



GUIDE FOR
CARIM PhD
CANDIDATES

2025



**Cardiovascular
Research Institute
Maastricht**

G U I D E F O R

CARIM PhD

C A N D I D A T E S

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Cardiovascular
Research Institute
Maastricht



1	Introduction	5
2	Welcome to CARIM	5
	Division 1 - Blood	5
	Division 2 - Vessels	6
	Division 3 - Heart	6
3	CARIM's PhD Programme	7
	Types of PhD Candidates	7
	Requirements of the CARIM PhD programme	7
	Collective Labour Agreement	8
	Introduction Meetings	8
	Buddy System	8
	Coaching System	9
	PhD TRACK	9
	Annual Appraisal	10
	Scientific Integrity	11
	Checklist first year of PhD	11
	Golden Rules for PhD Candidates	14, 15
	Golden Rules for PhD supervisors	15
4	Courses for PhD candidates	17
	CARIM Course Week	17
	Papendal Courses	17
	NVTH PhD Course	17
	Additional Course Offers	17
	CARIM Scientific Symposium	20
5	PhD Representatives, Networking and Social Life	20
	I'MCARIM	20
	I'MCARIM PhD representatives 2025	21
	Ph.D. Academy	21
	Central PhD Candidates Platform (CPCP)	21
	Promovendi Netwerk Nederland (PNN)	22
6	Administrative Support	22
	Employment and Contract Matters	22
	Knowledge Centre for International Staff (KCIS)	22
	UM Card	22
	UM Mail	23
	UMployee	23
	Employee Self Service (ESS)	23
	SuccessFactors	23
	Sports	24
	Bicycle Scheme	24
	Technical Support	24
	ICTS	24
	Software	24
7	Mental well-being	24
	CARIM contact persons	25
	Peer support	25
	Mental support	25
	Personal and professional development	25
	Are you in a situation in which you need urgent help?	25
8	Social safety	26
9	Grants	26
10	Graduation	27
	Thesis	27
	Requesting the PhD defence	28
	Requesting the PhD defence	28
	The PhD defence ceremony	28
	Submitting a digital version to the University Library	29
	Promotion Timetable	30, 31
11	Important Contacts	34
	Colophon	39



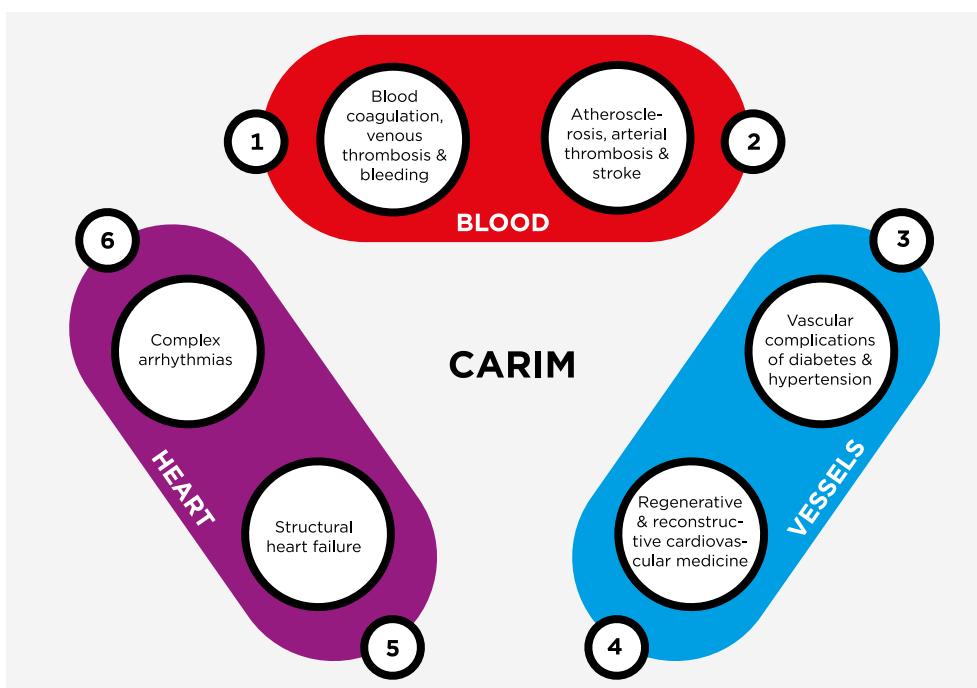
1 | Introduction

You are about to start a new journey within the Cardiovascular Research Institute Maastricht (CARIM), welcome! This PhD guide is intended to help you while you are getting started and give you tools for your PhD trajectory ahead.

2 | Welcome to CARIM

The Cardiovascular Research Institute Maastricht (CARIM) is one of the top institutes for translational cardiovascular research in Europe. This multi-disciplinary research institute consists of approximately 300 staff members (researchers and support staff) and close to 350 PhD candidates and post-doctoral researchers (post-docs). Your efforts as a PhD candidate are vital to CARIM, as you and your fellow PhD candidates are responsible for a large part of the research achievements of our institute.

The core research programme is organised around integrated multidisciplinary themes in 3 divisions (Figure 1) involving 11 clinical and 6 basic science departments within Maastricht University (UM) and Maastricht University Medical Centre+ (Maastricht UMC+).



DIVISION 1

BLOOD

Division 1 is aimed at deciphering impairments of proteins, platelets, and the vessel wall in relation to thrombosis with molecular and imaging approaches, and involves two programmes:

- *Blood coagulation, venous thrombosis & bleeding*
- *Atherosclerosis, arterial thrombosis & stroke*

The programmes include understanding of protein structure-function relationships; development of novel drugs; (molecular) imaging techniques and translation of these techniques into clinical practice. In addition, effects of blood components on the vessel wall are studied that lead to thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, myocardial infarction and stroke.

DIVISION 2**VESSELS**

Division 2 focuses on translational research of micro- and macrovascular dysfunction in the context of specific cardiovascular diseases that are a major burden to the ageing society. The mission of this division is to decrease the health burden imposed by these diseases, and involves two programmes:

- ▶ *Vascular complications of diabetes & hypertension*
- ▶ *Regenerative & reconstructive cardiovascular medicine*

Induced pluripotent stem cell (iPSC) technology is used to recreate patient tissue in the lab to study basal mechanisms of regeneration and for therapy testing in tailored patient treatments.

DIVISION 3**HEART**

Division 3 focuses on the topic of electrical heart failure, combining translational expertise in:

- ▶ *Structural heart failure*
- ▶ *Complex arrhythmias*

The term electrical heart failure represents a bidirectional interaction in which arrhythmias or conduction disturbances are induced by structural heart disease and, in turn, promote or enhance heart failure.

