



# PhD Guide

Wageningen University



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WAGENINGEN **UR**

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# PhD Guide

Wageningen University



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WAGENINGEN **UR**

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# Preface

# 1

About 1900 PhD candidates from all over the world follow the Wageningen University PhD programme. This guide gives an overview of the Wageningen PhD programme and contains information for PhD candidates. For online information on the Wageningen University PhD programme, see [www.wageningenUR.nl/phd-programme](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/phd-programme)

This guide is also available at [www.wageningenUR.nl/phdguide](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/phdguide)

We hope that it will be of use to you.

Comments and suggestions related to improving the PhD Guide will be appreciated. To this end, please contact Jorika Peterse at PhD services:  
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## **Disclaimer**

We have done our best to provide you with correct information; however, no rights can be derived from this publication.

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# About Wageningen UR

## 2

The mission of Wageningen UR (University & Research centre) is 'To explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life'. The strength of Wageningen UR lies in its ability to combine the forces of Wageningen University and its application-oriented and field-based research institutes. Its strength also lies in the interaction of the various fields of natural and social sciences at Wageningen UR that allow for an integrated approach to both fundamental and applied research. This union of expertise leads to scientific breakthroughs that can quickly be put into practice and be incorporated into education.

About 6.500 staff members, 10.000 students and 1.900 PhD candidates from over 100 countries are working all over the world from a fundamental and applied perspective in the pursuit of this mission. They contribute to scientific development for the benefit of science, policy, the business world and the community at large.

Education and research at Wageningen UR come highly recommended. Student and PhD numbers are growing strongly. Students ranked Wageningen as the best university in the Reference Guide for Higher Education for the last eight years in a row. The top quality of research at Wageningen University is evidenced by the university's position within the top 6 most important citation indexes of its domain.

The above-mentioned qualities of Wageningen UR, combined with the university's pioneering research and innovative education, create an excellent setting for a PhD programme.

For more information visit [www.wageningenUR.nl/en](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/en)

### Feeling at home in Wageningen

Wageningen UR has a large international community. Clear information is the beginning of feeling at home for everyone who is new in Wageningen. This information can be found on: [www.wageningenUR.nl/en/International-students-and-staff.htm](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/en/International-students-and-staff.htm)

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# The Wageningen University

## PhD Programme

# 3

Wageningen University offers a four-year PhD programme. The focus of the programme is the PhD research project (setting up, planning and performing research, then writing it up and presenting it), which leads to a thesis and associated publications. The research is done under the supervision of scientific staff.

PhD candidates are also required to spend 15% of their time on training and education activities, such as courses, seminars, conferences and workshops to broaden their skills, deepen their knowledge and increase their exposure to the international scientific community. PhD candidates who are employed by a Dutch tax-paying organisation (like Wageningen UR) have the option to spend up to 10% of their time teaching.

### 3.1 Formal Admission to the PhD Programme

To be able to defend a PhD thesis, Dutch law stipulates that PhD candidates must be formally admitted to a PhD programme. Wageningen University requires candidates to obtain admission within 12 months (or 18 months at the very latest) after the start of the PhD project. Even when a PhD candidate is invited by a supervisor to come to Wageningen, he/she must still obtain formal admittance.

#### **To be formally admitted to the PhD Programme, the following requirements must be met:**

- 1 Proficiency in the English (or Dutch) language.

PhD candidates from non-Anglophone countries are required to submit an internationally recognised certificate of proficiency in the English language (TOEFL, IELTS or Cambridge). This certificate is not a requirement for PhD candidates who have completed their higher education with English as the

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language of instruction or can prove that their Dutch language skills are at the VWO level.

- 2 Evaluation of the PhD candidate's diploma(s) and academic records. For graduates holding an MSc degree from a Dutch university, this evaluation is a mere formality. Graduates from non-Dutch universities must have their diplomas evaluated by the academic board, that bases its decisions on the evaluations done by NUFFIC (Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education). When a diploma is rejected, the academic board decides, together with the supervisor, whether a qualifying examination is required and, if so, what it should consist of. If a qualifying exam is required, the candidate will not be formally admitted until he/she has passed this exam.
- 3 Payment of fees (applies only to certain categories of PhD candidates; see 3.3)
- 4 Approval of the Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) by the graduate school where the PhD candidate is enrolled.
- 5 Approval of the research proposal by the graduate school where the PhD candidate is enrolled.
- 6 Evaluation of the PhD candidate's progress and performance after approximately one year (or 18 months at the very latest). This evaluation (the 'Go/No-Go interview') determines whether a PhD candidate may remain in the PhD programme. For information about the procedure regarding the Go/No-Go interview see 3.6

## 3.2 Categories of PhD candidates

Wageningen University has five categories of PhD candidates:

### 3.2.1 Research Assistant

Research Assistants are employed by Wageningen University and selected through vacancy announcements and interviews. They are generally appointed for an initial period of 18 months. Contract extension for the remaining duration of the PhD programme (four years in total, as a full-time employee) is considered only if the first period has been positively evaluated (the Go/No-Go evaluation; there is a grievance procedure for "No-Go") and they are formally admitted to the PhD Programme.

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At the request of the parties involved, a fulltime appointment can be changed to a 0.8 FTE position (80% of full-time equivalent).

In some situations, it is possible to have an additional contract extension. For more information, please contact the Human Resource Management office.

Information on the Collective Employment Agreement or CAO (*collectieve arbeidsovereenkomst*) is available in English and Dutch at [www.vsnunl.nl](http://www.vsnunl.nl) and at the Human Resources Management office.

For advice, contact your personnel adviser. The CAO that applies to research assistants financed by NWO can be found on the NWO website: [www.nwo.nl](http://www.nwo.nl).

Wageningen University information for employees can be found on: [www.intranet.wur.nl/en/people/Pages/WUR-people.aspx](http://www.intranet.wur.nl/en/people/Pages/WUR-people.aspx) (an intranet website with limited access).

