




Finishing your PhD

information for
Amsterdam UMC/VU PhD candidates

The last update is from May 2025

Amsterdam UMC Doctoral school

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Almost ready to defend your thesis!

The final steps you need to take, if:

- ☐ Your dissertation has been approved (or is being assessed)
- ☐ The date of the defence is (being) fixed (you can plan the date after approval of your thesis)

With the email from Hora Finita, to confirm the defence date, you receive relevant information. Keep this email close by, so you can easily refer to it

What still needs to be done before the graduation?

- ☐ Complete your thesis
- ☐ Prepare yourself (and others) for the actual defence of your thesis
- ☐ Defend your thesis and your research (PhD ceremony)

Check: [Beadle Office - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](#)





Finalize your thesis (1)

- ☐ Cover - design
- ☐ If applicable: translate the title into English
- ☐ Prepare the title page (website Doctoral School: [Approval of the title page - Amsterdam UMC/VU](#))
- ☐ You will be invited to do so in the email that confirms the defence date; do so within 7 days of receipt this email:
 - ☐ Using the format in Hora Finita
 - ☐ Mentioning the title 'Doctor of Philosophy'
 - ☐ Include the Rector Magnificus' approved version in your thesis
- ☐ Add your portfolio in your dissertation (format on website Doctoral School: [Portfolio](#) and [Example & template](#))
- ☐ Add a summary in the language your thesis is written, and - if applicable - a literal translation in English as well
- ☐ Optional: write a thank you note
- ☐ Optional: add an ISBN number and a DOI number (you will get the DOI automatically, via a Hora Finita email, after the title page has been approved)





Finalize your thesis (2)

Collected everything?

Print your thesis

- ☐ At least 5 copies for beadles and deans; neatly bound copier copies also are allowed
- ☐ Or have your thesis printed as a book
- ☐ Note:
 - ☐ Do so, only after having received a formal approval of the title page by the VU Rector Magnificus
 - ☐ For printing of your thesis you can turn to REPRO VU; check: [Handigeadressen.pdf \(vu.nl\)](https://www.vu.nl/handigeadressen.pdf) or check [ASAP](#) recommendations
 - ☐ Having your thesis drawn up and designed, printed in multiple colors, time pressure increase costs
 - ☐ Maybe you can find sponsors for printing your thesis (f.i. in your research involved organizations)?

It is mandatory to provide a digital version of your thesis to VU Amsterdam, via Hora Finita. It will be published by the UBvU in the VU Research Portal (Pure). Check: [Upload your dissertation \(vu.nl\)](https://www.vu.nl/upload-your-dissertation)

Distribution of your thesis; at least six weeks before the defence: see [Submitting the final version of the thesis - Amsterdam UMC/VU](#):

- ☐ Send five copies to the VU Office of the Beadle (check [Dissertation submission & defence - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](#))
- ☐ The beadles will send two hardcopies to the office of Dean's Affairs (of which one will be sent to the chair of the ceremony)
- ☐ To the members of the doctorate committee (opponents)
- ☐ Check with your supervisor if more organizations/persons involved need a copy of your thesis
- ☐ It is mandatory to provide a digital version of your thesis to VU Amsterdam. You can do this via [Hora Finita](#), after your title page has been approved by the Rector Magnificus, at least six weeks before the defence date.





Looking forward to the day of the defence

- ☐ Dresscode: appropriate clothing; check the [VU-website](#) (only available in Dutch)
- ☐ Appoint ceremonial assistants (in Dutch: Paranimfen) >> 2 = mandatory
 - ☐ Ceremonial assistants wear the same clothing (style) as the PhD candidate
- ☐ The defence ceremony is public accessible
 - ☐ Please note that minimum age part 1 (defence) is 8 years; second part children under 8 are allowed to attend
- ☐ Pre-discussion of the ceremony; to prepare you might use the 'Format for starting a general discussion of your PhD thesis' >> [Links & Supportive services for PhD candidates \(amsterdamumc.org\)](#):
 - ☐ The rector (chairman) sometimes contacts the PhD candidate to get acquainted and to go through the day
 - ☐ With (co)supervisor(s) (practice your defence)
 - ☐ You have probably attended a ceremony before?
 - ☐ In advance: visit the VU: register for a 'Meet the Beadle' meeting*:
 - ☐ Planned on Wednesdays 16.00 in the Aula VU main building; 4 times a year
 - ☐ Check dates: [PhD examining committee and day of the defence - Amsterdam UMC/VU | Amsterdam UMC](#)
 - ☐ Register via Fernie Maas (f.g.t.maas@vu.nl)

