Hora Finita
manual for PhD supervisors

University of Groningen
Groningen Graduate Schools
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Table of contents

1. Introduction

Hora Finita is the online PhD management system of the UG, in which all PhD projects are registered, monitored and processed from start to finish, thereby following the UG PhD Regulations. It is used, consulted and updated by the faculty Graduate Schools (GSs), the research institutes, the supervisors and the PhD candidates themselves. PhD candidates may access only their own file in Hora Finita. Hora Finita gives PhD candidates an up-to-date insight into the progress of their PhD project. Basic details of a PhD project such as, for instance, a copy of the Training and Support Plan are uploaded to Hora Finita at the start of a PhD trajectory and can be accessed and viewed instantly.

Hora Finita is also used to schedule all Results and Development interviews, with timely reminders sent to the PhD candidates and the supervisors. Upon completion of the interview, the interview forms are stored in Hora Finita, after which the PhD candidate can access them at all times.

Moreover, all training activities are recorded in Hora Finita by the PhD candidate. Details of activities can be entered throughout the complete length of the trajectory. The supervisors are subsequently notified by the system to approve these activities and sign off on the credits involved.

Finally, all formalities leading to a thesis defence are digitized in Hora Finita. This process is put in motion when the PhD candidate uploads their manuscript to Hora Finita. Once it has been digitally approved by the supervisors, all parties involved en route to a defence - from members of the Assessment Committee to the PhD Degree Registration Office - are informed by Hora Finita in due time about their respective duties and the (online) actions required.

In short, Hora Finita is used for a multitude of applications and plays a central role in a PhD project, from start to finish.

This Hora Finita Manual
Clearly, Hora Finita is an important management system during the trajectory of all our PhD candidates. A supervisor will also need to work with Hora Finita. Therefore, this manual was developed as a supervisor guideline throughout the trajectory. The different steps in which action of the supervisor is required, are all listed in this manual, in chronological order. In case the manual does not suffice your needs, please reach out to your faculty Graduate School for help.

2. Start of the PhD Trajectory

At the start of a PhD trajectory, two things are important: the registration of the PhD candidate in Hora Finita and the uploading of the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) in Hora Finita. Besides that, in most cases, the start of a PhD trajectory does not request too much of an engagement with the Hora Finita management system. However, supervisors are advised to take a look at Hora Finita to check whether the new PhD registration is visible for them in Hora Finita.

2.1. PhD candidate registration
Once a PhD candidate has been admitted to the Graduate School, it is important to register them in Hora Finita.

The faculty Graduate School, with the exception of the GS of Medical Sciences (GSMS), will register the new PhD candidate in Hora Finita. At the GSMS all new PhD candidates will register themselves in Hora Finita.