EPC The Education Programme Committee (EPC) coordinates CARIM's PhD programme and advises the Executive Board on related issues. The EPC is composed of 4 staff members and the members of I'MCARIM and is headed by CARIM's PhD coordinator. Topics that are discussed in the EPC are for example CARIM courses, events and PhD regulations within CARIM.

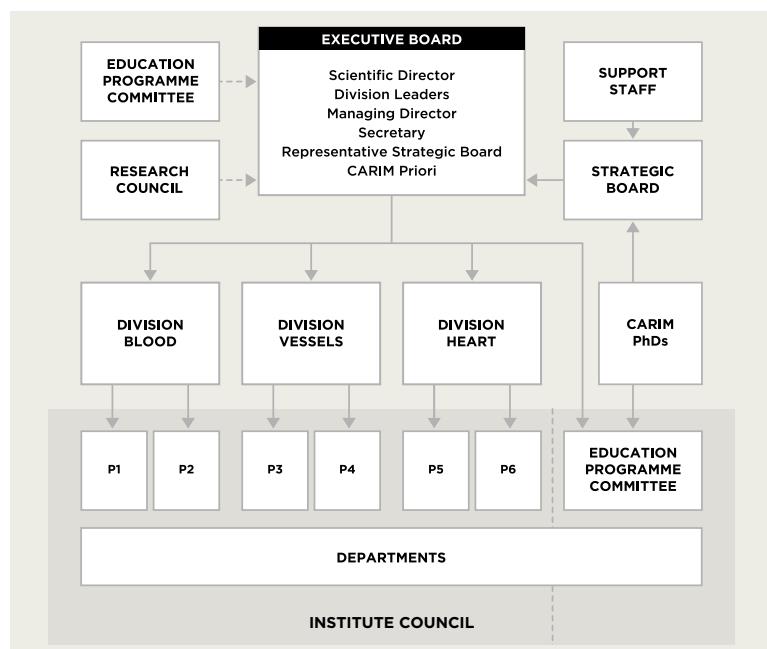
Education Programme Committee

FPC Every institute within the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML) is represented in the Faculty PhD Committee (FPC) by the PhD coordinator and one I'MCARIM PhD representative. The FPC advises the FHML Board and facilitates interaction between the research institutes regarding PhD matters, such as PhD wellbeing, PhD Track and faculty regulations. You can contact I'MCARIM via  imcarim@maastrichtuniversity.nl if you have any PhD-related issues that should be discussed in the EPC or FPC.

Faculty PhD Committee**SB Strategic Board**

The Strategic Board (SB) advises and supports the Scientific Director and the Executive Board in managing long-term policies. The SB serves as a discussion forum and generates written visions of the future of CARIM and its survival in an increasingly competitive international scientific environment. The Strategic Board meets monthly to discuss (strategic) issues such as research infrastructure, grant programmes, national and international collaboration networks, HR-policies, interdisciplinary communication and CARIM's visibility in the national and international cardiovascular fields. For more information you can reach the CARIM office via  carim-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl

FIGURE 1
The organisational structure of CARIM



3 | CARIM's PhD Programme

TYPES OF PHD CANDIDATES

As a PhD candidate at CARIM, you will conduct original research which will be the basis of your dissertation. Your supervisory team will support you in developing your research skills and becoming an independent scientist. However, every PhD candidate is unique. Depending on the nature of your employment and whether you are physically working at the Maastricht UMC+ or elsewhere, the requirements of your PhD programme will differ in some regards. The VSNU (Association of Universities in The Netherlands) distinguishes several categories of PhD candidates:

- 1. PhD candidate with an employment contract**
 - a. Employed as 'Promovendus' at the UM
 - b. Other FHML/UM or azM/Maastricht UMC+ staff doing a PhD
- 2. PhD candidate on a scholarship**
 - a. PhD candidate with a scholarship from UM/Maastricht UMC+
 - b. PhD candidate with a scholarship from another provider
- 3. Externally financed PhD candidate**
- 4. External PhD candidate (own resources)**

More information on the categories of PhD candidates defined by the VSNU can be found here: https://www.carimmaastricht.nl/media_file/guidelines-carim-training-development-plan-version-april-2023.pdf

REQUIREMENTS OF THE CARIM PHD PROGRAMME

The requirements for PhD candidates of each of the categories are summarized in the table below. Central to the CARIM PhD programme is the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) and the Personal Research Plan (PRP), which apply to all PhD candidates and are filled in in the first few months after entering the CARIM PhD programme. Find more information about the TSP and PRP in the introduction email from CARIM and in PhD track.

VSNU
Association Of
Universities In
The Netherlands

TSP

Training &

Supervision Plan

PRP

Personal Research
Plan

In addition, all PhD candidates at Maastricht University must fill in a declaration of scientific integrity and must complete the 3 mandatory UM general PhD trainings, which you can find via this link: <https://tinyurl.com/GeneralUM>

For PhD students in category 1a and 2 the participation in at least 25 ECTS worth of education activities (based on a 4 year program), including at least 2 CARIM courses, is expected.

Although annual appraisal meetings are only mandatory for PhD candidates employed by the UM or Maastricht UMC+ or work on a scholarship in Maastricht, it is still highly recommended to all PhD candidates to organize yearly evaluation meetings with the supervisor team.

Furthermore, at the start of the PhD programme all PhD candidates have to follow three short introductory courses organised by the UM, but only PhD candidates employed by the UM or working on a scholarship at the UM, are obliged to adhere to CARIM's training and development programme. Details of the different requirements are provided in the table below.

Requirements for PhD candidates according to VSNU categories

PhD candidate category	TSP	PRP	Declaration of Scientific Integrity	Annual appraisal	Education
1a	✓	✓	✓	✓*	✓
1b	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓		
4	✓	✓	✓		

*PhD candidates in category 1a have a go/no-go assessment after their first year.

COLLECTIVE LABOUR AGREEMENT

PhD candidates on a contract with a Dutch university are part of a collective labour agreement, in Dutch known as a “*collectieve arbeidsovereenkomst (CAO)*”. This agreement include rights as an employee and states what salary and bonuses you are entitled to, and is updated every few months to years to collectively protect employees. PhD candidates in category 1 and other PhD candidates that are paid through the university, are part of the collective labour agreement. The latest version of the labour agreement and related documents can be found on: https://www.universiteitenvannederland.nl/en_GB/cao-universiteiten.html

INTRODUCTION MEETINGS

In addition to this introduction guide, CARIM organises meetings for new PhD candidates to introduce them to CARIM and the CARIM PhD programme. Introduction meetings will be organised for PhD candidates that joined CARIM in the previous months. The meetings will be organised jointly by the PhD coordinator and by I'MCARIM.