**If the information in this presentation deviates from the information provided during the Meet the Beadle meeting, guidelines from the VU prevail*





Exposé or layman's talk (lekenpraatje)

In consultation with your supervising professor, you can present a general explanation of the research, being the basis of the thesis

- ☐ This is not mandatory
- ☐ It may take no longer than ten minutes

During the presentation, you can use the hall's standard audiovisual facilities, which include a projector, laptop and pointer. The use of these facilities is free of charge

- ☐ For further information, special requests and quotations, please contact the Audio-Visual Centre information desk on +31 (0)20 598 9161 or send an email to evenementen.avc@vu.nl

The Layman's talk can be followed online. The screen can be shared





The ceremony of the defence

The members of the examining committee and the doctorate committee are the same persons

- ❑ If one or more committee members are unable to attend, guest opponents will be appointed by the dean, on the recommendation of the supervisor
- ❑ The chair and the supervisor decide in consultation how much time each member gets, and in which order, to ask questions and exchange views. The chair will monitor this

On behalf of the dean, a colleague of the Doctoral School appoints a rector, to chair the ceremony





The day of the defence

Taking into account traffic jams, delays, etc., make sure to be at least 45 minutes before the start of the ceremony

In VU room 1C-21:

- ☐ Here you and your ceremonial assistants can change clothes
- ☐ You also will find here the text of the opening & closing statement, to say before and immediately after the defence (slides 11, 12)
- ☐ 30 minutes before start, the beadle and the audio technician also come there to take you through the protocol and the presentation
- ☐ This room will not be locked during the ceremony; there are lockers available where you can store belongings and leave them safely





The defence ceremony

Structure of the ceremony

- ☐ Entry in procession; order: beadle, chairman, supervisors, opponents, PhD candidate and ceremonial assistants
- ☐ Opening by the chair, opening statement
- ☐ Presenting exposé (layman's talk) - duration: max 10 minutes
- ☐ Opposition members ask their questions under the rector's chairmanship
- ☐ After exactly 1 hour: the beadle enters the room and reports 'Hora Est!'
- ☐ Closing statement by the PhD candidate

- ☐ After the defence: in procession beadle, chairman, supervisors, opponents, PhD candidate and paranympths leave the room, for deliberation of up to 10 minutes
- ☐ After deliberation, the PhD candidate is informed of the outcome of the defence

- ☐ Everyone returns to the room in the same procession order, for the graduation ceremony and signing of the document, a (short) speech by the supervisor (max 4 minutes) and closing ceremony by the chair; now the PhD candidate stands in front of the lectern
- ☐ After the ceremony: in procession, beadle, PhD candidate (+ possibly partner/children), paranympths, chairman, supervisors, opponents and guests leave the room
- ☐ If desired, music can be played (bring it on USB stick)

- ☐ Opportunity to congratulate + if arranged in advance >> a reception in the VU University building (at your own expense)





Addressing the opponents + opening & closing statements

Formal, prescribed, language. Also, by the chair - e.g. at the opening of the ceremony

Opening statement

- ☐ Text on paper available in room 1C-21

You should start the Laymen's presentation with:

- ☐ Dear rector, dear audience (in Dutch: Geachte rector, geachte aanwezigen)

During the defence in Dutch, you address the opponents, using:

- ☐ Hooggeleerde opponent (answering a professor)
- ☐ Zeergeleerde opponent (answering a doctor) or
- ☐ Geleerde opponent (answering a doctorandus / master)

Address an English speaking opponent using:

- ☐ Learned opponent

Closing statement after the 'Hora Est'

- ☐ Text on paper available in room 1C-21





Opening & Closing Statements



VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

STATEMENT PRECEDING THE DEFENCE

Rector,

On your authority and as authorized by the College of Deans,
and in accordance with the Doctoral Examination Committee in
the Faculty / School of

I am prepared to defend my thesis entitled:

in order to obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophy / Doctor.

STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE DEFENCE

Now that my defence has ended I sincerely thank the
opponents for the attention they have devoted to my thesis.
I now look forward to the decision of the Doctoral Examination
Committee in the Faculty / School of

which will decide whether the degree of Doctor of Philosophy /
Doctor will be granted to me.





