustainability? Reach out to duurzaamheid@amsterdamumc.nl.

RESEARCH SUPPORT

A broad range of support services is available to help you throughout your PhD journey — from study setup to publication.

WHERE TO START?

Use the Research Roadmap to help you navigate your research project, from idea to publication.



Find all support desks and available services on this website.

Research Grant Support
Help to find grants, write proposals, and manage funding throughout your project.

Legal Research Support
Legal advice on research contracts and data sharing agreements.

Methodological & statistical support
Expert guidance on study design, statistical analysis, and interpretation of results.

Ethical Review
Support for informed consent procedures, ethical review submissions and maintaining legal-ethical compliance.

Research Data Management
Assistance with Data Management Plans (DMP) and data retrieval, storage & archiving according to FAIR principles.

Clinical Monitoring Center
Planning, initiation and professional monitoring of clinical trials to assure that all relevant regulatory and quality requirements are met.

Medical Library
Guidance on literature searches, reference management, systematic reviews, and open access publishing.

Other services
Centralized research support services such as trial pharmacy, imaging, ECGs, biobanking, specific labs, clinical units, epic research and ICT for research.

Start early with legal-ethical review procedures

Use available expertise

Reach out proactively

COURSES

Your PhD is a period of significant professional growth. Beyond your research, formal courses are essential to developing your expertise. Below is an overview of the primary providers where you can fulfill your training requirements.

Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School

The Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School offers a range of fundamental, technical and general transferable skills courses. These are **free of charge** for registered PhD candidates.

- **Registration:** Use the SDB Platform to browse and register. You'll need your Amsterdam UMC credentials to log in.
- **Attendance Policy:** After confirmation of your participation attendance is compulsory. Cancellation is possible until two weeks before the start of the course.
- **Development tool:** You can use the PhD Competence Model to identify which areas you would like to develop.

Amsterdam UMC Research Institutes

The 8 reseach institutes organize events and courses within their specific domains. Visit their respectives websites for current offerings.

- **Amsterdam Neuroscience:** Candidates affiliated here can register for courses from ONWAR, the Graduate School Neurosciences Amsterdam Rotterdam. Candidates from other institutes may also join, but a fee applies.
- **Cancer Center Amsterdam:** Candidates affiliated here are elegible for courses from OOA, the Oncology Graduate School Amsterdam.

UvA and VU PhD courses

Both universities offer faculty-specific courses. While some are exclusive, many are open to all PhD candidates graduating from the respective university.

- **VU courses:** Centrally listed on a their website.
- **UvA courses:** Found on the respective individual UvA faculty websites. In case of doubt, contact the course organizer(s) to check if you are allowed to subscribe.
- For UvA courses you'll probably need access to the Canvas learning environment.

Online trainings via GoodHabitz

Amsterdam UMC employees (Type 1 and Type 2 PhD candidates) have access to a with range of online courses via Goodhabitz. These modules cover a variety of professional and personal skills, including productivity, leadership, and digital proficiency. You can access the platform via the Amsterdam UMC intranet.

IMPORTANT

- Please note that depending on your affiliation with your research institute, some courses may be mandatory e.g. Research Integrity. This information can be found in the 'Training Plan' section of the PhD Plan template provided by your corresponding research institute.
- Courses beyond the Doctoral School may involve costs and can be included in your Portfolio, but funding options should be discussed with your supervisor(s) and/or department.

PORTFOLIO

Throughout your PhD journey, you will develop a Portfolio that reflects the activities and experiences contributing to your growth as a researcher. The Portfolio will be a mandatory component of your PhD thesis submission.

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Develop a Portfolio

- Once your PhD trajectory is formally approved in Hora Finita, you will have full access to upload proof of participation for all activities (conferences, courses, teaching, etc.) as outlined in the Training Plan (Addendum of your PhD Plan).
- Your supervisor will approve these entries in the system as you work towards the mandatory 30 ECTS. (1 ECTS = 28 hours of workload).
- Your research institute must approve your Portfolio before you can submit your thesis. This requires a minimum of 30 ECTS and completion of all mandatory courses, such as **scientific integrity** and possibly others, depending on your research institute and research type (such as BROK or Laboratory Animal course).
- Ensure your Portfolio is included in your PhD thesis as required by the Additional Regulations.
- For detailed information and a Portfolio example, consult our website.

