



# Know Your Rights about Supervision, Conflict &

*A survival booklet for empowered PhD candidates  
Version 1 – November 2020*

## A. Purpose of the Booklet

We have noticed that PhD candidates would like to know more about their rights. Inspired by the work of Promovendi Netwerk Nederland (PNN) at the national level, we decided to make, in collaboration with the Graduate School, an easily accessible booklet for PhD candidates at TU Delft. This booklet includes information on your rights and opportunities for support at the national, university and faculty level, all in one. We hope you find it useful! If you have comments, remarks or suggestions, please write us at [upc-org@tudelft.nl](mailto:upc-org@tudelft.nl)!

## B. What kind of PhD are you? How does it affect your rights?

You can navigate the following image in order to discover where do you stand in the spectrum of formal classification of PhD candidates. Labour agreements are only for employees, thus the information in this guide is meant to inform PhD candidates who are formally employed by TUD. We are working in order to gather information about the rights of the other types of PhD candidates. If you already have some information, please share it with us.

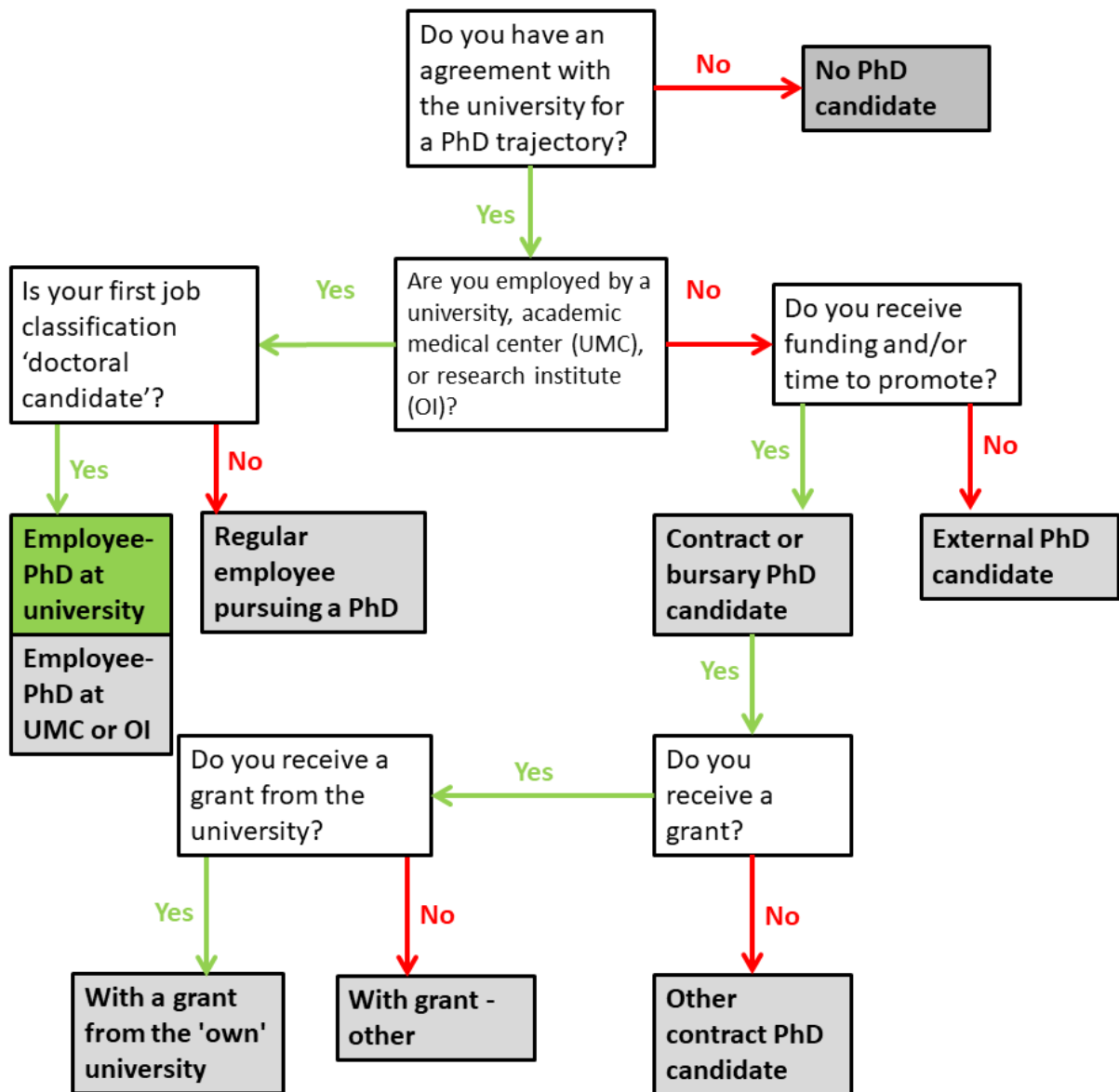


Figure 1. Types of PhD trajectories (Source: PNN)

For more information about rights of PhD at national level, go to the website of PNN: [hetpnn.nl/kyr/](http://hetpnn.nl/kyr/).