When a research assistant is appointed, he/she meets with the personnel adviser of the Human Resources Management (HRM) Office. The research assistant can contact this adviser concerning matters such as legal status, supervision problems or other personnel issues. Research assistants can also contact the PhD adviser of their graduate school when problems arise. To find the HRM adviser of your department, contact your chair group.

### 3.2.2 Staff PhD candidate

Staff PhD candidates are employees of Wageningen University who are given the opportunity to conduct PhD research besides their regular tasks.

### 3.2.3 Sandwich PhD candidate

Sandwich PhD candidates are international PhD candidates who spend part of their PhD at Wageningen University. Generally they are in Wageningen for the first and last 6-8 months of the project with possible short periods in between. In the intermediate period the PhD candidates do research in the home country or home institute under (co)supervision of a local supervisor. The first 6-8 months is spent elaborating on the proposal, taking courses and preparing for the research, while the final period is spent completing the thesis at Wageningen University. A sandwich PhD project requires agreed commitment and support from both the Wageningen supervisor and the home institute in the country of origin.

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The research proposal of a sandwich PhD candidate is often of direct interest to the home institute, dealing with a locally or regionally relevant topic. The preliminary research proposal must demonstrate that the applicant is competent in independent scientific research and has the qualities necessary to be enrolled in the PhD programme.

In addition to evaluating the sandwich PhD candidate on the basis of the general admittance criteria, Wageningen University will also assess:

- Financial support provided by the home institute
- Academic supervision provided by the home institute
- The curriculum vitae of the supervisor in the home country

### **There are two types of Sandwich PhD candidates**

- Sandwich fellowship PhD candidates: PhD project funded from outside Wageningen UR
- Sandwich employee PhD candidates: PhD project funded by Wageningen UR

#### **3.2.4 Guest PhD candidate**

Guest PhD candidates do their research at Wageningen University and are not employed by Wageningen University. They usually have a fellowship or grant from a local, national or international funding agency.

#### **3.2.5 External PhD candidate**

External PhD candidate are not employed by Wageningen University and do not do their research at Wageningen University. They will however defend their thesis at Wageningen University. The link with Wageningen University is primarily via the supervisor.

### 3.3 Tuition fee

The table below shows the tuition fee for PhD candidates who started since 01-01-2012.

Category	Tuition fee
<b>1 Research assistant</b>	No
<b>2 Staff PhD candidate</b>	No
<b>3 Sandwich PhD candidate</b>	
Wageningen University Funding	No
NWO Funding	No
Funding by a third party	€ 1000,- / month
<b>4 Guest PhD candidate</b>	€ 1000,- / month
<b>5 External PhD candidate</b>	No

Note: The tuition fee is levied by sciences groups / chair groups, which may specify exceptions.

The table below shows the tuition fee for PhD candidates who started before 01-01-2012.

Category	University fee	Departmental fee	Education budget
<b>1 Research assistant</b>	No	No	Yes
<b>2 Staff PhD candidate</b>	No	No	No
<b>3 Sandwich PhD candidate</b>			
Wageningen University funding	No	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>
NWO Funding	No	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Funding by a third party	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
<b>4 Guest PhD candidate</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
<b>5 External PhD candidate</b>	No	No	No <sup>2</sup>

1 External PhD candidates from a specified international education institute (ITC, IHE) who will defend their PhD at Wageningen University and who have a TSP, receive an education budget from Wageningen University.

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## 3.4 The Graduate Schools

The PhD programme is coordinated by six Graduate Schools of Wageningen University. Each graduate school identifies itself with a mission. The research groups of Wageningen University participate in one or more graduate schools. Researchers at other universities and research institutes can also be affiliated with a graduate school. The graduate schools have three main tasks:

- To stimulate and coordinate the development of a coherent university research programme within the mission of the graduate school
- To safeguard, monitor and stimulate the quality and progress of academic research (PhD candidates, postdocs and staff)
- To coordinate, develop and facilitate postgraduate education

Almost all researchers, postdocs and PhD candidates participate in a graduate school. The graduate schools of Wageningen University have been accredited by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and are therefore subject to quality control. Academic staff must meet the requirements set by the graduate school to be a member. PhD candidates become a member when their research proposal and Training and Supervision Plan is approved by the graduate school.

The Graduate Schools of Wageningen University together constitute “Wageningen Graduate Schools” (WGS). WGS is led and coordinated by the Dean of Sciences, Prof. J.A.M. van Arendonk. His responsibility is to stimulate scientific quality and cooperation between the graduate schools and to address matters of common interest. The dean is also advisor of the Executive Board.

The graduate schools of Wageningen University and their areas of research are described below.

### 3.4.1 Experimental Plant Sciences (EPS)

EPS is an inter-university institution for collaborative research and PhD/postdoc training at Wageningen University, Radboud University Nijmegen, Utrecht University, Leiden University, VU University Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam and University of Groningen. It was founded in 1992 in order to organise and coordinate the collaborating universities’ fundamental and strategic plant research, which aims at developing new principles in crop breeding, crop protection and crop growth for sustainable agriculture and horticulture.

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The mission of EPS is to organise the training of PhD candidates and postdocs to become self-reliant, skilled researchers in the field of basic and strategic research on healthy plants or plants affected by biotic or abiotic factors. The understanding of the functioning of plants offers new means for establishing sustainable agriculture and the sustainable production of food, feed, non-food and green energy and is also essential for the management of renewable nature resources.

EPS also aims to create a national platform for academic experimental plant scientists for mutual consultation, collaboration and coordination in research, research policy, fund raising, societal discussions and representation at the national and international levels, thus contributing to solutions for societal problems. The third aim is to create an international graduate schools network in north-west Europe for joint PhD activities and collaboration in research activities.

