

## **Information for Potential PhD students within the ERD department of Maastricht University**

1. **A PhD thesis consists of** four empirical studies (or three empirical studies + one literature review), published in peer-reviewed journals (preferably SSCI-indexed journals). It is allowed to publish one study in a peer-reviewed edited international book. Submission for external review of a PhD thesis will take place as soon as two studies are published or in press, and the other two are submitted. This is a very strict requirement.
2. **To get an idea** of how a completed PhD thesis looks like, the ERD department will email some examples of PhD manuscripts which meet our quality standards.
3. **Rules and Regulations of Maastricht University (MU)** with respect to the Attainment of Doctoral Degrees. We will provide you with a copy of the rules and regulations applying to the attainment of Doctoral Degrees.
4. **What effort does it take to receive a PhD?** Receiving a doctorate at MU is a time-consuming process. It is important to know that getting a doctorate from a Dutch university differs in many ways from PhD degrees in the USA. We don't require participation in course work (as in the USA), nor does a PhD take two-years (as is common in the USA). It is our experience that it takes on average four years for full-time PhD students, and about 5-7 years for PhD students who work on it part-time. Combining work and a PhD project requires a lot of effort. We will pay explicit attention to this issue during our interview(s) with you.
5. **Working on a PhD thesis** can also be a rewarding experience! We have several PhD researchers in our department researching various aspects of workplace learning, e-learning, team learning, assessment of learning, etc. Many of them got their work published in top-rated SSCI-indexed journals. If we accept you as a PhD student, you will get in touch with our PhD group and work with them in close cooperation.
6. **What is necessary to get selected as a PhD?** The applicant is invited to write a PhD project proposal, following the requirements as included in the PhD project proposal file. It should be written as if it is a grant application for a national science foundation. The proposal will be reviewed by two reviewers. Acceptance of your proposal depends on their recommendations. Once the proposal is accepted, the applicant is invited to present his/her work at our department (could as well be done with videoconference tools). After the presentation, researchers from my department will discuss the proposal with the presenter. If **both** proposal and presentation are acceptable, the PhD is accepted as student at our department. We will take care that the PhD gets access to the e-library of our university, and appointments will be made about how to proceed.
7. **Language requirements**. The only language of the PhD program is English, and all submitted materials must be in English. Candidates must have sufficient proficiency in English, as demonstrated by an official TOEFL test score, or as demonstrated in other evidence. We feel it is important that PhD students participate in presentations, discussions and other activities organized by our department. The TOEFL score should at least be 550 on the paper-based test; or at least 80 for the Internet-based test with a minimum of 20 points per skill (reading, listening, speaking, and writing).
8. **The selection procedure**. Before writing a PhD proposal, it is recommended to start working on a Powerpoint Presentation (PPT) which covers the key ideas of your PhD

proposal. We can give you feedback on this PPT. The final PPT could serve as input for your PhD project proposal. The whole procedure to get accepted as PhD takes about six months.

9. **Expectations about supervision.** Once the PhD is accepted in our department, we will give as much as support as is possible in the case of long-distance PhD supervision. Over the past few years, we trained several PhD's from around the world (Vietnam, Oman, Austria, Germany) and know by experience how difficult it can be to offer supervision which meets the needs of the PhD.
10. **Supervision and Preparation of the PhD project proposal.** Before a PhD is selected, feedback and reviews will only be given during 1) preparing the draft PPT that serves as the basis for the project proposal, 2) writing the proposal, and 3) preparing the presentation. Feedback and reviews will be limited to one review per stage of the selection process. Due to the increasing amount of PhD supervision requests, our department has to limit its supervision time during the selection process.
11. **Fees.** From 2014 onwards our department charges an annual PhD fee of € 2000 per year for PhD supervision to cover supervision costs, participation to PhD lunches, participation to the yearly PhD diner, and access to our library. All other costs involved to achieving a PhD degree are to be paid by the PhD: production of PhD thesis, research costs, travel and housing costs. The department hasn't decided yet about the final fee structure. Estimated printing costs for printing the dissertation in the Netherlands is €2000. Printing can also be done in your own country or institution. Participants are free to choose where they print the dissertation. The fee needs to be paid each year at the start of the year. If it takes more than four years to complete the thesis, the fee needs to be paid also for all additional years. Each year, the annual fee will be adjusted by the ERD department without prior notice, but with a maximum of 10%.  
Although the PhD program is distance-based, the candidate preferably comes to Maastricht for face-to-face communication on a few occasions during the program (normally at the start, in between, at the end and for the defense and the final completion of the thesis).  
Furthermore, it is possible to arrange face-to-face meetings during international conferences if our staff members participate in these conferences. Make appointments in advance to meet one of your supervisors during conference lunch time meetings. If statistical or methodological support is needed, the PhD candidate should specify this in the research proposal and pay separately for the extra support that is needed. The same holds for editing or improving the English language of papers.
12. **Cancellation policy.** When a PhD candidate decides to stop his or her participation in the program (s)he has to inform the Supervisor. No fees will be refunded in this case. The supervisor can also decide to end supervision and terminate the PhD project if progress or the quality of the work does not meet the requirements or for other reasons not specified. The minimum requirement for acceptable progress is one completed manuscript (ready for submission to a journal) per two years. In case of termination of participation in the PhD project before the PhD thesis is ready to be defended no fees will be refunded.
13. **Yearly performance appraisal.** There will be a performance appraisal at the end of each year in which the supervisors will discuss the progress that has been made so far by the PhD candidate.
14. **Required documents** Hand in a curriculum vitae (including personal details, master degree, professional work experience, educational experience, other academic activities,

current research interests). Hand in a letter of approval (written by the institute in which the applicant is currently employed), in which it is stated that the institute agrees upon the involvement of the applicant in the PhD program, and in which is stated who will be involved as external supervisor (if necessary) and under which conditions. Supervisor(s) are expected to actively contribute to papers written as part of the PhD project and, as such, they are generally listed as co-authors. Decisions on admission and on the appointment of supervisors are taken by the Department of Educational Research and Development.

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Prof. Dr. Wim Gijselaers  
Department Chair

Prof. Dr. Mien Segers  
Chair PhD Program