

# Finishing your PhD

## information for Amsterdam UMC/VU PhD candidates

Latest update: October 2026

Amsterdam UMC Doctoral school

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# Important!

If information in this presentation deviates from information provided by the VU Beadles, or from information on the VU website, the VU information will always prevail

Check:
Beadle Office - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam



# Almost ready to defend your thesis!

The final steps you need to take, if:

- ❑ Your dissertation has been approved (or is being assessed)
- ❑ The date of the defence is (being) fixed (you can plan the date after approval of your thesis)

With the email from Hora Finita, to confirm the defence date, you receive relevant information.
Keep this email close by, so you can easily refer to it

What still needs to be done before the graduation?

- ❑ Complete your thesis
- ❑ Prepare yourself (and others) for the actual defence of your thesis
- ❑ Defend your thesis and your research (PhD ceremony)

# Finalize your thesis (1)

- ❑ Cover – design
- ❑ If applicable: translate the title into English
- ❑ Prepare the title page (website Doctoral School: Approval of the title page - Amsterdam UMC/VU)
- ❑ You will be invited to do so in the email that confirms the defence date; do so within 7 days of receipt this email:
  - ❑ Using the format in Hora Finita
  - ❑ Mentioning the title 'Doctor of Philosophy'
  - ❑ Include the Rector Magnificus' approved version in your thesis
- ❑ Adding your portfolio in your dissertation (format on website Doctoral School: Portfolio and *Example & template*) is mandatory, due to the Amsterdam UMC Executive Board's supplementary regulations >> PhD graduation | Amsterdam UMC
- ❑ Add a summary in the language your thesis is written, and – if applicable - a literal translation in English as well
- ❑ Optional: write a thank you note
- ❑ Optional: add an ISBN number and a DOI number (you will get the DOI automatically, via a Hora Finita email, after the title page has been approved)

# Finalize your thesis (2)

Collected all items you need?

Print your thesis

- ❑ At least 5 copies for beadles and deans; neatly bound copier copies also are allowed
- ❑ Or have your thesis printed as a book
- ❑ Note:
  - ❑ Do so, only after having received a formal approval of the title page by the VU Rector Magnificus
  - ❑ Suggestions where to print your thesis: REPRO VU; check: Handigeadressen.pdf (vu.nl) or check ASAP recommendations (send an email: asap@amsterdamumc.nl)
  - ❑ Maybe you can find sponsors for printing your thesis (f.i. in your research involved organizations)?

Distribution of your thesis: digital version: no later than 5 weeks before the defence, paper version no later than 4 weeks before the defence: see Submitting the final version of the thesis:

- ❑ Send five copies to the VU Office of the Beadle (check the VU website: Dissertation submission & defence)
  - ❑ The beadles will send two hardcopies to the office of Dean's Affairs (of which one will be sent to the chair of the ceremony)
- ❑ To the members of the doctorate committee (opponents)
- ❑ Check with your supervisor if more organizations/persons involved need a copy of your thesis
- ❑ It is mandatory to provide a digital version of your thesis to VU Amsterdam, via Hora Finita, after your title page has been approved by the Rector Magnificus, at least six weeks before the defence date
  - ❑ It will be published by the UBVU in the VU Research Portal (Pure). Check: Upload your dissertation

# Looking forward to the day of the defence

- Dresscode: appropriate clothing; check the VU website (only available in Dutch)

- Appoint ceremonial assistants (in Dutch: Paranimfen) >> 2 = mandatory
  - Ceremonial assistants wear the same clothing style as the PhD candidate

- The defence ceremony is public accessible
  - Please note that minimum age part 1 (defence) is 8 years
    - During the part after the formal defence children under 8 are allowed to attend

- Pre-discussion of the ceremony; to prepare you might use the 'Format for starting a general discussion of your PhD thesis' >> Links & Supportive services for PhD candidates:
    - The rector (chairman) sometimes contacts the PhD candidate to get acquainted and to go through the ceremony
    - With (co)supervisor(s) (practice your defence)
    - You have probably attended a ceremony before?
    - In advance: visit the VU: register for a 'Meet the Beadle' meeting*:
      - Planned on Wednesdays 16.00 in the Aula VU main building; 4 times a year
      - Check dates: PhD examining committee and day of the defence
      - To register send an email to pedel@vu.nl.