**Research programmes:**

- Developmental biology of plants
- Interactions of plants and biotic agents
- Metabolism and adaptation
- Genome biology

**Scientific director:** Prof. Dr A.H.J. Bisseling

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[www.graduateschool-eps.info](http://www.graduateschool-eps.info)

### 3.4.2 Production Ecology and Resource Conservation (PE&RC)

The C.T. de Wit Graduate School PE&RC is a collaborative research and PhD training institute of Wageningen University that works on fundamental and strategic issues related to agricultural production systems and sustainable land use. Within Wageningen UR, PE&RC collaborates with the institutes PRI and Alterra, and outside Wageningen UR with the Netherlands Institute of Ecology, the Plant Ecology Group of Utrecht University and Naturalis Biodiversity Centre.

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The mission of PE&RC is: "To understand the functioning of (agro-)ecosystems to enable the design and development of sustainable and multifunctional production and land use systems". Research in PE&RC can be divided into four overlapping themes that range from sub-individual to global levels of integration:

- Systems biology
- Bio-/geo-interactions and biodiversity
- Complex adaptive systems
- Innovative nature

Fundamental/strategic, disciplinary and interdisciplinary scientific research is conducted in an integrated fashion on issues related to both the agricultural and the natural components of the rural environment. Being a collaborative research network, the prime task of PE&RC is to facilitate and stimulate the scientific research process and PhD training/education of the participating groups. Academic research within PE&RC is a bottom-up activity that is largely carried out by the individual chair groups and its staff members.

**Scientific director:** Prof. Dr L. Brussaard

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### 3.4.3 Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology, Nutrition and Health Sciences (VLAG)

VLAG focuses on food technology, agrobiotechnology, nutrition and health sciences. VLAG is a cooperative endeavour involving research groups at Wageningen University and Maastricht University and five research institutes, namely Food & Biobased Research, RIKILT Institute of Food Safety, NIZO Food Research, TNO Quality of Life, and the RIVM (National institute of public health and the environment).

The vision of the graduate school is that society needs high quality scientists who are able to perform excellent science for impact. The mission is to develop the careers of young researchers and to promote research collaboration in food

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technology, agrobiotechnology, nutrition and health sciences areas. VLAG's comprehensive and challenging PhD programme trains its graduate candidates as highly qualified researchers in the areas of food technology, agrobiotechnology, nutrition and health sciences.

**Research programmes:**

- Sustainable production: bio(techno)logical production routes, new process principles and production systems
- Product and ingredient structuring and functionality: sensory perceived properties of foods and new ingredient functionality
- Food safety: toxicology and microbiology
- Nutrition, metabolism and health on cellular, individual and population levels

**Scientific Director:** Prof. Dr R.M. Boom

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### 3.4.4 Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)

Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS) brings together senior researchers, postdocs and PhD candidates in the social sciences and interdisciplinary fields of research. WASS is strongly internationally oriented in staff, students and research topics, works across disciplinary boundaries and multiple scales from a solid empirical basis, analyses social challenges and contributes to problem solving to improve the quality of life. WASS strives to make high-quality academic contributions, to critically engage in social debates and to contribute to societal problem solving and innovation. It offers in-depth training that provides PhD candidates with a suitable background for a career in academic and applied research, or other leading societal positions.

The mission of WASS is to bring international, comparative, disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches to bear on core challenges and concerns related to food quality and food safety, environmental protection and sustainable resource use, healthy lifestyles and sustainable livelihoods, and equal access to development opportunities. In these domains, WASS focuses

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on exploring and understanding the interaction between institutions, practices and social change, often in relation to the material-physical world of natural resources, technologies and artefacts, and from a diversity of theoretical perspectives.

**Research themes:**

- Disparities: poverty, wealth and distribution
- Responsible production and consumption: sustainability, health and quality
- Natural resources and the environment: conflicts, competition and collaboration
- Knowledge in society: contestation, boundaries and bridges

**Scientific Director:** Prof. Dr A.P.J. Mol

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[www.wageningenUR.nl/wass](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/wass)

### 3.4.5 Wageningen Institute of Animal Sciences (WIAS)

The mission of WIAS is to improve our understanding of animals and their various roles for mankind through fundamental and strategic research and the training of early stage researchers.

WIAS combines the research of twelve chair groups of Wageningen University and three contract research organisations of the external Animal Sciences Group: the Central Veterinary Institute (CVI), Wageningen UR Livestock Research, and the Institute for Marine Resources and Ecosystem Studies (IMARES).

The core of WIAS research encompasses the life science fields of zoology, genetics, immunology, epidemiology, physiology, nutrition and ecology. It offers an integrated and comprehensive approach of research on societally relevant animals and animals which are relevant for science itself. Since 2010 Chair groups are combined into larger managerial entities, called clusters, to stimulate cross disciplinary talk and strategic collaboration:

- Animal biology, nutrition and health
- Epidemiology, genomics and interactomics
- Adaptive animals and systems

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The WIAS education programme aims to develop in candidates 'T-shaped' skills: a combination of broad personal skills and in-depth scientific knowledge. This combination is essential for a PhD candidate to become an independent, professional scientist with a high academic level.

**Scientific Director:** Prof. Dr J.A.J. Verreth

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### 3.4.6 Wageningen Institute for Environment and Climate Research (WIMEK)

WIMEK was founded to bring together the environmental expertise of natural and socio-economic scientists at Wageningen University. In subsequent years, WIMEK played an important role in establishing a strong inter-university research school in the field of environment and climate research. This became the Netherlands Research School for the Socio-Economic and Natural Sciences of the Environment (SENSE), in which environmental research groups at ten Dutch universities, UNESCO-IHE and ITC currently participate. Wageningen University and VU University Amsterdam are the principal coordinators of the SENSE Research School ([www.sense.nl](http://www.sense.nl)).

WIMEK aims to develop an integrated understanding of environmental change and its impact on the quality of life and sustainability, and offers solutions for environmental improvement by (I) conducting innovative scientific and technological research, (II) offering PhD training and education, and (III) disseminating emerging insights, recent research results and novel technological and policy approaches to companies, regulating authorities and society.

