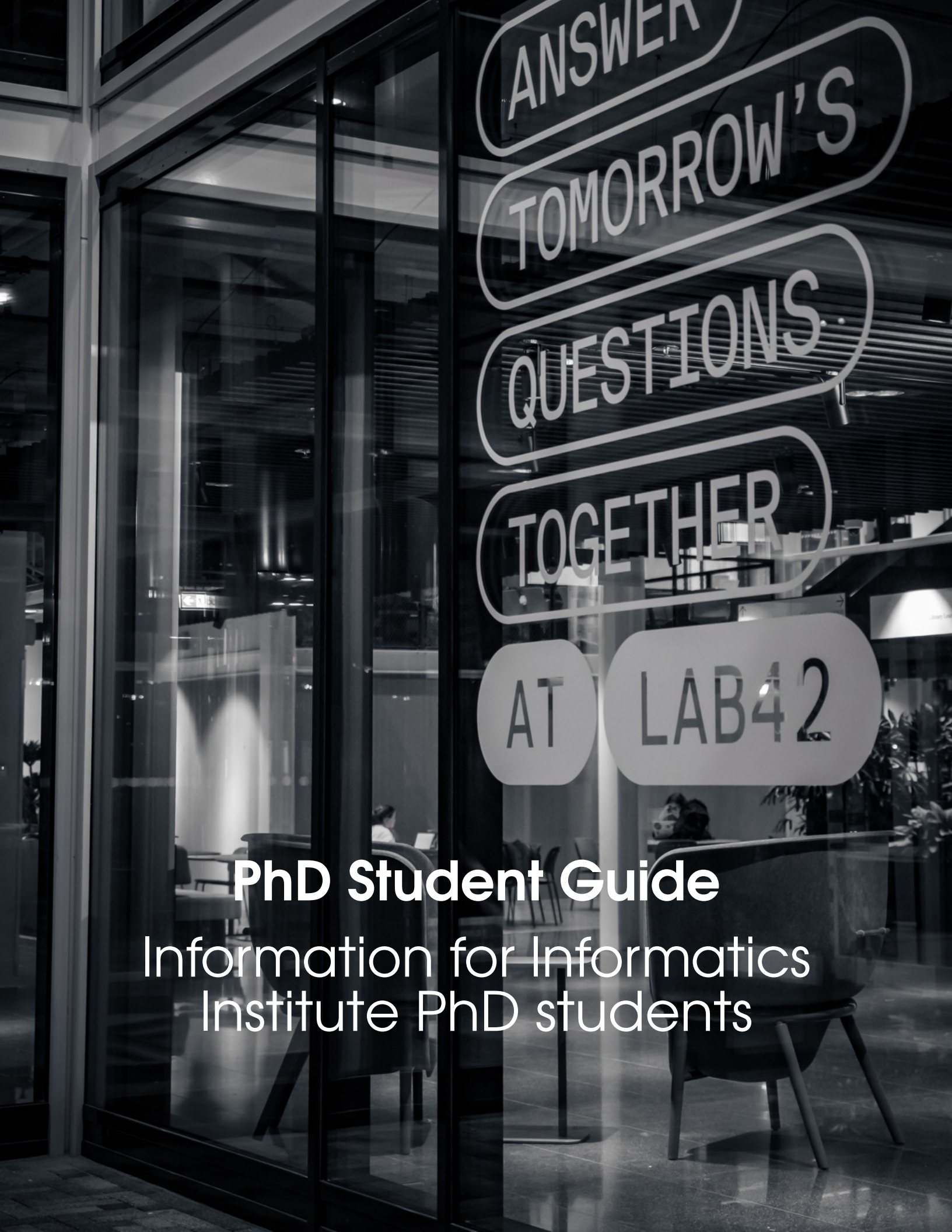


PhD Student Guide

Information for Informatics Institute PhD students

PRODUCED BY THE IVI PHD COUNCIL

PHD-COUNCIL-IVI@UVA.NL
AUTHORS

- Frederike Oetker
- Ebo Peerbooms
- Dimitris Michailidis
- Marius Herget
- Shruti Rao

The information in this document serves a guide to making your life as a PhD easier and more pleasant. Care has been taken to make sure all information is valid and up-to-date but it is always possible that things may change.

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The following points have been updated since the last edition: - Section 4 has been moved before Section 3; Addition of tipbox The Council Newsletter in Section 2.3; Addition of Section 3.1: Accessing Key Information. Section 5 has been updated to include Evaluations and Graduation, with a new section 5.4.1 Graduation Roadmap



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1. Your First Week

1.1 Your First Day

Welcome to the Informatics Institute on behalf of the PhD council! We hope you will have an inspiring and productive time at the institute. This booklet has been designed to help you get familiar with the life of a PhD student at IvI. To get acquainted, please send a first e-mail to the group's secretary to say hi and to double check if you are also registered internally as a PhD student. After doing this, make sure you have everything you need to get started on your work.