Openings- & Slotformules



VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

FORMULE VOOR DE VERDEDIGING

Mijnheer/Mevrouw de Rector Magnificus, op uw gezag en met machtiging van het College van Decanen, en volgens besluit van de promotiecommissie van de Faculteit der / School of

sta ik gereed mijn proefschrift, dat tot titel heeft

te verdedigen, ten einde de graad Doctor of Philosophy / Doctor te verwerven.

FORMULE NA DE VERDEDIGING

Nu mijn verdediging is beëindigd, zij mij vergund dank te betuigen aan de opponenten voor de aandacht die zij aan mijn proefschrift hebben willen schenken.

Ik zie nu het oordeel tegemoet van de promotiecommissie van de Faculteit der / School of

die zal beslissen of mij de graad Doctor of Philosophy / Doctor zal worden verleend.





(Other) practical matters concerning the ceremony (1)

Publicity: The VU press officers announce the defence on the VU website and in the (Dutch) VU Amsterdam newsletter, which is sent to the press once every two weeks

- ☐ Input can be [submitted digitally](#), preferably in Dutch, no later than five weeks prior to your defence date
- ☐ More information: [Media attention for your PhD defence \(vu.nl\)](#)

Current policy academic ceremonies:

- ☐ [Hybrid ceremony](#)
- ☐ [Online ceremony](#) (only allowed under conditions)

Each ceremony will be streamed live via the [VU Beadle's Office - YouTube channel](#)

- ☐ Candidate receives a link to the recording, to download it within two days
- ☐ After two days the recording will be deleted
- ☐ Check: [Hybride ceremony](#)

Looking for a photographer? >> suggestion: www.fotojaapmaars.nl





(Other) practical matters concerning the ceremony (2)

The defence takes place (in principle) in Dutch, unless you don't speak Dutch well

Answer the questions calmly and to the best of your knowledge and ability; you don't need to know everything; it's (also) about being able to have a discussion at an academic level

- ☐ Answering the first opponent's questions may be a bit 'stiff'; Don't let that discourage you!
- ☐ Keep in mind that the opponents (also) ask questions that are not necessarily about the articles in the thesis

Good to know:

- ☐ Use the glass of water at the lectern
- ☐ Bring paper and a pencil to be able to make notes
- ☐ Due to the lighting, you have a poor view on the public
- ☐ You will hear the opponents through the sound system from behind





(Other) practical matters concerning the ceremony (3)

Scientific integrity:

- ☐ By signing the doctorate register, you endorse Title 1, article 5 of the [VU doctorate regulations](#):
 - ☐ PhD candidates, supervisors and co-supervisors must at all times observe the standards of academic integrity as formulated in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice.”
- ☐ Know what you sign, so check the [Nederlandse-gedragcode-wetenschappelijke-integriteit_2018.pdf](#)





Practical matters concerning finishing the PhD trajectory

Make use of the compensation(s) to which you are (possibly) entitled:

- ☐ 500 euro [reimbursement](#) provided that the thesis has been uploaded for the UB VU and a repository link has been issued (you will receive an email about this from Hora Finita)
- ☐ 750 euro - under certain conditions, for OIO's, based on the (Dutch) CAO: [Amsterdam UMC PhD Graduation Bonus: CAO Regulation](#)
- ☐ Some departments have their own compensation facilities, that you may be entitled to

Compete for one of the following prizes, which will be yearly awarded during the [Amsterdam UMC Science & Awards Day](#)

☐ For more information check the website of the Doctoral School:

- ☐ [Amsterdam UMC PhD Thesis Design Award](#)
- ☐ [Amsterdam UMC PhD Thesis Award](#)
- ☐ [Amsterdam UMC PhD Publication Award](#)

Check the VU website for more information on [Preparation of the ceremony](#) and [Beadle Office - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](#).





Leaving Amsterdam UMC, or staying after the defence?

Staying in Amsterdam UMC? >> have your title changed from drs. to dr.

- ☐ In the personnel system and
- ☐ Also adjust it in the address book of Amsterdam UMC

Leaving AmsterdamUMC?

- ☐ Change the email address in Hora Finita, so you will remain reachable (for the time being)
- ☐ Are you going outside the EU to do research? Check with the organization where you will be appointed, if you need additional documents (such as a certified English translation of the diploma and/or an additional DUO letter for diploma legalization).