## 1. What are your rights around Supervision?

A healthy relationship between you and your supervisor will determine the success of your PhD trajectory. In this section we bring the overview of the guidelines for PhD candidates and their supervisor. For more information check the [employee portal under support and supervision](#), and the links provided below.

### 1.1 Basic Overview (Supervisor and Promoter)

A supervisory team typically consists of a minimum of two supervisors:

- A daily supervisor (Assistant or Associate Professor)
- At least one promotor (a full Professor).

The team may include additional researchers or educators, for example in case of collaboration between departments, faculties or organizations. Preferably, the supervisory team provides both junior and senior research and PhD coaching expertise.

The promotor selects the members of the supervisory team:

- from within the departments and institutes involved in the research project,
- on the basis of matching expertise and skills regarding the chosen research topic,
- in agreement with the PhD candidate.

### 1.2 Mentor

The Faculty Graduate School appoints a mentor to each PhD candidate. The intended roles of the mentor are:

- to act as a sounding board;
- to provide support to the PhD candidate, focusing on the PhD process and reciprocal relationship and drawing attention to potential bottlenecks;
- to refer the PhD candidate to other relevant people within the organization.

Recently, not all the PhD candidates are assigned to a mentor. If that is the case for you, ask the graduate school to appoint a mentor to you. That is your right to have a mentor upon request.

