

ADVICE IN FIGURES

A 2021 OVERVIEW OF OUR ADVICE & SUPPORT FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHICS



Female (62%)
Male (38%)



Medicine (52%)
Other (48%)



Dutch (79%)
Other (21%)



UvA/AMC (61%)
VU/VUmc (39%)



*Only for UvA/AMC PhD candidates

3049 PHD CANDIDATES REGISTERED

432 PHD CANDIDATES STARTED THEIR TRAJECTORY (VU/VUmc PhD candidates only included since April 2021)



ADVISORY CONVERSATIONS

183 ADVISORY CONVERSATIONS WITH **74** PHD CANDIDATES



TOP 3 TOPICS

≥2 sessions 62%

1. Problems with supervision (58%)
2. Personal problems (44%)
3. Interference work-life balance (42%)

DISCONTINUED PHD

51 PHD TRAJECTORIES WERE DISCONTINUED



Median duration of a discontinued PhD is **21 months**

Top 3 reasons

1. PhD graduation elsewhere
2. Problems with supervision
3. Feelings of incompetence

MONITORING IN FIGURES

A 2021 OVERVIEW OF OUR MONITORING FINDINGS



PHD PLAN

In an open and honest conversation, PhD candidates and their supervisors compile a PhD Plan to ensure proper training and supervision and to specify mutual expectations and goals.

308 PHD CANDIDATES COMPILED A PHD PLAN & HAD AN INTAKE MEETING WITH PHD ADVISOR

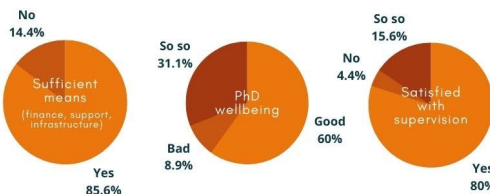
68% Did so within the first 6 months

PHD PROGRESS & CONSULTATION

An opportunity to reflect on the PhD trajectory further with supervisory team and independent PhD counsellor (professor/PI outside the research group).



221 PHD CANDIDATES DID PHD PROGRESS & CONSULTATION



TOP 3 HINDERING FACTORS

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| PhD candidate: | PhD counsellor: |
| 1. COVID-19 | 1. Plan & Project management |
| 2. Unpredictable research | 2. COVID-19 |
| 3. Collaboration / Bureaucracy | 3. Personal development |



PHD CONCLUSION

After graduating, the young doctors fill in a survey about supervision, infrastructure, research climate, thesis examination, clear goals & expectations, and gained skills.

110 SURVEYS RECEIVED **8.7** PhD satisfaction score

PhD candidates scored higher on PhD satisfaction when they:

- Discussed PhD Plan
- Discussed career
- Did teaching

PhD candidates scored lower on PhD satisfaction when they:

- Were unemployed / had job outside academia
- Took longer than 4 years
- Worried about funding

Top 3 to be improved

1. Supervision
2. Infrastructure
3. Financial support

RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Similar to 2020, problems with supervision is the most important theme in 2021. COVID-19, unpredictable research, poor plan/project management, and insufficient infrastructure and funding remain points of concern.

Compared to 2020, PhD candidates seem to struggle more with high workload, performance pressure, work-life balance, and feelings of incompetence.

Compared to 2020, International PhD candidates seem to struggle more with lack of social support, personal problems, and feelings of incompetence.

MAKE QUALITY OF SUPERVISION NO.1 PRIORITY

- Ensure enough training and evaluation opportunities for all supervisors.
- Improve collaboration and communication between supervisor and PhD candidate with realistic planning and priorities (SMART), bidirectional expectations, and regular evaluations.
- As a supervisor, attend to wellbeing of PhD candidates by personal support and positive feedback.



APPLY REQUIREMENTS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUNDING



Protect PhD employee rights and the quality of PhD projects by drafting requirements for the (infrastructure and funding) conditions under which a PhD position may be offered. In case of deviation from the requirements, ask for an explanation.

PAY EXTRA ATTENTION TO INTERNATIONAL PHD CANDIDATES

- Guide them through registrations/regulations and lead the way to extra support (Doctoral School & International Office).
- Bring them in contact with colleagues.
- Be mindful of cultural differences.



DOCTORAL SCHOOL

CURRENT ACTIONS

We revised our monitoring procedures to incorporate realistic planning and priorities, bidirectional expectations, regular evaluations, and wellbeing of the PhD candidate.

We set up a reporting and signaling plan for recurring problems at departments or with supervisors.

We are developing workshops and courses to improve wellbeing, mental resilience, and communication skills of PhD candidates.

FUTURE ACTIONS

We will form a vision plan to enhance quality of supervision together with all involved parties, including the deans and works council.

We will inform HR and research support on the current infrastructure and funding needs.

We will collaborate with international office to provide extra support for international PhD candidates.



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