Part of the registration of a PhD candidate is the registration of the supervisory team. After completion of the registration, the supervisors will be able to see and follow the PhD trajectory in their Hora Finita environment.
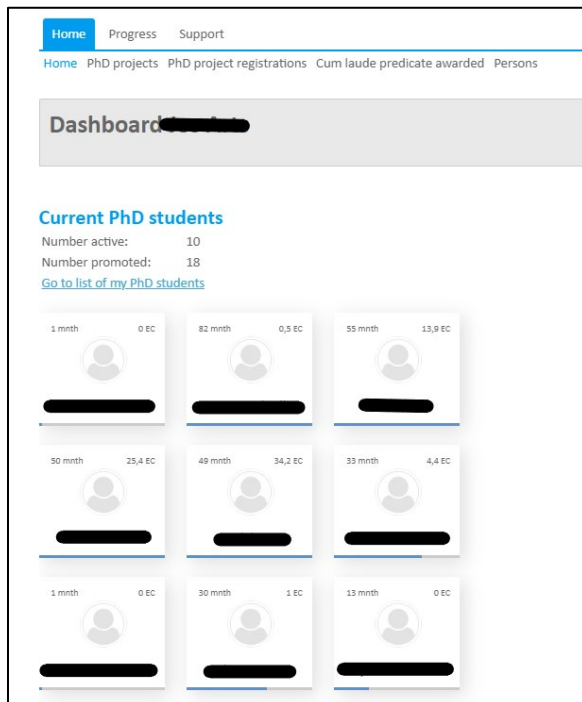
Picture 1 – HF dashboard for supervisors displaying active PhD trajectories
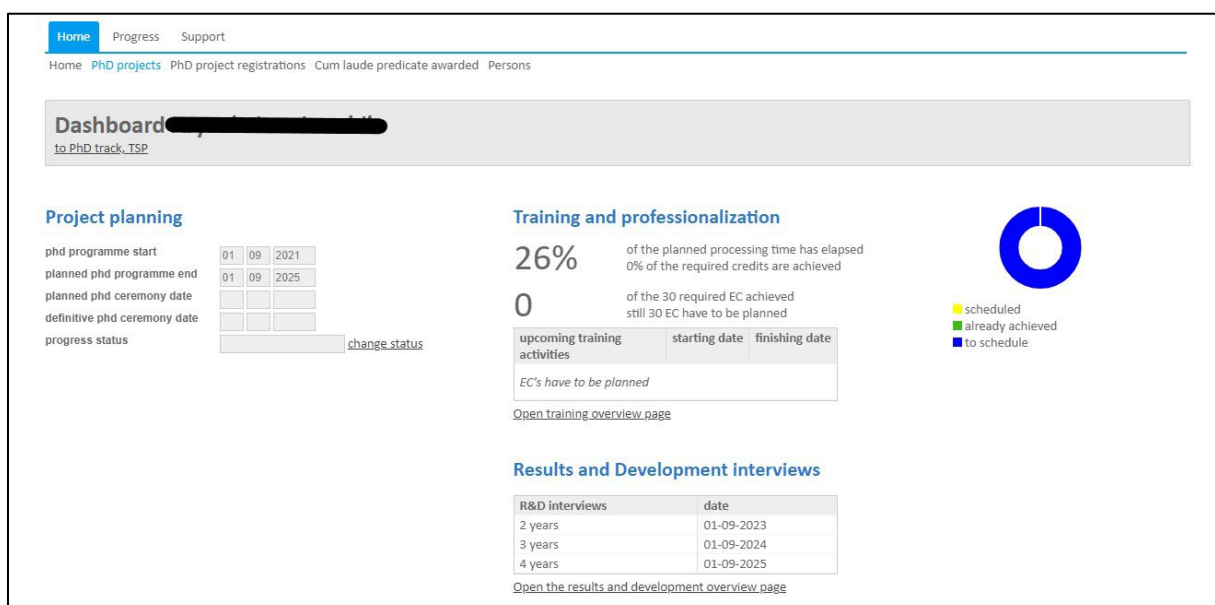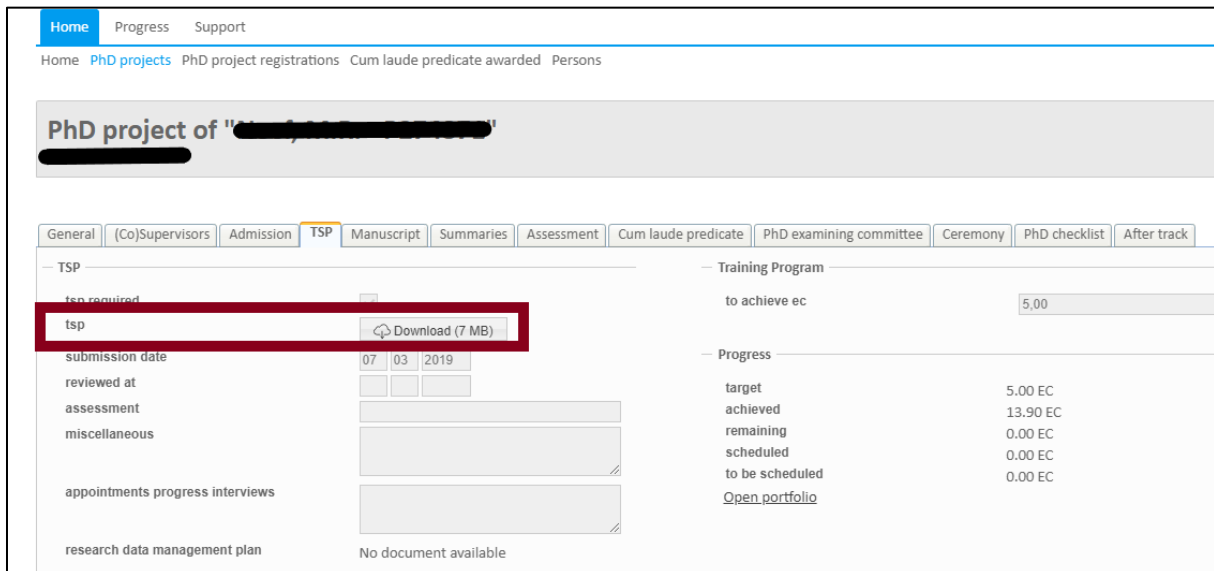
Picture 2 – HF for supervisors displaying a specific active PhD trajectory

2.2.   Uploading the Training and Supervision Plan

The Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) is a plan that is developed together by the new PhD candidate and the supervisors. The TSP described the research project and the training programme of the candidate, thereby also highlighting a time plan for carrying out all the work. The purpose of the TSP is to give the PhD candidate a means to mark progress, and a realistic idea of what his/her own timeline will look like over the course of the project. The TSP also serves as a contract between PhD candidate and their supervisors, covering expectations for research, educational activities, supervision and, if applicable, teaching responsibilities.