BUDDY SYSTEM

A buddy can serve as your contact person while you find your way within our organisation

I'MCARIM has developed a buddy system wherein new PhD candidates are linked to a somewhat more experienced PhD candidate from a different department. A buddy can serve as your contact person while you find your way within our organisation. Benefits of this system are:

- ▶ You will have an experienced PhD candidate to ask (practical) questions to while you get to know your colleagues
- ▶ You will be able to see beyond your own department
- ▶ You will get to know people from outside your own department and broaden your social network

If you are interested in participating in the buddy system or if you would like to have more information, send an email to
 ☐ imcarim@maastrichtuniversity.nl

COACHING SYSTEM

PhD candidates who work in Maastricht will be linked to an experienced staff researcher who may offer advice and personal guidance (coach). External PhD candidates can also ask to be coupled with a coach by sending an email to ☐ secretariaat-carim@maastrichtuniversity.nl. Unlike your supervisors, coaches are not intended to provide feedback or suggestions regarding your research project(s), but are there to discuss personal development, and provide support and encouragement. To uphold this distinction, PhD candidates are randomly assigned to a coach from a different division. Coaches and PhD candidates must keep all contact confidential.

PhD TRACK

CARIM implemented the digital platform PhD TRACK to plan PhD trajectories and support PhD candidates to complete their trajectory successfully. The PhD TRACK system can be seen as a documentation of your time as a PhD candidate at CARIM and allows you and your supervisors to keep track of the progress of your research project. Regular updates in PhD TRACK are of utmost importance to ensure that progress is consistently documented and monitored. Apart from being a registry of all PhD candidates, their supervisors, and the research lines they are embedded in, PhD TRACK allows you to build your personal research and teaching portfolio. You can add professional courses you have completed, conferences you have attended, or teaching experience you have gained. It also allows you to upload documents like course certificates or your CV.

Shortly after your start at CARIM, you will receive an email with instructions on how to create an account and how to start using PhD TRACK. You can access the PhD TRACK system via this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/PhDTRACK>

PhD TRACK support In case you are experiencing problems with PhD TRACK, you can contact:

Esther Willigers

CARIM bureau ☐ secretariaat-carim@maastrichtuniversity.nl
 ☎ +31(0)43 388 16 47

Eline Kooi

PhD coordinator ☐ eline.kooi@mumc.nl
CARIM ☎ +31(0)43 387 49 11

Within the *first three months* of your PhD trajectory, you must complete a **Personal Research Plan** (PRP) as well as a **Training & Supervision Plan** (TSP). This applies to PhD candidates of all categories (1 to 4). Both the TSP and PRP help you to give structure to your PhD programme and are used as input documents for your annual progress meeting.

Personal Research Plan: Your PRP includes a general overview of your PhD project and includes a work plan and timeframe. You develop your PRP in collaboration with your supervisors to ensure that the PhD trajectory can be finished according to your contract or tailored agreements.

Training & Supervision Plan: The TSP is a tailored plan, aimed at acquiring discipline-specific as well as general skills that are crucial for your development of becoming an independent researcher and states how your supervision is organised. It contains agreements on three core elements: research, supervision, and education. During your PhD trajectory, you will gain insight into your performance, possible gaps in your knowledge and competencies, and your career perspective. Accordingly, your TSP is adjusted at the end of each year to meet your personal needs.

As part of the TSP at CARIM, PhD candidates employed by the UM (category 1a) or working on a scholarship at the UM (category 2b) are expected to earn

ECTS

European Credit Transfer System

25 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) points based on a 4-year trajectory. Other PhD candidates (category 1b, 3, 4) are obliged to follow the three introductory on-line UM courses only.

As your TSP should be designed to facilitate your personal development as a researcher and academic professional, there is flexibility and several domains in which ECTS points can be earned:

- ▶ Attending general and specific courses (at least 2 CARIM Courses)
- ▶ Visiting conferences, symposia, scientific meetings, or lectures (7 ECTS max.)
- ▶ Teaching (4 ECTS max.)
- ▶ Supervising interns (3 ECTS max.)
- ▶ Being an active member of I'M CARIM (4 ECTS max)

More details can be found in CARIM's guidelines education plan,
<https://www.carimmaastricht.nl/education/phd-programme>

ANNUAL APPRAISAL

According to the Dutch labor agreement for universities (CAO-NU), UM-employed PhD candidates are assessed by their supervisors at the end of the first year. The supervisors explicitly express whether they can reasonably expect, based on the progress and results in the first year, that the goal of the PhD project will be reached, this results in the go/no-go decision. The assessment is conducted in the presence of the designated HR advisor. At the end of each subsequent year, an assessment review will be held. Prior to all annual assessments the PhD candidate updates the status of the TSP and PRP.

For PhD candidates not employed by UM, it is strongly advised to conduct annual evaluations on progress, performance and mutual expectations between the PhD candidates and the supervisory team.

An information leaflet on the annual assessment including the core competencies of PhD candidates prepared by HR can be found in PhD TRACK via 'Documents' → 'First-year assessment and annual appraisal reports', or via this link:
<https://tinyurl.com/AnnualAssessment>

Annual assessment including core competencies of PhD candidates

UM has a digital toolkit to help you prepare for your annual appraisal which is available on the UM intranet:
<https://tinyurl.com/UMintranet>.

AppRaisal app

You can also use the AppRaisal app which you can download from either the App Store or Google Play to take notes throughout the year.

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY

Declaration of Scientific Integrity

Everyone working at Maastricht University shares the responsibility of maintaining academic integrity. All members of our scientific community are expected to adhere to the general principles of professional academic practice at all times. Once you start with your PhD, you must watch the introduction video on scientific integrity and follow an obligatory course on this topic. Moreover, a declaration of scientific integrity must be signed and submitted in PhD Track.. More information can be found on the website:

<https://tinyurl.com/integrity-ethics>

Research code of conduct:

<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/researchcodeMUMC>

MASTER DIPLOMA

PhD candidates need to upload a pdf-file of their original Master Diploma in PhD track. If this concerns a Master Diploma from a non-Dutch University, you need a formal confirmation by Maastricht University that your Master Diploma is equivalent to a Dutch Master Diploma. Therefore, you need to email the digital copies of your Master's diploma(s), or equivalent(s), for an official check by Maastricht University to UM SSC via: phd-application-ssc@maastrichtuniversity.nl. After you have received the letter by SSC on the equivalence of your Diploma, this document should be uploaded in PhD TRACK as well.

