

Annual Report of the Academic Board

Academic year 2021-2022

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1 Academic Board

1.1 Task of the Academic Board

The Academic Board is authorised to grant the title of Doctor upon the achievement of a doctorate, in accordance with Articles 7.18 and 7.19 of the Higher education and Research Act (WHW) and the Doctoral Degree Regulations Wageningen University. The Academic Board establishes the doctoral degree regulations, which include handling the course of affairs with regard to granting a doctorate. The doctoral degree regulations must be approved by the Executive Board. Furthermore, the Academic Board is consulted by the Executive Board on requests for the establishment of special chairs and provides requested and unsolicited advice and recommendations to the Executive Board regarding education and the performance of scientific research. The members of the Academic Board can serve as deputy rectors to chair public PhD defence ceremonies.

Every academic year the Academic Board creates an annual report of its activities and sends this report to the Executive Board. The current annual report reports the activities of the Academic Board in the academic year 2021-2022; from 30 August 2021 to 2 September 2022.

1.2 Members of the Academic Board

The Academic Board comprises eleven members and the Rector Magnificus as chair. The members of the Academic Board are appointed, suspended and dismissed by the Executive Board. The members are all professors at Wageningen University and are appointed for a period of three years. They can be reappointed once.

During the academic year 2021/2022 the membership of the Academic Board was as follows:

- Prof. Arthur Mol (chair)
- Prof. Edith Feskens (until 1.10.2021)
- Prof. Petra Hellegers (until 1.1.2022)
- Prof. Marc Naguib (until 1.5.2022)
- Prof. Hans van Trijp
- Prof. Han Zuilhof
- Prof. Marcel Zwietering
- Prof. Martin van Ittersum
- Prof. Huub Savelkoul
- Prof. Yulin Bai
- Prof. Jakob Wallinga
- Prof. Simon Bush
- Prof. Renger Witkamp (from 1.10.2021)
- Prof. Marielos Peña Claros (from 1.2.2022)

The board met 10 times during the reporting year.

1.3 The Dean of Research and the Dean of Education

The Dean of Research has executive, advisory, and facilitative tasks related to conducting research within Wageningen University. Among other things, he/she is responsible for implementing and executing policy with regard to PhD programs and candidates. The Dean of Education is responsible for the education (for MSc and BSc) policy and for the implementation of that policy. Both deans have an advisory role in the Academic Board and are not voting members.

Wouter Hendriks is the Dean of Research and Arnold Bregt is the Dean of Education.

1.4 Appointment of former members of the Academic Board

In addition to the members of the Academic Board, any of its former members may be appointed to serve as deputy rector for the purpose of chairing public PhD defence ceremonies. The following former members of the Academic Board were appointed to serve as deputy rectors during the reporting year:

- prof. Tiny van Boekel
- prof. Pim Brascamp
- prof. Erwin Bulte
- prof. Martien Groenen
- prof. Wouter Hendriks
- prof. Bert Holtslag
- prof. Carolien Kroeze
- prof. Cees Leeuwis
- prof. Herbert Prins
- prof. Paul Struik
- prof. Richard Visser
- prof. Just Vlak
- prof. Niels Anten
- prof. Francine Govers
- prof. Frits Mohren
- Prof. Petra Hellegers
- Prof. Katrien Termeer
- Prof. Edith Feskens
- Prof. Arnold Bregt
- Prof. Marc Naguib

2 PhD graduations: key indicators

During the reporting year, 306 PhD candidates earned their doctorate at Wageningen University, of whom 11 were nominated for designation cum laude. Of these candidates, 8 were awarded the designation cum laude (2.6 %).

The distribution across the departments of PhD candidates who graduated in this reporting year was as follows:

Agrotechnology and Food Sciences Group (AFSG)	115
Animal Sciences Group (ASG)	37
Social Sciences Group (SSG)	50
Environmental Sciences Group (ESG)	47
Plant Sciences Group (PSG)	56
Other	1
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Total	306

The distribution across the graduate schools of PhD candidates who graduated in this reporting year was as follows:

Production Ecology and Resource Conservation (PE&RC)	49
Experimental Plant Sciences (EPS)	29
Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology and Health Sciences (VLAG)	94
Wageningen Institute of Animal Sciences (WIAS)	35
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)	53
Wageningen Institute for Environmental and Climate Research (WIMEK – SENSE)	45
Other	1
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Total	306

The PhD graduations occurred as follows during the academic year 2021-2022:

29 and 30 August, September	28
October	51
November	33
December	29
January	17
February	19
March	19
April	27
May	24
June	33
July	15
August, 1 and 2 September	11

A total of 191 foreign nationals (62%) graduated during the reporting year and a total of 148 graduates were women (48%).

