

Radboudumc PhD thesis guidelines ([link](#))

Background

The PhD thesis is a **proof of the ability to perform independent academic research**. It is up to the manuscript committee to decide whether a thesis meets this criterion, thereby using the assessment criteria as defined in the [Doctorate regulations of the Radboud University](#). The (co-)supervisors ('(co)promotors') will decide whether the PhD thesis is of sufficient quality to be presented to the manuscript committee.

The requirements for the academic and non-academic part of the PhD thesis are defined in [chapter 4 of the Doctorate regulations of the Radboud University](#). In addition to these general requirements, applicable to all faculties, Radboudumc PhD candidates adhere to the Radboudumc guidelines.

Radboudumc guidelines provide clarity to all involved, such as to the PhD candidate and PhD supervisors but also to the members of the Manuscript Committee, Cum Laude Committee and Doctoral Examination Board.

A typical Radboudumc PhD thesis contains

a. Title page

b. Table of contents

c. General introduction

- PhD candidates describe their view of the current state of the field, point out gaps in scientific knowledge, introduce an overview of the PhD thesis and give rationales for the performed studies. The general introduction contains information that the reader needs to know to understand the context of the research chapters. The general introduction may take the form of a review article.

d. Research chapters

- Each research chapter contains work in which PhD candidates follow **the scientific research cycle**: identifying a gap in scientific knowledge, outlining an approach, describing the appropriate collection and analysis of data or existing relevant databases, and finally reflecting on the results in the context of the specific field.
- The thesis demonstrates that PhD candidates have familiarized themselves and have worked with the principles and methodologies of international scientific practice and theory formation, methods and studies of the relevant discipline. Preferentially, the thesis contains variation in terms of the methods used.
- **Focus on quality instead of quantity.** PhD candidates demonstrate that they are competent researchers by completing a coherent set of empirical (or conceptual) chapters plus an introduction and discussion. If there is a coherent thesis of sufficient quality, there is no need to produce more research chapters when the term of the contract expires. There is no minimum requirement for the number of research chapters.
- While it is of course in the line of PhD candidates' ambitions to get their work published, there is **no obligation to have a certain number of chapters published** before sending the thesis to the manuscript committee. If not published, the quality of the chapters should be as such that they can be submitted for publication to a scientific journal.

- In principle, only chapters of which **PhD candidates are (shared) first author** are included in their PhD thesis. Occasionally a chapter as co-author may be included in the thesis if the content is consistent with the rest of the PhD research. Other publications may be listed in the publication list.

e. General discussion

- The general discussion should be the PhD candidates' own product, while the research chapters and sometimes the general introduction are more collaborative efforts. In this concluding chapter, the PhD candidates reflect on the research chapters and their findings with a bird's eye view, identify limitations as well as future research opportunities and discuss the impact on the research field and society.

f. Summary of the thesis

- If the PhD thesis is written in English, it includes at least a summary in Dutch. The summary should be short and concise.

Note: The RU Doctorate regulations erroneously state that the summary should contain a maximum of 350-400 words. There is no maximum number of words for the summary.

g. Description of the research data management

- All Radboud University researchers are obliged to have all research data comply at least with the F (sustainably findable) and the A (proper access management) of the FAIR guidelines. The [Radboudumc Data Management Plan tool](#) should be used to prepare a Research Data Management (RDM) plan at the start of a PhD trajectory and to keep it up to date. PhD candidates can include a summary of the RDM plan in the PhD. For more information and examples check the [website](#).

h. List of publications (not mandatory)

i. Acknowledgments (not mandatory)

j. Curriculum vitae

k. Portfolio

- Including a report of the doctoral education, e.g., courses, seminars, international conferences, lecturing, supervision of internships, as outlined by the research institute ([link](#)).

At least chapters b up to g (see above) should be completed before the manuscript can be reviewed by the Manuscript Committee.

NOTE: There are different kinds of PhD candidates at Radboudumc, differing in the length and type of contract, as well as additional (sideline) functions. The requirements for a PhD thesis are identical for all PhD categories.

Submission manuscript

After finishing the manuscript (at least **chapters b up to g**, see above), PhD candidates upload their manuscript to Hora Finita. Subsequently, the supervisor is asked to perform a plagiarism check, assess the manuscript and motivate why the PhD thesis meets the Radboudumc PhD thesis guidelines. After this assessment the manuscript can be reviewed by the Manuscript Committee. [Hora Finita tutorials](#) are available for these different steps.

Lay-out PhD thesis

Portfolio and cover guidelines can be found [here](#).

Guidelines for PhD candidates who are part of the Donders Graduate School can be found [here](#).