



PHD GUIDE

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1. Introduction

The SHE PhD guide aims to inform PhD candidates and their supervisors within SHE about our PhD policy. It offers information about the different phases of the PhD project, from start to end, focusing on relevant topics and practical matters to consider. Additionally, this guide contains an overview of relevant websites and contact persons.

The Graduate School of Health Professions Education (SHE)

The Graduate School of Health Professions Education (SHE) at the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML) at Maastricht University is a graduate school for education and research in health professions education. SHE offers a wide range of courses in health professions education ranging from short courses to degree programs such as a Master and PhD program and includes a research program. SHE's research program 2018-2023 is entitled 'Task-Centered Learning Environments in the Health Professions'. The program has four main themes: (1) goals and values of and approaches to evaluation, (2) approaches to instruction, (3) approaches to assessment, and (4) approaches to implementation. The full description of the program can be found [here](#). The SHE research program is led by the scientific director of SHE, Prof. Dr. Pim Teunissen.

2. The SHE PhD program

The SHE PhD program is an important part of the SHE research program. Educational research is essential for finding new and better ways to educate doctors, nurses, physical therapists and other health professionals. SHE offers a face-to-face and distance-based PhD program. The PhD candidates receive supervision from highly experienced and internationally acknowledged educational researchers associated with SHE. The general aim of the PhD program is to develop the next generation of health professions education researchers who can contribute to research and innovation in health professions education.

Objectives of the PhD program

The main objective of the PhD program is to enable participants to perform educational research (typically a series of empirical studies), resulting in a PhD thesis. A PhD thesis at SHE consists of at least four journal articles published in or submitted to peer-reviewed international journals reporting on the empirical work that was conducted. PhD supervisory teams strive to have at least two articles within the thesis published or accepted in international peer reviewed journals before the approval of the thesis. In addition, the PhD thesis includes an introductory chapter, a conclusion/discussion chapter, and a summary in English and Dutch. The aim of writing a PhD thesis is to learn to independently conduct high-quality educational research.

Below, the final achievement standards for a doctorate within SHE are described. These are adopted from the VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands) Position Paper 'Hora est!' (2004) and from the NFU guidelines (Dutch Federation of University Medical Centers).

- The successful candidate has made an original contribution to academic research of a quality which stands up to peer review at the level common within and outside of the Netherlands;

- The successful candidate has demonstrated their ability to apply the academic methods used in the discipline concerned for developing, interpreting and putting into practice new knowledge;
- The successful candidate has acquired and worked with a substantial body of knowledge, which, at the very least, embraces the principles and methods of international academic practice and of theorization, methodology and study in the discipline concerned;
- The successful candidate possesses the ability to design and implement a substantial project for the purpose of developing new knowledge;
- The successful candidate is able to communicate knowledge and methods pertaining to their discipline or specialism in an effective way;
- The successful candidate communicates their research and its results through publications in internationally recognized, peer reviewed journals.
- The successful candidate is able to exercise social responsibility in conducting, applying and making use of their own research.

Types of PhD candidates

Four types of PhD candidates are distinguished within SHE:

- 1) full time internal PhD candidates;
- 2) part time internal PhD candidates;
- 3) international external PhD candidates;
- 4) Dutch external PhD candidates.

All types will defend their PhD thesis at Maastricht University. Table 1 provides more details about the differences between the types of PhD candidates.

Table 1: Types of PhD candidates within SHE

Type of PhD	Location	On UM payroll	Extent of PhD appointment	Supervision	Tuition fee	TRACK registration
Full time internal PhD	Maastricht University	Yes*	0.8 fte or more	Mostly face-to-face	N.A.	Employed as promovendus
Part time internal PhD	Maastricht University	Yes	0.4 fte or more and less than 0.8 fte	Mostly face-to-face	N.A.	Other UM/MUMC staff doing a PhD
International external PhD	International	No	N.A.	Mostly online	Fee paid	Contract PhD candidate
Dutch external PhD	Dutch universities/ institutions	No	N.A.	Mostly online	No fee paid	Contract PhD candidate

*An exception in this category are certain scholarship students, e.g. CSC scholarship students. They are not on the payroll of SHE, yet they are regarded as full time internal PhD candidates.

Team of supervisors

Minimally two and maximally three supervisors are involved in the PhD team. Commonly, one ‘promotor’ (full or associate professor with an appointment at SHE) and one ‘co-promotor’ (daily supervisor) are assigned to each PhD project. In the case of external PhD candidates, we advise to include an external supervisor from the candidate’s institution or context (holding a PhD degree is a requirement). Together, the supervisors are responsible for monitoring and stimulating the progress and quality of the project. When a supervisory team for specific reasons wishes to include more than 3 members, approval from the Dean needs to be obtained. In the separate empirical studies that make up the PhD project, additional collaborators can be involved without approval from the Dean.

Duration of the PhD program

How much time it takes to write the thesis varies considerably. A full time PhD candidate on average needs four years to finish the PhD thesis (extension is possible in case of delay for reasons outside of the research such as pregnancy, maternal/paternal leave). Completion duration of part time and external PhDs greatly depends on the percentage of time available to spend on their PhD thesis, as well as prior research experience. It is important that at the start of each PhD project the starting and end date are carefully estimated and determined, taking into consideration prior research experience and percentage of time available to spend on the PhD thesis.

Size of the PhD program

Table 2. Number of SHE PhD candidates and supervisors per 01-02-2021

PhD candidates	95
Supervisors (including external supervisors)	108

3. Start of the PhD project

Development, submission and approval of PhD project proposal

Each PhD project is defined in a PhD project proposal in terms of starting date and expected completion date of the project, the studies to be conducted, the team of promotors/supervisors, the available budget and the planning of the studies. A template for the PhD project proposal, as well as more information about admission and application, can be found [here](#). Many PhD candidates will prepare this proposal as part of the SHE course “Writing a PhD Research Proposal”.