Any questions?

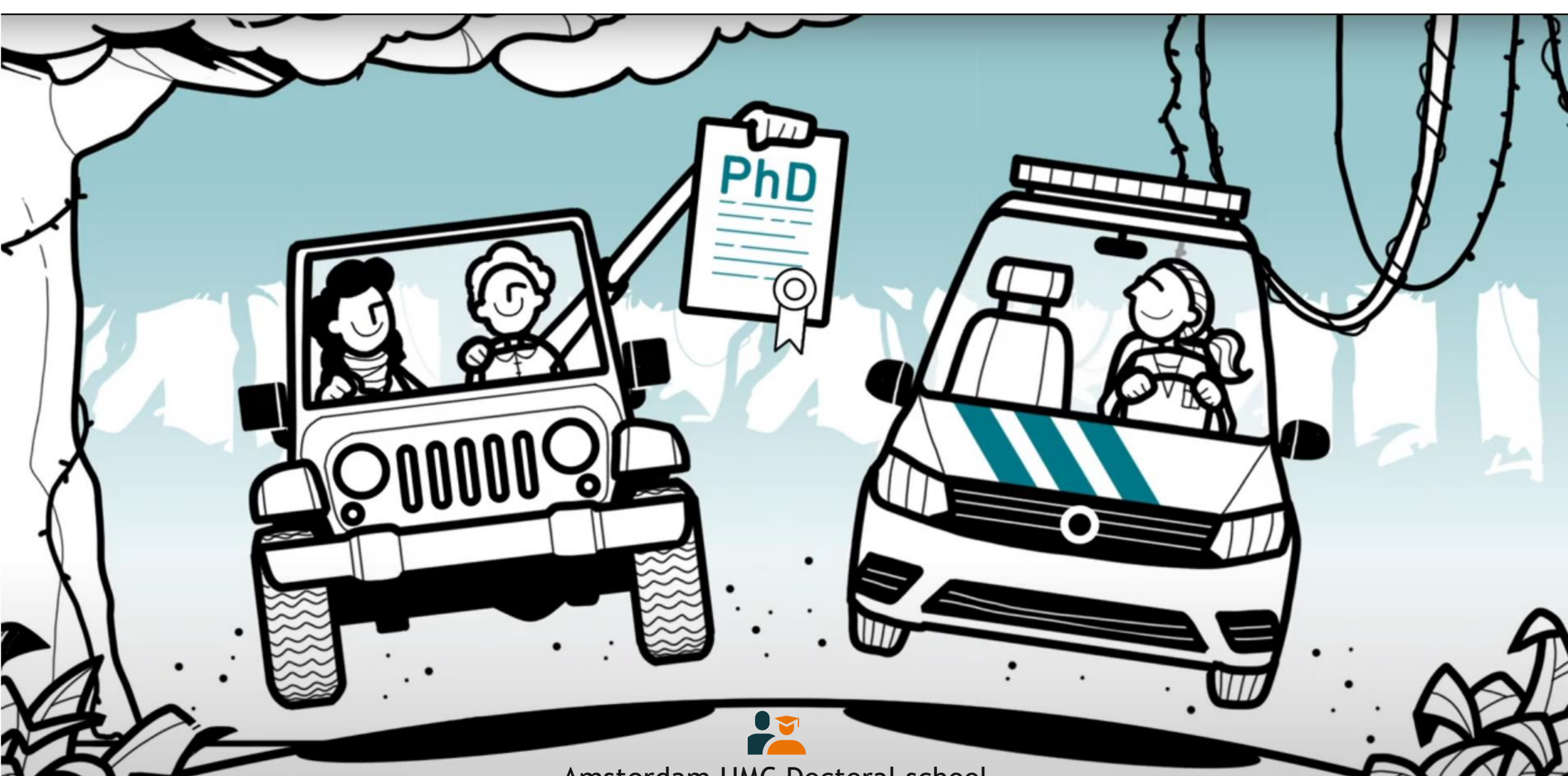


You may find answers to many questions on the [Doctoral School website](#), Graduation - steps 7-10

If not: know how to find us via promoties-decanalezaken@vumc.nl

Or register for one of the monthly workshops [‘Finishing your PhD’](#)





Amsterdam UMC Doctoral school

Good luck with the preparation to make your defence ceremony successful!