CHECKLIST FIRST YEAR OF PhD

WITHIN THE FIRST 3 MONTHS	<input type="checkbox"/> Plan meeting with supervisor to discuss supervision and work expectations and deadlines (Recommended, also see the Golden Rules chapter) <input type="checkbox"/> Submit following documents (mandatory) - Training & Supervision Plan (TSP) - Personal Research Plan - Declaration of Scientific Integrity - Master diploma
MONTHS 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Contact coach to plan meeting 6 months after start PhD	
MONTHS 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Plan annual appraisal with supervisor and HR (i.e., first year evaluation with go/no-go decision) <input type="checkbox"/> Complete annual questionnaire FHML on the CARIM PhD track <input type="checkbox"/> Go over the Training and Supervision plan and Personal Research plan to check if you are on track. Upload an updated version into PhD Track after the appraisal.	
WITHIN 12 MONTHS AFTER START PhD <input type="checkbox"/> 3 UM General PhD Trainings (mandatory) 1. Research Ethics and Integrity 2. Open Science 3. Science communication	

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The CARIM PhD programme is accessible for talented and motivated students who obtained a medical or biomedical Master's degree. In order to guarantee high quality PhD training, there are some golden rules for PhDs and supervisors, which can be found below.

GOLDEN RULES FOR PHD CANDIDATES

1. You are the captain of the ship.

You're stakeholder #1 in your project, which means that you are responsible for your PhD progress and completion. Take initiative on planning, organisation and time management throughout your PhD. Communicate your wishes, needs and challenges to your supervisory team. Remember you're smart! Yes, You Can!

2. Develop a clear, scientifically sound and feasible research plan.

Use the Personal Research Plan (PRP) within the first three months of the research trajectory. Discuss it regularly - at least once a year - with your supervisory team and, if needed, revise/update it.

3. Make a clear plan to support your professional and personal growth.

Use the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) within the first three months of the research trajectory and regularly update it. Identify training opportunities to support the acquisition of competences needed to develop into an independent researcher/scientist for future work, in and out of academia. Discuss your professional/personal development with your supervisory team at least once per year - and more often if your needs are not being met.

4. Discuss and evaluate mutual expectations regarding the supervision.

Clarify expectations and discuss your supervision needs with the supervisory team early in the project. Make sure to develop clear mutual agreements on supervision, responsibilities and communication. Use routine (weekly/monthly) work meetings, as well as the annual interview appraisal. Remember that constructive, bidirectional feedback is key. Also, realise you are in a position to give feedback in turn.

5. Manage your time well.

You have a limited, fixed time to finish your PhD project, so make sure to manage your time well. Develop time management skills and discuss timelines with your supervisory team to ensure you to obtain your PhD without delay.

6. Discuss your personal support needs.

Throughout your trajectory, regularly discuss the support you need within your team and outside of it. Make use of all available support that is being offered. It is also important to acknowledge that support needs can shift throughout the project.

7. Follow the scientific integrity code of conduct.

Maastricht University and Maastricht UMC+ have established a Research Code based on the codes of conduct of the Universities of The Netherlands (UNL). Familiarise yourself with the policies and expected behaviours. All your professional activities, whether they refer to education, research, patient care, or management, should comply with these codes. Know that you can expect the same from your supervisor.

8. Organise your own peer support network.

Talk to your fellow students. It is easier to overcome difficulties together. Try to be attentive and recognise when someone is struggling and don't hesitate to offer your help. Take advantage of the available peer support.

9. Plan your future post-PhD.

Throughout your PhD trajectory, discuss your interests, ambitions, and future career options with your supervisory team. Ask your supervisor for relevant contacts who may help you in your post-PhD career. Make active use of opportunities that help you to create a professional network. Don't be afraid to talk to people and take initiative.

10. Recognise, monitor and address work pressure.

Learn how to recognise early signs of work pressure and emotional strains and know to monitor them. Should work pressure escalate, contact the appropriate persons and/or services to address the situation. Don't forget to put time into your personal life and things you enjoy.

GOLDEN RULES FOR PHD SUPERVISORS

1. Discuss and evaluate mutual expectations regarding research and supervision.

Clarify expectations and discuss the supervision needs with your PhD candidate. Make sure to develop clear agreements and accepted deadlines. To this end, use routine work meetings, as well as the annual interview.

2. Develop a clear, scientifically sound and feasible research plan with your PhD candidate.

Use the [Personal Research Plan \(PRP\)](#) within the first three months of the research trajectory. Discuss it regularly - at least once a year - with your PhD candidate and, if needed, revise/update it.

3. Make a clear plan with your PhD candidate to support personal growth and development.

Use the [Training and Supervision Plan \(TSP\)](#) within the first three months of the research trajectory and regularly update it. Identify training opportunities to support the acquisition of competences needed to develop into an independent researcher/scientist for future work, in and out of academia.

4. Be aware that support needs may change.

Throughout the PhD trajectory, direct (give clear instructions and protocols), lead (guide towards achieving concrete goals), coach (give the necessary inputs to further develop), support and delegate (leave full independence in performing specific tasks).

5. Provide constructive feedback on process and results.

Invest the time needed to motivate and develop the researcher, not just the research project. Provide regular feedback based on the development level and the project's tasks and goals. Your feedback should be compassionate, concrete, constructive, and critical.

6. Be open to receive feedback from your PhD candidate.

Be approachable and regularly ask your PhD candidate for feedback in a respectful and encouraging way. Learn from your PhD candidate.

7. Recognise, monitor and address work pressure.

Learn how to recognise early signs of work pressure and emotional strains. Regularly address well-being issues and reach out during challenging periods.

8. Open up your network, discuss career perspectives and opportunities.

Throughout the PhD trajectory, discuss interests, ambitions, and future career options. Offer training and research opportunities from your network and resources to help the PhD candidate create a professional network.

9. Work on your supervisory skills and regularly evaluate your own way of supervision.

Reflect on your own strengths, motivation and growth.

Continuously develop your supervision and management skills through available training opportunities at FHML, Maastricht University, and externally.

10. Assure scientific soundness and follow the scientific integrity code of conduct.

Maastricht University and Maastricht UMC+ have established a Research Code based on the codes of conduct of the Universities of The Netherlands (UNL). All your professional activities, including supervision, should comply with these codes. Expect the same from your PhD candidate.

4

Courses for PhD candidates

**Attend at least 2
CARIM Course Weeks**

CARIM PhD candidates can participate in discipline-related courses offered by CARIM as well as general courses offered by FHML and UM. Together with your supervisors, you decide which courses to follow. If you are a CARIM PhD in category 1a or 2b you should attend at least 2 CARIM Courses.