**If the information in this presentation deviates from the information provided during the Meet the Beadle meeting, guidelines from the VU prevail*

# Exposé or layman’s talk (lekenpraatje)

In consultation with your supervising professor, you can present a general explanation of the research, being the basis of the thesis

- ❑ This is not mandatory.
- ❑ It may take no longer than ten minutes

During the presentation, you can use the hall’s standard audiovisual facilities, which include a projector, laptop and pointer.
The use of these facilities is free of charge

- ❑ For further information, special requests and quotations, please contact the Audio-Visual Centre information desk on +31 (0)20 598 9161 or send an email to evenementen.avc@vu.nl

The Layman’s talk can be followed online. The screen can be shared

# The ceremony of the defence

The members of the examining committee and the doctorate committee are the same persons

- If one or more committee members are unable to attend, guest opponents will be appointed by the dean, on the recommendation of the supervisor
- Five opponents is the least, at least three of whom are members of the doctorate committee
  - If you have any questions about this, please send an email to promoties-decanalezaken@vumc.nl

On behalf of the dean, a colleague of the Doctoral School appoints a rector, to chair the ceremony

- The chair and the supervisor discuss the order of the opponents
- The chair will monitor the time during the ceremony

# The day of the defence

Taking into account traffic jams, delays, etc., make sure to be at least 45 minutes before the start of the ceremony

In VU room 1C-21:

- ❑ Here you and your ceremonial assistants can change clothes
- ❑ You also will find here the text of the opening & closing statement, to say before and immediately after the defence (slides 12, 13)
- ❑ 30 minutes before start, the beadle and the audio technician also come to this room to take you through the protocol and the presentation
- ❑ This room will not be locked during the ceremony; there are lockers available where you can store belongings and leave them safely

# The defence ceremony

Structure of the ceremony

- ❑ Entry in procession; order: beadle, chairman, supervisors, opponents, PhD candidate and ceremonial assistants
- ❑ Opening by the chair, opening statement
- ❑ Presenting exposé (layman's talk) – duration: max 10 minutes
- ❑ Opposition members ask their questions under the rector's chairmanship
- ❑ After exactly 1 hour: the beadle enters the room and reports 'Hora Est!'
- ❑ Closing statement by the PhD candidate

- ❑ After the defence: in the same order procession beadle, chairman, supervisors, opponents, the PhD candidate and paranymphs leave the room, for deliberation of up to 10 minutes
- ❑ After deliberation, the PhD candidate is informed about the outcome of the defence

- ❑ Everyone returns to the room in the same procession order, for the graduation ceremony and signing of the document, a (short) speech by the supervisor (max 4 minutes) and closing ceremony by the chair; now the PhD candidate stand in front of the lectern
- ❑ After the ceremony: the procession order is different: beadle, the PhD candidate (+ possibly partner/children), paranymphs, chairman, supervisors, opponents and guests leave the room
- ❑ If desired, music can be played (bring it on USB stick; no live music is allowed)

- ❑ Opportunity to congratulate + if arranged in advance >> a reception in the VU University building (at your own expense)

# Addressing the opponents + opening & closing statements

Formal, prescribed, language. Also, by the chair - e.g. at the opening of the ceremony

Opening statement
- ❑ Text on paper available in room 1C-21

You should start the Laymen's presentation with:
- ❑ Dear rector, dear audience (in Dutch: geachte rector, geachte aanwezigen)

During the defence in Dutch, you address the opponents, using:
- ❑ Hooggeleerde opponent (answering a professor)
- ❑ Zeergeleerde opponent (answering a doctor) or
- ❑ Geleerde opponent (answering a doctorandus / master)

Address an English speaking opponent using:
- ❑ Learned opponent

Closing statement after the 'Hora Est'
- ❑ Text on paper available in room 1C-21

# Opening & Closing Statements

(the text you will receive at the VU, shortly before the ceremony, is leading)




**VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT**

## STATEMENT PRECEDING THE DEFENCE

Rector,

On your authority and as authorized by the College of Deans, and in accordance with the Doctoral Examination Committee in the Faculty / School of

_____

I am prepared to defend my thesis entitled:

_____

in order to obtain the degree of Doctor of Philosophy / Doctor.

## STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE DEFENCE

Now that my defence has ended I sincerely thank the opponents for the attention they have devoted to my thesis. I now look forward to the decision of the Doctoral Examination Committee in the Faculty / School of

_____

which will decide whether the degree of Doctor of Philosophy / Doctor will be granted to me.