Once final, the proposal has to be submitted to SHE, through the [Journal of SHE PhD Projects](#) (JSHEPP). The PhD project proposal will be reviewed and must be approved by the SHE scientific director. The PhD project proposal of all full time internal PhD candidates must also be approved by the Interuniversity Centre for Educational Research (ICO, see further below).

In some cases, an internal prospective PhD candidate without approved PhD project proposal is appointed as PhD candidate. This will be done if (internal or external) funding is guaranteed and if the PhD candidate has been recruited through a selection procedure. In this case, the PhD candidate will write the PhD project proposal at the start of their project guided by the supervisors.

Letter of acceptance and other documents

Once the proposal has been approved by the SHE scientific director, external PhD candidates are asked to sign a Letter of Acceptance and Agreement that stipulates the conditions of the PhD program. By signing this letter, external PhD candidates also state that they are familiar with and will commit to the 2018 Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, the SHE Data Management Policy, and the Maastricht University Regulations for Obtaining the Doctoral Degree.

Internal candidates will sign the Code of Conduct in their employment condition interview with HR, and will receive the SHE Data Management Policy and Maastricht University Regulations for Obtaining the Doctoral Degree from the PhD coordinator in a welcome meeting.

In addition, candidates are asked to submit a number of documents, e.g. certified copy of diploma and transcript, and for external candidates, a letter of approval of the candidates' involvement in the PhD program from the candidates' institution.

Registration at Maastricht University

All PhD candidates are registered at Maastricht University and will receive a Maastricht University user name, password, email account, and registration (SAP) number. This will also grant access to the online library of Maastricht University and other resources, courses and services.

Access to the SHE Research WIKI

In addition, PhD candidates will receive an account to access the [SHE Research WIKI](#) at the start of their project. This WIKI contains relevant information and documents related to starting, ongoing and completed SHE PhD projects, SHE meetings, grant possibilities and research resources. It includes up-to-date information on the SHE data management policy and open access publishing. Jeroen Donkers (jeroen.donkers@maastrichtuniversity.nl) manages the content of and access to the WIKI.

Registration as ICO PhD student

The Interuniversity Centre for Educational Sciences (ICO) is the Dutch research school accredited by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Science. All full time internal SHE PhD candidates are required to register as member of ICO. More information about the application procedure can be found on www.ico-education.nl.

As part of the ICO application procedure, the candidate's project proposal needs to be submitted to and approved by ICO. After approval, ICO PhD candidates need to fill out a training and supervision plan as used by ICO (ICO-OBP plan). Other SHE PhD candidates can also be involved in ICO if they meet ICO's requirements. SHE covers the ICO membership fees of all full time, internal PhD candidates. Other PhD candidates need to cover their fees independently. Pascal van Gerven (p.vangerven@maastrichtuniversity.nl) is the SHE contact person for ICO matters.

PhD budget, including budget for courses

The costs for internal PhD projects financed by other institutions than SHE (e.g. NWO) are paid for by the respective institutions. The same holds for external PhD projects; external PhD candidates are responsible for financing their participation in courses, conferences and other activities themselves.

Internal PhD candidates whose projects are financed by SHE need to submit further details about their budget to SHE. This includes budget for conferences, courses and other activities. They can use the

example excel sheets provided on the Research in Education WIKI (under 'Research Resources') when specifying their budgets. Two example sheets are provided: one for (mostly) quantitative research and one for (mostly) qualitative research. The internal PhD candidates' budget needs to be submitted to the SHE financial contact person, Joost von Weersch (joost.vonweersch@maastrichtuniversity.nl). The budget needs to be approved by the SHE Research management team as soon as possible after completing the PhD project proposal.

Determining the expected completion date

The default duration of a PhD project is 4 years. For fulltime internal candidates, this duration is fixed and aligns with the employment contract. For other candidates, the duration might differ. It is important for SHE to have an up to date overview of the expected completion dates of PhD projects.

Expected completion date = the date that the manuscript is ready to be sent to the assessment committee.

PhD candidates and supervisors are asked to discuss a realistic, feasible expected completion date within the team. The PhD candidate has to register this in TRACK (Field: Expected completion of PhD). Preferably, this is done before generating the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) in TRACK (see below). The expected completion date is then automatically registered in the TSP when this is generated from TRACK.

Registration in TRACK

Progress of the PhD project is monitored by the PhD candidate and their team through an [online program called TRACK](#). All PhD candidates receive a TRACK account at the start of their project and are asked to complete information about their projects. They are also asked to upload a Personal Research Plan (PRP) within 12 weeks after the starting date. TRACK provides a template for the PRP, but the approved PhD project proposal can be uploaded for this purpose as well. The PhD candidate will receive notifications and instructions from TRACK on where to upload the PRP/research proposal.

Email notifications are sent out to the PhD candidate and PhD team whenever action in TRACK is required. If you have any questions about the use of TRACK, contact Nicky Verleng (n.verleng@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

Training and Supervision Plan (TSP)

Candidates will also receive notifications and instructions from TRACK to complete a Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) and to discuss it with their team of supervisors within the first 12 weeks of their project. The TSP is intended to encourage a conversation between the candidate and the supervisors about the candidate's professional development, training needs, and teaching opportunities during the PhD trajectory, and a feasible expected completion date.

TRACK can generate the TSP form automatically based on the information that the candidate adds in TRACK, after which it can be discussed in the team. The TSP needs to be signed by the PhD candidate and the team of supervisors, after which it should be uploaded in TRACK, where the PhD coordinator of SHE will then check and approve the TSP on behalf of the Dean. For internal PhD candidates, the TSP needs to be forwarded to the HR office as well, and a member of the HR office will sign the document (the HR advisor for SHE is Irene Driessen: i.driessen@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

Moreover, within 12 weeks after starting the PhD project, the PhD team is asked to discuss how they would like to collaborate and communicate, through use of the PhD Team Tool. The PhD Team Tool can be found in TRACK under 'documents'.