Each new PhD candidate has to fill out a TSP somewhere at the start of the PhD trajectory. Exact deadlines for handing in this TSP differ per faculty Graduate School. However, all have in common that the plan needs to be approved, signed, and uploaded in Hora Finita at the beginning of the trajectory. Supervisors should refer to their faculty Graduate School for the exact procedure regarding the uploading of the signed TSP in Hora Finita.

Picture 3 – HF for supervisors displaying the sub-tab where the TSP is uploaded

3. During the PhD Trajectory

3.1.   PhD training activities

During the PhD trajectory the PhD candidate is – besides the writing of the thesis – expected to follow a professional training programme. This programme is discussed and developed within the supervision team and generally consists out of course work, research related activities, and organizational activities. Once an activity is completed, the PhD candidate is required to list it in Hora Finita, in their so-called "portfolio". As such, they build their portfolio throughout their PhD trajectory.

Supervisors can see all the activities that the PhD candidate fills out in the portfolio. The supervisor has to go to PhD project > Portfolio and an overview of the activities will appear.
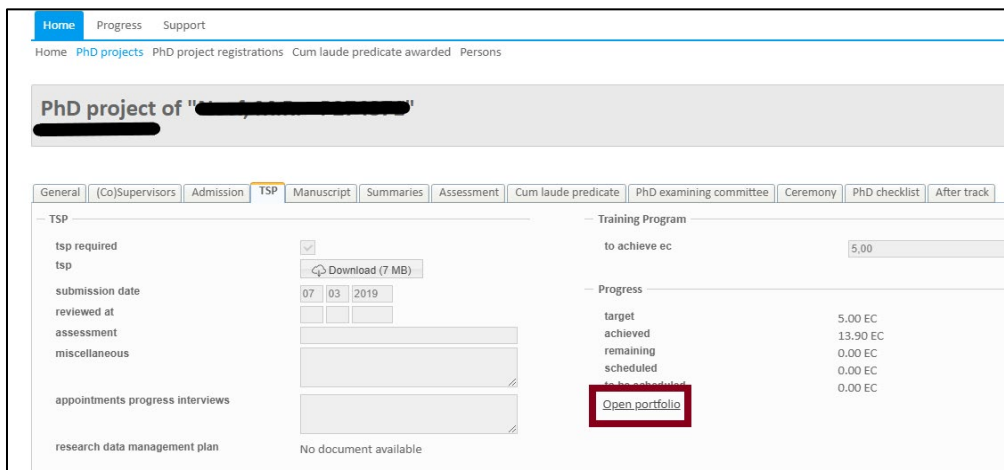
Whereas the PhD candidates fill out the activities in their portfolio, the supervisors will have to approve these activities and thereby accept the corresponding credits assigned according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), where 28 h= 1 credit. For activities organized by the UG,

the number of credits is fixed (see for example the course description). Some faculty GSs also suggest credits for individual activities like making a poster. It is the supervisor, however, who has to approve the activity and credits, in order to allocate the ECTS to the PhD candidate. Supervisors should make sure that they have approved all training activities of the preceding period before each Results and Development interview so that the PhD candidate can include them in the report of the interview.

The supervisor can see which activities still need approval by looking at the 'approved' column in the overview. For the approval, the supervisor has two options:
- Select multiple activities in the overview and approve them all at once ("approve selection")
- Click on the specific activity > a more detailed overview of the specific activity will follow > approve the specific activity