# Openings- & Slotformules (de tekst die aan je wordt uitgereikt in de VU, kort voor de ceremonie, is leidend)



**VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT**

**FORMULE VOOR DE VERDEDIGING**

Mijnheer/Mevrouw de Rector Magnificus, op uw gezag
en met machtiging van het College van Decanen,
en volgens besluit van de promotiecommissie van de
Faculteit der / School of

_____

sta ik gereed mijn proefschrift, dat tot titel heeft

_____

te verdedigen, ten einde de graad Doctor of Philosophy /
Doctor te verwerven.

**FORMULE NA DE VERDEDIGING**

Nu mijn verdediging is beëindigd, zij mij vergund dank
te betuigen aan de opponenten voor de aandacht die zij
aan mijn proefschrift hebben willen schenken.

Ik zie nu het oordeel tegemoet van de promotiecommissie
van de Faculteit der / School of

_____

die zal beslissen of mij de graad Doctor of Philosophy / Doctor
zal worden verleend.

# (Other) practical matters concerning the ceremony (1)

Publicity: contact Amsterdam UMC via communicatie@amsterdamumc.nl or 020 4443444

Current policy academic ceremonies:

- ❑ Hybrid ceremony (Online ceremonies are only allowed under strict conditions)

Each ceremony will be streamed live via the VU Beadle's Office – YouTube channel

- ❑ Candidate receives a link to the recording, to download it within two days
- ❑ After two days the recording will be deleted
- ❑ Check: Hybrid ceremony

# (Other) practical matters concerning the ceremony (2)

The defence takes place (in principle) in Dutch, unless you don't speak Dutch well, or if for other reason you prefer English.
In that case, please send an email to promoties-Decanalezaken@vumc.nl, so they can inform the chair of the ceremony

Answer the questions calmly and to the best of your knowledge and ability; you don't need to know everything; it's (also) about being able to have a discussion at an academic level

Good to know:

- ❑ Use the glass of water at the lectern
- ❑ Bring paper and a pencil to be able to make notes
- ❑ Due to the lighting, you have a poor view on the public
- ❑ You will hear the opponents through the sound system from behind

# (Other) practical matters concerning the ceremony (3)

Scientific integrity:

- By signing the doctorate register, you endorse Title 1, article 5 of the VU doctorate regulations
  - PhD candates, supervisors and co-supervisors must at all times observe the standards of academic integrity as formulated in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice."
- To know what you sign, check the Nederlandse-gedragscode-wetenschappelijke-integriteit_2018.pdf

# Practical matters concerning finishing the PhD trajectory

Make use of the compensation(s) to which you are (possibly) entitled:

- ❑ 500 euro reimbursement provided that the thesis has been uploaded for the UB VU and a repository link has been issued (you will receive an email about this from Hora Finita)
- ❑ 750 euro – under certain conditions, for OIO's, based on the (Dutch) CAO: Amsterdam UMC PhD Graduation Bonus: CAO Regulation
- ❑ Some departments or research institutes have their own compensation facilities, that you may be entitled to

Will you be defending your thesis in 2026? And did you **design and create the cover and** lay-out of your thesis yourself? Then consider competing for the Amsterdam UMC PhD Thesis Design Award
*It has not yet been decided whether the prize will be awarded again in 2027*

Check the **VU website** for more information on Preparation of the ceremony and Beadle Office - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

# Leaving Amsterdam UMC, or staying after the defence?

Staying in Amsterdam UMC? >> have your title changed from drs. to dr.

- ❑ In the personnel system and
- ❑ Also adjust it in the address book of Amsterdam UMC

Leaving AmsterdamUMC?

- ❑ Change the email address in Hora Finita, so you will remain reachable (for the time being)
- ❑ Are you going outside the EU to do research? Check with the organization where you will be appointed, if you need additional documents (such as a certified English translation of the diploma and/or an additional DUO letter for diploma legalization)

# Any questions?



You may find answers to many questions on the Doctoral School website, Graduation - steps 7-10

Do you still have questions? Send us an email: promoties-decanalezaken@vumc.nl

Or register for one of the workshops ‘Finishing your PhD’




Amsterdam UMC Doctoral school

**Good luck with the preparation to make your defence ceremony successful!**