WIMEK combines fundamental, strategic and participatory research in natural and social environmental sciences. WIMEK especially promotes interdisciplinary research focusing on the interactions between ecological, chemical and physical processes and their interactions with society, which is considered to be essential for a solid contribution towards analysing and solving complex environmental problems.

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Research in WIMEK concentrates on the components of the cause-effect-solution chain of environmental problems:

- The causes of environmental deterioration and climate change (human activities, sources and determinants of these activities)
- The behaviour of compounds within and transfer between the environmental compartments
- The effects on ecosystems and society
- The prevention, abatement and/or mitigation of the effects of environmental stress and natural resource depletion, including the use of natural processes based technologies

### **Research themes and research clusters**

WIMEK's research programme is fully embedded in SENSE. In its research programme, SENSE concentrates on environmental problems in a multidisciplinary approach. The four core themes reflect the main research effort of SENSE with regard to environmental change:

1. Environmental contaminants and nutrients
2. Environmental processes and ecosystem dynamics
3. Global environmental change
4. Sustainable development and change: actors, institutions and governance

SENSE has 15 research clusters. Each cluster is a network within SENSE that covers a number of specific topics. The researchers within a cluster communicate actively with each other on these topics, look for cooperation possibilities and organise events. Additional research clusters will be added as new fields of research emerge.

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## 3.5 The PhD Training and Education Programme

The PhD training and education programme entails the candidate to acquire in-depth knowledge of research issues, improving his/her general skills and broadening his/her scientific scope. This programme aims at integrating the PhD candidate's work into other research areas as well as placing this work in a societal context. The personal education programme and agreement on supervision are formulated in a Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) (this might not be applicable to external PhD candidates).

### 3.5.1 Training and Supervision Plan (TSP)

The PhD candidate and his/her supervisor must formulate a TSP in consultation with the graduate school, and submit it to the graduate school for approval within six months. The TSP formalises the education programme of a PhD candidate and contains agreements on training and education activities, optional teaching and supervision. The document must be signed by the candidate, the supervisor(s) and the chair of the graduate school's education committee. The TSP is a plan and PhD candidates may deviate from the original plan in consultation with their supervisors.

The requirements laid down in a TSP may vary between the graduate schools. Additional information can be obtained from the specific graduate school. In general, up to 15% of a PhD candidate's time is spent on training and education activities. PhD candidates can spend up to 10% on teaching duties/activities (i.e. lectures, supervision of practicals, MSc supervision). The remaining time is invested in research.

The budget to support the PhD candidate in financing training and education activities (i.e. courses or travel, boarding and registration expenses for conferences) is provided by the research group to which the PhD candidate is affiliated (minimum of €2500 for the 4-year period).

### 3.5.2 Training and Education Certificate

When the training and education activities of the PhD candidate meet the criteria set by the graduate school, he/she can request a Training and Education Certificate. This certificate must be requested using a form that is specific to the candidate's graduate school and details the training and

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education activities that the candidate has performed. This form must be submitted to the graduate school at least 15 weeks prior to the public defence of the thesis. Besides the certificate, which is awarded directly after the thesis defence with the certificate of the PhD degree, the education activities must also be listed in the thesis. For detailed information on the preparation of the certificate, contact your graduate school.

Note that the Training and Education Certificate determines the financial compensation for PhD supervision. If a PhD candidate does not obtain the certificate, this sum is reduced significantly.

### 3.5.3 Courses for PhD candidates

Wageningen University offers several types of courses for PhD candidates (see: [www.wageningenUR.nl/phd-courses](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/phd-courses)).

#### **Courses organised by graduate schools**

All graduate schools at WU have an education programme focused on their disciplines and field of study and they regularly organise PhD courses, summer schools and seminars. External PhD courses can also be followed and credited on the Training and Education Certificate.

#### **WGS Skills and Competence Courses**

WGS offers a variety of competence strengthening, research ethics, career building and language skills courses. For an overview of the courses offered see <http://applicaties.wageningenUR.nl/wever.internet/applications/wgs-Wageningenur/>

Competence and skills courses can also be followed elsewhere.

#### **Courses from the Wageningen University BSc / MSc programmes**

Courses that are offered as part of the Masters programme at Wageningen University can be taken free of charge as part of a Wageningen University TSP. See [www.wageningenUR.nl/study-handbook](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/study-handbook)

#### **Educational Staff Development**

Wageningen University staff courses on teaching can be found at [www.wageningenUR.nl/esd](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/esd)

These courses are not designed for PhD candidates with the exception of 'Orientation on teaching for PhD candidates'.

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## Wageningen in'to Languages

Wageningen in'to Languages offers languages courses as well as courses on scientific writing and presentation skills: [www.wageningenUR.nl/into](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/into). Courses at the PhD level are subsidised by WGS.

### 3.6 Requirements, Progress and Quality Control

PhD candidates are evaluated in various ways in order to maintain high quality PhD research.

- A. Before the start of the PhD programme: a check based upon the Wageningen University PhD programme entry requirements.
- B. During the PhD programme:
  - 1 The PhD candidate and supervisor formulate a TSP in consultation with the graduate school, and submit it to the graduate school for approval.
  - 2 The research proposal is evaluated by the graduate school and external referees
  - 3 Go/No-Go decision. Wageningen University admits new PhD candidates for an initial period of 12–18 months. The supervisor(s) decides within the first year (or 18 months at the latest) whether the candidate may continue the PhD programme under their supervision. It is one of the criteria that must be fulfilled to be formally admitted to the PhD Programme.

The evaluation is based on the candidate's quality and progress in research and training.

The Go/No-Go evaluation form should be used for this purpose. It is suggested that, at the start of the PhD programme, the PhD candidate and his/her supervisor(s) agree upon when the evaluation will be carried out, the criteria to be applied and the procedure to be used. If a PhD candidate wishes to object to the outcome of the evaluation, he or she can appeal to his/her graduate school. Research assistants will usually initially receive an 18-month contract. Only after a positive evaluation the contract can be extended for the duration of the PhD programme (an additional 2.5 years if the candidate is appointed to a full-time position).
  - 4 An annual or a biannual progress evaluation is conducted by the graduate school.
  - 5 All PhD candidates should have an annual evaluation on progress and development with supervisors (see below).

