

PhD Regulations Faculty of Religion and Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

In accordance with article 38.2 of the Doctorate Regulations of the Vrije Universiteit, the Dean, having consulted the Faculty's board of professors, stipulates the following rules:

Article	Text in Doctorate Regulations	Supplement FRT
7.1.b.	The candidate has met the additional conditions set by the faculty;	PhD candidates can only be admitted to the PhD programme if they have been accepted by and are member of the Graduate School FRT. Requirements for acceptance to the Graduate School FRT VU are: 1) the candidate is in possession of a Master's degree or has successfully obtained an equivalent qualification from a foreign institute of higher education. Furthermore, the candidate has graduated from a Master's degree programme that matches the chosen field of expertise or has demonstrably obtained knowledge and competences for this field in another manner. A vocational master, such as a Master of Divinity (MDiv) or Master of Theology (MTh) does not suffice as qualification to enter the PhD trajectory. Only when an applicants can demonstrate that the completed master programme had a substantial research component and/or Master's thesis, can the Graduate School FRT VU consider acceptance to the programme. This decision is entirely reserved for the Graduate School FRT VU. An exception is made for applicants with a vocational master that that completed a bridging programme accepted by the Graduate School FRT VU and offered by one of the partner institutions of the Graduate School FRT VU. 2) The candidate has adequate proficiency in written and spoken English. The proficiency requirement can be met by the successful completion of one of the following examinations: IELTS: 6.5; TOEFL (paper based test: 580; computer based test: 237; internet based test: 92-93; Cambridge Advanced English: A, B or C. Exemption from the examination is granted to candidates who: (1) within two years of admission to the Graduate School FRT VU, have met the requirements of VU test in English language proficiency TOEFL ITP, with at least the scores specified on the website of the Graduate School FRT VU. (2) have had previous education in secondary or tertiary education in an English-speaking country (Canada, USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand). (3) have an English-language 'international baccalaureate' diploma. (4) have a diploma from a Bachelor or Master's degree programme which has been accredited by the NVAO in the Netherlands.

		3) A FRT research team has positively advised the Graduate School to accept the PhD candidate. At least one Supervisor employed by VU has declared to be willing and able to supervise the PhD candidate during the PhD trajectory. There is a mandatory annual fee for membership of the Graduate School FRT VU. The amount of the fee is determined yearly and can be found on the website of the Graduate School. PhD trajectories of PhD candidates that have not paid the membership fee for two years or more will be frozen, meaning that the Supervisors cannot continue with the supervision, that courses cannot be followed anymore and that the PhD trajectory cannot be finalized.
7.1.b.	The candidate has met the additional conditions set by the faculty;	PhD candidates can only be admitted to the PhD programme if they have successfully completed Research Design module 1. research integrity, and, when applicable, module 2. methodology and module 3. proposal writing.
7.1.b.	The candidate has met the additional conditions set by the faculty;	PhD candidates can only be admitted to the PhD programme if they are member of one of the FRT research teams. As member of a research team, PhD candidates are required to attend the annual PhD conference organized by the Graduate School and the research team. Other requirements regarding active participation in research teams are laid down in the TSP and are determined on an individual basis.
7.1.b.	The candidate has met the additional conditions set by the faculty;	PhD candidates can only be admitted to the PhD programme if their research proposal: 1) has been completed and has been presented to one of the FRT research teams within one year after acceptance to the Graduate School FRT VU. 2) has formally received ethical clearance by the FRT Science and Ethics Committee. 2) is positively reviewed by the PhD Proposal Advisory Committee (PPAC) and the Dean has formally approved the research proposal. The Dean bases this decision on the advice of the PPAC.
8		The Dean of Research appoints four professors as members of the PhD proposal advisory Committee (PPAC). The term of service is 6 months. The members will be selected in such a way that the main disciplines of the faculty are represented (literary/linguistic, historical, systematic, empirical). The PPAC advises the Dean on acceptance of research proposals. The PPAC assigns assessors to each research proposal and bases its advice to the Dean on their assessment.
10.4	The Dean makes the proposal to appoint a Supervisor or a	The Dean shall consult all professors present at the monthly meeting of the Board of Professors before

