

The right of Associate Professors to confer doctorates

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The extension of the right to confer doctorates at the University of Twente

Summary

In September 2017, new legislation (Article 718, paragraph 4 of the Higher Education and Research Act) was adopted that makes it possible for the Doctorate Board to grant the right to confer doctorates (henceforth: *ius promovendi*) to any person who holds a doctoral degree, irrespective of whether they hold the title of Professor. The University of Twente wishes to implement this legislation and to exercise its right to interpret it in its own way. The proposal below concerns the granting of the *ius promovendi* to academic staff who hold the position of Associate Professor.

Because this involves the extension of *ius promovendi* to a new group of people, the new policy must be consistent with existing university policy. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science attaches great importance to linking the extension of this right with a quality assessment, whereby a number of criteria are defined and to be fulfilled. See, for example, the guidelines published by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) which state, among other things, that the Associate Professor must have demonstrated both his/her research competencies and his/her supervision competencies to a sufficient level.

In order to ascertain whether a separate quality assessment is required in order to grant *ius promovendi* to employees holding the position of Associate Professor at the University of Twente, we have undertaken the following steps. In the first instance, the Doctorate Board formulated criteria for granting *ius promovendi*. An analysis was then made of the extent to which the existing promotion criteria pertaining to the move from Associate Professor 2 to Associate Professor 1 correspond with the criteria of the Doctorate Board. On the basis of this analysis, the following **recommendations** are made:

- Extend *ius promovendi* to scientists at the University of Twente who will be promoted to **Associate Professor 1** in the future, on the basis of the criteria set out in this memorandum.
- Extend *ius promovendi* to existing academic staff who hold the position of Associate Professor 1 at University of Twente, provided that they meet the quality criteria formulated by the Doctorate Board.
- The granting of *ius promovendi* should occur upon the recommendation of the dean of the relevant faculty, having consulted the chairperson of the relevant department.
- The quality criterion relating to adequate supervision competencies entails that at least 3 fully completed doctorates have been supervised as assistant thesis supervisor.
- The doctoral regulations should be amended accordingly.
- Records of the allocation and duration of *ius promovendi* should be kept in the personnel registration system.

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1. Criteria for extending *ius promovendi*

According to the law, *ius promovendi* can be extended to any person holding a doctoral degree. However, the University of Twente chooses to award *ius promovendi* to academic staff of the University of Twente who hold the position of Associate Professor 1 and who meet a number of additional criteria (see Figure 1). The arguments for not granting *ius promovendi* to academic staff who hold the position of Associate Professor 2 can be found in Appendix 1.

Doctorate Board: Criteria for extending <i>ius promovendi</i>
<p>The candidate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. has developed his/her own clear and productive line of research, and coordinates and fulfils a full or partial research programme;2. plays an independent role within that line of research;3. works actively to build and maintain partnerships both within and outside the University of Twente.4. acts as assistant thesis supervisor for PhD candidates and has been involved in the supervision of at least three completed PhD programmes;5. has demonstrable international experience, evidenced by joint projects, joint publications, periods spent at overseas institutions, etc.;6. has had a substantial output of international publications (ISI or equivalent) over the past five years, either as the first author or as the leading author/author with overall responsibility;7. has submitted at least two substantial research proposals or projects (with a total budget of at least 250k), which have been awarded (NWO (including VIDI/VICI), EU project, contract funding project, ERC starting grant, STW or other projects);8. achieves scores on a par with international peers; and9. clearly demonstrates his/her ability to apply for funding in a strategic manner.

Figure 1: Doctorate Board's criteria for granting *ius promovendi*

The quality assessment must, according to the law, determine whether the candidate functions as a 'good supervisor'. Criterion 4 (see above) relates to whether this is the case. This is combined with the requirement for a basic teaching qualification (competence 2b: supervision of graduates) which applies to every Associate Professor, which we consider to be a sufficient guarantee of adequate supervision competencies.

A further point concerns the extent to which those who currently hold the position of Associate Professor 1 already meet these criteria. Where this is the case, the dean can proceed to nominate them to the Doctorate Board.

