

## Doctoral Programme Nursing Science

### **Background**

The Maastricht - Graz - Bern Doctoral Programme Nursing Science is a joint doctoral programme which began in 2000. This doctoral programme provides nurses with a structure to prepare a dissertation and it enables students work with one another. In the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland, such programmes are rare. The University of Maastricht has nearly 25 years of experience in doctoral programmes for nurses. Therefore, the joint doctoral programme is ideal for high-profile doctoral projects. The programme has an international character, with students converging from a variety of European countries.

### **Research topics**

Research is performed in the research fields of the departments which are offering the programme. Therefore, all projects focus on health problems from a nursing perspective and contribute to the degree of nursing knowledge via the use of clinical research methodologies. There are currently between four to five doctoral projects per topic being carried out, which equates to approximately 25 doctoral students. The supervisors are professors of the cooperating universities as well as other experts in relevant research topics. Currently, the majority of the doctoral projects are investigating care dependency, aggression, pressure ulcers, fall incidents and incontinence. Some projects deal with related topics such as quality of life, patient education, psychosocial health problems or malnutrition.

### **Thesis**

The thesis is usually a compilation of articles published in and / or submitted to international scientific journals. A doctoral thesis is equivalent to approximately five (Maastricht) or four (Graz) articles. While only a few subjects can be examined, the thesis and articles nevertheless contribute profoundly to general knowledge in nursing.

### **Programme**

The programme consists of four meetings per year, which alternate between Graz, Bern and Maastricht. During these meetings, the students discuss theoretical, methodological and practical problems that they are encountering in the course of their doctoral projects. The students participate in lectures focusing on methodological issues in qualitative and quantitative research, or they work collaboratively in workshops on topics which are relevant to their PhD. In group sessions, they also further their knowledge regarding scientific writing and the revision process.

### **Participants**

Students from Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany as well as other European countries, are currently participating in this doctoral programme. The majority of them have several years of experience in a variety of functions in nursing, in combination with various forms of further education in the field. They have all completed a masters programme, which is a prerequisite for the Doctoral Degree in Nursing Science.

### **Official degrees**

Students will finish their programme either at the University of Maastricht or at the Medical University of Graz. In Maastricht, the title is "*Doctor aan de Universiteit Maastricht (PhD)*". In Graz the title is "*doctor rerum curae*", which is read as "Doctor of Nursing Science".

### **How can one join the programme?**

If you are interested in joining the programme please contact one of the professors at the cooperating universities.