Table 3. Overview of starting documents

Document	Internal		External	
	Full time PhD	Part time PhD	International PhD	Dutch PhD
PhD project proposal	yes	yes	yes	yes
Signed letter of acceptance	no	no	yes	yes
Approval letter from the candidate's institution	no	no	yes	yes
Training and supervision plan (TRACK)	yes	yes	yes	yes
Personal research plan (TRACK)	yes	yes	yes	yes
PhD Team Tool (TRACK)	yes	yes	yes	yes
Detailed budget to be submitted to SHE	yes	yes	no	no
ICO project proposal	yes	if ICO member	no	if ICO member
ICO training and supervision plan	yes	if ICO member	no	if ICO member

4. During the PhD project

Supervision

During all steps of the PhD project, supervision will be provided (e.g. feedback during the writing process, methodological advice on data analysis) by means of face-to-face meetings, or for external PhD candidates via email, Zoom, Skype, and other media.

Commonly, PhD candidates schedule a one-hour meeting with their team of supervisors approximately once every three to four weeks. Typically, the PhD candidate submits an agenda for the meeting and documents to be discussed. In addition, the PhD candidate commonly organizes more frequent meetings with the co-promotor (daily supervisor), e.g. once per one or two weeks, and/or drops in on their daily supervisor at any time for questions.

The hours specified for supervision hold for PhD candidates with a contract of at least 0.8 fte. PhD candidates who spend less time on their PhD receive a proportional number of hours for supervision per week. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that the numbers of hours of supervision per week might differ per phase of the PhD project and per specific needs of the candidate.

PhD coordinator and PhD representative

A PhD-coordinator is available for all PhD candidates involved in SHE. The SHE PhD coordinator (Janneke Frambach, j.frambach@maastrichtuniversity.nl) arranges a meeting with each internal PhD candidate at the start of the PhD project. The PhD coordinator informs all PhD candidates about the SHE PhD policy and procedures, PhD courses, supervision of PhD candidates, and other relevant aspects. The PhD coordinator can also be contacted by PhD candidates and PhD supervisors when problems are encountered within the PhD project.

The PhD coordinator is furthermore responsible for use of the monitoring system TRACK, and for organizing the PhD conference 'SHE Academy'. Finally, the PhD coordinator is responsible for PhD issues within the SHE Research management team, and she represents the interests of SHE PhD candidates and supervisors at Faculty and University level.

Next to the PhD coordinator, there's a PhD representative at SHE; one of the PhD candidates who represents the interests of SHE PhD candidates. The PhD representative (Lianne Loosveld, l.loosveld@maastrichtuniversity.nl) is a member of the SHE Research management team and the FHML PhD Committee. PhD candidates can contact Lianne with any questions related to their PhD experience.

Confidential PhD counsellors

A confidential PhD counsellor is available for PhD candidates within SHE. This is SHE staff member Herma Roebertsen (h.roebertsen@maastrichtuniversity.nl). PhD candidates can contact the confidential counsellor for all issues they would like to confidentially talk about. PhD candidates are recommended, if possible, to first discuss their concerns with their supervisors and to search within their team of supervisors for solutions if problems are experienced. However, if there are particular issues that they would prefer to talk about with an outsider or if they need advice on how to discuss a topic with their supervisors, there is always the possibility to contact the PhD confidential counsellor of SHE.

Furthermore, there is an independent external confidential advisor available for PhD students at FHML/MUMC+, prof. Frans Feron. PhD candidates experiencing problems that they prefer to discuss with a person who operates fully independent from SHE, can contact prof. Feron. During his 40-year career in healthcare, prof. Feron has gained a lot of experience in this field. He has worked as a youth healthcare physician, as a confidential doctor for child abuse and as a professor of social medicine at Maastricht University. He also served for years as an internal confidential counselor for PhD candidates at one of FHML's research schools. Prof. Feron can be contacted at f.feron@maastrichtuniversity.nl.

Scientific integrity

SHE considers scientific integrity as a core value of responsible research conduct. All PhD candidates sign the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity upon the start of their project. In addition, PhD candidates and supervisors are encouraged to consult the [FHML webpage of scientific integrity](#), where they can find the MUMC+ Research Code, which was developed in line with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the UM Integrity Code of Conduct.

The webpage furthermore contains a comprehensive overview of issues to consider regarding scientific integrity. It includes information on what to do and links to available websites/tools. The aim of this overview is not only to abide by the principles set out in the MUMC+ Research Code but also to engage in a broader dialogue about scientific integrity and good practice in research. The overview can be used for all involved in research, and has also been designed for use by supervisors and PhD candidates at the start of a PhD trajectory, for discussion throughout the project and during the annual assessments.

The webpage also provides contact info for the MUMC+ Platform Scientific Integrity, which has been installed to create a culture of awareness regarding scientific integrity. The SHE representative (and chair) of this platform is Karen Könings (kd.konings@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

Research ethics and data management

In addition to complying with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, ethical approval is needed for all research projects carried out within SHE. Researchers will typically need ethical approval from their own university or hospital. For SHE researchers located in the Netherlands, ethical approval can be asked from the [Netherlands Association for Medical Education](#) (NVMO; website in Dutch). The SHE contact person for research ethics is Karen Könings (kd.konings@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

With regard to European regulations for privacy (GDPR) and national policy concerning research data, PhD candidates must follow the SHE policy for research data management. This policy has implications for the storing, sharing and transferring of research data. Detailed information about this policy, including a template for the data management plan, can be found on the SHE Research WIKI. For each separate study of the project, a data management plan needs to be developed.

The SHE data manager is Jeroen Donkers. Contact shedata@maastrichtuniversity.nl for any questions on research data management.