Things you should have on the first day

- Your **UvANet ID**. This is your online employee identifier that is used for email, printing and using the self-service tools.
- Your **UvA badge**. This is used for accessing your room, entering employee-only areas of the university, getting coffee or using the printers. You might not yet have access to your office on your first day, so make sure to coordinate that your supervisor or someone else from your group be there on your first day. Try also to "activate" your badge by tapping it in the main building (904) at the "update-points", this often can activate your badge and the room accesses you've been given.
- A **room** with an assigned desk. The secretariat should be aware of where you have been assigned and is able to activate access privileges on your UvA badge.
- Access to **UvA Zelfbediening** (Self-Service tool). This tool is used to register holidays, submit expense claims, request advances on your pay and manage your personal information.
- A signed copy of your **contract** (arbeidsovereenkomst).

Some stuff you should be able to get from the secretariat.

Things you can get from the secretariat

- Notebooks
- Pens

Finally, to make your life easier and more comfortable, consider bringing some of the following.

(Optional) things to bring yourself

- Coffee mug (there are no disposable cups at UvA)
- Water bottle
- Cutlery
- Small plant
- Headphones
- USB stick
- (Study) books relevant to your PhD topic

You can of course always ask your supervisor for any specific recommendations on what else to bring.

1.1.1 Slack

Communication with your supervisor, colleagues and other members of the institute is often done through Slack. Ask your supervisor to help you set up access to the IVI Slack workspace **ivi-uva.slack.com** and join the relevant channels. Other members in your group will be able to point out any other channels besides the work-relevant ones, in case any social channels exist for your group specifically.

1.1.2 Laptop and Surfspot

Usually, you will start by working with your own laptop, before discussing with your supervisor if and what new laptop is needed for you. The standard laptop is decent for doing day-to-day stuff, but if your PhD requires computationally intensive work, you could discuss getting a laptop suited to your specifics. Discuss this with your supervisor and/or your group leader.
Additionally, the UvA has a contract with **surfspot**, a website that offers soft- and hardware to university employees at a discount. As an employee, you also get a yearly 12500 credits (equivalent to 125 euros) to spend on the website every year. Make sure to transfer the points over year-by-year if you are not using them, as they can be added up, but only if you properly transfer them (they will otherwise lapse).

1.1.3 Coffee

Your employee ID also doubles as a way to get free coffee and tea from the coffee vending machines that are spread throughout the UvA buildings. Coffee machines with oat milk are available on some floors.

1.1.4 Printing and Scanning

Printing documents can be done using the **Canon Portal**. This website allows you to

- Print

- Order readers
- Place orders (for printing of booklets or posters)

For simple printing, once you have sent your documents to the printer, you can print them at any printer on campus by logging in to the printer using your employee ID. In the printer, you can also set up stapling and double-sided options.

Printing from your own laptop

It is also possible to install a printer on your computer that will allow you to send documents directly to the UvA printers. To do this, install the Canon internet printer driver on your computer. You can find the software in the Canon portal under Print → Drivers and instructions.

Most of the printers also allow scanning of documents. The scanned documents are automatically sent to your UvA employee email address.

1.1.5 Library

The UvA has its own University Library (UB) and various faculty libraries. The library is an inspiring and friendly offline and online space for study, research and socialising, aimed at PhD candidates, researchers, lecturers and students. The UB offers a global selection of information and tailor-made support to help you find the resources you need.



2. Informatics Institute

2.1 The Institute

The Informatics Institute (IvI) is a research and educational organization focused on informatics, with a mission to perform curiosity-driven and use-inspired fundamental research and to train talent through high-quality academic education. IvI's research focuses on four themes: Artificial Intelligence, Computational Science, Data Science, and Systems and Networking. IvI is committed to diversity and creating an open community where all members feel at home, and it strives to strengthen its valorisation and societal impact activities. For new PhD graduates joining the institute, there are several opportunities available for career development and research. The institute provides a stimulating and dynamic environment that encourages innovation and fosters collaboration. New PhD graduates will have access to state-of-the-art facilities and cutting-edge technologies, allowing them to conduct high-quality research and advance their careers. In addition, the institute offers a range of professional development programs and training opportunities, such as workshops, seminars, and networking events, designed to enhance the skills and knowledge of its researchers. As a new PhD joining the institute, you will have the chance to work alongside world-class researchers and make meaningful contributions to your field of study.

2.2 The Research Groups

The Informatics Institute is subdivided into sixteen **research groups**. As a member of one of the research groups, you will be expected to attend regular group meetings. These can be formal or informal in nature, depending on your group. Usually it is customary for the PhDs of the group to give regular talks about their current project progress or to present an interesting paper they have come across. Besides your own group's meetings and seminar, it may be useful to keep an eye on the agenda of other research groups in the institute for interesting seminars and events.