The difference between *ius promovendi* for Assistant Professors in the Tenure Track and *ius promovendi* for Associate Professors is thus limited to the right to wear a gown.

A comparison of the Doctorate Board's assessment criteria for the granting of *ius promovendi* and the promotion criteria for the position of Associate Professor 1 in all faculties (see Appendix 2) shows that the criteria are equivalent with the exception of criterion 4 ('has supervised at least three completed PhD programmes').

This criterion is currently not mentioned explicitly in the promotion criteria for Associate Professor 1 and must therefore be added. In exceptional cases, the dean may deviate from the criteria specified, provided that substantiation is provided, all other results are comparable and the suitability of the candidate can be demonstrated.

The current numbers of employees who hold the position of Associate Professor 1 and Assistant Professor in the various faculties is shown in Figure 2.

	Associate Professor 1	Assistant Professor
BMS	13	3
ET	11	4
EEMCS	13	0
ITC	6	2
S&T	17	5
	60	14

Figure 2: Number of employees holding the position of Associate Professor 1 but not participating in Tenure Track and the number of employees holding the position of Assistant Professor in each faculty (figures from 15 Nov. 2015)

2. *Ius promovendi* for existing Associate Professors 1

Within the faculties, the promotion criteria applied are consistent with the criteria outlined above. Therefore, with effect from 1 January 2018, the University of Twente intends to extend *ius promovendi* to all qualifying employees who hold the position of Associate Professor 1 in the BMS, ET, EEMCS, ITC and S&T faculties.

It is possible that certain candidates have no interest in supervising doctoral students, have not supervised doctoral candidates for a number of years or do not wish to exercise *ius promovendi* for some other reason. Any employee holding the position of Associate Professor 1 who does not qualify for *ius promovendi* on the basis of his/her own wishes or in the opinion of the relevant dean may discuss this with the dean. Where relevant, this discussion may result in agreements regarding the action(s) to be taken in order to acquire *ius promovendi*.

The candidates will be nominated to the Doctorate Board by the dean in order to be granted *ius promovendi*. The Doctorate Board will then decide whether to grant *ius promovendi*. Candidates will be informed of the Doctorate Board's decision in this regard. Candidates who are not granted *ius promovendi* will be given a personal explanation by the dean, together with the HR manager, regarding the reason for this.

3. After an Associate Professor is granted *ius promovendi*

After granting *ius promovendi*, the relevant Associate Professor can be appointed as a thesis supervisor by the Doctorate Board for new PhD programmes.

For ongoing PhD programmes where a thesis supervisor (and possibly an assistant thesis supervisor) has already been appointed, the Associate Professor can be appointed as thesis supervisor.

If the current thesis supervisor wishes to withdraw and the PhD candidate agrees to this, the Associate Professor may be appointed as the candidate's sole PhD supervisor. In such cases, a new request must be submitted to the Doctorate Board.

4. New appointments to the position of Associate Professor 1

With effect from 1 January 2018, the faculties will ensure that the appointment criteria for Associate Professor 1 are consistent with the criteria for *ius promovendi* outlined above for all future appointments. The candidates may then be nominated to the Doctorate Board by the dean in order to be granted *ius promovendi*.

The intention is to ensure transparency going forward, as these criteria are applied across all faculties: if an employee is appointed to the position of Associate Professor 1, he/she will also be granted *ius promovendi*.

All employees appointed as Associate Professor 1 will be nominated to the Doctorate Board by the dean, after which the Board will decide on the granting of *ius promovendi* to the nominated candidates. The formal granting of *ius promovendi* is to take place in accordance with the procedure for Assistant Professor.

5. Duration of *ius promovendi*

Ius promovendi applies for a five-year period. After five years, *ius promovendi* expires automatically. *Ius promovendi* can only be extended for a further five years in response to a written nomination by the dean.