	co-Supervisor. The Dean first consults a substantial number of professors from the faculty. Professors will be selected based on a rule that is part of the Regulations mentioned in Article 38, paragraph 2.	deciding to appoint a second (Co-)Supervisor and shall weigh the advice of those who cannot attend the meeting but do send in a written reply concerning the Dean's proposal.
11.4	The supervision referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 is partly aimed at ensuring that the dissertation is completed by the deadline stated in the training and supervision plan and that it complies with the requirements in these Regulations.	In addition, within two years after acceptance to the Graduate School, the PhD candidate is required to plan a go/no-go meeting with their Supervisor. During this meeting, the Supervisor decides whether the candidate has progressed satisfactorily in research and writing and whether the candidate can continue the trajectory. This decision is based on the following criteria 1) The research proposal must have been accepted by the PPAC and the Dean at the time of the go/no-go moment 2) The PhD candidate must be admitted to the PhD programme at the time of the go/no-go moment 3) The PhD candidate must have completed the state of research of the dissertation with a positive evaluation of the Supervisor(s) 4) The PhD candidate must have completed the methodology section of the dissertation with a positive evaluation of the Supervisor(s) 5) A plagiarism check shows no plagiarism in the state of research and methodology section 6) The PhD candidate meets the English proficiency requirements as set by the Graduate School FRT VU.
11.4	The supervision referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 is partly aimed at ensuring that the dissertation is completed by the deadline stated in the training and supervision plan and that it complies with the requirements in these Regulations.	The time limit for external PhD candidates to finalize their dissertation is 8 years (with a possible extension of two years if necessary) after acceptance to the Graduate School. Trajectories of PhD candidates who are not in time will be frozen. Freezing a PhD trajectory means that the PhD candidate is no longer supervised by the supervision team, that courses cannot be followed, and that the manuscript cannot be submitted. PhD candidates can only apply for a further extension of their PhD trajectory when they are delayed in their studies because of exceptional circumstances. The decision to grant an extension is made by the Dean, who takes into consideration the advice of the Supervisor(s) and Graduate School FRT VU.
12.2	The Dean proposes the appointment of a co Supervisor after having consulted the Supervisor and other professors, as set out in Article 10, paragraph 4.	The Dean shall consult all professors present at the monthly meeting of the Board of Professors before deciding to appoint a second (Co-)Supervisor and shall weigh the advice of those who cannot attend the meeting but do send in a written reply concerning the Dean's proposal.

13.2	For the appointment of the members of the Doctorate Committee, the Dean requires the consent of the professors, as referred to in Article 10, paragraph 4.	The Dean and the Dean of Research are authorized by the Board of Professors to appoint the members of Doctorate Committees to be installed. They account for the decisions made by handing in a full list of Doctorate Committees installed at each meeting of the Board of Professors. The Supervisor of a given PhD project proposes the members of the Doctorate Committee to the Dean.
13.4	Each Doctorate Committee has at least five members, including at least one man and one woman. At least one member, and two at the most, must also be associated with the faculty, and no more than one members may be associated with the Supervisor's work unit. At least two members of the Committee must be affiliated to a university other than the one that is to confer (or co-confer) the degree. These external members may not have co-authored articles that are included in the PhD candidate's dissertation. Exceptions to this are permitted in special cases, following a reasoned proposal made by the Supervisor and with the written consent of the Dean. This is subject to the condition that no more than one member of the Doctorate Committee may have co-authored no more than one article included in the dissertation.	The Supervisor of the PhD project proposes the members of the Doctorate Committee to the Dean and makes sure that there is some degree of interdisciplinarity on the Committee and that there is gender balance. In agreement with the Faculty's general gender policy, at least two female colleagues are to be proposed in each Doctorate Committee, primarily selected on the basis of their expertise. In case the Supervisor does not succeed at finding at least two suitable female colleagues, the installation of the Doctorate Committee shall be discussed in the Board of Professors, in order to make use of the networks of the members of the Board and find suitable, qualified female candidates for the Committee.
14.4	The Dean may grant exemptions for components of the programme, provided the way in which the PhD candidate has met the final requirements of the relevant components is shown	Courses and activities of component A of the training programme are mandatory for all PhD candidates. PhD candidates can apply for waivers for the mandatory component of the training programme except for the course research integrity (research design module 1, 2 EC), which is mandatory for all PhD candidates. For the other mandatory courses, waivers are only granted for PhD candidates who: (1) have successfully completed a VU research Master's degree, (2) have successfully completed courses at research Master's- or PhD-level covering the same study objectives, (3) are affiliated to