Open access publishing

Maastricht University encourages open access publication of research, in accordance with national policy. More info about open access can be found on this [UM Library page on Open Access](#). Maastricht University has agreements with many scientific publishers, allowing Maastricht University researchers and PhD candidates (internal and external) to publish open access free of charge. PhD candidates can check whether an agreement exists with a journal/publisher that they want to publish in, meaning that no fee needs to be paid. Select a journal from the following list: [open access journals free for UM](#). Many major journals in our area are on this list: Medical Education, Medical Teacher, and so on. For some journals it is stated in the list that the agreement status is unknown (e.g. for Academic Medicine). In that case, always contact the library to ask about the possibilities. In the case of Academic Medicine, for example, the library can provide a voucher code for free open access publication. This is the library email address to contact with all questions about open access: ub-ayl@maastrichtuniversity.nl.

In case costs are charged for open access publication, PhD candidates need to cover these from their individual research budgets. More information about the SHE open access policy can be found on the SHE Research WIKI (under 'Research Resources').

Wellbeing and progress: Progress meeting and TRACK annual questionnaire

PhD candidates and supervisors are strongly encouraged to discuss and evaluate the progress of the project, wellbeing of the PhD candidate, and team collaboration at a regular basis during their team meetings. It is advised to furthermore schedule a progress meeting once a year to discuss these topics in more depth, including the quality of the supervision; PhD training courses that were done or still need to be done; teaching activities; career development plans; problems encountered and agreements for improvement. The annual questionnaire sent to the candidate through TRACK can be used as input for this meeting.

Once a year, TRACK sends out a questionnaire to the PhD candidate to evaluate progress, supervision and wellbeing. The questionnaire is confidential; the PhD coordinator is the only one with access to the answers. PhD candidates are suggested to use this annual moment to place these themes on the agenda of one of their team meetings. They might use (part of) their answers to the questionnaire as input for this meeting; only if they feel comfortable to share this with the team.

The PhD coordinator monitors the questionnaires to maintain quality of the PhD program. If the responses suggest that further action is needed, the PhD coordinator will first contact the PhD candidate in question to discuss this. When deemed necessary, a meeting might be organized between the PhD candidate and supervisors to discuss solutions. It is also possible to consult the PhD coordinator or confidential PhD counsellor (see above).

Once a year, ICO PhD candidates are asked to fill out the ICO monitor. In other words, all full time internal SHE PhD candidates are also monitored by the national research school ICO.

TRACK evaluation periods

Every six months, supervisors are asked to record the PhD project progress in TRACK. This is an evaluation of the project progress for which the team as a whole is responsible. It is not an individual evaluation of the PhD candidate.

Supervisors are asked to record three aspects:

1. Qualification

Green: Good - *The project is progressing according to the project schedule. There might be a small delay (e.g. 1-6 months), but it is still feasible to catch up during the remainder of the project or to complete the project with minor delay.*

Orange: Attention - *The project is progressing, but is substantially behind schedule (more than 6 months). It is unclear or unlikely that the project can be completed before the originally planned end date. The project schedule has to be revised. (see below how to revise the expected completion date)*

Red: Insufficient - *The project is not progressing. It is highly unlikely that the project will be completed before the originally planned end date. The project schedule has to be revised. (see below how to revise the expected completion date). A decision has to be taken about continuing or discontinuing the project.*

2. Reason

Supervisors are asked to describe the reason(s) for the qualification, which provides relevant info to SHE and can be regarded as more important than the actual qualification.

3. Progress

Supervisors indicate the numbers of months that the project is behind or ahead of planning to achieve the planned end date.

Adapting the expected completion date of a PhD project

The default duration of a PhD project is 4 years. For fulltime internal candidates, this duration is fixed and aligns with the employment contract. For other candidates, the duration might differ. It is important for SHE to have an up to date overview of the expected completion dates of PhD projects.

At minimum once a year, the feasibility of the expected completion date should be discussed within the team (e.g. during the annual progress meeting, see above). In case the date needs to be adapted, the candidate changes the date in TRACK (Field: Expected completion of PhD). Note that changes of the expected completion date have to be discussed with and approved by the team as a whole.

Expected completion date = the date that the manuscript is ready to be sent to the assessment committee.

For international external PhD candidates: Possibilities to put the PhD project “on hold”

In case of personal or other circumstances that inhibit a PhD candidate to work on their project for a certain period of time, there is a possibility to temporarily place the project “on hold”. For the duration of the project as a whole, the project can be placed on hold for a maximum of three times, with each on hold period lasting six months. These periods can be consecutive or intermittent. During these period(s), no tuition fee is required.

In addition, the following conditions apply:

- The decision to place the project on hold is taken jointly with all members of the team (PhD candidate and supervisors).
- The PhD candidate informs the PhD coordinator, who has to approve the “on hold” status. Consequently, the PhD secretariat is informed.
- During the on hold period, there is no guidance and supervision with regard to the project.
- Placing the project on hold can only be done prospectively, not retroactively.
- When resuming the project after the on hold period, the PhD coordinator is informed, and, if necessary, a new expected completion date will be determined (see above).

NB. In exceptional situations, the PhD coordinator can be consulted to discuss if an individual arrangement is necessary.

For internal PhD candidates: Evaluation meeting / assessment interview

For internal PhD candidates who are employed within the Department of Educational Development and Research or other departments of Maastricht University, it is the responsibility of the chair of the department to schedule an annual evaluation meeting. In addition to the PhD supervisors, it can be decided to invite another staff member who might be better informed about the non-PhD related activities of the candidate to the meeting. During the interview a review form provided by the HRM office of FHML is used for PhD candidates who are employed at Maastricht University.

For full time internal PhD candidates, at the end of the first year, a formal assessment interview will take place. An HR representative is present at this meeting as well. The promotor must give an advice to either continue or stop participation of the candidate in the PhD program. The final go/no-go decision after year 1 will be taken by the scientific director of SHE. The requirement for acceptable progress is one completed manuscript (ready for submission to a journal) per year. A signed copy of the first year assessment interview report is sent to HR.

