

# University of Twente fee policy for non-employed doctoral candidates

## 1. Purpose

This policy outlines the fee policy for new doctoral candidates who are not employed by the University of Twente (UT).

## 2. Definition fees

The University of Twente applies two kinds of fees to help compensate for the costs of a doctoral trajectory:

**Tuition fee:** a fixed annual contribution, requested from a doctoral candidate or an external sponsor, like a scholarship provider or an employer, to help compensate for the basic costs of a doctoral programme (as specified in § 5.1 of this policy).

**Bench fee:** an annual contribution, requested from a doctoral candidate or an external sponsor, like a scholarship provider or an employer, to help compensate for additional research related costs (as specified in § 5.2 of this policy). Since these costs vary per candidate and research project, bench fees differ accordingly.

## 3. Scope

**This fee policy applies only to the following categories of doctoral candidates not employed by the University of Twente:**

Doctoral candidates on a grant (scholarship Doctoral candidates) (UNL category 2)

These are Doctoral candidates who are not on an employment contract with the university where they are completing their doctoral research, but whose main objective is to obtain a doctorate, and who have been awarded funding by a third party to do so.

Doctoral candidates who receive external funding (UNL category 3)

Doctoral candidates who receive external funding differ from external Doctoral candidates in that they either receive funding to conduct doctoral research or have been allotted time by their employer to conduct doctoral research (regardless of the amount of time they have been allotted).

External Doctoral candidates (self-funded) (UNL category 4)

These are Doctoral candidates who are not allotted any hours or funding to conduct doctoral research by an external party but do wish to obtain a doctorate. They fund their own research, or use funding placed at their disposal by their relatives. For example: a pensioner who conducts doctoral research, an employee of a company who conducts doctoral research on their own time on top of their regular job, a university employee whose UFO profile does not say 'doctoral candidate' and who is not allotted any hours or funding by the university to conduct their research either (formerly known as 'employees seeking to obtain a doctorate'), or a medical specialist whose UMC is not reducing their regular hours to allow them to conduct doctoral research.

**This policy does not apply retroactively and does not apply to:**

Employee Doctoral candidates (UNL category 1a)

An employee who has an employment contract with the University of Twente, and for whom arrangements have been made to help them complete a doctoral research project.

Employees who are conducting doctoral research (UNL category 1b)

An employee who has an employment contract with their own university, and for whom arrangements have been made designed to help them complete a doctoral research project.

Non-employed doctoral candidates (UNL categories 2, 3 and 4) who have started their doctoral programme before April 1st, 2026. These doctoral candidates continue their doctoral programme under the fee conditions that were agreed at the start of their programme.

## 4. Guiding principles of the proposed new fee policy for doctoral candidates

The guiding principles of the new fee policy are:

- The fees serve as a contribution towards the operational costs of a doctoral programme.
- The fees payable cannot be waived for legal and fiscal reasons.
- The collection of fees is not intended as a revenue-generating model for the university.
- The university must avoid making a financial loss on doctoral programmes.
- For strategic considerations, no tuition fee is charged for certain categories of doctoral candidates as specified in § 5.1.
- The policy must be uniformly implemented in all faculties.

## 5. Fees

### 5.1 Tuition fee

The University of Twente applies an **annual tuition fee of € 3,000.-** for all non-employed doctoral candidates for the duration of their enrolment as a doctoral candidate at the UT, which gives access to:

- The UT library facilities and ICT facilities (such as open access publications, an e-mail account, use of various software licenses and data storage).
- The UT Social Safety Support Structure and PhD/EngD counsellors.
- Supervision by promotor and co-promotor(s).
- Enrolment in the Twente Graduate School (TGS)
- Courses taken for the 30 EC doctoral education programme.
- Use of a flexible workplace and general campus facilities, if necessary.
- The doctoral defence ceremony as described in the UT Doctoral Regulations
- A financial contribution to the printing costs of the thesis

By exception, the University of Twente applies an **annual tuition fee of € 0.-** for the following categories of non-employed doctoral candidates:

