PhD Candidate Assessment Interview

Each PhD candidate is assessed every year, during the 10th, 22nd, 34th and 46th month of their PhD research.
The first assessment interview, which usually takes place during the 10th month, determines whether the appointment will be extended for the rest of the PhD track. Therefore it is important to be well prepared for this interview.

The assessor (the PhD supervisor) informs the PhD candidate, no later than two weeks before the assessment will take place, that s/he will be assessed. The assessment interview takes place in the presence of the PhD supervisor, the PhD candidate and the HR adviser.

The assessment interview is carried out on the basis of the following:

❖ it is expected that the PhD candidate will, before the assessment, make a short report regarding the progress of his/her PhD research. This report will address matters such as his/her findings, experiences and achievements.

❖ at the start of the PhD track, a training and supervision plan should be created that describes agreements made between the PhD supervisor and the PhD candidate. Progress will be checked against this plan, whether the desired/agreed upon outcomes have been realised;

❖ a PhD candidate must also satisfy a number of core activities and competences. These are listed in the attachment and are also available digitally at the link below:
https://fws.e-office.com/vsnu/fws.nsf/wwwlogin?openform
User name: um
Password: umufo

During the interview, the above mentioned points will be discussed and the assessments will be recorded on the assessment form. The assessment form will be completed by the assessor, who will review the core activities and competences.

A copy of the assessment form will be submitted to the HR department. This will be stored digitally.

For more information, refer to the assessment regulations.
http://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/Main/Sitewide/MUO/Assessment.htm

Competences of PhD candidates

1. Conceptual capacity

Definition: Formulating views, ideas and concepts based upon complex information, and constructing conceptual frameworks or models.

Behaviour Indicators

- ❖ Sees similarities with previous issues and possible solutions.
- ❖ Identifies patterns and trends in information.
- ❖ Is able to find connections at an abstract level.
- ❖ Knows how to draw out the essential points from complex information and find new connections.
- ❖ Integrates ideas, themes and observations into clear, practical insights.
- ❖ Considers problems or situations in a more covering framework, leading to broader and deeper insights.

Assessment Questions

- ❖ What do you consider to be complex information?
- ❖ Use an example to show how you arrive at the formulation of concepts.
- ❖ What did you do with the various concepts?
- ❖ Have you recently arrived at new insights based on complex information which you have analyzed? How did these insights come about?

Development Tips

- ❖ Try making a diagram or drawing (mind map) of a problem or situation, putting on paper only what is truly important.
- ❖ Study innovations of competitors and think about how your own organization unit could improve these.
- ❖ Study problem solutions of other similar organizations and think about how they arrive at them.
- ❖ Try to be creative in your thinking and avoid standard thinking patterns at an early stage of the project.
- ❖ Hold a brainstorming session with colleagues about a problem, for example, and formulate different approaches, hypotheses. Explore how others came to their conclusions.

2. Presenting

Synonyms: Oral presentation, Public performance

Definition: Presenting ideas and information clearly, taking the target group into account.

Behaviour Indicators

- ❖ Briefly lists the essential points of a complicated matter.
- ❖ Pays attention to the form, individual parts and structure of a communicated message.
- ❖ Alligns the content of the presentation closely to the target group's expectations.
- ❖ During presentations, makes contact with the audience by inviting people to ask questions and respond.
- ❖ Varies his or her presentational approach.
- ❖ Uses attractive language and examples so that others listen attentively.

Assessment Questions

- ❖ Have you given any presentations over the last year? How often? What about? Did you find it easy?
- ❖ When do you feel a presentation has been successful?
- ❖ Has presenting been part of your job evaluations? What did the evaluation involve?
- ❖ Can you a give a 2-3 minute presentation about your motivation for this job?
- ❖ How do you communicate knowledge in a lecture? Do you use specific techniques?

