

PhD programme for professionals

Utrecht Centre for Pharmaceutical Policy and regulation

Background

The Utrecht Centre for Pharmaceutical Policy and Regulation offers an international high quality PhD-programme for professionals with several years of relevant work experience. The unique format of the programme combines academic research and public health practice requiring candidates to use their work experience, data and policy issues as input for their PhD-thesis.

The Utrecht Centre is a leading group for independent multidisciplinary research which links drug regulation, pharmacoepidemiology, public health and policy analysis. The Centre is based at the Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Clinical Pharmacology of Utrecht University in the Netherlands, an internationally acclaimed research institute, and works closely with many well-known international partners such as the World Health Organization and the European Medicines Agency as well as with national partners such as the Dutch Medicines Evaluation Board and the National Health Care Institute.

Research themes

The work of the Centre concentrates on the design and evaluation of pharmaceutical policies with a focus on Global Health, Drug Regulatory Science (e.g. drug approval) and health technology assessment (e.g. drug access, pricing and reimbursement).

What do we offer?

- A Part time multidisciplinary PhD-programme; duration of 3-5 years depending on available time and individual effort; the final PhD thesis should consist of an appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods resulting in 6-7 papers suitable for publication;
- A combination of online and face-to-face supervision by acknowledged researchers in the field of drug regulation, pharmacoepidemiology, health technology assessment and pharmaceutical policy analysis;
- A stimulating research environment including regular courses and other meetings (eg. Pharmaceutical Policy Analysis summer course, annual Winter meeting)
- Remote access to library and other facilities of Utrecht University;
- Unfortunately no financial support for travelling, open access publications and courses can be offered.

Candidate Profile

To be eligible for a PhD-research position within the centre, a candidate should:

- Hold a Master's degree or equivalent in a medical/pharmaceutical/economic/public health or related subject;
- Have at least three years of work experience in a related field;
- Be able to use their work experience and work-related data for their PhD; Be willing to think out-of-the-box and enjoy a multi-disciplinary approach to research questions;
- Be able to work independently and as part of a team and show initiative in each role;
- Be a 'learner' who proactively shares knowledge and welcomes feedback;
- Have good communication skills in English, both written and oral;
- Have basic data analysis skills and basic understanding of epidemiology and biostatistics;
- Be able to write academic research papers.

Features of a typical PhD thesis in this program

- 6-7 original papers, at least 3 should be published / accepted in peer reviewed journals;
- Good mixture of different methods, both qualitative and quantitative research;
- High-level introduction and discussion chapter;
- An example of a typical and more detailed workplan is annexed.

Further requirements and terms of reference

- Candidates should commit to visit Utrecht at least 2 times per year for progress discussion meetings, including at the time of the pharmaceutical policy analysis summer course and during the annual Winter meeting. These visits will include individual and group discussions;
- Candidates may be required to undertake individual courses at Utrecht University or at other (academic) institutions or by correspondence based on discussions with supervisors. This will be at the candidates own expenses;

- Candidates should provide a commitment statement from their employer that their employer supports the application;
- Formal evaluation of the progress of each PhD student will take place after 1 year with a go/no go decision to be taken;
- Accepted applicants may be asked to contribute to the departmental teaching, research and supervision of Master students (topics related to their own work);
- The number of positions per year is limited to a few students. Initial assessment of candidates will be done on the basis of research theme, work experience, academic background, and writing skills;
- The next group of students will be admitted in January 2022;
- Applicants will receive an acknowledgement within 2 weeks after their application and a decision letter within 2 months after the application deadline.

Application

If you wish to apply for the PhD programme, please send a recent CV, three written references, an employer commitment statement, a writing sample of a recent paper or report and a personal statement before 26 September 2021 to: Dr. Rianne van den Ham (h.a.vandenham@uu.nl)

Annex: Example of typical workplan

Year 1:

- Initial assessment of skills, capabilities and deficiencies;
- Plan and undertake course work to remedy deficiencies;
- Review past work and publication experiences in relation to PhD programme;
- Agree on topics of interest for PhD papers;

- Prepare a research protocol for at least one study of interest;
- Analyse data and write a draft manuscript for this study;

- Attend summer school and Winter meeting.

Year 2-4:

- Undertake research activities encompassing quantitative, qualitative, and policy analysis methods resulting in papers of publishable standards;

- Each research project should be accompanied by a literature review and annotated bibliography.

Final Year:

- Finalise papers for publication in journals and thesis;

- Write introduction, discussion and conclusion linking the body of work into a coherent whole.