- A. In the framework of the capacity development mission at the faculty ITC: non-employed doctoral candidates (UNL categories 2, 3 and 4) with a nationality from defined countries<sup>1</sup> and whose external sponsor does not provide cover for tuition fees or bench fees.
- B. Non-employed doctoral candidates who receive external funding (UNL category 3), who are (1) employed by *a health care or public health organisation, university, university of applied sciences or another (semi-)public organisation* with which the UT has a university-wide partnership agreement<sup>2</sup> and (2) whose employer pays for a substantial part of the costs, like supervision costs, of the doctoral programme.
- C. Non-employed doctoral candidates (UNL categories 2, 3 and 4) who do their doctoral programme under a *joint or double degree agreement* between the University of Twente and a partner university<sup>3</sup>.

*The Executive Board, at its sole discretion and only upon the request of a faculty dean, reserves the right to designate additional exceptional categories of non-employed doctoral candidates (e.g. in the light of long-standing partnerships) to whom an annual tuition fee of € 0.- shall apply.*

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<sup>1</sup>ITC annually establishes the list of qualifying countries as part of the [faculty scholarship eligibility requirements](#). The current country list reflects the OECD list of ODA recipients and is specified in annex 1.

<sup>2</sup> A partnership agreement in the sense of a university-wide agreement with *a health care or public health organisation, university or university of applied sciences or another governmental organisation*. It sets out shared strategic goals and areas of collaboration at the institutional level and provides a basis for developing specific joint activities or projects under its umbrella. (Single project specific contracts or departmental agreements that are not related to such a university-wide agreement do not fall under this definition.)

<sup>3</sup> An up-to-date [overview of the Joint and Double PhD Agreements between the University of Twente and the partner universities](#) can be found on the TGS website.

## 5.2 Bench fee

Faculties may charge an additional annual **bench fee** to help compensate for research related costs, such as use of (expensive) lab facilities, fieldwork expenses or international conference visits. The bench fee is optional, variable and based on actual costs.

## 6. Existing agreements with external partners

### Existing joint and double degree agreements

For existing joint and double degree agreements between the University of Twente and other universities, the fee conditions for non-employed doctoral candidates set out in those agreements will continue to apply until the expiry date of the agreements. If no fees for non-employed doctoral candidates are mentioned in these agreements, the fee conditions in this new fee policy will apply. Any joint or double degree agreements that require renewal, as well as any new joint or double degree PhD agreements, will be subject to the new fee policy.

### Existing agreements with external PhD scholarship providers

For existing agreements between the University of Twente and external scholarship providers, the fee conditions for non-employed doctoral candidates set out in those agreements will continue to apply until the expiry date of the agreements. If no fees for non-employed doctoral candidates are mentioned in these agreements, the fee conditions in this new fee policy will apply. Any agreements that require renewal, as well as any new agreements with scholarship providers, will be subject to the new fee policy.

### Agreements with other partners

For existing university-wide partnership agreements between the University of Twente and (international) partner organisations, the fee conditions for non-employed doctoral candidates set out in those agreements will continue to apply until the expiry date of the agreements. If no fees for non-employed doctoral candidates are mentioned in these agreements, the fee conditions in this new fee policy will apply. Any partnership agreement that requires renewal, as well as new partnership agreements, will be subject to the new fee policy.

## 7. Fee administration and collection

The **Faculty Dean is responsible** for the approval of the doctoral candidate's total budget before admission to the doctoral programme<sup>4</sup>. The fees for non-employed doctoral candidates accrue to the faculties. **The fee administration and collection are handled by the faculty finance departments** and uniformly booked as instructed by Financial Reporting (FIN-FS-FR).

The applicable fees are **collected, in principle, annually** from the doctoral candidate or an external sponsor, like a scholarship provider or an employer for the full duration of the doctoral programme.

In the event of **part-time availability** of the doctoral candidate for the doctoral programme, the payable fees will be reduced proportionally for the entire duration of the doctoral programme: €2,400 per year for 80% availability and €2000.- per year for 67% availability of the doctoral candidate. In these situations, the doctorate agreement and registration in the HR registration system should clearly indicate the expected start and *extended end date* of the PhD programme (duration is five years for 80% availability and 6 years for 67% availability).