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Develop a Portfolio

- Track all your activities such as conferences, courses, teaching, etc. as you work towards your Training Plan.
- For your trajectory, 30 ECTS is a guideline rather than a strict requirement (1ECTS = 28 hours of workload).
- Attention: If you are graduating at the UvA but are affiliated with the CCA/OOA, a minimum of 30 ECTS and completion of all mandatory activities in their Training Plan (Addendum in the PhD Plan) is required.
- Ensure your Portfolio is included in your PhD thesis as required by the Additional Regulations.
- For detailed information and a Portfolio example, consult our website.

WHOM TO CONTACT?

Your PhD journey is supported by several departments across Amsterdam UMC, each responsible for different aspects of your work and development. Use the guide below to find the right contact for your needs, helping you navigate your trajectory smoothly and efficiently.

1. **Human Resources (HR):** HR manages employment matters (badge, contract, salary, 30% ruling, insurance, pension, pregnancy leave, long-term illness,...).

- **Amsterdam UMC employees:** Contact HR via the service portal (digital ticket system). If you lack intranet access, use the following:
  - Phone:
    - AMC: Mon–Thu, 08:00–16:00 — +31 (0)20 56 65821
    - VUmc: Mon–Thu, 08:00–16:00 — +31 (0)20 44 46000
  - In person:
    - AMC: PA1-181, Mon/Wed/Thu, 08:00–16:00
    - VUmc: PK 7 Z190, Mon–Wed, 08:00–16:00

- Use 'Mijn HR' to arrange reimbursements, apply for (holiday) leave, and handle other HR matters.

- **Amsterdam UMC Research BV employees:**
  - Email: researchbv-hr@amsterdamumc.nl
  - Phone: Mon, Tue, Thu, 09:00–16:00 — +31 (0)20 56 62674

- Find your department's HR advisor here.

2. **ICT support**: Your user account provides access to Amsterdam UMC PCs and the remote desktop. Usernames are generated automatically upon HR registration (employee or guest status).

- **Passwords & Tiqr:** Collect your password the next working day at the ICT Service Desk. You can also set up the Tiqr app here for secure two-step verification.

- **Service desk locations:**
  - VUmc: −1st floor, hospital building
  - AMC: D0-208

- **Software and Support:** For other ICT services, request access to software, manuals and support, visit their website or use the digital platform. ICT should be able to provide you access to the requested software via your department on your Amsterdam UMC PC or remote desktop. For personal devices, visit SURFspot for discounted licences using your Amsterdam UMC credentials.

- **No intranet access?** Contact the ICT service desk by phone: +31 (0)20 44 40000.

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3. **Office of Doctorate Affairs:** For questions regarding Doctorate Regulations (UvA or VU) or the Supplementary Regulations of the Amsterdam UMC, contact the Office of Doctorate Affairs (UvA or VU). They will guide you through the steps (UvA or VU) towards submitting your thesis and preparing for your PhD defence.