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- 6 A check on completion of the training and education programme is made when the thesis is sent to the thesis committee for evaluation (at least 15 weeks prior to thesis defence).
  - 7 On completion of the thesis, a thesis committee evaluates it and states whether it may be defended in public.
  - 8 A public defence of the thesis, after which the candidate can be awarded a doctorate degree.

### **Annual evaluation on progress and development**

Once a year every PhD candidate and his/her supervisor(s) have a formal discussion about the progress of the PhD programme. For research assistants and other staff this is called a 'R&O discussion' ('R&O' is the Dutch abbreviation for 'results and personal development') and aims at clarifying how the PhD candidate and the supervisor(s) are functioning in their respective roles. This discussion is bilateral, since the performance of both parties is analysed. It offers an opportunity to reflect on the working environment and to voice concerns. However, if issues arise in the meantime, a candidate should not wait until the evaluation meeting: it is important to discuss concerns when they occur so that they can be dealt with in a timely fashion. When needed, the graduate school can assist when issues do occur. Finally, graduate schools also evaluate the progress of PhD candidates during their annual visit to the chair groups or as part of annual or biannual surveys.

## **3.7 End terms of a Wageningen PhD degree**

Upon completion of the PhD programme, a PhD candidate must be capable of:

- 1 Functioning as an independent practitioner of science, as shown by:
  - a. formulating scientific questions, whether based on social issues or scientific progress
  - b. conducting original scientific research
  - c. publishing articles in leading journals, publishing books with leading publishers or making a technical design
- 2 Integrating his or her own research in, or placing it within the framework of, the corresponding scientific discipline and against the background of a broader scientific area
- 3 Placing the research aims and research results in a societal context
- 4 Postulating concisely worded propositions in scientific and societal areas, formulated in such a way that they are subject to opposition and defence

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## 3.8 Doctoral degree regulations Wageningen University

The Doctoral degree regulations (*promotiereglement* in Dutch) are formal regulations concerning the qualifications, criteria and procedures that lead to the conferring of the doctorate degree. PhD candidates are strongly recommended to download a copy from [www.wageningenUR.nl/phdregulations](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/phdregulations) and familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations at the onset of their PhD programme.

## 3.9 The Wageningen Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice

This Code contains five principles that all scientific practitioners like PhD candidates should observe individually, among each other and towards society.

- 1 Scientific activities are performed scrupulously, unaffected by mounting pressure to achieve.
- 2 Science's reputation of reliability is confirmed and enhanced through the conduct of every scientific practitioner. A scientific practitioner is reliable in the performance of his research and in the reporting, and equally in the transfer of knowledge through teaching and publication.
- 3 Presented information is verifiable. Whenever research results are publicized, it is made clear what the data and the conclusions are based on, where they were derived from and how they can be verified.
- 4 In his scientific activities, the scientific practitioner heeds no other interest than the scientific interest. In this respect, he is always prepared to account for his actions.
- 5 Scientific practitioners operate in a context of academic liberty and independence. Insofar as restrictions of that liberty are inevitable, these are clearly stated.

PhD candidates must act according to this principles from the first day of their PhD Programme onwards. It is important to read the entire text on: [www.wageningenUR.nl/code-of-conduct](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/code-of-conduct)

## 3.10 Timetable for a PhD Programme

Time period	Action	Who
Before the start of the PhD programme	1 PhD candidate approaches a graduate school, which facilitates contact with a potential research group. Find out more about the application procedure on the Application page <a href="http://www.wageningenUR.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/Application.htm">www.wageningenUR.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/Application.htm</a>	PhD candidate/ chair group
	2 Contact between PhD candidate and a professor (supervisor of a chair group) results in mutual wish for a new PhD project.	
	3 In case of a fellowship, the supervisor has to consult a HR advisor. Together they will check that all fellowship finances comes from outside Wageningen University (tax requirement). The only exceptions are labour contracts for Sandwich PhD candidates.	Chair group / HR advisor
	4 Chair group informs the graduate school about the new candidate.	Chair group
	5 The PhD candidate is registered in PROMIS (the university's PhD registration system).	Graduate school
	6 PhD candidates who did not obtain a Master's degree at Wageningen University submit a certified scan of their BSc and MSc diplomas, a list of grades and their passport to PhD services. Please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the diploma is not in English, Dutch, French, German, Spanish or Afrikaans, an official translation is required in addition to the scans of the original diploma's and list of grades.</li> <li>• If a PhD candidate does not hold a Master's degree or if the Master's degree does not allow admission to a PhD programme, the candidate must present other relevant higher education diplomas and/or proof of expertise. When diplomas are not accepted, the supervisor defines a qualifying exam which must be approved by the academic board.</li> </ul>	Chair group/ PhD candidate
	7 Non-Dutch PhD candidates from non-Anglophone countries must provide a certified document stating that the Master's education was in English or submit an internationally recognised certificate of proficiency in the English language (TOEFL, Cambridge or IELTS) to PhD services.	Chair group/ PhD candidate
	8 Contract or employment agreement with the department is signed, and tuition fees are paid (Fees are not required for all PhD categories). The contract or employment agreement cannot be signed without prior validation of diplomas and check of proficiency in English. In case requirements are not met, the contract or employment agreement will specify at what moment these requirements should be met. That moment is always within 18 months from the start of the PhD programme.	Chair group/ PhD candidate