Development Tips

- ❖ Take the opportunity to give a presentation occasionally, even if you are nervous. Start small and 'safe'. For example by giving a speech at internal events. Make no secret of the fact that you find it difficult. Ask for explicit feedback to your presentation.
- ❖ Look for literature relating to presentation techniques. Follow a course. Invite colleagues who have fewer problems to attend 'basic presentations', so that you can spend less energy on the contents and more on your presentation style.
- ❖ Find people who are good at giving presentations and consider what elements of their style you could copy.
- ❖ Ask an experienced colleague to watch one of your presentations and give you feedback. The following points are important:
    - Is the structure logical?
    - Do you make good use of aids?
    - Do you hold your audience's attention? For example by asking the audience (rhetorical) questions?
    - Could the presentation be shorter and more concise?
    - Does your personal presentation style appear natural to the audience and does it meet the expectations of the target group?

- Could the presentation be livelier? For example by making more gestures, varying intonation, not reading from notes or including a bit of humor?
- ❖ Write a presentation and discuss it with your manager.
- ❖ When giving a presentation, look out for the following aspects:
  - Do you briefly summarize the aim of your presentation?
  - Does this correspond with the expectations of the target group? How can these expectations be managed?
  - Have you used a clear head – body - tail structure?
- ❖ Is your presentation the right length - not too long and not too short?
- ❖ Do you provide a stimulating start and an interesting end?
- ❖ What aids, e.g. an overhead projector, pc + beamer, slide projector, flip-over etc. do you need? Choose the most appropriate for the presentation.
- ❖ Practice beforehand in the room where the presentation will be held. Make sure that you can control all the technology and that all the connections work.
- ❖ Ensure that you arrive well in advance to install everything at your leisure and have time to call in help if a fault occurs.
- ❖ Do not fill sheets with too much information. Keep the lay-out simple.
- ❖ Provide hand-outs and distribute them in advance so that the audience can make notes on them.
- ❖ Record your presentation on video camera and analyze it with a colleague.

3. Planning and organising

Definition: Surveying the work; setting goals and priorities. Planning the activities, time and resources needed.

Behaviour Indicators

❖ Creates priorities by classifying issues into matters of major and lesser importance.
❖ Considers carefully beforehand how to tackle an issue systematically.
❖ Formulates measurable objectives for self and others.
❖ Creates frameworks for completing tasks in an orderly and efficient way.
❖ Anticipates on unexpected events by adapting the plans accordingly.
❖ Realistically estimates the time, people and resources needed to achieve a goal.

Assessment Questions

❖ What are the critical steps in organising your current project-based work?
❖ How do you prepare for meetings and how do you keep them under control?
❖ Have you ever drawn up work procedures? How did you implement them?
❖ What were your objectives over the past year? Did you achieve these objectives?
❖ Have you a certain approach for keeping an eye on issues which must be tackled in the short term? What is this approach? Example?
❖ How did you determine which tasks had priority over the past year? Give a few examples.
❖ Have you ever actively been involved in a reorganization? What was the scenario for this reorganization and what was your contribution during the preparations for this reorganization?
❖ Are you ever been asked to organize something extra? Can you give an example?
❖ Describe an example of a situation in which you had to adjust the original planning.
❖ What resistance did you meet?
❖ What did you do about it?
❖ How did you organize your work?
❖ Can you give an example of a situation when you indicated that you didn't have time for an extra job?
❖ How do you ensure that you remain well informed about what happens in your environment/field?
❖ How do you plan your research and ensure that you meet the deadlines?

Development Tips

❖ Plan fixed meeting dates for large projects.
❖ Allow room in the schedule for unforeseen events.
❖ Draw up action lists and check off/cross through items as soon as something has been completed.
❖ Make sure that you are given responsibility for planning and organising a certain research or service project.

- ❖ Then determine:
    - The exact objective of the project.
    - The required resources (time, people, budget etc.), required to reach the set goal.
    - The effort (in terms of time and contribution) of everyone involved.
- ❖ Draw up a schedule listing who does what on which day or week, with the required limiting conditions.
- ❖ When you have worked out the planning (on paper), tell everyone about the planning and organization of the project.
- ❖ Meanwhile consult a colleague or your manager to see whether your planning and organization fulfill the expectations and demands.