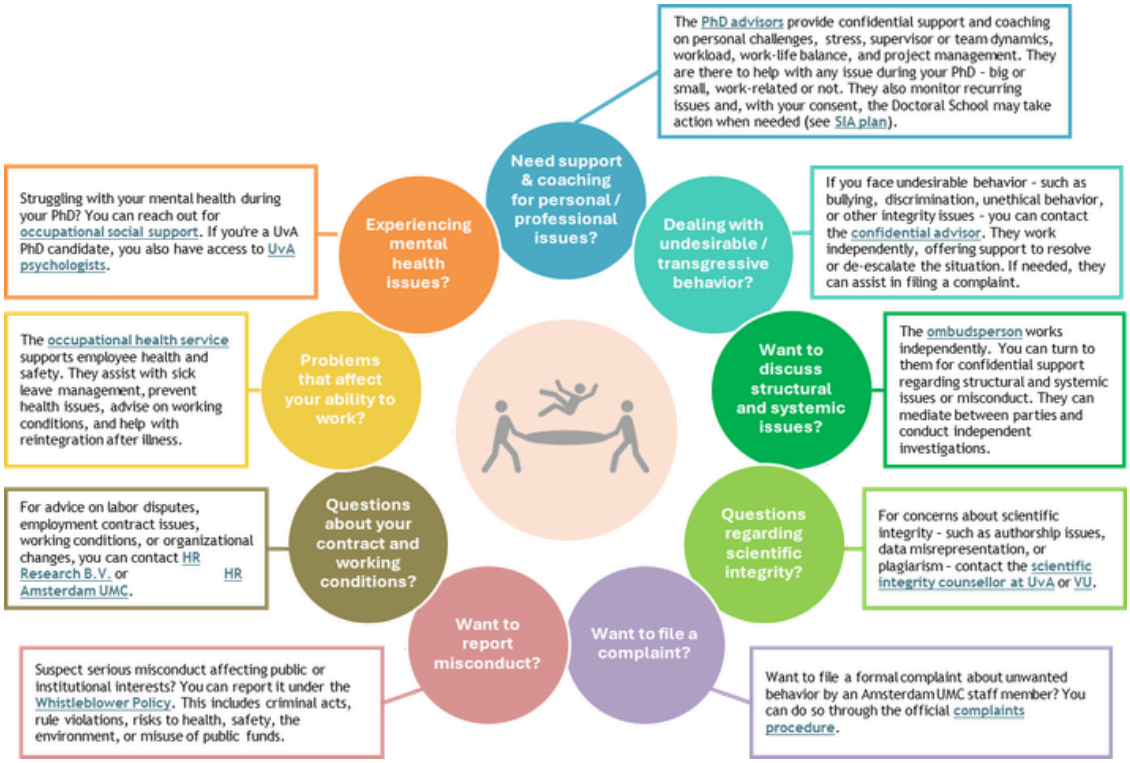
4. **Beadle's Office:**The Beadle's Office (Pedel) handles all matters related to the defence ceremony itself (UvA or VU).

5. **International PhD candidates:** If you are moving to the Netherlands, specific support is available for housing, permits, visas, and insurance. You can find helpful information and support on this website. You can also consult A beginner's guide to Dutch academia to learn more about the structure of Dutch academia.

6. **Policy documents and manuals:** Specific policy documents, protocols, and manuals are hosted on K2 iProva/Zenia (access to Amsterdam UMC OneView is required to view those files).

7. **Promovendi Netwerk Nederland (PNN):** The National Dutch Network of PhD Candidates offers an extensive knowledge repository filled with essential information on the practical and legal aspects of the PhD trajectory.

8. **Social Safety and Support Systems:** In the PhD Safety & Support Guide, you'll find an overview of the different support systems and how to contact them. You can also consult the Coaching, Advice, and Support page of the Doctoral School for more information on the various support initiatives and services.



FINALIZING YOUR PHD



FINAL STEPS

The final steps of your PhD trajectory may feel very far away right now, but the more you know in advance, the better you can prepare for what's to come. As a graduated PhD candidate, you will also be entitled to apply for various awards and compensations.

Submission and Timeline: Approximately 6–12 months before your tentative defense date, you must begin the formal submission process. Follow the steps indicated on your university's website:

- **UvA Candidates:** Begin from Step 3 onward.
- **VU Candidates:** Begin from Step 5 onward.

Plagiarism Scan Requirements:

- **UvA:** A scan of the full thesis is mandatory at the end of the trajectory (Step 5).
- **VU:** A scan of a specific chapter, article, or report must be completed within the first two years (Step 4).

Financial Support & Bonuses

- **PhD Graduation Bonus (€750):** If you are employed as a Research Trainee (*Onderzoeker in Opleiding*, OiO) by Amsterdam UMC or Amsterdam UMC Research BV, you may qualify for this bonus. It is awarded if you successfully obtain your doctorate within your four-year contract.
- **Defense Reimbursement (€500):** All PhD candidates registered with the Doctoral School—regardless of contract type—are entitled to a €500 reimbursement. Click the following links for more information: UvA or VU.
- **Printing Costs:** Some research institutes offer additional contributions toward thesis printing. Consult your specific institute for their policy.

Awards & Recognition

The Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School hosts several award categories for graduates, current candidates, and incoming researchers. Visit this website for a full list of categories, criteria, and application deadlines.



STAY CONNECTED WITH THE DOCTORAL SCHOOL



NEWSLETTER

No subscription is required. You will automatically receive it as long as you are registered with the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School.



WEBSITE

Be sure to check the news section for the latest events, updates, and posts from the PhD advisor's blog



E-MAIL

For general questions about your PhD trajectory or courses, we're here for you!



LINKEDIN

Follow us on LinkedIn to stay up to date with our latest news and events!



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