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
Start of the PhD programme	PhD candidates can register at the Student Service Centre (at the Forum building) if they require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSc or MSc courses</li> <li>• Student sports card (not for PhD candidates who are employed at Wageningen UR).</li> </ul>	PhD Candidate
Within 6 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Submission of a TSP to the graduate school (this may not apply to external PhD candidates).</li> <li>2 Submission of the project proposal to the graduate school (this may not apply to external PhD candidates).</li> </ol>	PhD Candidate/ supervisor(s)
Within 9 months	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Approval of TSP.</li> <li>2 Approval of project proposal.</li> </ol>	Graduate School
Within 12 months (18 months at the very latest)	PhD candidate must have obtained full admission to the PhD programme. Full admission is obtained once the following criteria are met: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The Master diploma or result of qualifying exam must be approved and registered in PROMIS by PhD services.</li> <li>2 The proof of English proficiency (if applicable) must be approved and registered in PROMIS by PhD services.</li> <li>3 The TSP and research proposal (if applicable) must be approved and registered in PROMIS by the Graduate school.</li> <li>4 Positive Go/No-Go evaluation by supervisor. Note: communicated by supervisor to the graduate school and registered in PROMIS by the graduate school. Supervisor should download the evaluation form, from the "overviews" page of PROMIS.</li> <li>5 Letter stating formal admittance to the PhD programme (when all requirements mentioned above have been met).</li> </ol>	supervisors/ PhD candidate/PhD services  PhD Candidate/ PhD services  Graduate School  supervisor, Graduate School  Dean on behalf of the Academic Board
Annually	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 PhD candidates must re-register at the Student Service Centre (at the Forum building) each year if they require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSc or MSc courses</li> <li>• Student sports card (not for PhD candidates who are employed at Wageningen UR).</li> </ul> </li> <li>2 Annual progress and development evaluation (called "R&amp;O" meeting for employees of Wageningen UR).</li> </ol>	PhD candidate  supervisor/ PhD candidate
12 to 6 months before the desired date of public defence	Supervisor downloads the "Application letter for the public defence of a PhD thesis at Wageningen University" from the "overviews" page of PROMIS; PhD candidate submits that letter.	PhD candidate

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
6 to 3 ½ months before the desired date of public defence	1 Supervisor(s) approves thesis and propositions.	supervisor
	2 Supervisor books tentative date for public defence and adds opponents in PROMIS.	supervisor
	3 Supervisor submits request for appointment of a thesis committee (the supervisor can download this letter from the "overviews" page of PROMIS).	supervisor
At least 15 weeks before the desired date of public defence	1 Supervisor submits 5 bound copies of thesis and propositions (on a separate sheet) to the Doctorate secretariat of PhD services. This version of the thesis must contain: Table of Contents, Chapters, List of References, English Summary and General Discussion.	supervisor
	2 PhD candidate requests a Training and Education Certificate at the graduate school.	PhD candidate/ graduate school
	3 Thesis committee needs approval.	Academic board / Dean
At least 12 weeks before the desired date of public defence	Propositions must be approved by the Academic board. If the propositions have not been approved 12 weeks before the public defence, the defence will be postponed.	Academic board
After approval of the thesis by the committee (approximately 9 weeks before the date of public defence)	1 PhD candidate submits cover, the first four pages and a page summarising the education activities (issued by the graduate school) to the Doctorate secretariat of PhD services.	PhD candidate
	2 The Doctorate secretariat of PhD services approves the cover and the first four pages. Final date for public defence is confirmed.	Doctorate secretariat of PhD services
At least 2 weeks before the date of public defence	PhD candidate submits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 copies of the thesis to the Doctorate secretariat of PhD services</li> <li>• 10 copies and 1 PDF file of the thesis and an abstract in Word to the library</li> </ul>	PhD candidate
Just before the date of public defence	PhD candidate meets with Rector Magnificus or his representative.	PhD candidate/ Doctorate secretariat of PhD services

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### 3.11 The PhD candidate–supervisor relationship: communication and responsibilities

The PhD candidate is the driver of the project and carries responsibility for the content, quality and progress of the research. The supervisor can be seen as a back-seat passenger – advising, reflecting and facilitating – but he/she carries the final responsibility for quality and process. Here, quality refers to scientific quality, innovation, challenge and the feasibility of the project, while process refers to the progress of the PhD research as well as the steps to be taken during the PhD programme (e.g. approval of the project proposal and TSP by the graduate school, Go/No-Go procedure and annual evaluation meetings).

The PhD proposal can initially be written by the candidate, and the supervisor(s) must see to it that the proposal is submitted to the graduate school. Proposals that have not yet been peer reviewed will go through a review process. PhD candidates benefit from a well-conceived proposal, and must take a critical approach towards the proposal from the beginning. They should challenge supervisors about their suggestions for altering the proposal or, if they did not write the proposal, about what has been written. This requires thorough discussion with the supervisor(s). The proposal is a guide for the final goal: the PhD thesis. The thesis generally consists of four papers, an introduction and a synthesis.

Good and open communication between the PhD candidate and supervisor(s) is crucial, and tasks and responsibilities for both parties must be as clear as possible. For some PhD candidates and supervisors this means weekly meetings, while others may meet only when the need arises. Particularly at the start of the project, meetings at fixed intervals are recommended. There are many things to discuss even if there appear to be few new developments. The supervisor is usually an expert in the PhD candidate's research field and much can be learnt from him/her that cannot be learnt from scientific literature. The supervisor may profit from new insights and knowledge acquired by the PhD candidate. Supervision is crucial for a pleasant and successful PhD programme and supplementing the supervisor with a daily supervisor is highly recommended.

All this must be taken into consideration when completing the supervision section of the TSP.

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## 3.12 Solving Problems

Communication might not always be easy. This is understandable, since the PhD candidate is, in a sense, a 'scientific adolescent' who is breaking away from the 'scientific parent' (the supervisor). Miscommunication can lead to problems. Moreover, supervisors have limited time and the PhD research may be at the edge of their supervisor's expertise, which can lead to conflicting opinions on how to proceed. If this occurs, keep in mind that problems are undesired by both parties. The first person to experience a problem should approach the other with an open and constructive attitude rather than closing off and retreating. Closing off may be a natural reaction, but it will not help anyone and will not solve a problem.