CARIM COURSE WEEK

CARIM offers several courses during the annual CARIM Course Week in June. These courses focus on state-of-the-art technologies and novel concepts in the cardiovascular research field. The CARIM Course Week also allows you to meet fellow PhDs and CARIM staff and broaden your network at CARIM. Each year, two of the following courses are offered:

- ▶ Heart Failure Research
- ▶ Non-Invasive Biomedical Imaging
- ▶ Drug Development
- ▶ Vascular Inflammation and Thrombosis
- ▶ Advanced Optical Microscopy (organised by the Department of Molecular Cell Biology)

More information can be found on: <https://tinyurl.com/CARIMPhD>

PAPENDAL COURSES

**Dutch Heart
Foundation's
PhD courses
or Papendal courses**

CARIM PhD candidates and junior post-docs have the opportunity to join the Dutch Heart Foundation's PhD courses, the so-called Papendal courses. CARIM PhD candidates and PhD candidates from other Dutch universities and research institutes can register for one of two 5-day courses taking place at the Papendal Conference Centre in Arnhem in fall. The topics of the Papendal courses correspond to the three CARIM research themes and include Cardiac Function & Adaptation, and Vascular Biology & Pathology. There is also a course specifically for post-docs and PhD candidates in their last year. The Papendal courses are not only a great opportunity to gain insight into the newest developments in cardiovascular research, but also to present your own research and network with PhD candidates from all over The Netherlands.

Dutch Heart Foundation Cardiovascular courses:
<https://tinyurl.com/Papendal>

NVTH PhD COURSE

**NVTH
The Dutch Society
on Thrombosis and
Haemostasis NVTH**

The Dutch Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis (NVTH) is an association of researchers working in the field of coagulation. They organise a PhD course for young basic and clinical researchers every year. Additionally, NVTH stimulates the interaction between researchers in the field of thrombosis and haemostasis by organising an annual 2-day symposium in Koudekerke.

More information can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/NVTHcourse>

ADDITIONAL COURSE OFFERS

The University offers comprehensive courses to improve skills such as academic writing or laboratory techniques. FHML offers courses for its PhD candidates as a part of the FHML/Maastricht UMC+ training programme. This includes courses on methodology and statistics, biomedical and clinical research skills (for example the 'Lab Animal Science' course), or University teaching skills (for example the 'Introductory Course on Principles of PBL' or





Ridder Bier

Staff 'Tutoring/Teaching Skills', both needed to take on the role of tutor). The Staff Career Centre offers courses related to professional development as well as career coaching specifically for PhD candidates. The University Library also offers several workshops and courses for PhD candidates and UM research staff, including courses on systematic literature searches or selecting a journal for publication.

FHML/MUMC+ courses:

<https://tinyurl.com/FHML-courses>

Staff career service courses for young researchers:

<https://tinyurl.com/UM-career-centre>

University Library courses for PhD candidates and UM researchers:

<https://tinyurl.com/lib-courses>

CARIM SCIENTIFIC SYMPOSIUM

From a variety of scientific events which are organised by CARIM, the CARIM Symposium is a recurrent highlight. Every year in November, the CARIM community comes together to celebrate their scientific and societal achievements of the past year. Recent CARIM laureates deliver presentations on their research findings and nominated PhD candidates are given the chance to present their research in a poster session. The scientific programme of the CARIM Symposium traditionally closes with the Robert Reneman Lecture by a renowned international researcher in the field of cardiovascular research. The scientific programme is concluded by the awarding of prizes, including the PhD Dissertation prize. The award ceremony is usually followed by an evening reception.

5 PhD Representatives, Networking and Social Life

I'MCARIM

Under the name I'MCARIM, we are dedicated to make your time with CARIM enjoyable and make everybody proud to say "I'm CARIM!".

The I'MCARIM committee represents PhD candidates from all CARIM research lines. The members of I'MCARIM are involved in the Faculty PhD committee (FPC) of the FHML and the Education Programme Committee (EPC) of CARIM, where they have an advisory role. It is our task to inform you about issues that are discussed at institutional level and to communicate PhD issues to the council. Please feel free to contact us with any issues via

✉ imcarim@maastrichtuniversity.nl

I'MCARIM organises different events:

- ▶ Young investigator round
- ▶ Thesis printing workshop
- ▶ Career workshop

During the CARIM Course Week, I'MCARIM organises an afternoon event with a joint programme as well as social activities for all course participants. In previous years, social activities included mini golf, bowling, and laser tag in the Valkenburg caves. For more information about I'MCARIM, follow us on twitter (@imcarim) or instagram, keep an eye out for our updates via mail, or see <https://tinyurl.com/IMCARIM>

I'MCARIM PhD REPRESENTATIVES 2025

Margarita Pencheva (Chair and FPC representative) - Departments of Internal Medicine/Biomedical Engineering
Minke Rijpkema (Diversity&Inclusivity Officer) - Department of Biochemistry
Lisa den Brok (Financial Officer) - Department of Internal Medicine
Stan Muitjens (Scientific Officer) - Department of Pathology
Rita Chamoun (Education Officer) - Department of Biomedical Engineering
Sophie van de Walle (Personal Relations Officer) - Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery
Eduardo Zancanaro (Communications officer and external PhD representative) - Department of Cardiothoracic Surgery

PH.D. ACADEMY

Ph.D. Academy is an association that offers PhD candidates a wide range of activities and, in this way, connects people from every department of UM. They organise educational, social, and fun activities all year round. The Academy is always looking for new members and supports the initiatives of PhD candidates who want to organise events. Their goal is to improve communication between the different departments & faculties and help people create a strong network in Maastricht. If you are interested in the events organised by Ph.D. Academy or if you are looking for more information, check out their website or social media profiles:

<https://phdacademy.maastrichtuniversity.nl/>

<https://www.facebook.com/PhDAcademy/>

<https://www.instagram.com/phdacademy/>

You can also reach out through the 'PhD Academy' group on UMployee, where all event info will be regularly posted. If you want to become a member or have an idea for an event to improve PhD life in Maastricht, you can contact:

Ph.D. Academy

- ✉ phdacademy@maastrichtuniversity.nl
- ✉ phdacademy@googlemail.com

Jaehyeon Kim, President

- ✉ j.kim@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Gerli Viilup, Secretary

- ✉ g.viilup@maastrichtuniversity.nl

CENTRAL PhD CANDIDATES PLATFORM (CPCP)

CPCP

The Central PhD Candidates Platform

The Central PhD Candidates Platform (CPCP) is a UM-wide platform that discusses interfaculty and (inter)national issues that concern PhD candidates. This includes topics such as workload, contractual and other statuses, teaching duties, psychological health, and the duration of PhD tracks. The platform consists of six representatives with one PhD candidate from each faculty. They have taken up the official role of representing PhD candidates within their faculty and meet at least 4 times per year, with additional ad hoc meetings when required. Decisions are made on a consensus basis; however, email correspondence may be used for expediting minor or urgent decisions. The meetings are open to all PhD candidates and interested parties provided there are no confidential items to discuss. Please send an email to the chair and secretary for these meetings to rotate on a per-meeting basis.