For the position of Associate Professor 1, *ius promovendi* also generally expires upon termination of employment. PhD programmes already underway can then only be completed if the thesis supervisor is replaced. Where possible, it is advisable to make plans for any such changes at the start of a PhD programme.

In cases where a change of thesis supervisor is undesirable, it may be decided to extend *ius promovendi* for the PhD programme that is already underway for a maximum of 5 years.

6. Gown

The proposal is that any Associate Professor 1 who has been granted *ius promovendi* will not wear a gown during the doctoral degree defence and ceremony or at other formal occasions.

7. Registration of *ius promovendi*

A clear record of which employees have been granted *ius promovendi*, and when, must be kept in the personnel information system.

8. Mutual recognition

Finally, it is important to make clear arrangements on how to handle the mutual recognition of *ius promovendi*. This is because the granting of *ius promovendi* to Associate Professors, unlike full professors, is linked to the position that they currently hold at their respective university.

The principle is that universities recognize each other's *ius promovendi*.

For the time being, however, the recommendation is that *ius promovendi* granted by the University of Twente to those holding the position of Associate Professor 1 will only apply at the University of Twente until further agreements are made in this regard at 4TU level or through the VSNU.

9. Changes to doctoral regulations

When the University of Twente's Doctorate Board makes a decision about granting *ius promovendi* to Associate Professors, the doctoral regulations must be adapted accordingly.

10. Communication plan

In consultation with the HR managers at the faculties, an appropriate communication plan will be developed regarding the granting of *ius promovendi* to the relevant Associate Professors, and how to communicate this to other academic staff.

In addition, Associate Professors 1 with *ius promovendi* will receive thorough support with regard to the process and procedures surrounding doctoral degree defences and ceremonies.

11. Implementation

Ius promovendi for those holding the position of Associate Professor 1 at the University of Twente will take effect on 1 January 2018. In order to achieve this, in January 2018 the deans of the BMS, ET, EEMCS, ITC and S&T faculties will compile an overview of all the Associate Professors 1 in their faculty who meet the criteria. These candidates will be nominated to the Doctorate Board by their respective dean, along with brief explanatory information relating to each of the criteria specified for each candidate. By February 2018 at the latest, the Doctorate Board will discuss the proposed candidates and grant *ius promovendi* to those candidates who meet the criteria. *Ius promovendi* will apply to the relevant Associate Professors 1 with retroactive effect, starting 1-1-2018.

12. Follow-up steps

At a later stage, a further matter to be considered is to what extent *ius promovendi* could also be granted to university employees who hold the position of Associate Professor 2.

An additional question is to what extent the function of Associate Professor 1 with *ius promovendi* continues to be distinct from that of Assistant Professor in the Tenure Track.

Appendix 1: Arguments relating to the decision on *ius promovendi* for Associate Professor 1 and/or Associate Professor 2

Arguments relating to the decision on <i>ius promovendi</i> for Associate Professor 2	
Arguments for	The promotion criteria for Associate Professor 1 and Associate Professor 2 relating to research are similar.
	Delft University of Technology grants <i>ius promovendi</i> to Associate Professors 1 and Associate Professors 2.
	Internationally, the criteria for granting <i>ius promovendi</i> are applied less strictly than in the Netherlands.
Arguments against	Creates poor impression among Tenure Track candidates: "you are entitled to faster promotion than in the TT".
	Granting <i>ius promovendi</i> to Associate Professors 2 could still take place at a later stage. Granting <i>ius promovendi</i> to Associate Professors 1 first will allow us to gain experience with a larger group of academics who have the right to confer doctoral degrees.
	Creates a clearer step in the career path for academic personnel at the University of Twente. Granting <i>ius promovendi</i> to Associate Professors 1 only creates a clearer distinction between Associate Professor 2 and Associate Professor 1.