It is best to discuss unpleasant feelings or problems when they occur. The PhD candidate should not wait until a problem becomes apparent to others or feel 'the underdog'. He/she has been selected by the supervisors to conduct the PhD research, so they have confidence in the candidate's capabilities and are committed to helping. Additionally, they have a profound interest in a successful completion of the project and are motivated to help solving a problem.

If a PhD candidate has difficulty approaching the supervisor with a problem, feels misunderstood or cannot find a solution to the problem, the best thing to do is to talk to others. Perhaps other PhD candidates (who may even have the same supervisor), members of staff or the professor of the chair group can provide good advice. If a PhD candidate desires confidentiality, this will be respected. In such a situation, a staff member or professor can take an intermediary role, or if needed, can have a serious 'closed door' conversation if a supervisor is not fulfilling his/her role. Moreover, the PhD programme coordinator of a graduate school can give advice and support in problematic situations. Unless stated otherwise, all issues will be dealt with confidentially.

Although this happens infrequently, a problem may appear to be unmanageable. Rather than resigning, a PhD candidate should ask his/her colleagues on the PhD council or the confidential advisers of the university or the graduate school, for a confidential conversation. All these people will listen and take or suggest appropriate action to help solve the problem.

Confidential advisers support WU staff and non-staff PhD candidates with work-related complaints and problems, including conflicts with colleagues, the daily adviser or supervisors, and problems related to the appointment or the work evaluation. PhD candidates should also contact a confidential adviser if they are subjected to undesired sexual attention, other undesirable behaviour or believe that they are being treated in a discriminatory fashion. The confidential adviser can take immediate, confidential action concerning a complaint. The confidential advisers have a supportive, advisory and guiding role. All information given to a confidential adviser is of course treated confidentially.

**Contact:**

Martie Wagenaar

E [martie.wagenaar@wur.nl](mailto:martie.wagenaar@wur.nl)

T +31 (0)317 48 45 53

**Graduate school confidential advisers**

PhD candidates may also contact their graduate school for a confidential conversation regarding issues related to the PhD training/supervision.

Confidential advisers of the graduate schools are:

<b>EPS</b>	<b>WASS</b>	
Douwe Zuidema T +31(0)317 48 49 26 E <a href="mailto:douwe.zuidema@wur.nl">douwe.zuidema@wur.nl</a>	Eveline Vaane T +31(0)317 48 41 16 E <a href="mailto:eveline.vaane@wur.nl">eveline.vaane@wur.nl</a>	
<b>PE&amp;RC</b>	<b>WIAS</b>	
Claudius van de Vijver T +31(0)317 48 51 16 E <a href="mailto:claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl">claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl</a>	Marianne Bruining T +31(0)317 48 34 42 E <a href="mailto:marianne.bruining@wur.nl">marianne.bruining@wur.nl</a>	Or: Geert Wiegertjes T +31(0)317 48 27 32 E <a href="mailto:geert.wiegertjes@wur.nl">geert.wiegertjes@wur.nl</a>
<b>VLAG</b>	<b>WIMEK</b>	
Yvonne Smolders T +31(0)317 48 51 08 E <a href="mailto:yvonne.smolders@wur.nl">yvonne.smolders@wur.nl</a>	Johan Feenstra T +31(0)317 48 48 36 E <a href="mailto:johan.feenstra@wur.nl">johan.feenstra@wur.nl</a>	

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### **Departmental personnel advisers (Wageningen UR staff only)**

Wageningen UR staff can approach this adviser with matters concerning legal status, problems regarding supervision or other issues affecting them as employees. Contact information for the personnel advisers is available via a chair group or the Human Resource Management department.

### **Scientific integrity**

The Confidential Counsellors for Scientific Integrity can be contacted in case of suspected improper scientific acts such as fraud, plagiarism, infringement of copyright or incomplete information. Members of staff and all PhD candidates who experience a moral dilemma can contact the Confidential Counsellors for Scientific Integrity:

Prof. Dr. Ir. A. van den Brink  
E [adri.vandenbrink@wur.nl](mailto:adri.vandenbrink@wur.nl)  
T +31 (0)317 48 27 84

Prof. Dr. Ir. M.H. Zwietering  
E [marcel.zwietering@wur.nl](mailto:marcel.zwietering@wur.nl)  
T +31 (0)317 48 22 33

### **Social workers of Wageningen University**

Staff social workers can help with problems related to a PhD candidate's work or private life. In consultation with the social worker, a PhD candidate seeks the most suitable solution to his/her problem. A social worker can provide a PhD candidate with information on (or refer him/her to) internal or external organisations and help providers. PhD candidates can ask for an extensive pamphlet or can make an appointment with the social worker directly.

All information is treated confidentially.

T +31 (0) 317 47 41 58  
E [bedrijfsmaatschappelijkwerk@wur.nl](mailto:bedrijfsmaatschappelijkwerk@wur.nl)

### **PhD candidates not employed by Wageningen UR**

PhD candidates not employed by Wageningen UR can also consult a student psychologist.

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### 3.13 PhD councils

At Wageningen University each graduate school has a PhD council that acts in the interest of all PhD candidates at the graduate school by means of active participation on the graduate school's education committee and board and by acting on developments that could affect the PhD candidates. The councils can be found on the site of the Wageningen PhD council (WPC, [www.wageningenUR.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/Services/Wageningen-PhD-Council.htm](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/Services/Wageningen-PhD-Council.htm)).

Representatives from all the PhD councils participate in the Wageningen PhD council (WPC). Issues that concern PhD candidates or issues that are brought forward by one of the PhD councils are discussed by the WPC with the dean of WGS, as well as representatives of the Wageningen Graduate School Course and Corporate Education & Research. If necessary, action is taken or the issues are brought to the attention of responsible units of the organisation.

Contact person for the Wageningen PhD council:

Onno Möller

E [onno.moller@wur.nl](mailto:onno.moller@wur.nl)

T +31 (0)317 48 16 42

### 3.14 PhD Network of the Netherlands (PNN)

PNN represents local PhD councils at meetings of national policy makers (NWO, VSNU, KNAW, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). The mission of PNN is to understand, discuss and tackle the problems PhD candidates encounter during their work. PNN exchanges information between local PhD councils at both the national and the international level. PNN representatives meet approximately five times per year. Visit [www.hetPNN.nl](http://www.hetPNN.nl).