For internal PhD candidates: Teaching opportunities

Full time internal PhD candidates are expected and encouraged to fulfill educational roles at Maastricht University, such as tutor, block planning group member, skills teacher, etc. at 10% of their appointment. Part time internal PhD candidates may fulfill educational roles as agreed in their appointment. Once a year, usually in April/May, acquisition for the fulfillment of the different educational roles within the Department of Educational Development and Research takes place. All starting internal PhD candidates at this department are asked to schedule a meeting with the education coordinator of the Department of Educational Development and Research, Ineke

Wolfhagen (i.wolfhagen@maastrichtuniversity.nl), to discuss their teaching ambitions and which educational roles might fit their interests and expertise.

Internal candidates are also encouraged to register for teaching faculty development courses, such as tutor training, University Teaching Qualification course, and others.

Personal, professional and career development

Supervisors are encouraged to discuss personal, professional and career development at regular intervals with their PhD candidates during the PhD project, and to advise on relevant courses and other activities. Internal PhD candidates can make use of PhD career management and mental wellbeing courses offered by the Maastricht University Staff Career Centre. This centre also offers individual career guidance and personal coaching. More information can be found [here](#). PhD candidates are encouraged to discuss their career plans and wishes with their supervisors.

PhD courses

PhD courses offered by Maastricht University

Relevant PhD courses are offered for all PhD candidates at FHML. Many of these FHML courses are free of charge for internal and external SHE PhD candidates. Many of these courses are face-to-face, however, the online course offer is growing. For example, there are online introductory courses in statistics, qualitative research and academic writing. The University Library also offers a range of courses free of charge for PhD students, such as introduction to research data management, introductory and advanced courses in EndNote, increasing your research impact, etc. The FHML and library course offer can be found [here](#). PhD candidates need their UM registration number (p-number) to register for most of these courses (see above: "Registration at Maastricht University").

For internal PhD candidates, the Maastricht University Staff Career Centre offers a range of courses that are particularly aimed at PhD candidates, such as time management, self management and career management. A small fee is asked for these courses. More information can be found [here](#). SHE offers several courses at PhD level. Fees for these courses have to be covered from the candidate's individual budgets. More information can be found [here](#).

PhD courses offered by ICO

The Interuniversity Centre for Educational Research (ICO) also organizes PhD courses. In order to receive their ICO certificate, all ICO PhD candidates are required to participate in the following ICO modules: ICO introductory course (5 Education Credits (EC)), two thematic ICO master classes (each 3 EC), one methodological ICO master class (3 EC), ICO's National Spring School (1 EC) and ICO's International Spring School (3 EC). Thus, ICO PhD candidates attend about 500 hours in the ICO educational program (18 EC). Participation is free of charge for ICO members. For non-ICO members, participation costs € 1000 per course. The training courses mainly take place in Utrecht in the Netherlands and are spread over a period of several weeks. More information is available at the ICO website (www.ico-education.nl).

Methodological and language support

PhD candidates who struggle with academic writing and/or English language, may send the final draft manuscripts of their studies to the SHE language editor, Angelique van den Heuvel (ajm.vandenheuvel@maastrichtuniversity.nl), who can perform a language revision before submission to a journal. Drafts submitted to Angelique have to comply with the formal requirements of the

journal they will be submitted to (maximum number of words, structure/headings etc.). Non-Dutch speaking PhD students who wish to have their PhD dissertation summary translated into Dutch can also contact Angelique.

PhD candidates who struggle with quantitative methodology and statistics can contact Jeroen Donkers at j.donkers@maastrichtuniversity.nl. Based on topic, expected methods, and availability of the PhD candidate and consultants, the PhD candidate will then be assigned to one of the quantitative research consultants at SHE.

PhD candidates who struggle with qualitative methodology can contact one of the SHE qualitative research consultants: Dr. Janneke Frambach (j.frambach@maastrichtuniversity.nl) and Dr. Renée Stalmeijer (r.stalmeijer@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

SHE activities and events

SHE presents new candidates

Recently started PhD candidates present themselves and their proposal in one of the 'SHE-presents new candidates' meetings. These are organized twice a year.

SIG presents

SHE has a number of Special Interest Groups (SIG), i.e. groups of junior and senior researchers who have organized themselves around a certain area of interest. Currently, SHE has five SIG's:

- Educational Change and Co-Creation
- Globalization, Internationalization and Diversity
- Interprofessional Education and Collaboration
- Instructional Design and Self-Regulated Learning
- Workplace-Based Learning

More information and contact persons for each SIG can be found on the SHE Research WIKI. It is encouraged that SHE PhD candidates participate in one (or more) SIG's. Most SIG's hold regular (online) meetings with their group. Once a year, each SIG organizes a 'SIG presents' meeting that can be attended by other SHE researchers and PhD candidates.

SHE Journal Club

SHE organizes a number of journal club meetings per year during which relevant literature is discussed between SHE researchers. The meetings last one hour and take place at Maastricht University. Online presence is facilitated. During each meeting one paper is discussed. This paper typically is a state-of-the-art paper that is selected by a staff member or the organizing team. The discussion is organized around the reading questions that are formulated by the staff member or the PhD candidate who has put forward the paper.

SHE Academy

Biannually (every odd-numbered year) the PhD conference 'SHE Academy' is organized in Maastricht (or online in times of pandemic). The goal of this meeting is community building and exchange of ideas among SHE researchers and PhD candidates, for both internal and external PhD candidates. PhD candidates are strongly encouraged to attend at least one SHE Academy meeting during their PhD project.

In the year following on SHE Academy, a mini version of SHE Academy is organized (Mini SHE Academy), usually taking place at the AMEE conference.

Relevant conferences

PhD candidates are encouraged to present their work at national and international conferences. Interesting Dutch conferences are: Onderwijsresearchdagen (ORD, organized by the Dutch Association for Educational Research/VOR) and the NVMO conference (organized by Dutch Association for Medical Education). Interesting international conferences are: AERA (American Educational Research Association), EARLI (European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction), and AMEE (Association for Medical Education in Europe). Naturally there are many more. At the annual AMEE conference, SHE organizes a social gathering for all SHE students, staff, alumni and SHE partners.