Note: supervisors have to choose the date of the activity that will appear on the certificate; they can choose the starting or the end date or fill in any date manually.
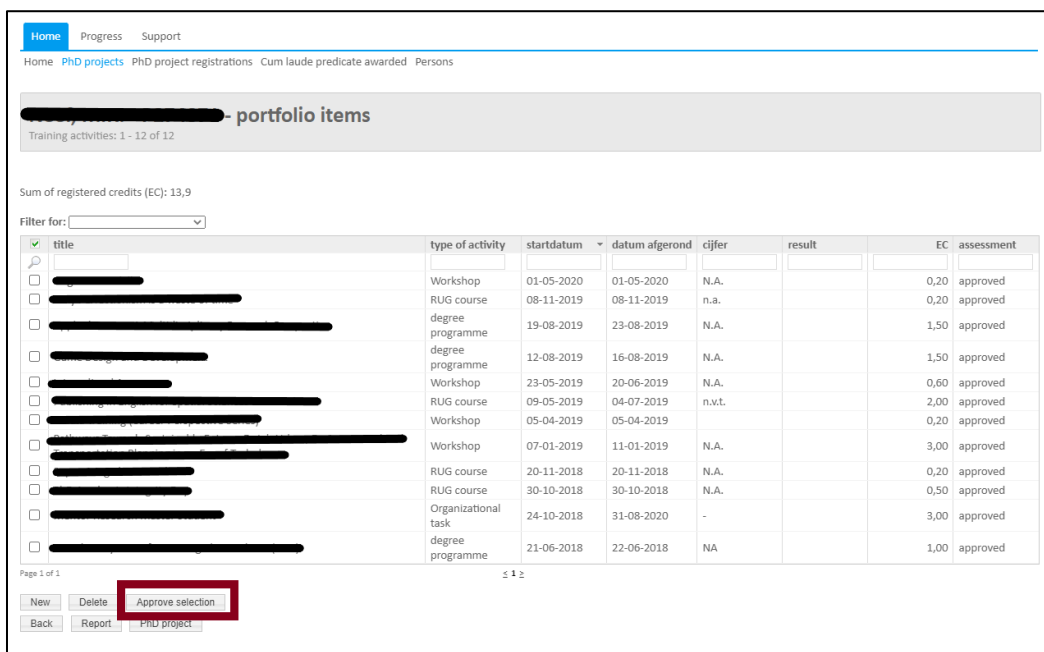
Picture 4 – HF for supervisors displaying the sub-tab where to find the PhD candidate's Portfolio
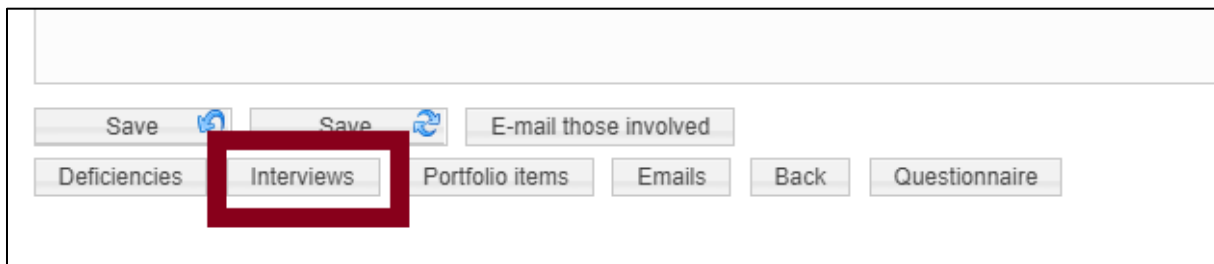

Picture 5 – HF for supervisors displaying the sub-tab where and how to approve activities within a PhD candidate's Portfolio

3.2.   Results & Development (R&D) interviews

During the Result and Development interview, the PhD candidate and the supervisors discuss the progress of the research project as a whole, reflect on the PhD candidate's past performance and personal development, and set targets for the coming period, including training activities that will be followed. In addition, the PhD candidate and the supervisors discuss (the development of the) competences of the PhD candidate and their future career plans.
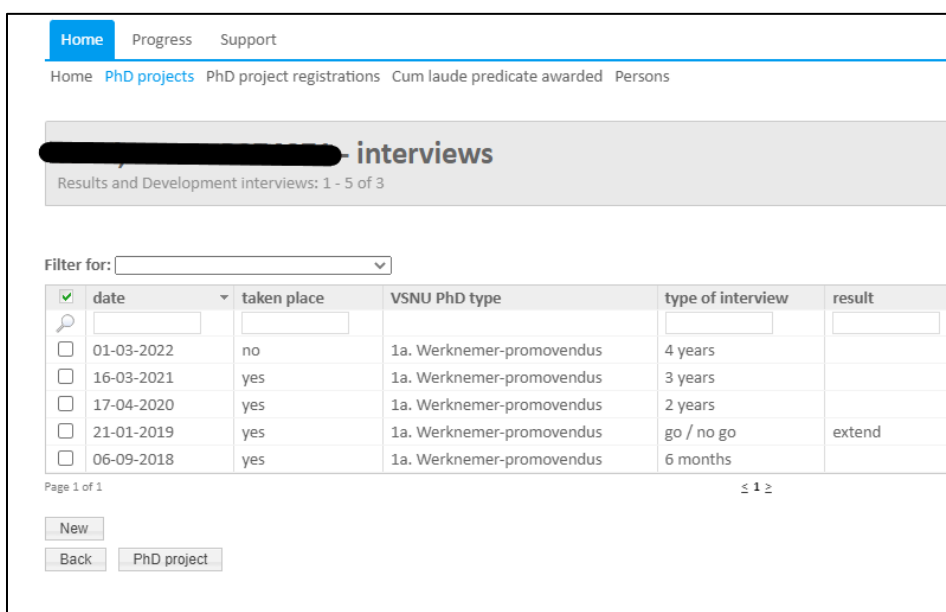
In line with university regulations, meetings are scheduled after 6 and 9 months, and after 2 and 3 years of the project. If a project takes longer than 4 years, the GGS advises to also schedule an interview addressing this issue after the fourth year. The faculty Graduate Schools will make sure to plan these meetings in Hora Finita upon registration of the PhD candidate. Subsequently, the PhD candidate and the supervisors will be sent a reminder for the R&D interview one month in advance. The form that needs to be filled out for the R&D interview can be found in Hora Finita or by clicking on this Intranet-link.