### 3.15 International Student Organisation Wageningen (ISOW)

The ISOW is a social organisation for international students. It was founded in 1995. ISOW is a place where all international students in Wageningen can meet and socialise. <http://isow-wageningen.nl/>

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# Additional Funding

## 4

There are options for additional funding for PhD candidates who have started their PhD programme.

### 4.1 Education Budget

The total education budget is € 2500 (Training and Education budget) and is intended for the entire PhD programme. PhD candidates are entitled to this budget when they have an approved TSP.

The budget is provided by the chair group, *not* by a graduate school. When the TSP is approved, the relevant graduate school informs the PhD candidate and the supervisor; the chair group can then allocate the education budget.

The aim of the Training and Education budget is to support the realisation of the TSP. This means that the budget is to be used for:

- Courses
- Conferences, seminars, symposia and workshops
- Working visits

Note that the education budget is limited, and PhD candidates and chair groups are advised to seek additional funding, especially for travel and lodging costs. Possible sources are described below.

The supervisor is responsible for the proper use of the budget, that is, for the realisation of the TSP.

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## 4.2 Wageningen University Funds like the LEB Foundation

The Wageningen University Fund has funds aimed at supporting (current) students and young researchers at Wageningen University.  
See [www.wageningenUR.nl/en/Benefactors/For-Applicants.htm](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/en/Benefactors/For-Applicants.htm)

An example is the LEB Foundation (Stichting Fonds Landbouw Export Bureau 1916/1918). This foundation stimulates developments in agricultural research at Wageningen UR – including the environmental sciences – and the publication of the results of such research. The LEB Foundation provides financial support for visits to scientific meetings, study trips, publication of proceedings of scientific meetings held in the Netherlands and, in special cases, the publication of theses.

The LEB Foundation supports the activities of PhD candidates at Wageningen University, junior scientists at Wageningen UR who do not have an employment contract, guest lecturers of Wageningen UR and researchers from developing countries who have limited financial means.

On the basis of co-financing, the LEB Foundation provides funding for 50 per cent of the total costs. Moreover, there is a maximum funding amount for each activity. Funding is not provided for personal expenses, costs of capital goods, normal publication expenses or regular travel expenses.

### **Contact:**

Esther Dorland  
Droevendaalsesteeg 4 Building 104  
T +31 (0)317 48 14 99  
Fax +31 (0)317 48 48 84  
E [wuf@wur.nl](mailto:wuf@wur.nl)  
Postal address  
P.O. Box 9101  
6700 HB Wageningen  
Internal Postal Code 75

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## 4.3 Researcher's Mobility Programme

Fellowships, grants and research jobs in Europe can be found at <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/general/index>

## 4.4 Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)

The NWO provides grants for research and training through foundations and offices. For information, contact the relevant foundation group administration listed in the NWO Subsidy Guide.

Postal address: PO Box 93138, 2509 AC The Hague

T +31 (0)70 – 34 40 640

Fax: +31 (0)70 – 38 50 971

[www.nwo.nl](http://www.nwo.nl) (English, under 'Subsidy Guide')

## 4.5 Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences:

- Awards grants for research, conference visits or periods of residence abroad. It also manages a variety of other funds and foundations
- Contributes to the cost of organising international conferences, workshops and colloquia in the Netherlands
- Manages the secretariat of numerous private funds
- Promotes international communication and partnerships

[www.knaw.nl](http://www.knaw.nl) (English, under 'Funding')

## 4.6 Private Grants

The Central Student Desk has some information on private grants. In most cases these grants are intended to finance a specific group. Visiting address of the Central Student Desk:

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FORUM, Droevendaalsesteeg 2, Building 102, Wageningen.  
Opening hours: Monday–Thursday: 09.00-14.00; Friday: 09.00-12.30.  
Postal address: PO Box 414, 6700 AK Wageningen

FIN – the association of grant providers in the Netherlands – produces the *Fondsenboek* (Grants Book), which is published by Walburg Pers. This book contains an overview of private grants, many of which are intended for target groups with special objectives and are subject to specific conditions. The book (in Dutch) is available at bookstores and at the Central Student Desk. There is also a CD version of the book.

## 4.7 Travelling and postings abroad

Wageningen University staff can get financial compensation for travel in the Netherlands and abroad (see the intranet). Note that financial compensation for travel and postings abroad must be paid from the project budget. There are three categories in the new regulations for international travel:

- Short stay abroad
- Long stay abroad: longer than 60 days abroad for work-related activities
- Mission: work abroad that is related to rural development projects in specified countries (see HRM website for a list of countries/regions concerned). A mission can be a period of between 7 days and 6 months

There are no provisions for stays abroad that are longer than 6 months. However, PhD candidates who spend a significant time overseas and receive a salary from Wageningen UR can apply for a tax refund.

## 4.8 Miscellaneous

Below are some websites with useful information on funding possibilities:

- [www.siswo.uva.nl/facta/subsidie.html](http://www.siswo.uva.nl/facta/subsidie.html) (Fondswijzer)
- [www.beursopener.nl](http://www.beursopener.nl) (Nuffic 'Beurs Opener', in Dutch)
- [www.grantfinder.nl](http://www.grantfinder.nl)
- [www.scholarshipportal.eu](http://www.scholarshipportal.eu)

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## 4.9 Emergency Fund for International Students

In cases of extreme emergency, it is possible for international PhD candidates to obtain financial support to return to their home country. In exceptional cases, sandwich PhD candidates can obtain funding to extend their final period at Wageningen University for a maximum of three months. To apply for this financial support, make an appointment with one of the student deans.

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[www.wageningenUR.nl/phd-programme](http://www.wageningenUR.nl/phd-programme)  
January, 2014