Relevant professional associations

The following professional associations might be of relevance for SHE PhD candidates. Two Dutch associations are of interest: NVMO (Dutch Association for Medical Education) and VOR (Dutch Association for Educational Research). The Department of Educational Development and Research has a collective membership of NVMO, due to which all PhD candidates are automatically member of this association. The NVMO also has a network for PhD candidates and organizes a meeting once a year for PhD candidates and supervisors. See www.nvmo.nl. The VOR is the Dutch association for educational research. The VOR also has a network for PhD candidates, entitled VPO (VOR PhD consultation). They also organize a meeting for their PhD candidates once a year www.vorsite.nl.

At the international level the following associations might be of relevance: AERA, EARLI and AMEE. The AERA is the American Educational Research Association. PhD candidates of SHE do not need to subscribe as a member, because promotors within SHE are members, due to which PhD candidates can subscribe to the AREA meetings. www.aera.net. The EARLI is the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction. This association also has a network for Junior Researchers (JURE) that is of interest to junior researchers and PhD candidates. They organize pre-conferences for junior researchers before the EARLI conference (once in two years) that can be attended by PhD candidates. www.earli.org. Furthermore, conferences on specific topics are organized by special interest groups within EARLI. The AMEE is the Association for Medical Education in Europe and also organizes a conference once a year. www.amee.org.

SHE Scholarships

SHE offers a number of scholarships to financially support students and researchers who would like to participate in SHE's educational or PhD program. Below, an overview is provided of the types of scholarships, eligibility criteria, and their deadlines. You can find all details of the Scholarship program [here](#).

Table 4. Overview of SHE Scholarships

Deadline	Scholarship	Eligibility
July 1	Course: Writing a PhD research proposal	SHE MHPE graduates who completed the Research Track
	Material research costs	SHE PhD candidates from developing countries
December 1	Course: Writing a PhD research proposal	SHE MHPE graduates who completed the Research Track
	Coursework at PhD level	International SHE PhD candidates
	Bi-annual SHE Academy	SHE PhD candidates from developing countries

5. End of the PhD project

Final steps of the PhD process within SHE

When the separate studies of the PhD project have been completed, PhD candidates can start writing the final two parts of their PhD thesis, being the introduction chapter and the discussion chapter. Supervisors can provide several examples of SHE PhD dissertations. When finalizing these chapters, the steps below should be started. Keep in mind that the entire approval procedure, starting with submission of the thesis to the assessment committee and ending with the PhD defense ceremony, can take up to 5 months. An important step is to be aware of and read the UM regulations for obtaining the doctoral degree! Available [here](#).

The promotor should inform Nicky Verleng (n.verleng@maastrichtuniversity.nl) approximately one month before the manuscript is ready for submission to start up the necessary administrative procedures.

Make sure your research data are stored in Dataverse

After you published a study, but in any case before you defend the PhD thesis, your anonymized data needs to be made available on the Dataverse platform (www.dataverse.nl). See the SHE Research WIKI for more information about data management and Dataverse, or contact the SHE data manager at shedata@maastrichtuniversity.nl.

Discuss the members of the assessment committee

Discuss with your team of promotors (supervisors) which assessors could be involved in the assessment committee. When your team of promotors perceive the PhD thesis to be of sufficient quality, it will be presented to the assessment committee. The committee consists of at least four and no more than five members: two or three from Maastricht University (internal reviewers; one of them is the chair of the committee), two external members, and the majority should be full professor. This is detailed in the Maastricht University promotion regulations, which are available on the [UM webpage for PhD support](#). The promotor approaches and invites the assessment committee members.

Write impact paragraph

The impact paragraph is a reflection of 500 to 2000 words, in layman's terms (for a wide target group), on the scientific impact of the results of the research described in the thesis, as well as, if applicable, the social impact anticipated or already achieved. More information about the impact paragraph can be found in the promotion regulations (available [here](#)).

Four questions are provided that can serve as a guideline for drafting the impact paragraph:

1. (Research) What is the main objective of the research described in the thesis and what are the most important results and conclusions?
2. (Relevance) What is the (potential) contribution of the results from this research to science, and, if applicable, to social sectors and social challenges?
3. (Target group) To whom are the research results interesting and/or relevant? And why?
4. (Activity) In what way can these target groups be involved in and informed about the research results, so that the knowledge gained can be used in the future?

Edit or layout your thesis

Before the PhD thesis can be sent to the assessment committee, it should be edited. The layout of the document sent to the assessment committee preferably does not differ from the layout of the final thesis. Have a look at thesis examples provided by your supervisor to see examples of layout and see

page 21 for further details. PhD candidates can layout the thesis themselves or they can ask an official publisher for help; such as [lpskamp Printing](#), [Gildeprint](#) or [Proefschriftmaken.nl](#).

Send manuscript to the assessment committee

The version for the assessment committee should contain at least:

- title page;
- names of supervisors and assessment committee members;
- table of contents;
- introductory chapter;
- chapters reporting the studies;
- discussion chapter;
- impact paragraph;
- English summary.

Once the team of supervisors approves this version, the promotor will send the manuscript to Nicky Verleng, who will share it with the assessment committee members.

The assessment committee will assess the quality of the thesis and will decide whether the thesis is of sufficient quality to be defended at Maastricht University. The committee will need at least four weeks to give their judgment. The committee will only approve (or, in very exceptional circumstances, reject) your thesis. They will typically provide no suggestions for further improvement of the thesis.