4. Monitoring

Synonyms: Progress checks

Definition: Acting to monitor and check the progress made on activities or tasks.

Behaviour Indicators

- ❖ Makes clear agreements at the start of a project or work about the different points in time at which evaluation will take place.
- ❖ Maintains an overview of the work.
- ❖ Makes interim checks as to whether the work is progressing as agreed.
- ❖ Calls people to account if agreed deadlines are not met.
- ❖ Takes the initiative to get feedback or reports from staff.
- ❖ At the end of discussions, makes follow-up arrangements.

Assessment Questions

- ❖ What kind of controls do you build in your work?
- ❖ How do you manage to meet the appointments you make with people, both in time and quality?
- ❖ How do you manage to be well-informed about the progress of a project or activity?
- ❖ How do you manage to work according to plan or planning?
- ❖ Do you have any experience with a co-worker who didn't meet up to appointments? What did yo do?
- ❖ How do you evaluate your activities? Example?

Development Tips

- ❖ Draw up a project plan with mileposts and evaluation moments.
- ❖ Write down in your diary any agreements made regarding progress.
- ❖ Regularly hold evaluation meetings to check whether activities are on schedule.
- ❖ After a meeting, make specific and measurable follow-up agreements.
- ❖ Consider the activities for which it would be sensible to implement a (standardised) progress report and decide what the content of such a report should be.
- ❖ Evaluate each assignment or project.
- ❖ Take a course in project management.

Maastricht University

Assessment interview

User instructions:
– The UFO profile and corresponding VSNU competences form the basis of this interview. You can find these on the UM website>Employees>Terms of employment A..Z>University Job Classification.
– The line manager fills out the core activities and competences before the interview.
– The administrative manager approves the report.
– A signed and fully completed form is sent to the administrative unit's HR department.
– The signed form is filed in the employee's personnel file.

1. Personal information

Faculty / MUO / Service centre	
Department / Unit	
Employee name and initial(s)	Pers. number 700
Job profile	Job level
Contract	☐ permanent ☐ fixed term from _____ until _____
Line manager	
Interview conducted by	
Appraisal interview concerning the period of	from _____ until _____
Date of interview	
Date of previous assessment	
Date of previous appraisal	

2. Assessment of core activities
- State only the relevant (core) activities included in the appraisal form.
- Assess the output per activity on a five-point scale.

Core activity 1

Assessment   ☐Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

Version 2 - 2009

Core activity 2

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Assessment   ☐ Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

....

Core activity 3

....

Assessment   ☐ Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

....

Core activity 4

....

Assessment   ☐ Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

....

Core activity 5

....

Assessment   ☐ Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

....

Core activity 6

....

Assessment   ☐ Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

....

3. Competences
- State only the competences included in the appraisal form
- Assess these competences on a five-point scale

Competence

....

Assessment   ☐ Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

....

Competence

Assessment ☐Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

Competence

Assessment ☐ Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

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Reasons

Competence

Assessment ☐Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

Competence

Assessment ☐Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

Reasons

4. Intended assessment

☐Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

5. Employee's view on intended assessment

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6. Assessment with observance of employee's view

☐Unsatisfactory ☐ Adequate ☐ Satisfactory ☐ Good ☐ Very good

7. Agreements
- Describe the concrete agreements made further to this assessment

Agreement 1

Action	
Who	
How	
When	
Completion date	

Agreement 2

Action	
Who	
How	
When	
Completion date	

8. Agreement as to the employee's Legal position or contract

Agreement

Action to be undertaken by	
Term	

This assessment report was **drawn up** by		And **approved** by	
Name line manager		Name administrative manager	
Signature		Signature	
Date		Date	

I have **taken notice** of the content of the assessment report

Name employee

Signature

Date

Pursuant to Article 7:1 of the General Administrative Law Act (Awb) the employee may lodge a written and reasoned objection to this assessment with the Executive Board within six weeks.