If you have questions, want to participate, to inquire after the agenda for the next meeting or bring an issue to the attention of the platform, you can always contact the CPCP by sending an email to:

✉ phdplatform@maastrichtuniversity.nl

PNN PROMOVENDI NETWERK NEDERLAND (PNN)

The PhD Network

Netherlands

GMM

The General Members

Meeting

DB

Daily Board

POs

PhD Organisations

The PhD Network Netherlands (PNN) is the national interest group for and by PhD candidates affiliated to one of the fourteen Dutch Universities, one of the eight University Medical Centres, or other research institutions. The General Members Meeting (GMM) is the highest decision-making body, during which the Daily Board (DB) and the local PhD Organisations (POs) deliberate together about the strategy and new actions, and make decisions about the course of action on the national level. PNN keeps in close contact with many stakeholders and other relevant organisations, such as the

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science; The Association of Universities in the Netherlands; The Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres, labor unions, political parties, and student organisations. Furthermore, PNN is an initiator and member of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers. You can get in touch with PNN via your local PO or directly via

✉ info@hetpnn.nl

6

Administrative Support

EMPLOYMENT AND CONTRACT MATTERS

CARIM has two HR advisors who can advise you on matters relating to supervision, legal status, or terms of employment. Advisors are assigned to specific departments, please inquire at your departmental bureau/office.

Anke Neekmann

HR advisor at CARIM

✉ a.neekmann@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Petra Suurmond

HR advisor at CARIM

✉ p.suurmond@maastrichtuniversity.nl

KNOWLEDGE CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL STAFF (KCIS)

KCIS A large portion of international staff at Maastricht University are employed in PhD positions. The Knowledge Centre for International Staff offers a wide range of services to help foreign employees of Maastricht University (e.g. immigration procedures,

UM CARD

As an employee of the University, you will receive a UM card to give you access to the UNS 40/50 buildings. If you are employed by or working in the hospital, you will receive a Maastricht UMC+ card and your UM card authorities can be added to your Maastricht UMC+ card. This can be arranged through the secretary of your department. If you need 24-hour access to one of the buildings or need to cross the walking bridge between hospital and University, a separate form needs to be handed in. Please ask your department's secretary to help you with this. Your UM card also functions as a library card,

parking card, and works with the photocopying machines. You can also use your card to pay at the Maastricht UMC+ restaurant or UM mensa, but each has a separate budget that needs to be loaded onto your card.

If you lose or damage your UM or Maastricht UMC+ card, please contact Facility Services (Facilitaire Dienst) or to the P&O desk at level 0 UM (for MUMC cards):

Facility Services

① +31 (0)43-3882002

✉ servicepoint-fs@maastrichtuniversity.nl

UM MAIL

All new PhD candidates receive an UM email account which should be used for work-related correspondences. It works via Outlook Web App and can be accessed from any location.

To use it, log in with your UM email (@maastrichtuniversity.nl) and your password here:

<https://mail.maastrichtuniversity.nl>.

If you work in or are employed by the hospital, you also receive a Maastricht UMC+ mail address (@mumc.nl). It is practical to use only one of the two email accounts actively and let email sent to the other account be forwarded automatically. Your UM email address is also your login for most UM systems like ESS or IMAR. Please be aware that your UM account is terminated 90 days after your contract has ended.

UMployee

All practical matters for UM employees can be found on UMployee, the intranet of the UM. The intranet contains a dashboard with relevant news and updates, as well as information about work, leave, career development and links to answers to frequently asked questions. Log in to UMployee by using your UM username and password here:

<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/my-um>

From the UMployee page you can access other apps by navigating to the blue bar on the left and clicking on the “Applications” button.

EMPLOYEE SELF SERVICE (ESS)

ESS is a digital environment that allows you to see and edit your personal information (like your address or phone number), download your salary slip and annual statement, and declare work-related costs. Log in to ESS through the “Applications” on UMployee:

<https://tinyurl.com/ESS-UM>

SUCCESSFACTORS

SuccessFactors is the Universities leave registration system. It allows you to see your holiday hours and register holidays. The system divides the number of holiday hours per category, such as statutory and non-statutory holiday hours. In principle, UM employees have to take at least four weeks of holiday every year which should be registered before 1 July. Access SuccessFactors through UMployee Applications or log in using your UM username and password here: <https://tinyurl.com/UM-success>

SPORTS

UM Sports offers group classes, training sessions or walk-in activities in a variety of sports and disciplines. The University Sports Centre located opposite of the Maastricht UMC+ is UM Sports' main location with a gym, sports studios and a sports hall, a spinning studio, squash courts and a climbing wall. PhD candidates can choose from several membership plans for staff members or get a try out session for 5.00 €. You can find more information on the UM Sports website

<https://tinyurl.com/UM-sports>.

More information on memberships for PhD candidates and employees can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/sports-membership>.

As a UM PhD candidate, you can also participate in the corporate fitness scheme with BenVitaal. Your membership fee will be deducted from your gross salary. Depending on your tax rate, you may be eligible for almost 50% discount on the membership fee. This only applies for memberships to selected fitness centres. For an overview of these centers, search for "company fitness" in UMployee.

BICYCLE SCHEME

For those employed by the UM there is a Bicycle Scheme offering a UM contribution of up to 340 € towards the purchase of a new bike, including insurance or maintenance. There is also the option to use your vacation hours or your end-of-year bonus to pay for the remainder of the cost. Certain conditions apply to be eligible for a UM contribution which can be found on <https://tinyurl.com/UMintranet>.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

ICT services (ICTS) can help with any ICT-related (information and communication technology) problems. Your department probably has an ICT supporter, please contact this person before asking your questions to ICTS.

ICTS

① +31(0)43 388 55 55

✉ servicedesk-icts@maastrichtuniversity.nl

SOFTWARE

UM offers software downloads and licenses, for example Office 365 or the Adobe Creative Cloud. You can find an overview of available software on <https://tinyurl.com/UM-ICTS> and <http://www.surfpot.nl/>.

7

Mental well-being

Doing a PhD is an exciting journey, but can at times be challenging and/or stressful. At CARIM you are not doing a PhD alone, you are embedded in a larger academic community. In case you are experiencing any problems, minor or major, we think talking to someone about it is an important first step. There may not be an easy fix, and while there are resources at CARIM and Maastricht University available to PhD candidates, we realise it may be difficult to find out where to start. Therefore, we have assembled some resources that focus on mental well-being. We hope that this may be helpful to you.

