

Young Academy Twente on the implementation of *Ius Promovendi*

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As Young Academy Twente, we are here to build a community of young academics, provide a safe environment to learn, facilitate a learning platform for academic leadership, and thereby strengthen the societal impact of our university. We are also proud of working at a relatively young university that wants to be on the forefront of academic change. We are therefore happy to see the efforts and consideration of the Twente Graduate School with regards to implementation of changes to *Ius promovendi* (IP). In this memo, we provide our advice on extending IP.

According to us, **the current criteria for granting IP at the UT must be revised, as they i) are not in line with the Higher Education and Research Act and ii) do not necessarily reflect an ability to supervise PhD students.** From the career perspective of the supervisor, the need for (a search of) a promotor who in reality may not contribute to the project also allows for problematic situations. Unintended conflicts of interests could, for example, arise in division of promotion bonuses and publications. Such situations impedes independency, international competitiveness, and could undermine the long-term commitment to the UT. From the supervision perspective of the PhD candidate, quality of their supervision is most important, and the evaluation by Technopolis has shown that quality is assured, if not improved, by having motivated young staff as supervisors.

We now turn to our three advices.

Advice 1. Overall, we agree with the [view](#) of the Dutch National Young Academy and support the need for a uniform guideline regarding, and inclusive interpretation of IP. We ask the Doctoral Board and Executive Board to lobby in their national networks for a uniform approach to IP. We stress that it is very undesirable to have different regulations at various Dutch universities, especially given the reason that IP was extended five years ago to improve international competitiveness of the Dutch system. For now, within the UT, we recommend to grant IP to all scientific staff members (UD/UHD/Prof) who have proven to be successful supervisors of PhD students.

Advice 2. The current registration system (Hora Finita), and the communication from its Support Office, limits the recognition of primary supervisors without IP. We appreciate the efforts of our Twente Graduate School in their support to educate PhDs with ever-increasing numbers. We suggest the inclusion of the role 'corresponding supervisor' and their associated responsibilities in Hora Finita. Those responsibilities include direct communication from the Support Office with the corresponding supervisor, instead of contacting with the promotor and PhD candidate exclusively. This implementation would benefit all stakeholders, as it: i) makes primary supervisors (currently registered as co-promotors without responsibilities) feel recognised for their training efforts, ii) provides PhD candidates clarity on who is their primary supervisor, iii) liberates promotors (who are not primary supervisors) from administrative duties while keeping their oversight, and iv) creates transparency for TGS who acquires the statistics about supervision of PhD candidates. Overall, more transparency would create visibility of the performance of junior academics, and thus evidence for narratives to support promotion.

Advice 3. We advise to evaluate and potentially revise the [current training offer](#) for PhD supervisors based on the underlying question of what makes a good supervisor to ensure good quality of supervisors. We regard IP as an academic citizenship right, which means that the PhD supervision training needs to be expanded to all current and future holders of IP. Our suggested changes to IP training would therefore also fit in the broader discussion on Recognition and Rewards at the UT, and hopefully add to the goal of lowering work pressure, widening career paths and opening up opportunities for tailor-made supervision.

Background. The extension of the right to confer a doctorate (i.e., *ius promovendi*) is part of a broader movement to promote internationalization of the Dutch academy (Science Vision 2025). **According to Dutch law** (Article 718, paragraph 4, in Wet Hoger Onderwijs), **any person holding a doctoral degree is allowed to promote PhD students since 2017**. In 2016, Universiteiten van Nederland (UNL) [advised](#) to restrict IP to associate professors who are (1) a good researcher as well as (2) a good supervisor. In contrast, the Dutch National Young Academy (DJA) emphasized [\(in 2019\)](#) that the promotor should be the main supervisor, and requested to grant *IP* to assistant as well as associate professors (until five years after leaving their position to finish running trajectories). In 2022 an evaluation by Technopolis and CHEPS showed that extending IP (1) indeed helped to diminish the comparative disadvantage of the Dutch scientific system compared to others, (2) made many associate professors who obtained IP feel recognized for their work, and (3) had a positive effect on the quality of supervision since it offers more opportunities to build a supervision team. At UT, IP is limited to UHD1 and candidates must have acted as co-promotor for 3 finished PhDs for a demonstrable experience with promoting a PhD student ([2017](#)).