When a supervisor wants to see the R&D cycle and schedule in HF, they should go to the bottom of the dashboard page where they will find the following tabs:

Picture 6 – HF for supervisors displaying the sub-tab where to find the R&D interview cycle and schedule

Clicking on this button will lead the supervisor to the R&D cycle and schedule, showing which R&D interviews already took place and which are still scheduled for the future.
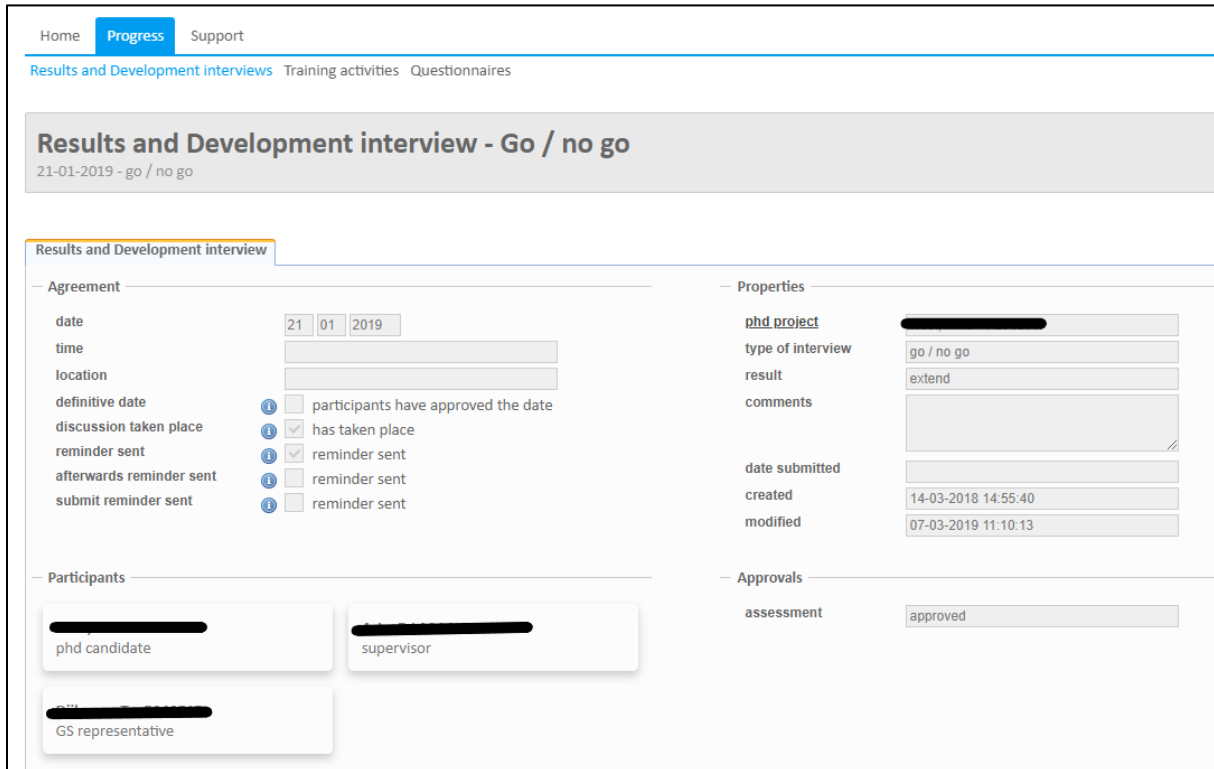

Picture 7 – HF for supervisors displaying the R&D interview cycle and schedule

Then, by clicking on a specific R&D meeting that already took place, the details of the meeting will be displayed, including the filled out and uploaded R&D form. The PhD candidate and supervisors need to make sure that all parties sign the R&D form and the first supervisor uploads the pdf version. Some faculty Graduate Schools require that the form is sent to them (please use Surfilesender because it contains sensitive personal data) and they will then make sure to upload the R&D form in Hora Finita.
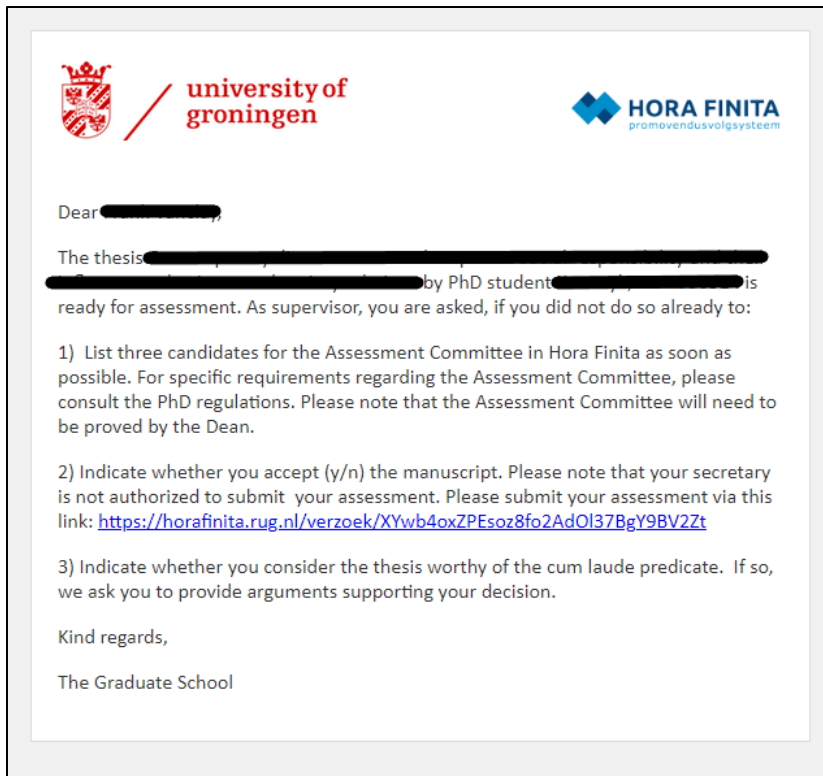