The fees (and the payer of the fees) are agreed with the doctoral candidate or, if applicable, with the scholarship provider, employer or other sponsor, **prior to the admission of the doctoral candidate**. The agreed fees are documented in the faculty finance administration and in the HR administration in the doctorate agreement with the doctoral candidate. For doctoral candidates UNL category 3, whose employer pays for the fee(s), the in-house legal counsel team (Novel-T) needs to be consulted to verify if an **additional (research) agreement** must be established between that party and the UT regarding the payment of the fees.

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<sup>4</sup> [Charter for Doctoral Candidates](#)

The payable fees cannot be waived.

**Payment of the annual fees ends** upon termination or completion of the doctoral programme, as set out in the Charter for Doctoral Candidates.

In the event of exclusion or withdrawal from the programme, whether by the candidate's own decision or due to force majeure, the payer of the fee(s) remains responsible for all financial obligations for the year in which the doctoral candidate leaves the programme.

If the doctoral candidate's defence takes place during the year, the payer of the tuition fee(s) may request a refund for the months following the defence, provided that fees had already been paid for those months.

## 8. Implementation date

The new fee policy for non-employed doctoral candidates enters into effect on *April 1<sup>st</sup> 2026*.

The policy will be evaluated after two years of its implementation.

## 9. Transitional arrangements and evaluation

Prospective non-employed doctoral candidates who have already been admitted by the faculty before April 1st, 2026 and who meet the University of Twente's admission requirements, may be admitted under the old fee policy.

Prospective doctoral candidates on a grant (scholarship doctoral candidates) (UNL category 2) who have received a conditional admission letter from the faculty before March 1st, 2026—for the purpose of applying for a scholarship—and who meet the University of Twente's admission requirements, may be enrolled under the old fee policy until August 1<sup>st</sup> 2026.

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## Annex 1

ITC Capacity Development Country List (published on [ITC Excellence Scholarship Programme | Scholarship finder | University of Twente](#))

Afghanistan	Grenada	Pakistan
Albania	Guatemala	Palau
Algeria	Guinea	Palestinian Territories
Angola	Guinea-Bissau	Panama
Antigua & Barbuda	Guyana	Papua New Guinea
Argentina	Haiti	Paraguay
Armenia	Honduras	Peru
Azerbaijan	India	Philippines
Bangladesh	Indonesia	Rwanda
Belarus	Iraq	Samoa
Belize	Jamaica	Senegal
Benin	Jordan	Serbia
Bhutan	Kazakhstan	Seychelles
Bolivia	Kenya	Sierra Leone
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Kiribati	Solomon Islands
Botswana	Kosovo	Somalia
Brazil	Kyrgyzstan	South Africa
Burkina Faso	Laos	South Sudan
Burundi	Lebanon	Sri Lanka
Cambodia	Lesotho	St. Helena
Cameroon	Liberia	St. Lucia
Cape Verde	Libya	St. Vincent & Grenadines
Central African Republic	Madagascar	Sudan
Chad	Malawi	Suriname
Chile	Malaysia	Syria
Colombia	Maldives	São Tomé & Príncipe
Comoros	Mali	Tajikistan
Congo - Brazzaville	Marshall Islands	Tanzania
Congo - Kinshasa	Mauritania	Thailand
Cook Islands	Mauritius	Timor-Leste
Costa Rica	Mexico	Togo
Cuba	Micronesia	Tokelau
Côte d'Ivoire	Moldova	Tonga
Djibouti	Mongolia	Tunisia
Dominica	Montenegro	Turkey
Dominican Republic	Montserrat	Turkmenistan
Ecuador	Morocco	Tuvalu
Egypt	Mozambique	Uganda
El Salvador	Myanmar (Burma)	Ukraine
Equatorial Guinea	Namibia	Uruguay
Eritrea	Nauru	Uzbekistan
Eswatini	Nepal	Vanuatu
Ethiopia	Nicaragua	Venezuela
Fiji	Niger	Vietnam
Gabon	Nigeria	Wallis & Futuna
Gambia	Niue	Yemen
Georgia	North Korea	Zambia
Ghana	North Macedonia	Zimbabwe