### 1.3 Training and guidance plan (PhD Agreement)

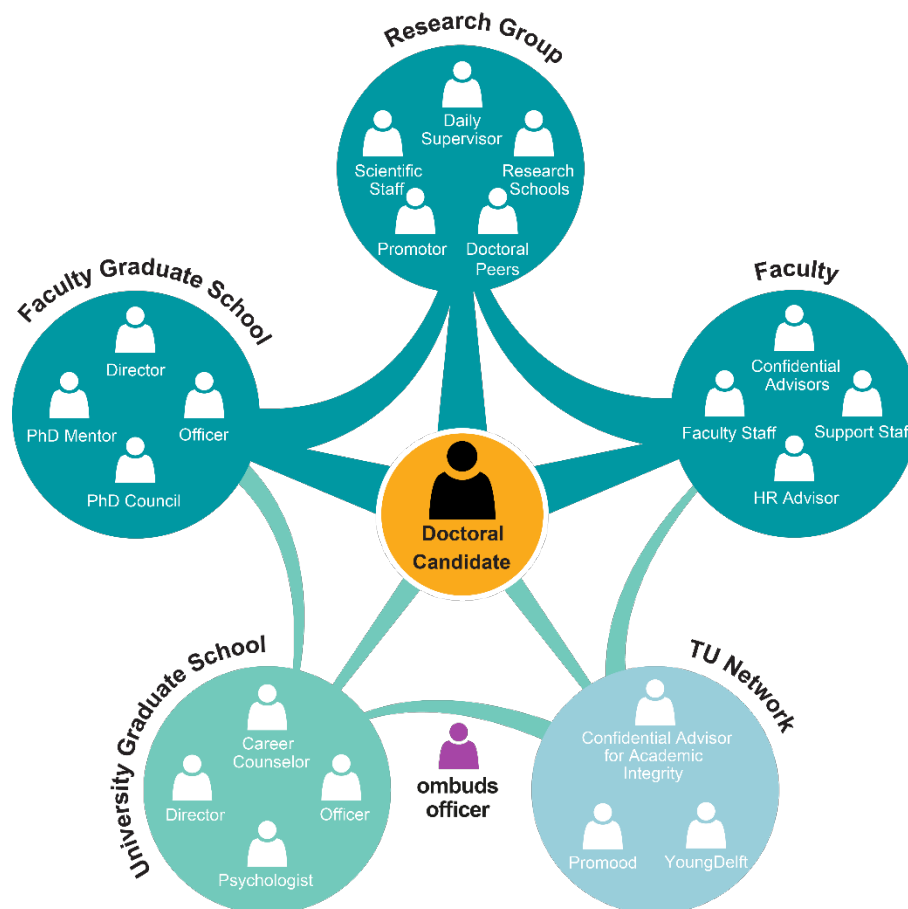
The training and guidance plan should be one of the cornerstones of your PhD trajectory. This is a customized plan that should be set up for you by the appointed mentor or supervisor. This plan is called PhD Agreement in TU Delft and should be discussed and prepared within the first three months of the PhD program. It's essential to discuss with your supervisor and promotor about the mutual expectations for your PhD trajectory. These expectations (e.g., workload, research goals, research visits) should be mentioned in this agreement. For more information about this agreement and the follow up progress meetings check the [PhD development cycle](#) at TU Delft. You can find the corresponding for this agreement in your faculty's graduate school website.

More information

- [cao-NU](#)
  - Article 6.9: Doctoral candidate training and guidance plan
- [Golden Rules for Supervisors and PhD Candidates](#) (Leiden University)
- [Higher Education Act \(Dutch only\)](#) (*Wet op hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*)
  - Article 7.18 sub 4: Awarding the degrees of Doctor or Doctor of Philosophy; admission and system
- Leiden University: [Rules for PhD supervisors](#)
- Maastricht University: [Policy ius promovendi for associate professors](#)

## 2. What are your rights around conflicts in your PhD trajectory?

During your PhD trajectory, you might experience conflict with an actor in your university. It's important to know your rights regarding different issues that cause the conflicts and to approach them with a constructive attitude. As a necessary first step, it is helpful to directly discuss the conflict with the people involved in. However, in some cases, it is understandable that this discussion might endanger your position. For this, we provide an overview of the internal and external supports you can seek out for contact. For more information check the [PNN "Know Your Rights"](#), the conflicts section, for more details on your rights.



Who is involved in your PhD? For more information regarding the support and regulations in TU Delft, check [here](#). Furthermore, to improve your coping and conflict resolution skills, there are a few transferrable skills courses at the [Doctoral Education Program \(DE\)](#) that you could take.