Picture 9 – HF for supervisors displaying the details of a specific R&D interview

4. Final Phase of the PhD Trajectory

4.1. Uploading the thesis

Once the PhD candidate and the supervision team agree that the manuscript is finished and the PhD trajectory can be concluded, it is time for the PhD candidate to upload the manuscript.

After the manuscript is uploaded, the supervisors receive an email from Hora Finita with a link to the assessment page. Here they can download the thesis and upload their assessment and motivation.

Picture 10 – HF for supervisors displaying the email to assess the thesis of the PhD candidate

4.2.   Approval of the thesis by supervisors

The supervisors must determine whether the writings meet the standard of the PhD thesis, that is, whether the quality and quantity of the work are sufficient to form a substantial contribution to academic debate in a particular discourse and demonstrates that the PhD candidate has become a good, independent and reliable scientist. In most cases, the PhD candidate will only upload the manuscript after the supervisors have agreed to its content. This means that giving the approval of the supervisors in Hora Finita can be done rather quickly.
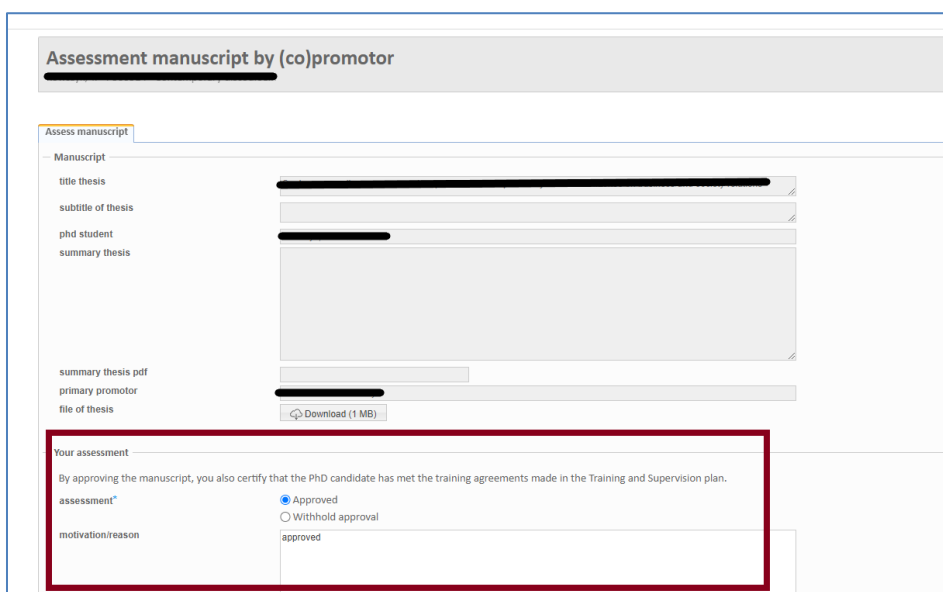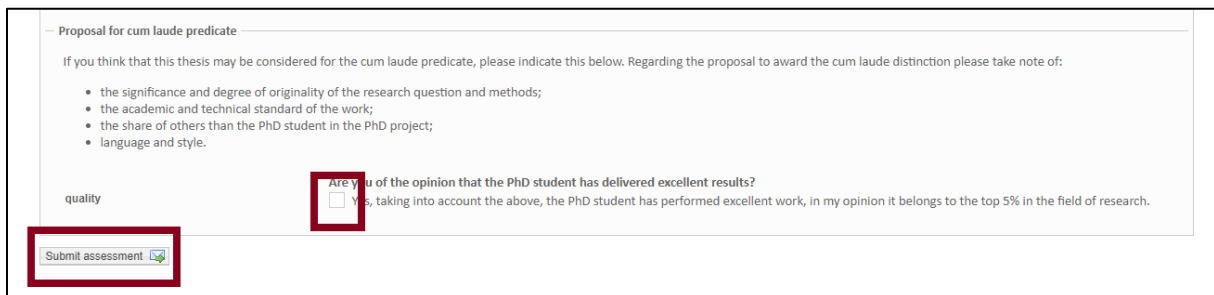