2.3 The PhD Council

As a PhD student at the IvI, your first point of contact for any questions regarding your academic life should be the PhD council, specifically the council representative within your own group. The PhD council is a group consisting of PhD students from the various research groups of the institute. The goal of the PhD council is to make it easy for PhD students to learn about the various aspects of doing a PhD at the institute and to ensure that all students are treated fairly and do not experience unnecessary problems while working to complete their PhD programme.

The Council newsletter

The Council sends email newsletters from time to time, to share highly relevant information or to advertise for any professional and social events. Please keep an eye on your inbox and join us whenever you can!

2.4 IvI-Wide Meetings

In addition to your regular group meetings, the IvI organizes a yearly meeting for all of its members to discuss the status of the institute, introduce new hires, and celebrate successes (the All-Hands-Meeting). Usually several PhD students from the institute are asked to present a poster during this meeting. These meetings are a nice way to get to know your colleagues outside of your own research group, as well as to voice your opinion and hear what the managerial side of the IvI has been up to. Furthermore, once a month, there is a Coffee and Cake for the entire IvI, in which you can meet your colleagues in a more relaxed environment. Sometimes there are small announcements made by the management or other groups (PhD council, staff-council).

2.5 Mission Statement

The mission[1] of the Informatics Institute is to perform curiosity-driven and use-inspired fundamental research and to train talent by high-quality academic education in diverse areas of informatics. The institute's research involves complex information systems focusing on collaborative, data driven, computational and intelligent systems in four research themes:

Research themes

Artificial Intelligence, Computational Science, Data Science, and Systems and Networking.

IvI is a learning organisation and will actively contribute to keep building a vibrant and resilient academic community in Informatics. To this end IvI actively cooperates with partners in and outside academia, local and further away. The informatics ecosystem in the Netherlands and abroad is served by a tight-knit network of flexible partnerships. IvI is fully connected with - and open to society at large and actively seeks to create societal impact through its research and education. IvI will create lasting impact by delivering talent through education, by delivering knowledge through research, and by fostering innovation through public private partnerships and supporting the creation of spin-offs and start-ups.

[1] Paraphrased from: https://ivi.uva.nl/about/statement-informatics-institute/informatics-institute-2021-2023.html

2.6 Media

Getting your (first) paper published is a big deal! Therefore you want to make sure it does not go unnoticed. When your paper gets accepted, discuss with your supervisor or senior group members if it is possible to send out a press release and publish an announcement on your research group's (or perhaps the UvA) website. You can also always contact the IvI Press Office **see here**. For conference attendance or other noteworthy achievements, your group might still want to mention you on their website (with an appropriate (nice) picture).



3. Practical Tips

3.1 Accessing Key Information

The IvI uses Microsoft Teams to maintain and distribute resources that are very relevant to your PhD. These resources can be located under `Teams/IvI Support/PhD Channel/Files/`. Here we bring to the file ***"Links to general information and documents for IvI PhDs"***. This sheet outlines the latest and most relevant documents for your PhD program, doctoral regulations, Mastering Your PhD courses and other training opportunities (explained further in Chapter 6), graduation and dissertation (explained under Chapter 4), housing, taxes, etc. Please install Teams and keep an eye on it for any changes to the documents.

Besides the above, a complete overview of all topics relevant to employees of the UvA can be found on A-Z of the FNWI website. **medewerker.uva.nl/fnwi/az/a-z.html**

When searching for any information related to the PhD or the Institute, we highly recommend **first checking: (a) IvI PhD Files in Teams and (b) the A-Z list.**

3.2 Self-service Tool

The UvA self-service tool is the UvA website for managing employee related administrative tasks such as requesting leave, setting tax rate preferences, declaring public transport and travel expenses and setting up a work schedule. It is also the place to go when you need a copy of your salary specification or yearly income report. To access the self-service website, you need to **set up the tiqr authentication app on your phone**.

Holiday leave requests

Holiday leave can be requested using the self-service tool. A full-time contract (38 hours/week) gives right to 29 days of holiday leave each year.

96 compensation hours

In exchange for working an extra two hours each week, it is possible to receive an additional 96 hours of leave. Note that these additional hours should be used in the same year as they are assigned and will expire otherwise.

Travel Expenses (Commuting)

As a UvA employee, you can apply for travel-to-work expenses reimbursement, regardless of the mode of transport. Allocating a percentage of your gross wage for that purpose means you will no longer pay the relevant taxes or contributions, which means you will **take home a higher net salary** each month. The UvA determines the level of the travel-to-work expenses reimbursement based on the distance between your home and your work address and the travel days you have submitted. The UvA uses Routenet to determine travel distance. This calculation is based on up to 75 km for a one-way journey. If you do not make use of the travel-to-work expenses reimbursement, but you do travel using public transport, **you can add deductions for travel expenses on your income tax return** for the year in which you incurred the expenses.