		a partner institution that provides courses with the same study objectives and with which the Graduate School FRT VU made special arrangements. PhD candidates who have a VU research Master's degree are exempted from 28 ECTS of the training programme (2 EC for the research integrity course is always mandatory). PhD candidates who have completed a research Master's at another institution can also apply a 28 ECTS waiver. The Director of the Graduate School FRT VU decides whether to grant this waiver. PhD candidates with other Master's degrees can apply for a waiver for the electives (18 EC). Only extracurricular activities/training or courses from a second Master's may be used as substitution for the electives, insofar as they are relevant to the intended research. In all cases, the PhD candidate must justify why they should be granted a waiver by submitting a Waiver Request form and include evidence of already completed courses/activities. Waiver requests must be put in the TSP and are to be approved by the Director of the Graduate School FRT VU, if necessary, in consultation with the Dean of Research.
14.5	In the first two years of the PhD programme, a plagiarism check is carried out on an appropriate product. The plagiarism check consists of a scan and an interview about the results of the scan. The university determines how the scan is carried out, and the interview is between the Supervisor (or, at their request, a co-Supervisor) and the PhD candidate. The Supervisor (or co-Supervisor) draws up a brief report of the interview, which states whether or not any plagiarism has been identified. The report is stored in the system referred to in Article 8, paragraph 1. The Dean may allow the plagiarism check in a specific case, or in general throughout the faculty, or in a particular field, to take place at a later time. Exemptions from	The plagiarism check is carried out as part of the go/no-go moment with the Supervisor within two years after acceptance to the Graduate School FRT VU.

	the plagiarism check are not possible.	
16.2	A faculty may set additional rules relating to the dissertation, which are part of the Regulations set out in Article 38, paragraph 2.	Given the large differences in methodology between dissertations, FRT neither defines a minimum, nor a maximum number of pages for a dissertation. The rule of thumb is: a good dissertation gives an in-depth analysis in combination with being readable and concise. The average number of pages is somewhere between 150 and 400 (75,000 to 200,000 words).
16.2	A faculty may set additional rules relating to the dissertation, which are part of the Regulations set out in Article 38, paragraph 2.	FRT does not have specific requirements for the lay-out of the dissertation (font, spacing etc.) as long as the chosen lay-out is used consistently throughout the dissertation.
16.2	A faculty may set additional rules relating to the dissertation, which are part of the Regulations set out in Article 38, paragraph 2.	In case a dissertation consists of published articles, the minimum number of articles is five. Three of these should be published in international, scholarly journals or series (refereed or highly qualified in another way), and at least two of the other articles should have reached the status “submitted”. The contribution of the PhD candidate to the compiled articles should be substantial, and the Supervisor has to hand in a written statement expressing this fact.
20.5	The PhD candidate will submit a number of copies of the dissertation, as specified by the College of Deans, to the Beadle of the university at least three weeks prior to the PhD ceremony, as described in paragraphs 2 and 3. These copies are intended for the Rector Magnificus, the Dean and the University Library.	Next to the number of dissertations that the candidate has to hand in at the Beadle’s office, eight copies have to be delivered to the Faculty’s secretary.
21.2	The dissertation must meet any other requirements set by the faculty	The dissertation must meet the FRT Final attainment levels for PhD research. A document with the final attainment levels are available online for all PhD candidates and Supervisor(s).
22a.1	The completed dissertation will be subjected to a plagiarism check in the following cases: • if plagiarism is established during the plagiarism check referred to in Article 14, paragraph 5, or • if this is prescribed by the rules referred to in Article 38, paragraph 2.	FRT requires that all completed dissertations will be subjected to a plagiarism check.

23.1	The Supervisor explains why the dissertation meets the requirements.	Along with an explanation why the dissertation meets the requirements, the Supervisor sends the plagiarism report to the assessment Committee.
35		The faculty has appointed two confidential advisors for PhD candidates.