

#### Sample letter for inviting someone to become member of a Doctorate Committee This version is from November 28, 2022

Re: assessment of draft PhD thesis by [name PhD candidate]

Dear colleague, dear [name],

Soon [Mrs/Mr name candidate] will complete the manuscript for [her/his] PhD thesis, entitled “[title].” The research is supervised by [name, titles and affiliation of the other supervisor], and me.

Given your expertise in the field of research in question, I would like to invite you to sit on the Doctorate Committee to assess whether the thesis meets the requirements for obtaining the degree of Doctor or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) of Social Sciences from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

[Add in the letter to the potential chair an additional invitation; your justification can be elaborated] I would greatly appreciate it if you will also take on the chairpersonship. [Mrs/Mr name candidate]'s research is related to your research, you are an expert in this field, and similar research is rarely carried out within the Faculty of Social Sciences.

If you accept the invitation, your candidacy is submitted to the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences. After appointment of the Doctorate Committee and approval of the thesis by the supervisors, the manuscript is sent via the Hora Finita Doctoral Examination System. It is anticipated that you will receive the manuscript within [one month].

You provide your assessment through Hora Finita; please do so well within 30 days. You will give your assessment by either not recommending or recommending that the candidate be admitted to the defense.

* If your assessment is positive, you will add a relatively brief explanation. You may offer suggestions for the candidate or supervisor, but these are not conditional on your judgment. Moreover, in the event of a positive evaluation, the dissertation is not intended to be changed in terms of content; however, minor changes such as correction of typo's, a single sentence that does not flow well, incorrect Internet links, and updating a reference when a paper has been published are allowed.
* In the case of a negative assessment, please give a detailed explanation. This helps to prepare and conduct the discussion in the Doctorate Committee.
* When all assessments are received and they are unanimously positive, the chair writes a reasoned recommendation to the Dean. This recommendation is expected within thirty days of receiving the manuscript. If the assessments are not unanimously positive, the chair will convene the Doctorate Committee for deliberation.

The date of the defense and degree ceremony is determined after the manuscript has been approved.

The website of the Graduate School of Social Sciences provides information on the requirements set by the Faculty of Social Sciences at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Please have a look at <https://vu.nl/en/about-vu/more-about/the-graduate-school-of-social-sciences> > Requirements, and in particular to the documents:

* Assessment of the quality and scope of the PhD thesis, including a rubric
* Rules for the PhD thesis

Prior to the submission of the draft thesis the candidate submits a PhD portfolio. This portfolio includes information on

* compliance with rules for the implementation of the investigation (data accountability; ethics test of research; authorship – compliance with rules for the research; open access to the thesis; duration of the research);
* quality of the PhD candidate as researcher (plagiarism check of thesis; presenting and discussing the research; scientific attitude), and;
* training followed by the phd candidate.

You are not asked to assess the portfolio. You may ask the chair of the Doctorate Committee or the Graduate School (graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl) to see this portfolio.

I hope for a positive answer!

Kind regards,