Finalize your thesis

Meanwhile, you can work on finalizing additional elements of the thesis. The final version should in addition contain:

- Formal information page about the defense ceremony (page 3 of the thesis). Before the thesis can be printed, this page must be officially approved by the PhD office. The same holds for page 4, on which the names of the team of promotors and the assessment committee are included. See page 21 of this guide for further instructions. Send page 3 and 4 of your thesis to Nicky Verleng for approval!
- Dutch summary. Non-Dutch-speaking candidates can contact the SHE language editor to translate their English summary into Dutch.
- Brief Curriculum Vitae of the author
- Acknowledgements
- SHE dissertation series. Contact Nicky Verleng for the most recent SHE dissertation series.
- (for ICO PhD candidates only) ICO dissertation series. These can be found on the ICO website.
- In addition, the thesis should contain a separate leaflet that includes 8-11 propositions (see below for proposition requirements).
- The thesis may contain a separate invitation to the public defense ceremony.

Write propositions or statements

A minimum of 8 and a maximum of 11 propositions or statements should be added to your thesis. Four propositions must be related to the subject of the dissertation. Three propositions must be related to the candidate's discipline, with the exception of the subject of the thesis. One proposition must be related to the impact of the results of the research for science and/or society. Any other propositions do not have to be related to the subject or the discipline. Make a longer list, so your team of promotors can indicate which propositions they prefer. Your team of promotors must approve the final list of propositions. Start in time with thinking about your propositions; preferably collect them during the course of your project. During the defense, questions can be asked about your propositions. You should be able to defend them.

Prepare printing of PhD thesis after approval

After the thesis has been approved by the assessment committee, and page 3 and 4 have been approved by the PhD office, you can continue with further preparing the printing of the thesis. Check and re-check layout and tables etc. before you print the thesis. A printed version of the PhD thesis should be sent to the assessment committee members at least one month before the defense. The number of PhD theses to be sent to the SHE secretary is about 20, which includes 6 copies for the Deans' office. It is up to you to order any amount of theses to be printed on top of the ones for SHE and the assessment committee. Typically, your team of supervisors, collaborators, close colleagues and family receive a copy. Nowadays it is common to send a digital version to other colleagues and researchers who request a copy.

The costs for layout and printing the PhD thesis are to be paid by the PhD candidate, except for PhD candidates who are employed at SHE if they have specified in their budget a maximum amount of 1000 euros for printing costs of the PhD thesis. However, part of the printing (and reception) costs may be claimed to Maastricht University. A [claim form](#) can be submitted.

Requests from University Library and UM press office

You will be asked to send a digital version of your dissertation to the University Library before the PhD defense. You have to submit a Statement of Approval, signed by your promotor, in order for the thesis to be accessible worldwide. More information will be sent to you by the UM PhD office and the library. Also, you will be asked to perform a voluntary plagiarism check for your thesis. Furthermore, you will be asked to provide your dissertation title and a short description of the dissertation to the UM press office.

Schedule the defense ceremony and reception

As a final step, the thesis has to be presented and publicly defended in a one-hour session. This ceremony has to be scheduled in advance. It is only allowed to make a reservation for the day of the defense at Maastricht University after the assessment committee has approved the PhD thesis. Exceptions can be made considering special circumstances. The date reservation is made by the secretary of SHE after the PhD candidate has been consulted about a possible date and the secretary has checked which date is appropriate for the team of promotors and if possible the assessment committee members. The assessment committee members will not be paid any fees or travel costs to participate in the PhD ceremony by SHE. If travel of an external member needs to be covered, the PhD candidate must find financial resources themselves. If certain committee members cannot attend the defense ceremony, additional examiners have to be found. This has to be discussed with the team of supervisors at least one month prior to the defense. The promotor will invite the examiners.

The thesis will be publicly defended in a one-hour session in which members of the assessment committee and possibly additional examiners question the candidate on various aspects of the research. The defense is an open ceremony and may be attended by relatives, friends and colleagues of the candidate. The PhD degree from Maastricht University is awarded after the ceremony. The defense will take place at Minderbroedersberg 4-6, Maastricht (in the city centre), or, only in times of pandemic, online.

After the (onsite) defense, the PhD candidate is required to organize a (small) reception to shake hands. You can choose to organize this onsite at Minderbroedersberg or at another location. The PhD candidate will receive an email with information about the possibilities to organize this onsite. There is a possibility to claim the costs of the reception to Maastricht University, using the PhD ceremony allowance. More details can be found [here](#).

Prepare a presentation and discussion for the defense

Prepare a (powerpoint) presentation to be presented during the defense for max. 15 minutes. This time limit is strict! The powerpoint should summarize your thesis and is meant to inform the (lay) audience. Ask your peers and team of promotors for feedback on the presentation. In order to prepare well for the defense, start thinking about possible questions that could be asked by the assessment committee members and think about your answers. You could also arrange a session with some colleagues in which you present your powerpoint and defend the questions raised by your colleagues (i.e. mock defense). You could for example divide the chapters among your colleagues and ask each colleague to prepare one question, and ask them for feedback on your answers.

Select “Paranimfs”

During the defense two persons will support the candidate. They are called “paranimfs”. They will sit next to the PhD candidate during the defense and have no further role. They could be asked to read aloud one of the propositions during the defense. The PhD candidate can choose these persons; it could be relatives, friends or colleagues. In online defense ceremonies there are no paranimfs.

Check the powerpoint for the defense

A few days before the defense, the PhD candidate can check the powerpoint in the building where the defense will take place, Minderbroedersberg 4-6. An email will be sent to the PhD candidate to make an appointment. In case of an online defense, instructions about the ceremony will be shared with the candidate well in advance.

SHE Dissertation Award

About 10 PhD candidates defend their thesis at SHE each year. Many of the theses are of very high scientific quality. To honor our PhD candidates and to celebrate scientific progress in health professions education, SHE offers an annual SHE Dissertation Award for the best PhD thesis defended in a particular year. The winner is announced at the SHE social gathering at the annual AMEE conference.

SHE Alumni Community

When you’ve successfully defended your thesis you will become part of the SHE alumni community. The SHE alumni community facilitates activities for and by SHE alumni. This community provides a sounding board for professionals who share the same interests. It aims to contribute to a continuation of the collaborative learning that took place during the SHE education programmes.

