

Doctorate Guidelines – Faculty of Law – December 2024

Doctorate Regulations – VU Amsterdam

Dissertations are governed by Sections 6 and 7 of the [VU Doctorate Regulations](#). Make sure you read the most recent version of these Regulations to ensure you are aware of the latest requirements.

The most important provisions in the VU Doctorate Regulations regarding the form and contents of the dissertation are:

Article 16(1):

The dissertation may consist of:

- a. a scholarly monograph on a specific topic; or
- b. a collection of a number of separate scholarly articles. Some or all of the articles should be in the public domain. The articles must demonstrate sufficient cohesion;
- c. a monograph (a) or collection of articles (b) combined with an artistic and/or technological component that forms an integral part of the dissertation and makes a significant contribution to furthering knowledge in the field.

Article 16(4):

If the dissertation consists of a collection of articles, the PhD candidate will outline how these are interrelated in an introductory or concluding chapter.

Article 16(5):

If the dissertation consists of a collection of articles by multiple authors, the PhD candidate must demonstrate that, for each article, the candidate's own contribution has been essential. This can be done by adding a page to the dissertation containing a list of references, with an overview of the authors of each article and, for each article, an explanation of the co-authors' contributions.

Article 18(1):

The dissertation must be written in Dutch, English, French or German. Approval for writing the dissertation in another language must be requested from the dean.

Article 21(1):

The dissertation must show evidence of the following:

- The PhD candidate is able to contribute to extending the frontiers of knowledge by conducting original research that can withstand the rigours of peer review;
- The PhD candidate demonstrates a systematic understanding of a specific branch of knowledge and has demonstrated expertise in the methodologies needed for conducting research in this discipline;
- The PhD candidate is able to design, develop, implement and modify a research project;
- The PhD candidate is capable of critically analysing, evaluating and synthesizing new and complex ideas in their field and beyond;
- The PhD candidate is able to enter into debate with peers in the discipline and the wider scholarly community regarding their expertise in a specific branch of knowledge.

Additional rules set by the Faculty of Law

Under Articles 16(2), 21(2) and 38(2) of the VU Doctorate Regulations, the Faculty of Law has set the following additional rules and requirements for the form and scope of the dissertation.

Form

In the case of all forms of dissertations referred to in Article 16(1) of the VU Doctorate Regulations:

- all components of the dissertation must add value to the other components;
- the dissertation must contain both an introduction and a conclusion showing the cohesion between the components and the value that each component adds to the others;
- the methodology must clearly show the period during which data was collected (if applicable); updating is not required.

The following requirements apply as a minimum to dissertations comprising a number of separate articles.

A dissertation comprising a number of separate articles:

- consists of four or more substantive components, including two articles. These two articles must have been submitted to a scholarly journal (i.e. a journal primarily aimed at academic researchers), and at least one article must have been accepted by a journal's editorial committee;
- may include components that have not yet been accepted or published;
- may include components published or accepted for publication within eight years before the date on which the dissertation is submitted to the supervisors. The dean may allow an exception in this respect;
- may include articles in facsimile or a new lay-out;
- will preferably comprise components written in the same language, but may comprise components in a maximum of two languages, providing the reasons for this are satisfactorily substantiated.

Final provisions

These Regulations were adopted on **5 December 2024** and apply to doctoral trajectories starting on or after **5 December 2024**.

Candidates submitting dissertations relating to PhD trajectories started before that date are urgently advised to ensure their dissertations comply with these Regulations.