Appendix 2: Comparison of Doctorate Board's criteria for *ius promovendi* with promotion criteria for Associate Professor

Criteria for <i>ius promovendi</i>	Doctorate Board	ET-TT Associate Professor 1	EEMCS-TT Associate Professor 1	BMS-TT Associate Professor 1	ITC-TT Associate Professor 1	S&T-TT Associate Professor 1
1. Candidate has developed his/her own clear and productive line of research. He/she coordinates and fulfils a full or partial research programme.	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. An independent role in the research line must also be demonstrated.	x	x		x	x	x
3. Works actively to build and maintain partnerships both within and outside the University of Twente.	x	x	x	x	x	x
4. Acts as assistant thesis supervisor for doctoral candidates and has been involved in at least three completed PhD programmes.	x	x	x	?	?	?
5. Also has demonstrable international experience, evidenced by joint projects, joint publications, period spent at foreign institutions, etc.	x	x	x	x	x	x
6. Has had a substantial output of international publications (ISI or equivalent) over the past five years, either as the first author or as the leading author/author with overall responsibility.	x	x	x	x	x	x
7. Has submitted at least two substantial research proposals or projects (with a total budget of at least 250k), which have been awarded (NWO (including VIDI/VICI), EU project, contract funding project, ERC starting grant, STW or other projects).	x	x	x	x	x	x
8. Achieves scores on a par with international peers.	x	x	x	x	x	x
9. Clearly demonstrates his/her ability to apply for funding in a strategic manner.	x	x	x	x	x	x

Appendix 3: *Ius promovendi* at peer institutions

Eindhoven University of Technology:

All those holding the position of Associate Professor 1 (60 persons in total); the dean has power of veto, which is used in 5% of cases. Possible extension to Associate Professor 2 in the future.

Selection has gone smoothly. All Associate Professors 1 have been notified. Associate Professors 1 who have not been granted *Ius promovendi* have been given a reason for this. Doctoral Regulations have been amended. *Ius promovendi* for Associate Professors is fully consistent with new structure of research groups/departments.

University of Twente:

Deans draw up a list that is discussed by the Doctorate Board. Not yet fully implemented. Ultimately only for Associate Professor 1 (in the first instance; intention to extend to Associate Professor 2).

Wageningen University:

Only for Associate Professor 1 in TT (38 individuals). Doctorate Board grants this. Individual (non-TT) Associate Professors can be nominated by the dean. *Ius promovendi* remains valid for 5 years (just as with a personal professorship), and may then be extended.

Delft University of Technology:

Is fully prepared for introduction on 1 January. Both Associate Professor 1 and Associate Professor 2. Deans nominate (with input from the Faculty Career Committees and HR). *Ius promovendi* probably granted to around 160 Associate Professors; 60% of the total number. All Associate Professors have been assessed by the faculty according to Doctorate Board criteria.

Doctorate Board grants *Ius promovendi*, which means that the person in question **can** be appointed as a thesis supervisor at the request of his/her PhD candidate for an individual PhD programme. Doctoral Regulations have been amended. A hard requirement has been added for at least two (assistant) thesis supervisors.

Appendix 4: Comparison of minimum number of supervisors/thesis supervisors in VSNU

At almost all VSNU member universities, at least two supervisors are appointed for a PhD programme.

University of Twente: the University of Twente's PhD Charter states that there is to be at least one (intended) thesis supervisor and one daily supervisor. In practice, however, one professor may assume both roles so that there is formally only one supervisor. This has been discussed by the Doctorate Board and is currently being 'tolerated'

Leiden University: two supervisors

Radboud University Nijmegen: still only one thesis supervisor but will be changed to two thesis supervisors

Eindhoven University of Technology: two supervisors, not necessarily two thesis supervisors

Tilburg University: two supervisors, not necessarily two thesis supervisors

Erasmus University Rotterdam: two supervisors, not necessarily two thesis supervisors

Wageningen University: two supervisors, not necessarily two thesis supervisors, maximum of four assistant thesis supervisors

University of Groningen: two thesis supervisors (each professor is thesis supervisor (no assistant thesis supervisors), and Assistant Professor or Associate Professor is co-supervisor)

VU Amsterdam: two thesis supervisors

Maastricht University: two thesis supervisors

Open University: two thesis supervisors