CARIM CONTACT PERSONS

In case of questions or experienced difficulties you can always contact one of these people

PhD coordinator: Eline Kooi

✉ eline.kooi@mumc.nl

PhD representatives: I'MCARIM

✉ imcarim@maastrichtuniversity.nl

FHML PhD confidential advisor: Maria Jansen

✉ maria.jansen@maastrichtuniversity.nl

CARIM confidential contact persons:

Dr Magdi Nagy:

✉ m.nagy@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Prof. Peter de Leeuw:

✉ p.deleeuw@maastrichtuniversity.nl

For administrative support you can contact the HR advisors:

Anke Neekmann HR advisor at CARIM

✉ a.neekmann@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Petra Suurmond HR advisor at CARIM

✉ p.suurmond@maastrichtuniversity.nl

PEER SUPPORT

PhDs can help each other to face the challenges together and stay well by offering a listening ear to each other and sharing experiences. Talking to other PhDs at CARIM can be very helpful. If you want to expand your network and peergroup, join one of the social events organised by Im CARIM, the CARIM café (every 1st Monday of the month at SAAM), participate in the buddy system, or come by at the open office hours of Im CARIM.

MENTAL SUPPORT

As an employee at the UM you can find mental support here

- **Coaching:** If you are experiencing anxiety or stress that affects your work, you can seek counselling from a coach from the Staff Career Centre (SCC). Coaching is free.
- **Occupational Health Physician:** offers advice and guidance to employees regarding (mental) illness.
- In addition, your general practitioner (GP) can guide you to other resources also if you are not an employee at the UM.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- The **SCC** offers courses on career management, transferable skills and personal development related to work & career in case you are employed at Maastricht University.
- **GoodHabitz** offers online training on a wide range of topics including well-being.

ARE YOU IN A SITUATION IN WHICH YOU NEED URGENT HELP?

In life-threatening situations, call 112. If you are having suicidal thoughts, call 113 (or 0800-0113). For non-life threatening emergencies, you can call your general practitioner (GP) during office hours. Outside of office hours, call the GP office located in the hospital via +31(0)43 387 77 77

8

Social safety

If you experience problems related to social safety, such as discrimination, racism, sexual harassment, aggression, violence or problems relating to equal opportunities or conflicts with colleagues, you are encouraged to contact the team Social Safety, who can assist PhD candidates in finding the right help and support to try to address and resolve these issues. The team is independent. You can have a confidential conversation with the members of the team:

Esther Goethart Coordinator Concerns & Complaints Point (CCP)

Primary contact person, responsible for support and referral

① +31(6) 28 84 99 65

✉ esther.goethart@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Claire Essers Ombuds officer

The ombuds officer conducts independent, impartial and confidential investigations with advice and/or mediation

① +31(6) 40 77 63 09

✉ claire.essers@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Katinka Bastin Confidential advisor

Contact person who can help in case of (suspected) breach of integrity or undesirable behaviour

① +31(6) 46 70 55 46

✉ k.bastin@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Joep Peters external confidential advisor

① +31(6) 20 30 51 59

✉ contact@deeikmediation.nl

Further information about the CCP and the members of this social safety team can be found on the website: <https://tinyurl.com/UM-CCP>

9

Grants

If you want to apply for funding during or after your PhD, you can contact the Grants Office. The Grants Office is part of the Research Office and can give you information on grant opportunities and offers support while writing a grant proposal. On this website, you can find a list of grant opportunities ranging from regional to European funding:

<https://tinyurl.com/FHML-grants>

A brief overview of well-known grants for after completion of the PhD is listed here:

- ▶ **CARIM HS-BAFTA** (for talented PhD candidates who want to apply for a 1 year post-doc position abroad)
<https://www.carimmaastricht.nl/research/talent-development>

- ▶ **FHML Kootstra Talent Fellowship (KTF)**
<https://tinyurl.com/kootstra>

- ▶ **NWO Rubicon**
<https://tinyurl.com/NWO-rubicon>

► **Universiteitsfonds Limburg SWOL**

<https://www.ufl-swol.nl/>

► **ZonMW Veni**

<https://tinyurl.com/ZonMW-VENI>

There are some grants to support you during your PhD. These include travel grants such as these:

- **HS-BAFTA** for talented PhDs, to spend 2-6 months during their PhD in a lab abroad.
- **Erasmus+ Mobility** for staff – helps finance EU staff training mobility with other Erasmus+ partner institutions including job-shadowing, training, exchange/collaboration projects
- **The Dutch Heart Foundation** frequently has travel grants available

The university provides several grant application workshops per year. You can contact the FHLN funding advisor for more information, or follow the CARIM newsletter for course announcements.

10

Graduation

The regulations for obtaining a PhD at UM can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/UM-graduation>

THESIS

The regulations for obtaining a PhD at UM can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/UM-graduation>

In brief, the thesis contains the following chapters:

1. **Introduction:** This section should introduce the research and its significance, positioning it within the context of existing related research at both national and international levels.
2. **Scientific Treatise(s):** This is the core of the thesis. For a single treatise, it should contain a detailed exploration of the chosen subject. For multiple treatises, they should be sufficiently cohesive and related. At least one treatise should be under review by a scientific journal.
3. **General Discussion:** This chapter should provide a reasoned representation of your own position concerning the main theme or major themes of the thesis. It's an opportunity to reflect on the findings and the broader implications of the research.
4. **Summary:** A concise summary of the entire thesis, highlighting the main points, findings, and contributions. This should be provided in Dutch and English.
5. **Impact Paragraph:** This section should outline the impact of your research on science and/or society, explaining the significance of your findings.
6. **Curriculum Vitae:** A brief overview of your academic and professional background.
7. **Propositions:** A set of statements that present key hypotheses, conclusions, or ideas arising from your research. These propositions may relate to the thesis subject, your field of expertise, and the broader impact of your research.
9. **An acknowledgements chapter is common.** The impact statement is included in the assessment of the thesis.

The propositions, Curriculum Vitae and acknowledgements do not have to be included in the thesis when submitted to the assessment committee, but can/should be added to the final thesis. For more details on the thesis, see article 12 of the “UM PhD Regulations on the support for PhD webpage”.

REQUESTING THE PhD DEFENCE

When you have an outline sketched and a deadline set for your thesis together with your supervision team, you and your promotor should start the request for the promotion. To avoid any delay, it is best to start this procedure 3 to 6 months before the intended thesis submission (see timeline).

The main promotor or principal supervisor is responsible for sending out the so called “model letters” to request the PhD defence. It is advised to make agreements with your supervision team on starting this procedure, and discuss who is responsible for what, to avoid any delay.

The model letters can be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/UM-graduation>

In brief:

- ▶ **Model letter 1** - Request for Admission PhD Candidate and Supervision Team: this letter can be sent out already in the first year of the PhD.
- ▶ **Model letter 2(B)** - Request for Change in Composition Supervisory Team or Expansion of Supervisory Team: only when supervision team is changed after sending model letter 1. (optional)
- ▶ **Model letter 3** - Assessment Committee: for the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences the primary supervisor is required to submit Model Letter 3 via the digital PhD track
- ▶ **Model letter 4** - Instructions to chair and members Assessment Committee: this letter, together with your final version of your thesis is to be sent to the assessment committee. There is a specific letter from CARIM which can be requested from the CARIM office.
- ▶ **Model letter 5(B)** - Reply to PhD Office: this is the letter the chair of the assessment committee sends to the PhD office with a decision on the thesis.
- ▶ **Model letter 6** - Advice on Cum Laude: send by the chair in case it is eligible for the distinction ‘cum laude’. (optional)
- ▶ **Model letter 7** - Admission to Public Defence, approval Title Page. To be send together with your principal supervisor to request the public defence.
- ▶ **Model letter 8** - Composition Defence Committee. The defence committee might differ from the assessment committee.

