Procedure to request for the right to supervise, or ius promovendi

On June 6, 2017 a new law has been passed in the Netherlands enabling that the ius promovendi can be awarded to persons with a doctorate other than Full Professors. The law came into effect in September 2017, and required an amendment of the Doctorate Regulations of the Vrije Universiteit. In Article 10 of the Doctorate Regulations of the Vrije Universiteit (annex 2 to 4), it is now stated:

2. Ius promovendi may be awarded to persons who hold a doctorate and who, in the opinion of the College of Deans, are competent to act as Supervisor.

3. In relation to a staff member who holds the position of Associate Professor, the fact that the requirement referred to in paragraph 2 has been satisfied may be determined on behalf of the College of Deans by the Dean of the faculty where the staff member concerned is employed. The Dean evaluates the competence of the staff member concerned in relation to the criteria set by the College of Deans for this purpose.

4. A staff member who holds the position of Associate Professor and who believes that the Dean of his faculty has, as a result of the evaluation referred to in paragraph 3, incorrectly assessed his competence in relation to the requirements set out in paragraph 2, may inform the College of Deans of this situation. He must submit a reasoned request to the College of Deans detailing why he believes this to be the case. Once the Dean in question has also given his account, the College of Deans will decide on the reasoned request submitted.

Being competent to act as Supervisor is operationalized by the College of Deans in terms of the following two criteria:

a. The intended Supervisor is a good researcher, as evidenced by positive assessments and recognition by peers, in the form of awards of external research funds or the evaluation as research proposals as ‘excellent’, or multiple peer-reviewed publications of excellent scientific quality.

b. The intended Supervisor has good supervision skills, as evidenced by at least two successfully completed PhD projects during which the intended Supervisor has served as co-promotor for the entire duration of the projects in question.
The faculties have been asked to implement a procedure for requesting the right to supervise, given the aforementioned overarching criteria of the College of Deans. These criteria provide the framework within which faculties can further operationalize the concepts of good researcher and good supervisor. Within the Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences much emphasis is placed on having a track record in the acquisition of external means for research. In relation to the ius promovendi this criterion has been narrowed down to external means that the Associate Professor has acquired for the purpose of the (complete) financing of PhD projects within a project or program conceived by him- or herself.

At the Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Science a standing advisory committee has been installed to evaluate requests for awarding the ius promovendi, consisting of the heads of the five scientific departments of the faculty, one of the two chairs of the PhD Education Committee and the portfolio holder for research in the Board of the Faculty, who chairs the committee.

A request to award the ius promovendi to an Associate Professor is made by a Full Professor of the Faculty (generally the Associate Professor’s manager, but this is not formally required) in the form of a reasoned letter in which the supporting Full Professor argues why the Associate Professor in question deserves the ius promovendi, together with a recent vita and fact-sheet of the intended Supervisor. These documents should be submitted via e-mail to the chair of the committee, who is currently Prof. Schuengel (c.schuengel@vu.nl), upon which he will call together the committee to discuss the proposal. The standing advisory committee advises the Dean about the request to award the ius promovendi. The advice is formally non-binding. The final decision is taken by the Dean.