3.3 Students From Outside The Netherlands

3.3.1 The 30% rule

If you are a foreign employee employed by the UvA, or a UvA employee who is seconded to another country, subject to certain conditions you will be eligible for the so-called 30% rule. This rule allows you to receive part of your salary – up to a maximum of 30% – as a tax-free allowance, resulting in a higher net income. The tax advantage is intended as compensation for the additional costs incurred as a result of your temporary stay in another country.

3.3.2 Dutch Courses

You can take courses offered by the University of Amsterdam, click **here** for more information. The courses are in principle done in person on the UvA campuses, but there are some online options as well. During the courses you will be trained in reading, writing, listening and speaking. The classes consist of 20 students.

There are three levels of pace you can choose from, extensive (one 3-hour class/week), semi-intensive (two 3-hour classes/week) and intensive (16 hours of classes/week). If you are employed full-time, we recommend following either the extensive or the semi- intensive course. Bear in mind that you will need about the same time for homework as you need for the lectures (e.g., expect 6 hours of homework/week on the semi-intensive course). We recommend that you do the course on a period when you are not otherwise busy (e.g., when you don't have teaching obligations).

A course usually covers one level of language knowledge, and you can start from the absolute beginner level (A0). If you already know or speak some Dutch, don't worry, there is a test you can take that helps you decide if you need to start from the A0 or the A1 level.

Each course costs €365 and your lab/group can probably cover the cost, but make sure you ask your supervisor.

After you are done with courses, there are plenty of resources to keep learning. You can start by visiting **news websites**, watching **videos**, listening to **podcasts**, or reading popular but

accessible **dutch books**. You can also join the **ilps-taalcafe** IvI slack channel, where you can **interact with other learners and even arrange language coffee breaks**, where you get to practice.

3.4 Work/life Balance

Doing a PhD can be tough and take up most of your time. Make sure to **allocate plenty of time** outside of your working hours to **unwind, relax and think about something other than your research**. Some resources that might help with this include:

3.4.1 USC

The USC is a student sport center in Amsterdam with one location right in the middle of the Science Park campus. UvA employees (including PhD students) can become a member of the USC at a reduced rate. For more information, go to **uscsport.nl**.

3.4.2 CREA

CREA is a cultural student center that organizes creative courses, lectures, workshops, debates and performances. Their courses covers topics such as photography, music, dance and many more. For more information, go to **crea.nl**.

3.4.3 Contemplation rooms

The UvA offers four contemplation rooms on its campuses. Staff and students can retreat to these contemplation rooms for a moment of silent reflection or meditation, or to escape the bustle of campus life. At Science Park, the room can be found in building B, room B1.26 (near the library).

3.5 What To Do If You're (Feeling) Stuck?

You will invariably get stuck once or a few times during your PhD. A computational model that keeps getting poor results when fitting to data; a network inference algorithm which keeps producing seemingly random networks that make no sense; numerical simulations which keep becoming numerically unstable; an analytical derivation that keeps sending you in circles; etc. Of course, as a start it is important that you really try to resolve this independently: search for related work, or a person who dealt with similar problems, or put your debugging hat on and find that error (either in your thinking process or in your code, data, etc.). If you are stuck with a problem for an extended time then it is time to call in **the Cavalry!** *The Cavalry* consists of your supervisor and/or other members of the group. It is then time to meet much more frequently and/or for much longer, and dive into more detail in your code and debugging plots together. The time of a weekly meeting of an hour or so is over. In our experience, even if a Cavalry member is not an expert on your topic, just having someone taking the role of a rubber duck is often already very helpful and might just get the job done! Don't be afraid to use the "Cavalry card", most team members are more than happy to help out and clear some of their schedule for that – including your supervisor. And they might ask you to return the favor at some later time.

3.6 Working From Home

The UvA facilitates both an on-site workstation and a long-term work from home. You are entitled to a work from home if you are employed by the UvA and carry out computer screen work for at least two hours a day. You must first make agreements with your supervisor about hybrid working before you make an application.



4. Supervision

4.1 Daily Supervisor

Your daily supervisor is here to help you on your path to becoming an independent scientific researcher.

Together with your supervisor you will be brainstorming about the best way forward, the most interesting scientific articles you could read, how to translate your research efforts into a well-written paper ready for publication, or how to write the most optimal algorithm to compute something. But in the end the goal is to reach a consensus with you. This is not necessarily equal to you agreeing with the initial idea of the supervisor. So please feel free to be critical (within reason).

Specifically, a University is not a company. Therefore, you shouldn't expect your supervisor to dictate what your next project should be, which method to use for something, or to debug your code. The goal of your PhD is to become someone who is able to independently assess how to approach a scientific question and what steps to take based on such an approach.

Not knowing what to do

Note that sometimes this can be frustrating for you, for instance if you are going through a time where you yourself don't see a clear path forward. If this time begins to frustrate too much then it is of course time to switch tactics. On the other hand, such periods are likely also valuable from a formative view, so our advice is to accept such periods as they come and do your best to get through (which may very well include asking for help).

