

External PhD fees

This version is from May 13, 2026

This fee structure applies to all non-VU employed PhD candidates (i.e., scholarship, externally financed, and self-funded PhDs¹).

The fee structure is composed of three cost categories², as listed below.

	Year 1-4 (per year)	>4 years (per year, max. 10)
Membership Graduate School	€ 500	€ 250
Education Contribution (Tuition fee)	€ 1250	n/a
VU Services	€ 1300	€ 1300 (optional after 4 years)
Total (yearly)	€ 3050	€ 1550 (incl. VU Services) € 250 (excl. VU Services)

Graduate School (GSSS) Membership

This amounts to a fixed annual fee payable for the first four years of €500 per year, followed by €250 per year up to a maximum of 10 years. This fee covers a portion of the Graduate School's organizational costs (staff, administration, seminars and workshops, communication, guidance from PhD advisors, support with data and software management, assistance with privacy-sensitive data, registration and monitoring via the PhD tracking system Hora Finita, etc.)

Educational Contribution (Tuition fee)

A fixed fee for four years, payable by all external PhD candidates. This pertains to costs for training organized by, or facilitated by, the GSSS (including training at partner institutions). The GSSS provides a broad course offering of ~ 35 ECs, as well as possibilities for self-organized tutorials and seminars. The VU PhD regulations require the completion of 30 ECs in training.

VU Services

VU services (such as VUnetID) are necessary at the GSSS. This fee covers hospitality costs (access pass, VU account, email, computer software, access to key portals and course pages, and use of the University Library/UBVU). These services (including the invoicing of associated fees) are arranged through the department.

Effective Date: The above rates apply to trajectories starting as of **July 1, 2026*** and may be adjusted annually based on price developments.

¹ UNL PhD types 2, 3, and 4.

² This excludes research-related costs that depend on the design of the project, such as costs for data collection/fieldwork, conference attendance, and publication fees. There must be sufficient coverage for all planned costs. The costs and coverage should be specified in the Budget Plan during admission. A Budget Plan template is available on the VU-GSSS website.

***A transitional period is stipulated to allow for timely processing:** *Complete applications received by GSSS before 1 June 2026 (with a start date on or before 1 July 2026) will be processed in accordance with the old fee structure. Applications for prospective admissions received after 1 June 2026 (or with a start date later than 1 July 2026) will be processed in line with the fee structure above.*

Exemptions

A (partial) fee waiver might be granted only under special circumstances:

- When a Memorandum of Understanding between the scholarship provider and the VU grants a waiver to the scholarship holders;
- If the PhD candidate has an income below the minimum wage and voluntarily submits an exemption request providing documented information about their income on their own initiative.

The initial waiver assessment is performed by the Head of Department and it must be approved by the Director of Operations of the Faculty before it can be granted.