## 2.1 Internal actors

- **Arbitration committee:** If you want to make use of your rights as laid down in the Collective Labour Agreement, but you think your employer refuses to grant them, you can opt for dispute settlement. A dispute can be submitted to the Disputes Committee, which must be set up at every university. Disputes can relate to non-compliance with the leave agreements. The employer can establish further administrative rules in a local procedure regarding the internal handling of a submitted dispute. Condition for the committee to handle the request is that 'demonstrable consultation' has taken place between employee and immediate superior on the subject of the dispute.
- **Faculty/graduate school confidential advisor (vertrouwenspersoon):** If you are affected by undesirable behaviour, such as bullying, aggression and unwanted sexual advances, you can turn to one of TU Delft's confidential advisors for help, support and advice.
- **Ombudsperson:** At times, problems can occur at work that you need to discuss because they involve a question, personal dilemma or conflict. In such cases, you can contact the Ombuds officer for staff.
- **Works council:** The Works Council (OR) represents the interests of TU Delft staff and consists of members chosen by and from within the workforce. The OR is consulted on decisions made by the Executive Board, which have a direct or indirect impact on the interests of the community.
- **Local PhD Council:** At Dutch universities, PhD candidates often are represented by local PhD councils. At TU Delft, you can refer to the University PhD Council ([UPC](#)), or the councils for each faculty. PhD councils typically maintain contact with the university's Executive Board, deans and individual PhD candidates and can address the problems arisen for doctoral candidates.

## 2.2 External actors

- **Promovendi Netwerk Nederland (PNN):** PNN is the national interest group for and by PhD candidates affiliated to Dutch universities, academic medical centers, and research institutions. Every PhD candidate in the Netherlands is free to send her or his legal and rights-related questions. At PNN, one board member is in charge of all matters concerning labour conditions (*arbeidsvoorwaarden*) and will try to provide an appropriate answer for your situation.
- **Labour union:** If you are a member of a labour union you can also ask for guidance from a union representative. All labour unions in the Netherlands employ specialised lawyers who provide expert advice to their members.
- **Other forms of (free) legal advice:** Check "More Information" below.
- **Media**

## 3. What are your rights for getting support in TUD?

The University has a range of services available to support the trajectory of PhD candidates.

- [Confidential advisor](#) (mentioned related to conflict resolution): You can contact this advisor in case you encounter undesirable behavior, such as bullying, aggression, (sexual) intimidation, stalking or discrimination.
- [Psychologists at TUD](#): The psychologists from Career & Counselling Services can provide you as a TU Delft student, PhD or PDEngs candidate with treatment and support in the event of psychological problems that prevent you from studying effectively or completing your PhD/PDEng. Their treatment is meant for issues related to or leading to, stagnation in your studies or PhD process.
- [University Health Services Doctor](#): If you suffer from work-related physical and/or mental health problems, you may contact one of the two university health services doctors at TU Delft for assistance and advice.
- [Career counsellors](#): TU Delft Career Centre works with students, PhDs, and young alumni to help them build their employability and career management skills by providing a range of careers workshops, programs and resources. They also have a variety of workshops available to support both your PhD process and future career development.
- [University Social Worker](#): If any problems arise in your personal life or your work situations that have a negative impact on your health or hinder your performance, you may contact the University Social Worker of TU Delft for assistance and advice. This person is not employed by TU Delft. Hence, he or she can assume an impartial position and provide professional support.
- [Financial advisors](#): If you get into financial difficulties, you may be able to get help from the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science Social Fund (SFOCW). This fund is run by and for the ministry and education and culture organization employees, including TU Delft.
- [Support for International Employees](#): This webpage has relevant information to help overcoming the challenges of relocating to take up a new position in TU Delft. If you have challenges advancing your partner's career, arranging housing, school and nursery, joining the health system, dealing with formalities and finding social activities to participate in, check the website for more information. Also check out their events and workshops.
- [HR Advisors](#): They can be contacted in case of questions or concerns regarding approaching expiration of the contract or hospitality agreement, visa and resident permit extensions and all other HR related matters (Check for the ones in your faculty).

#### More Information

- [cao-NU](#):
  - Appendix H Regulation on disputes
- [Het Juridisch Loket \(Dutch Only\)](#)
- [List of local PhD councils at Dutch universities](#)
- [Rechtswinkel Amsterdam \(Dutch only\)](#)
- [Rechtswinkel Utrecht \(Dutch only\)](#)
- [Working Conditions Act \(Dutch only\) \(Arbeidsomstandighedenwet\)](#)
- [Works Councils Act \(Wet op de ondernemingsraden, WOR\)](#)