In the beginning, your supervisor will likely take the lead, e.g., project meetings and chair them, define the agenda for the meeting, etc. But usually it would be good if you slowly take over these role(s).
Try to be on top of the administrative and planning side. Your supervisor has probably multiple projects to manage simultaneously, on top of teaching and management duties. For instance, if you

agree that you will meet at some time in the future, please make a calendar invite directly with appropriate location (or zoom link etc.), for which your supervisor can just click 'Accept' and then the meeting cannot slip through the cracks.

4.1.1 Meetings

Please try to take charge of a meeting between you and your supervisor. A small agenda to guide the meeting would be nice (1-3 bullet points is enough). If you need your supervisor to prepare or read something, please notify them in advance. Keep an eye on time, it is possible that your supervisor has another meeting right after yours. After the meeting ends, it is very useful to send a short summary of the main (action) points in the appropriate Slack channel or other communication form. For important points, it is also recommended to send a summary by email to yourself and your supervisor. You can store these emails in a separate folder in your email client. Keeping track of agreements and communication is good for you but also serves as a memory card for your supervisor.

4.2 Advisors

Your advisor will likely be less involved in your daily work than your supervisor, but they can give valuable input! Not only are they involved in your evaluations but also this is the person to turn to when having issues with your daily supervisor. Your advisor likely has a large network of scientific collaborators, as well as other PhD students that they supervise. When looking for collaborators, labs to contact for visits, conferences or summer schools to consider, PhD students to work with, etc., your advisor should be (after your supervisor) the first person to contact.

Some advisors will be more or less involved in your work than others. It is worth establishing a (semi) regular schedule of checking in with them. We recommend to not go more than 6 months at most without contact.

4.3 Shared and External PhDs

Different conditions apply to students who do not have an employment contract with the university. This includes teaching obligations, decision-making authority on PhD funding and the intellectual ownership of research results. Since these conditions depend heavily on the type of financing party and/or the specific situation of the external PhD student, we will not cover these conditions here in detail. Some things to be aware of will be explained in the following section.

4.3.1 Doing A PhD In Cooperation With A Company

When starting a PhD programme cooperating with a company, it's crucial to consider several factors. While there are many benefits to working with an industry partner, there can also be some unique challenges that you'll need to navigate to ensure that your research is successful. One significant advantage of working with an industry partner is the potential for **greater access to resources, funding, and expertise** that can enhance your research project. However, it's essential to recognize that working in a corporate setting can be quite different from working in an academic environment. Processes within a company are often less accessible than within a university, and they can be bureaucratic and slow. This can impact the pace of your research and create additional hurdles that you may not have experienced in an academic setting.

Having a dedicated supervisor

One of the most important considerations when working with an industry partner on a daily basis is ensuring that you have a dedicated supervisor from the partner company. This person can help facilitate communication and ensure you're on the same page with your research goals and objectives. With a dedicated supervisor, you may find navigating the corporate environment easier and communicating effectively with key stakeholders.

Another vital factor to consider is the on-boarding process. When you start working with an industry partner, there may be a lot to process, and it can take some effort to get up to speed on the company's structure, data, and processes. Additionally, understanding a company's structure and data is often tricky and may require significant time and energy.

One potential challenge of working with an industry partner is that they may introduce new topics and directions quite rapidly, which can be overwhelming if you're not prepared for it. It's essential to watch out for this and ensure that your supervisor is helping to **manage your workload and prioritize your research objectives**. Additionally, if you work with confidential data, most of the time, each publication (e.g., poster, article, or paper) needs to be reviewed by the company. It's essential to inform yourself early about these processes within your industry partner and ask for deadlines so that you can plan accordingly. Another crucial factor to consider is the potential for bias within or by the company. It's essential to **remain objective** and ensure that your research is unbiased, regardless of any potential influence from the industry partner. In big companies, finding the right expert or person to talk to can take longer than you might expect, so be sure to plan ahead. Finally, it's important to take advantage of the time you spend working in the industry and gain experience that can be helpful for future jobs. Actively **engage in company meetings and social events** to connect with new experts and build relationships. Make sure you have enough time to research and test ideas and enjoy the experience of working in a corporate setting. With the right approach, you can create a successful partnership that benefits both you and your industry partner.



5. Evaluations and Graduation

5.1 Registration and Starting Date

In order to ensure the progress of the doctoral programme, the well-being of PhD candidates and the quality of their theses, the UvA strives to register all PhD candidates in the UvA Employee Administration System at the start of the doctoral programme. The doctoral programme will start on the effective date of the PhD agreement between the PhD candidate and faculty or PhD candidate and thesis supervisor. This date cannot be changed retrospectively and must be recorded in the training and supervision plan (TSP). However, this registration does not imply that the PhD candidate has been admitted to the doctoral programme. In order to be admitted, **all PhD candidates must complete the Request for admission to the PhD programme form** first. PhD candidates will only be admitted to the PhD track after having received a positive decision from the Doctorate Board. As a rule, doctoral programmes last four years (full-time). Full-time doctoral programmes that are either longer or shorter (e.g. a three-year doctoral programme for PhD candidates pursuing a research Master's degree) than four years are exceptions.