►► Important note, the procedure in requesting the PhD defence is being digitalised in 2024. Please check online for the most up-to-date information

THE PhD DEFENCE CEREMONY

Once you received a positive verdict from the Assessment Committee, consult with your supervisors and the PhD Office about the degree ceremony date. You can find the up-to-date contact information on <https://tinyurl.com/UM-graduation>.

If you have found a date, you can send model letter 7 (see timeline next page).

Once you have settled a date and receive approval from the Rector Magnificus for your PhD defence, there are several things that need to be organised

(see timeline). Here is a list of useful information sources that might help you in preparing for your defence:

- **Thesis printing** – the thesis needs to be printed as a hard copy, the university needs 6 and all members of the opposition need a copy. Furthermore, check with your supervision team, colleagues, collaborators, friends and family, who would need or want a hardcopy. There are several specialised companies who offer printing service and can help you with the formatting and/or design. For example, I'M CARIM offers printing workshops from Ridderprint and AIO once or twice per year and has a discount offer for CARIM PhDs (all you have to do is to indicate you are from CARIM). Getting your thesis printed takes some time and costs can vary between printing companies, make sure to contact a printing company as soon as you have a date (at >2 months in advance, if possible).
- ▶ **Financial support printing** – Check with foundations and institutions related to your field, they might offer financial aid in getting your thesis printing, also if they did not subsidise your research prior. For example, the Dutch Heart Foundation offers €500 for printing your research. Make sure to check funding opportunities and their requirements in advance.
- ▶ **Ceremony** – briefly, the PhD defence ceremony entails a 15 minute layman presentation by the candidate, followed by a 45 minute period in which the opposition can ask question. More information can be found here: <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/phd-office>.
- ▶ **Practice defence** – in some research groups it is common to practise the layman talk and the defence with your fellow PhDs and (part of) your supervision team a week or two before the ceremony. This is not mandatory but might be helpful in the preparation. There are not rules and format and you are responsible for taking the initiative.
- ▶ **Reimbursement** – after your defence, you can claim (part of) the costs you made for the printing and the reception. For up to date information please see <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support-phd-candidates>.

►► **Of note, some information is currently difficult to find in English. We are working on improving this. If you are unable to find the right information in English and do not have anyone close to you that can help you with translating, feel free to contact I'M CARIM**

SUBMITTING A DIGITAL VERSION TO THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

A minimum of three weeks before your PhD defence, a digital version of your PhD thesis has to be submitted to the university library. It is the responsibility of the PhD candidate to deposit the PhD thesis for online sharing. In case some of the chapters are not yet accepted for publication, it is possible to put a temporary embargo on these chapters which is very important if you want to be able to publish these chapters in the future.

You can find the submission portal, step-by-step instructions, and any additional information on:

<https://tinyurl.com/ThesisDeposit>

PROMOTION TIMETABLE

FINAL 12 MONTHS OF CONTRACT

1 YEAR

At least 1 year before the end of contract

► **Sketch your thesis**

Together with your supervisor(s), prepare a sketch of your thesis (title, research chapters with authors, state of each chapter)

3-6 MONTHS

► **Send a request for the promotion, your promotor(s) and co-promotor(s) to the BoD**

Letter can be obtained via the secretary of your department or the promotor(s)
Model letters can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/UM-graduation>

► **Send a proposal for composition of your assessment committee to the Dean of the faculty & BoD in CC**

Your first promotor has to start this procedure in PhD Track

After 3 to 4 weeks, the Chair of the BoD appoints the promotion, promotor(s), co-promotor(s), and assessment committee. A confirmation of these appointments is sent to the promotor(s), co-promotor(s), members of the assessment committee, Dean, and PhD candidate.

1 MONTH

► **Submit thesis to the members of your assessment committee**

► **The chair of the assessment committee send the admission from the committee with the assessment from each member to BoD (using Thesis Assessment forms)**

4 weeks after submission, the assessment committee decides whether you are allowed to defend your dissertation. The committee sends the admission with the assessment by each member to the BoD (using Thesis Assessment form).

► **Settle date for ceremony with promotor(s), co-promotor(s), members of the Corona and Office of Academic Ceremonies**

BoD =

Board of Deans

PROMOTION TIMETABLE

FINAL 3 MONTHS WORKING TOWARDS THE DEGREE CEREMONY

3 MONTH ► Send copy of title page to Office of Academic Ceremonies for approval by the Rector magnificus
download model letter 7 here:
<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/phd-office/support-voor-phd-kandidaten>

► Promotor sends a declaration to the BoD stating that the prepositions belonging to the dissertation are defendable
download model letter8 here:
<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nl/phd-office/support-voor-phd-kandidaten>

2 MONTHS ► Get dissertation printed

6 WEEKS ► PhD candidate, promotor(s), co-promotor(s) and Dean receive definite confirmation from the Rector magnificus that the defence can be held

**3 WEEKS
AT LEAST** ► Submit digital version of thesis and propositions to University Library
► Submit 6 copies of the thesis to Office of Academic Ceremonies
► Apply for reimbursement
► Discuss scenario for degree ceremony (slides, reception, your paranymphs)
► Promotor sends order of Corona members to PhD Office (using On-site Defence form)

1 WEEK ► Send out scenario to all involved parties





11 Important Contacts

Eline Kooi

PhD coordinator CARIM, chair CARIM Education Programme Committee

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① +31(0)43 387 49 11

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✉ m.nagy@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Prof. Peter de Leeuw

✉ p.deleeuw@maastrichtuniversity.nl

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Coordinator Concerns & Complains Point (CCP)

<https://tinyurl.com/UM-CCP>

① +31(0)6 28 84 99 65

✉ esther.goethart@maastrichtuniversity.nl

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PhD confidential advisor

✉ maria.jansen@maastrichtuniversity.nl

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✉ a.neekmann@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Petra Suurmond

HR advisor at CARIM

✉ p.suurmond@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Staff career centre

✉ staffcareercentre@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Learning & development broker

CARIM

✉ imcarim@maastrichtuniversity.nl

✉ secretariaat-carim@maastrichtuniversity.nl

✉ carim-office@maastrichtuniversity.nl

✉ phdplatform@maastrichtuniversity.nl

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Notes

Notes

Colophon

Authors/editors

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UNIVERSITEIT