Picture 11 – HF for supervisors displaying the assessment page for the thesis of the PhD candidate

Once all the supervisors have approved the manuscript, Hora Finita will send out the following emails:

- Email to the PhD candidate to inform that the manuscript has been approved
- Email to the faculty beadle, who will subsequently assist the Dean with the installment of the Assessment Committee
- Email to all supervisors to inform them that all supervisors approved the manuscript and that they should propose the Assessment Committee if they have not already done so.

4.3. Cum Laude

When approving the manuscript of the PhD candidate, the supervisor is also asked to indicate whether they consider the thesis worthy of the *cum laude* predicate which in the Netherlands is given only to the top 5-7% of dissertations. If so, they must motivate this in a detailed fashion.
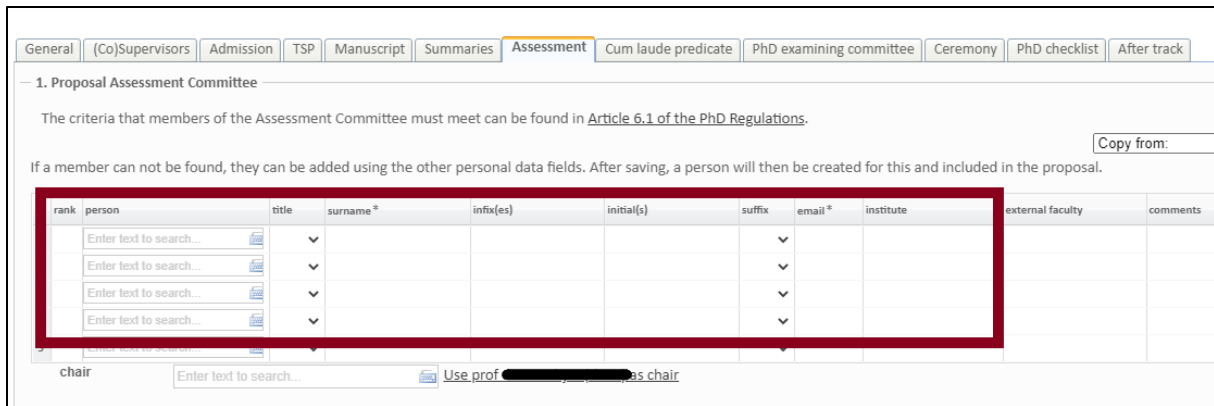

Picture 12 – HF for supervisors displaying the cum laude checkbox

The Assessment Committee will also be asked to indicate whether they consider the manuscript worthy of the *cum laude* predicate, however their judgment will only be considered if at least one of the supervisors has also given a positive advice on the conferral of the *cum laude* predicate. If all Assessment Committee members agree on the *cum laude* predicate, they are asked to suggest referees. The faculty beadle will then together with the Dean follow up on the *cum laude* procedure and request the opinion of at least two referees. Hora Finita will send the faculty beadle and the PhD degree registration office a message about the proposed *cum laude* predicate and the eventual decision. Subsequently, the faculty beadle will take care of further communication with the first promotor.

4.4. The Assessment Committee

The primary supervisor is expected to suggest names for the Assessment Committee and check that they are willing to serve on the Committee. Note that the Assessment Committee members do not have to be part of the PhD Examining Committee as well but it is customary that they are invited. The names of the proposed committee members should be entered by the primary supervisor in the field under the tab 'Assessment'. Once the primary supervisor has made the suggestions and saved the names, an email will be send by Hora Finita to the faculty beadle listing the suggested Assessment Committee members. After approval of the manuscript by the supervisors (see in the above) the faculty beadle will install the Assessment Committee.

Picture 13 – HF for supervisors displaying where to propose assessment committee

The members of the Assessment Committee are asked to assess the manuscript within 4 weeks and enter their assessment in Hora Finita. Besides the official assessment, which will only go to the Dean, the Assessment Committee members will also be asked to give remarks or suggestions for changes meant for the PhD candidate and supervisors. The faculty beadle will keep track of this process. As soon as the Assessment Committee has issued a positive assessment (the approval should be unanimous), all supervisors and the PhD candidate will be informed by email *via* Hora Finita. This email also provides the suggestions for changes from the Assessment Committee.

Picture 14 – HF for supervisors displaying email with approval and suggestions assessment committee concerning thesis of the PhD candidate

Setting the defence date

Once the manuscript has been sent to the Assessment Committee, the PhD candidate is invited to choose a preliminary date for the defence in Hora Finita. Obviously this date should be fixed in agreement with the supervisors.