5.2 Training and supervision plan

At about 3 months into your PhD you need to submit a Training and Supervision Plan (TSP). This contains an initial plan for your research and a brief description of the potential/envisioned content for your four journal articles. At this point you will also discuss the supervision plan/structure with your supervisors. It also contains a list of (PhD) courses that you plan to take. Your TSP will come back to you at every subsequent evaluation.

5.3 Formal and Informal Evaluations

5.3.1 9-Month Evaluation

This is your first formal evaluation. Together with your supervisor you will assess how things are going and how you will proceed. Since by this time you will likely have a feel for your project, this evaluation is usually used to draw project outlines and make formal agreements on how supervision

will proceed and what kind of additional responsibilities you will have. The evaluation is normally done with your supervisor (co-promotor) and promotor. There is a standard form for this which both your supervisor and promotors will have to sign.

5.3.2 14-Month Evaluation

This is conducted by IvI and performed by staff of the institute who are not part of your lab so the chance is small that they are familiar with your type of research. A brief report is written by these committee members and is sent to the supervisors and you. Instructions for this will be e-mailed to you in advance by the IvI secretariat. It will involve you writing a personal statement, a brief report on your work, as well as giving a presentation to (independent) committee members. This is your opportunity to discuss with your committee, who is explicitly not made up of members of your own group, any work, supervision, or group issues that have arisen.

5.3.3 15-Month Evaluation

Your own group might have an additional evaluation scheduled for you. This is generally around the 15 month mark and many of the requirements are the same as for the 14 months evaluation.

5.3.4 Contract Renewal

Once all necessary evaluations have been concluded positively, your contract will be renewed for the remaining time of your PhD. Make sure to check in with plenty of buffer time about your new contract if you are not automatically still in contact regarding this from your 14 months evaluation. You will sign the contract for your remaining time as a PhD.

5.3.5 24-Month Evaluation

After 18 months you move to normal regular evaluations. These are nothing more than a check in to make sure all is going well. These sessions are also an opportunity for you and your supervisor (and advisor) to discuss any issues/ideas related to your work in general. This is not really an evaluation and there is no negative/positive outcome. At the 24 months evaluation, you are (for the first time) asked to consider your future after obtaining your PhD. In your TSP, you will now have to fill out some sections regarding the chapters in your dissertation, as well as a brief overview of what you are planning to do after graduating. This might seem early but it is an opportunity for you (and to discuss with your supervisor) to plan in any necessary qualifications you might need to obtain for your future.

5.3.6 36-month Evaluation

The same as for the 24-month evaluation, though with a much closer look at your defense, thesis and future.

5.4 Graduation

5.4.1 Graduation Roadmap

The document “Doctorate Regulations of the University of Amsterdam” provides a Graduation Roadmap, starting on page 2. We find this roadmap to be an essential resource for a well-organized PhD graduation journey. It includes information on the procedural requirements, UvA defense timelines, and specialized provisions, such as those for achieving cum laude, arbitration procedures,

and final and transitional provisions. This document clarifies each stage of the doctoral process and explains the roles and responsibilities of doctoral candidates, supervisors, and the Doctorate Committee at each phase. **Key deadlines** for each stage are also outlined. We strongly recommend printing or bookmarking this section and referring to it regularly, especially during your final year, to help you stay on track with planning your defense and fulfilling all formal requirements in a timely manner.
The document can be found in (`Teams/IvI Support/PhD Channel/Files/`).

5.4.2 Graduation Committee

Your graduation committee will start taking importance in your last year of the PhD. For an explicit breakdown of how to finish your PhD, have a look at **completing a doctorate**.
The committee will read your final PhD thesis as well as attend your defense in which they will ask you questions. Typically, in your last year you will start thinking about who is relevant for your committee. They might be researchers you have collaborated with over the years of your PhD.



6. Teaching and Courses

6.1 Teaching Assistant

As a PhD candidate or Postdoc you will be expected to help out as teaching assistant (TA) for about one course per year. Think of guiding practical sessions, grading homework and answering questions from students (both during tutorial sessions and through email).

> **Teaching hours**
>
> The amount of time spent teaching will vary depending on the faculty, but should be no more than 10-20% of your working hours. For a full time contract, this consists of around 160-320 hours total.

The agreements you make about your teaching responsibilities with your supervisor, co-supervisor or research institute should be recorded in the TSP. If you are passionate about teaching and have some experience as a TA for a particular course, consider asking the course coordinator if you can take over one of the lectures.

