

Tasks and role of the ACLC PhD moderator

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Profile of the moderator

The role of the Director of the research school is to provide a safe and inclusive working environment for its personnel (i.e., the PhD) and monitor their progress until completion of their project. In this regard, the Director also has a mentoring function. Within the ACLC, part of this role is taken up by the moderator. Each PhD candidate is therefore assigned a moderator. The moderator is a senior member of the ACLC, who in this capacity, represents the director of the ACLC (as the PhD is ultimately employed by the ACLC and not by the supervisory team). However, the moderator does not make any decisions with respect to the PhD-candidate and only conveys the decisions made by the ACLC director. The moderator is not directly involved in the PhD candidate's project. They are an ACLC scholar from a different department and are active in a different ACLC research group. In the unlikely situation where no eligible senior member is available, the ACLC director can evaluate whether it is appropriate to assign a moderator within the same research group as the PhD candidate.

Role of the moderator

The moderator guides and facilitates the PhD candidate's progress and functions as a mentor to the PhD candidate throughout their PhD trajectory. Their role is to listen to the PhD candidate, to provide an outsider perspective or external pair of eyes, and, if needed, they can help facilitate the communication between the PhD candidate and their supervisors. In case an issue arises, the moderator, in consultation with the ACLC director and/or coordinator, can provide support and assistance to the PhD candidate in an open, neutral, and easily accessible way and guide the PhD to the right people and/or resources (within the UvA Faculty of Humanities) who are experts in resolving such problems, such as the Arbodienst, labour union, student psychologists, and the confidential advisors.

In relating to, or mentoring the PhD candidate, each moderator is free to take on their role in a way they feel works for them and the PhD candidate. Crucially, the ACLC strongly encourages the PhD and moderator to have a conversation about their mutual expectations at the beginning of the PhD's trajectory.

Chairing of the intake, pilot, and progress meetings

The progress of all ACLC PhD candidates is monitored throughout the PhD track. PhD candidates have an intake meeting, a pilot (*go/no-go*) meeting, and annual progress meetings. These meetings are chaired by the moderator, who in that role ensures that these meetings are held in a structured and fair way in accordance with the [ACLCL guidelines](#). At the end of progress meetings, the PhD and ACLC moderator speak in private about the PhD candidate's overall progress and well-being (see below). After annual progress meetings, the [ACLCL progress report form](#) is sent to the ACLC director, who reads and also signs the form. The ACLC director attends the pilot meeting, which is of major importance in the PhD's trajectory. It is the ACLC director's role to announce during the pilot meeting whether the pilot is considered of satisfactory quality. After a successful pilot, the ACLC director signs a letter to request the extension of the candidate's status as a PhD candidate.

Meetings between moderator and PhD candidate

The moderator and PhD candidate hold semi-regular meetings throughout the PhD trajectory. Such meetings are meant to facilitate contact between the moderator and the PhD candidate so that the latter finds it easy to reach out to the moderator in case of any issues. How often meetings should

occur differs per situation, but the moderator is asked to approach the new PhD student in the first three months of their PhD trajectory to introduce themselves and to have a short introduction meeting. In this meeting, they explain the role of the moderator, and answer any questions that the PhD may have. After this, the moderator and PhD student are encouraged to meet at least yearly, or more often as necessary. The PhD student can always approach the moderator to keep them up-to-date and to ask any questions or raise issues. The moderator checks in with the PhD student at least once or twice a year. When a PhD candidate asks for more than three meetings per year, there may be an issue and it would be good to get the ACLC director involved (or someone else suitable).

Please note that simply asking how a PhD candidate is doing may not be enough to evaluate the PhD's situation. You may want to ask targeted questions, such as:

- What are the things that cause you stress in your PhD?
- How's your work-life balance? How is your workload? Are you taking holidays?
- Do you still enjoy doing your PhD?
- Are you able to prioritise your PhD dissertation and are you not taking on/assigned too many other responsibilities (including teaching duties)?
- (If the candidate is teaching a course) How do you experience teaching? Are there any challenges with regard to your collaboration with your co-teachers?
- How do you feel about the collaboration within your team? Have you found your place in the team?
- Do you have enough space to voice your opinion?

Other topics that can be covered are:

- Circumstances surrounding work, e.g. related to their office, working from home.
- Academic integrity, publication guidelines.
- Social safety, work culture, safe atmosphere.
- Relationship with colleagues.
- Relationship with supervisors.
- Personal issues that may interfere with work.

Social safety

The ACLC is committed to providing its members, and its PhD candidates in particular, a safe work environment. The ACLC expects all of its members to treat each other with respect and equality. The moderator can be the first point of contact for any issues relating to the progress of the PhD candidate that cannot be resolved with the supervisors. These issues may concern content-related disputes, but also academic integrity or social safety.

The moderator is also not (formally or otherwise) responsible for the way in which a situation of social unsafety is resolved. According to the guidelines of the faculty, the relevant research director is responsible for handling situations of inappropriate behavior if it concerns a report from a PhD candidate. The moderator, when receiving a report, forwards the report, if the PhD candidate gives permission, to the research director, who then processes the report. If the report concerns the research director, the moderator can scale up to the AIHR director. If the PhD candidate does not want the moderator to do anything, the moderator could also refer the PhD to one of the [FGW confidential advisors](#), HR and/or encourage the PhD to report to the research director themselves.

There is a range of people that the PhD candidate can talk to; some people may be better suited for certain issues than others. The PhD candidate can always contact the ACLC director, ACLC coordinator or confidential advisors directly (i.e., without necessarily involving the moderator). The current confidential advisors for undesirable behaviour at the Faculty of Humanities are [Eloe](#)



[Kingma](#), [Asli Ozgen](#), [Cock Dieleman](#), [Charlotte Jalvingh](#), and [Beyza Sümer](#). The confidential advisor for academic integrity for the University Quarter is [Josephine Hoegaerts](mailto:j.a.i.hoegaerts@uva.nl) (j.a.i.hoegaerts@uva.nl). More information on the confidential advisors can be found [here](#).

Finally, if there are any issues or if you do not feel comfortable being the moderator for a particular PhD candidate, please contact the ACLC director or coordinator.

Useful links

- [Social safety Support guide for staff](#)
- [Academic integrity at the UvA](#)
- [Confidential Advisors](#)
- [ACLCL authorship guidelines](#)
- [PhD progress interviews](#)
- [Pilot study](#)