4.5.   Approval of the propositions

Once the supervisors have approved the manuscript, the PhD candidate can submit the thesis propositions in Hora Finita. The supervisors will be sent an email with a link to the assessment page, where the propositions will be listed. This email 'Stellingen van promotietraject [PhD name] - [Title]' is also visible in the dashboard of the promotor under 'Most recent messages'.

Picture 15 – HF for supervisors displaying page mail propositions Most recent messages

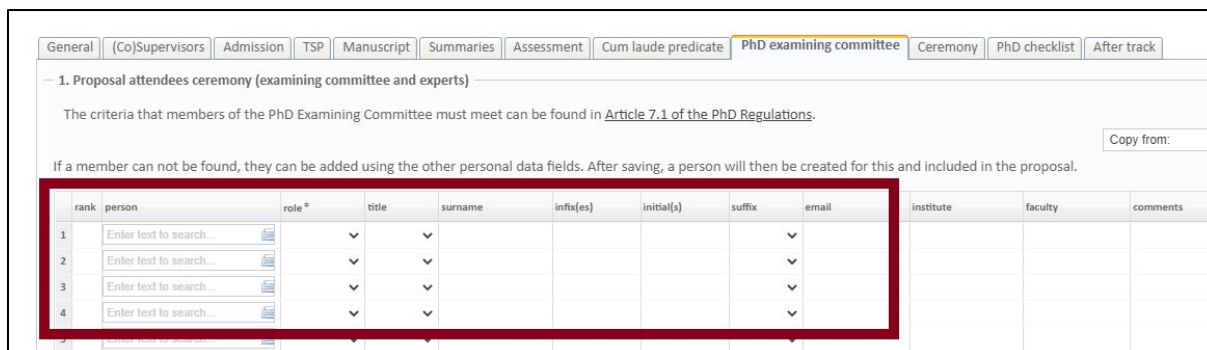The supervisors have to assess whether the proposed propositions are defensible or not.

Picture 16 – HF for supervisors displaying page for propositions assessment

4.6.   The PhD Examining Committee

Once the Assessment Committee has approved the manuscript, the PhD Examining Committee can be composed. The primary supervisor is requested to propose members for the PhD Examining

Committee in Hora Finita under the tab 'PhD Examining Committee' after having verified that they are available on the envisioned defence date.

Picture 17 – HF for supervisors displaying where to propose examining committee

On behalf of the Dean, the faculty beadle invites the PhD Examining Committee members and keeps track of acceptances.

4.7. Presence in the Aula

About two months before the defence date all PhD Examining Committee members and supervisors receive an email with a link to Hora Finita asking them to indicate whether they will be present in the Aula (or another location of the ceremony) or participate online. If one of the supervisors or the secretary of the PhD Examining Committee will not be present in person, the GS will collect their signatures for printing on the PhD certificate before the ceremony.

4.8. Secured data repository

Before the PhD candidate can have the actual defense, it is important that the data that is collected and used during the PhD trajectory is stored in a designated UG repository. This is to secure that UG follows the GDPR guidelines regarding safe data management. Some faculty Graduate Schools have part of this process built in in Hora Finita (by means of questions and checkboxes, etc.). Supervisors should ask their faculty Graduate Schools about the process and steps for uploading data of the PhD candidate in the designated repository.

5. Hora Finita Actions Overview and Timeline for the Thesis Defence

Please find a timetable for supervisors below to learn what actions need to be taken by what party to secure a smooth final phase for the PhD candidate.

Action	What to do:
6 months before defence day	
1.	• Develop provisional assessment committee in Hora Finita • Read checklist in Hora Finita • Discuss and check educational programme (portfolio) in Hora Finita with PhD candidate. Make sure mandatory programme elements are successfully conducted • Check whether PhD candidate agreed with statement of scientific integrity • Develop awareness for need to archive data of PhD trajectory
3,5 months before defence day	
2.	• Approval of PhD thesis by supervisors in Hora Finita • Finalize proposal Assessment Committee in Hora Finita

	• GS invites the Assessment Committee to assess the dissertation • Develop provisional PhD examining committee in Hora Finita
2 months before defence day	
3.	• Approval of propositions by supervisors in Hora Finita
4.	• Finalize proposal for the PhD examining committee in Hora Finita • GS invites the Examining Committee to attend the defence • Examining Committee members and supervisors indicate in Hora Finita whether they attend in person or online
Defence day	

Furthermore, it is advised to also monitor the checklist at Hora Finita, this can be found at the dashboard of the PhD candidate (just scroll down). This a useful tool to see what has to be done by the supervisor, the PhD candidate or the Graduate School. For all questions regarding the PhD defence you can contact your faculty Graduate School.

Picture 18 – HF for supervisors displaying the checklist for supervisors