6.2 Supervising Student Projects

In addition, you are expected to supervise about one master student thesis project per year. For example, in the master Computational Science program that the Computational Science Lab coordinates, each master student will finalize their study with a 7-months full-time thesis study. If you are supervising students, it is useful and recommended that you following the module “Tailored supervision" that is offered as part of the didactic skills training programme (see section 6.4). Remember though that a master student can also be a valuable resource for your own work, it should not only be time taken away from your own research project. Tailor the project you are offering to what is currently beneficial for your own work.

6.3 Mastering Your PhD

One of the mandatory elements is the “Mastering your PhD” course, which will help you develop your transferable skills; skills that have been proven to be influential during a career inside and outside of academia. The course is spread over two years. In the first year, you will learn about time management, effective communication skills and your own skills and strengths. In the second year, you will focus on mental health, scientific integrity and peer feedback from your peers.

6.4 Didactic skills

(Ideally) Before or at the start of your first task as a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Science, you are required to follow the training *“Teaching Skills for PhD candidates"* organised by the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC). This is irrespective of the faculty you are employed by. The compulsory part of this training for PhD candidates consists of four 3-hour modules:

Compulsory modules

- You as a teacher (module 1)
- Didactic skills: the basics (module 2)
- The learning environment you create (module 3)
- You and the group (module 4)

You can be exempted from taking (parts) of this training if you have taken some training before or already have experience. In case you are going to supervise a research project or assist in the supervision of a master thesis, you are advised to take modules 2 and 4 in addition to the specific course “Tailor your supervision style".

Voluntary modules

- Coaching conversations (module 5)
- Tailor your supervision style (module 6)
- Design challenging teaching activities (module 7)
- An inclusive learning environment (module 8)
- Classroom management (module 9)
- Blended learning (module 10)
- Teaching students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (module 11)

Modules are organised several times a year and you can join when it suits you best. Signing up for any of the modules can be done through datanose.

6.4.1 Teaching qualifications

Obtaining the BKO certificate is mandatory for every lecturer in the position of professor, associate professor, assistant professor. Participation in the BKO program is also open to employees within the faculty with a different appointment, provided they have a significant teaching task. The University Teaching Qualification (BKO - Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs) is a nationally accredited teaching certificate that offers lecturers the opportunity to make existing competencies visible and to get them recognised. A BKO trajectory supports the lecturer in reflecting on their own education and in developing further in their role as a lecturer. For more information, contact the BKO coordinator.



7. Conferences and travel

Conferences and travel to visit partnering research labs, project partners, attend summer school or workshops are part of your PhD. Have a conversation with your supervisor in the beginning of your PhD as to what frequency both of you can envision for your PhD and if there are any key-conferences or planned-in visits that will be part of your PhD. Generally, there should be a budget within your project that is dedicated to travel. Ask your supervisor about this, but for more expensive (long distance) travel, there are other funds available outside of your projects.
Some groups might have a one-conference-per-year rule, others might not. When you attend a conference, it is usually because you got accepted with a contribution. For this, you have to apply (with an abstract) to the relevant conference. Submitting an abstract is usually free. However, once you are accepted, you pay the conference fee and have to factor in travelling and accommodation into your overall costs. Be aware that the application-deadline for a conference is often several months before the conference itself.

7.1 Conferences

The purpose of a conference is to present your own work for feedback or if you need feedback or are looking for project partners, or likewise see other's work. There are several types of conference contributions, such as normal attendance, poster presentation, lighting talk or talk. Conferences are mostly organized in keynote talks in the morning and parallel sessions later on, with poster presentations throughout. Talk to your supervisor about which type of contribution makes the most sense for you. You will likely also need an easychair account to apply for conferences. Talk to your supervisor if it makes sense to publish with the conference as well, if there is the option. Once accepted, the conference will send you specifications about the format, duration, etc. expected for your contribution.

7.1.1 Poster Presentations

A poster presentation gives you the opportunity to present your work on one poster. The conference will send you the exact measurements, but generally A0[1] is used. For good print quality, make sure that your poster is sent to the printer with a resolution of 300 dpi. Even better is to use a vector graphics program (such as Adobe Illustrator, Inkscape, etc.). This ensures that your poster doesn't look pixelated or blurry when printed.

> **Presenting a poster**
>
> During the conference, your poster will hang at a designated spot and during specific times you have the chance to stand next to it and chat with interested people about your work. As a general rule of thumb, make sure that the poster conveys your research goal and interesting results, as well as methodology. An eye-catching figure, picture or title will draw people in.

Including a QR code leading to your website or github is a nice addition on your poster.

7.1.2 Talks

During a talk, you give a presentation at the conference usually within a track that holds a specific theme. Sometimes there are satellite sessions at the conference with additional themes, beware that you mostly need to apply to these additionally as to the normal conference. However, often times satellite session applications have different deadlines than the conference itself. Make sure to practice your presentation beforehand (for example during a group meeting) and ask your supervisor to give feedback to the presentation and slides. Sometimes the talks are recorded through the conference and you can ask for a copy to watch back or forward on.

