

VU PhD Survey 2025: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why should I participate in the VU PhD Survey 2025?

By completing the survey, you can influence the quality of your own PhD trajectory and that of other PhD candidates in the Netherlands. The data from the survey will be used for quality policy within VU. Your participation helps VU to improve its PhD programs, both for current and future PhD candidates.

2. What will VU do with the results of the VU PhD Survey?

We will use your feedback as an important tool to evaluate your education, supervision, facilities and work environment and to decide what we should focus on in the coming years. A factsheet with an overview of the aggregated results will be shared on the VU website.

3. What has been done with the results of previous surveys?

The results of the previous (2023) VU PhD Survey can be found here <https://vu.nl/nl/onderzoek/meer-over/phd-monitor-2023>.

4. Who will be invited to participate in the PhD Survey 2025?

All PhD candidates who are registered in Hora Finita will be invited by e-mail to participate in the VU PhD Survey.

5. Which topics will be included in the PhD Survey 2025?

The survey covers all aspects of your PhD trajectory. The first few questions will be about your prior degree, your PhD project and your affiliation with VU. There will be questions about the supervision you are receiving, the progress of your project, your work environment, and whether you are involved in teaching and supervising. You will also be asked questions about your well-being and social safety. The final topic is what you plan to do after you obtain your PhD.

6. Which personal data will be registered?

Personal data will be included in categories, namely Age category (<30, 30–40, >40), Gender (male, female, non-binary, prefer not to say), Nationality category (Dutch, EEA, non-EEA), Phase of PhD trajectory (starter, intermediate, senior), Type of PhD candidate according to the UNL categories, Faculty, Department. See the Privacy Statement for more information.

7. How will the university safeguard my privacy?

Your answers cannot be traced directly back to you as a person because names and e-mail addresses are not included in the data collection. Personal data such as age, gender and nationality are converted to categories. By converting personal data into categories, the traceability (due to the combination of data) becomes very small. Within VU, the data is only accessible to persons who need access in the context of data analysis and writing of reports. Group results will only be presented for group with a minimum group size of 15 people.

9. Can I withdraw my participation after I have completed the survey?

Once the survey has been completed, it is not possible to withdraw your response, because the data is stored anonymously and cannot be linked back to you.

10. Until which date can I complete the survey?

The survey will be available until November 17, 2025. You will receive an invitation in your inbox (preferred address as listed in Hora Finita) with a link to the survey. We recommend that you complete the survey right away!

11. How long does it take to complete the survey?

Depending on your situation, it will take you approximately 10 minutes to complete the survey.

12. Can I save my half-completed survey and return to it later?

Yes, this is possible. If you click on the link again, you will automatically go back to where you left off.

13. What should I do if I have not received an invitation email?

All PhD candidates who are registered in Hora Finita will be invited to participate in the VU PhD Survey. If you fall into this category but have not received an email, please send an email to phdmonitor@vu.nl to request a link for participation.

14. Why is the VU PhD Survey 2025 only available in English?

The VU PhD Survey is a tool to measure the experiences of all VU PhD candidates, some of whom have an international background.

15. Who manages the VU PhD Survey 2025?

The VU PhD Survey 2025 is managed by the Department of Institutional Affairs of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

16. Is participation in the PhD Survey 2025 confidential?

Yes, participation in the VU PhD Survey is confidential. Your feedback will be combined with that of all the other VU PhD respondents, and your name and email address will be removed. Personal data that is included in the national PhD database will be divided in categories, and no open answers will be included. The results of the survey will be discussed in reports, but can never be traced back to individuals. See the Privacy Statement for more information.

17. Where and when will the results be presented?

The results of the VU PhD Survey 2025 will be made available early 2026.