SHE alumni members all have either a Master in Health Professions Education (MHPE) degree or a PhD degree from the School of Health Professions Education and share the advantages of being part of the SHE Community network. SHE alumni constitute a worldwide bridge between the graduate school and society, making them our best ambassadors. They continue to be part of the academic community and provide a strong link to the health professions education community and societal institutes.

As a SHE alumni you:

- Continue to be part of the scholarly community—an important and useful network—and can rely on a bond of collegiality and friendship in which both the School of Health Professions Education and alumni actively participate;
- Have access to participation in special alumni activities;
- Exchange knowledge in health professions education and collaborate in projects;
- Receive regular updates on educational and research developments within SHE;
- Above all: enjoy staying in touch with former classmates, returning to Maastricht once in a while, reminiscing together and forging new friendships.

Guidelines for thesis layout

In order to promote the School of Health Professions Education (SHE) dissertations, PhD candidates within SHE are requested to use the following structure for first and last pages of their thesis.

Page 1:

Title thesis

Page 2:

The research reported here was carried out at



in the School of Health Professions Education



in the context of the research school (if applicable)

ico

(Interuniversity Center for Educational Research)

and was funded by (if applicable)



(or other funding agencies)

ISBN

Copyright info

Cover design and printing info

Page 3:

Information about the public defense ceremony, see example thesis (this can be in Dutch or English)

Page 4:

Name(s) of the promotor(s)

Name(s) of the co-promotor(s)

Names of the assessment committee members, starting with the chair and then in alphabetical order. The affiliated institution is only mentioned for those who are not affiliated with Maastricht University.

Second-to-last page:

SHE dissertation series, check the most recent version with the secretariat of SHE.

Last page (only for ICO PhD candidates):

ICO dissertation series (download at www.ico-education.nl)

6. Overviews of contact persons and useful websites

ROLE	NAME	EMAIL
PhD coordinator	Janneke Frambach	j.frambach@maastrichtuniversity.nl
PhD administrator & secretariat	Nicky Verleng	n.verleng@maastrichtuniversity.nl
PhD representative	Lianne Loosveld	s.meeuwissen@maastrichtuniversity.nl
PhD confidential counsellor SHE	Herma Roebertsen	h.roebertsen@maastrichtuniversity.nl
External independent confidential PhD advisor	Frans Feron	f.feron@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE scientific director	Pim Teunissen	p.teunissen@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE scientific co-director & grants coordinator	Anique de Bruin	anique.debruin@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE managing director	Sabina Bulic	s.bulic@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE financial contact person	Joost von Weersch	joost.vonweersch@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE HR advisor	Irene Driessen	i.driessen@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE coordinator educational roles	Ineke Wolfhagen	i.wolfhagen@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE language editor	Angelique van den Heuvel	ajm.vandenheuvel@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE Research ethics & scientific integrity contact person	Karen Könings	kd.konings@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE data manager	Jeroen Donkers	shedata@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE contact person quantitative research and statistical support	Jeroen Donkers	j.donkers@maastrichtuniversity.nl
SHE qualitative research consultants	Janneke Frambach Renée Stalmeijer	j.frambach@maastrichtuniversity.nl r.stalmeijer@maastrichtuniversity.nl
ICO contact person	Pascal van Gerven	p.vangerven@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Maastricht University Library contact email (e.g. for open access questions)	N.A.	ub-ayl-e@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Maastricht University PhD Office (in charge of scheduling and organizing PhD defense ceremonies)	N.A.	phd-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl

USEFUL WEBSITES	
SHE website. Contains info about the SHE research program, the PhD program, SHE courses, SHE scholarships, SHE community and more.	https://she.mumc.maastrichtuniversity.nl/
Maastricht University website for PhD support and PhD regulations. This page contains relevant practical information as well as the UM PhD regulations.	https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/phds
PhD courses offered by the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences. Also contains links to relevant other courses, e.g. by the University Library, the Staff Career Centre, and external parties.	https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/about-um/faculties/health-medicine-and-life-sciences/phd-fhmlmumc/phd-training-programmes-fhmlmumc
SHE TRACK. Online monitoring system for PhD projects.	https://she.track.maastrichtuniversity.nl/Public/login
SHE Research WIKI. Contains relevant information for SHE researchers and PhD candidates, for example on data management, research ethics, special interest groups and more.	https://www.elearningfhml.nl/ovowiki/doku.php
JSHEPP. The submission website for SHE PhD project proposals.	http://www.epress.ac.uk/jshepp/webforms/author.php
ICO website. Dutch Interuniversity Centre for Educational Sciences (national research school of which full time internal PhD candidates are member)	www.ico-education.nl
Maastricht University Library page on open access publishing.	https://library.maastrichtuniversity.nl/open-access/
PhD ceremony allowance page. Here you can find the Regulations for printing and reception costs for PhD's at Maastricht University, including a claim for to claim part of the printing and reception costs.	https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/um-employees/you-and-your-work/legislation/phd-ceremony-allowance
<i>Editing and printing your thesis option</i>	https://www.gildeprint.nl/en/printing-thesis/?noredirect=en-US
<i>Editing and printing your thesis option</i>	https://proefschriften.net/en/?utm_source=ips&utm_medium=website&utm_campaign=proefschrift_thesis
<i>Editing and printing your thesis option</i>	https://www.proefschriftmaken.nl/en/
Application procedure for ethical approval at the Netherlands Association for Medical Education (NVMO; website in Dutch)	https://www.nvmo.nl/index.php?page=Intro_erb&id=2&are_cookies_accepted=11;CKI;20210208102554;137.120.160.131;4395c0600d24f34f5a1b65991a713637
FHML webpage on Scientific Integrity , which contains the MUMC+ Research Code and a comprehensive overview of issues to consider for PhD candidates and supervisors.	https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/about-um/faculties/health-medicine-and-life-sciences/scientific-integrity