7.2 Summer Schools

Summer schools are high-intensity workshops in which you can learn and network with other researchers on your level. They are often aimed specifically at PhD students. Be aware that often there is an application process which starts many months in advance. Summer schools can often result in new projects or research collaborations.

7.3 Other

Within your PhD time, you might want to do other (longer) travel such as an internship or lab visit. For this, discuss with your supervisor (and advisor) the possibilities as well as intended uses for your project, as well as possible funding opportunities.

7.4 Declarations

Costs made during travel (such as travel expenses and daily meals) can be declared in the UvA self-service tools. Make sure to keep all of your receipts as you will need to upload these as part of the declaration. Be aware that you will have to front the money. Once declared, your supervisor will have to approve within the self service tool, and you can then await your payment either together

[1] 841 x 1189 mm

with your salary or the 1st Thursday of the month. Ask your supervisor which cost number you should be using.
The UvA also works together with a company called Munckhof for travel. They will be able to book your travel for you and charge your cost element directly so you don't have to front the money. Be aware that this gives you less flexibility for example for the time of day you travel.

7.5 Grants

Paying out of your project-budget might not always be possible. Within the UvA, there are some possibilities to help you with this. You can apply for a PhD travel grant from the UvA via **Travel grant for PhD students**. Be aware that there are deadlines to apply for this grant, and that this is a one-time-only opportunity. Often times, conferences themselves will offer travel grants or scholarships for their attendance, especially to PhD students. You can also apply for outside grants or scholarships within your field. There are many travel grants, which mostly only require an acceptance to the conference. Check with your supervisor about conflict of interests.



8. Who To Contact?

Sometimes you will need to contact someone outside of your own group. Within the UvA, you have several options. Have a look at the **IvI contacts website** for specific contacts within the IvI.

8.1 Faculty Services

8.1.1 Secretariat

To contact the secretary, you can use:
secr-ii-science@uva.nl

8.1.2 IT Services

To contact IT services you can send an email to:

- **ict-ivi-science@uva.nl** for ICT services within the IvI.
- **servicedesk-icts@uva.nl** for general ICT services at the UvA.

Many groups will also have their own specialists who will be able to help you with IT or ICT issues.

8.2 Other Services

8.2.1 Doctor

If you need to see a general practitioner, you can register through the **GP of the UvA**. They take on students and staff, as well as locals, and have several offices around the city. Be aware that in the Netherlands, for seeing a specialist, you generally need to be referred through your GP, who can sometimes carry out the specialists' examination themselves or refer you on. Check with your own insurance as to which services and specialists are covered for you. For life threatening emergencies, call 112 right away.

8.2.2 Dentist

Do you need a dentist? Dental care is available at the Academic Centre for Dentistry Amsterdam (ACTA), where treatment is provided by university dental students who are supervised by qualified

dentists. Treatments can take slightly more time because they may be carried out by several students, but the cost is lower (65% of the normal fee, on average). A selective examination will be carried out before you can **register at ACTA** in order to establish whether you are a good candidate for treatment by students. It is possible that you will not be admitted to ACTA as a patient.

8.3 Serious Issues

8.3.1 At The University

For serious issues, you can always contact the

- **IvI PhD council** (**phd-council-ivi@uva.nl**)

who will be able to direct and assist you with whom to contact for your specific problem. If you have been subjected to undesirable behaviour and/or are struggling with issues regarding your legal position, the PhD council could refer you to

- **Human Resources (Emiel Turlings)** for HR issues at the IvI.
- **Ombudsfunctionaris** for official complaints or investigations into structural problems. The ombudsperson is an independent figure you can contact when you encounter structural problems and injustices within the UvA. You can do so confidentially and without formalities. When you report to the ombudsperson, there will be an (intake) interview unless you don't want this. The ombudsperson can also decide to not take on the report if legal proceedings are pending. The ombudsperson may decide to initiate an investigation based on a single report or (the registration of) multiple reports.
- **Confidential advisor (Diana Vos)** for reporting and/or discussing experiences with undesirable behaviour. They can provide support and help look for a way to stop or de-escalate the undesirable situation. Where relevant they will refer you to professional care and assistance. They can also help you submit a claim to the Complaints Committee. The confidential advisors work in accordance with the guidelines of the National Association of Confidential Advisors and handle your report or question confidentially.

For detailed information on the UvA policy and resources regarding social safety, you can consult the **social safety support guide**.

8.3.2 Outside The UvA

If you are experiencing issues outside of the university, you can contact

- Your own GP or therapist.
- Call the emergency number **112** in case of an emergency.
- Call the number **0900-8844** if you want to contact the police for non-urgent situations.
- **Jellinek** or **088-5051220** for help with alcohol, drugs and addiction.
- **Sexual Assault Center (CSG)** or **0800-0188**.
- **Veilig thuis** or **0800-2000** for help in case of domestic violence.
- **113 suicide prevention** or call **113** or **0800-0113**.