Two PhD WU IHE Delft Institute for Water Education graduations occurred (both in Wageningen) and 3 WU Wetsus PhD graduations occurred (all three in Wageningen).

Ac year	Assessment in Promis/HF	No assessment in Promis/HF	Total defences	No. Cum Laude (CL)	CL as % of total
<i>Prognosis 2022/2023 (reference date 15-MAR-2023)</i>	345	0	345	20	5.80%
2022/23 to date (Q2)	199	0	199	11	5.53%
2021/22	299	1	300	8	2.67%
2020/21	292	1	293	8	2.73%
2019/20	278	4	282	11	3.90%
2018/19	279	3	282	10	3.55%
2017/18	279	2	281	10	3.56%

Table 1: Trends in the number of graduations and cum laudes between the academic year 2017/18- 2022/23. The numbers in 2021/22 deviate from the numbers mentioned above. Above the graduations from 29 August 2021 to 2 September 2022 were included, whereas in Table 1 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 were included in the counting.

3 Doctoral Degree Regulations

The academic board has made no amendments to the doctoral degree regulations in the academic year 2020-2021. New regulations entered into force on 1 January 2022 in the academic year 2021-2022, but the approval by the Academic Board and Executive Board of Wageningen University took place in the academic year 2020-2021 and hence has been described in the annual report of the academic board of 2020-2021.

4 Professors

4.1 Special and endowed chairs

The Academic Board has been consulted on the following proposals for special chairs:

- Life Cycle Ecophysiology of Marine Animals funded by the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ) hosted by the Marine Animal Ecology group. Prof. dr Myron Peck was appointed on 1 June 2022.

- Data and Simulations for Self-care Postharvest Fresh-food Supply Chains funded by the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science and Technology hosted by the Food, Quality & Design group. Prof. dr Thijs Defraeye was appointed on 1 December 2022.
- Human-Nature relationships in the Anthropocene funded by Stichting NatuurCollege. Prof. dr Maria Tengö was appointed on 1 January 2023.
- Applied Plant Developmental Biology funded by Rijk Zwaan B.V.. The anticipated candidate is Prof. dr Ben Scheres.

5 Objections and Appeals

There was one request for mediation, which was handled by an external party. The conflict has been resolved amicably.

Secondly, an objection was made to pronouncing the name and birth date of a candidate on the live stream during the still-to-be-held defence ceremony. It has been promised that the microphone will be turned off when the name and date of birth are pronounced.

6 IUS promovendi UHD1

Grade 1 associate professors (UHD1) with a Tenure Track position are conferred ius promovendi automatically for a period of five years. The board has set up a separate ius promovendi application procedure for people other than those with UHD1 status as part of the Tenure Track programme. A special committee with members of the Academic Board assesses such ius promovendi applications twice a year in accordance with the UHD1 Tenure Track criteria for research and the supervision of PhD candidates.

In the academic year 2021/2022, three staff members have applied for an evaluation procedure for the ius promovendi. To two of these staff members, the Academic Board conferred the ius promovendi for a period of five years.

7 Joint degrees

Since 2016, the Academic Board is charged with the approval of any joint PhD degree programs with joint governance of PhD projects that may result in 'joint, 'double' or 'dual' degrees from Wageningen University before the included PhD candidates start their research. The Dean of Research has been mandated by the Academic Board to decide whether a proposed joint PhD degree program meets the criteria set by the Academic Board (as listed in appendix 8 of the doctoral degree regulations) and approve 'joint, 'double' or 'dual' degrees. One proposal was approved by the rector because the chair group of the dean of research was involved in the agreement.

Before the evaluation of a proposal for a joint PhD degree program by the Academic Board, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) approved by the partner universities involved, needs to be signed at the corporate level.

Four joint degree programs have been submitted to the Dean of Research and were approved:

- Joint PhD programme between the University of Ghent and WU "Nutrient Cycling"
- Joint PhD programme between Université Paris-Saclay and WU: training in the animal science sector (Approved by the Rector)
- Joint PhD degree between the University of Valladolid (UVa), Technical University of Denmark (DTU) and WU: Anaerobic Digestion for the production of Valuable New Chemicals in Europe (ADVANCE 2021)
- Joint PhD programme between TECHNION Israel Institute of Technology and WU: the creation of novel dispersed materials

Three joint doctoral degree programmes were submitted and are still being considered after the academic year 2021/2022:

- Joint PhD degree between WU, the Universidade de São Paulo, Escola Superior de Agricultura Luis de Queiroz, and Centro de Energia Nuclear na Agricultura (USP/ESALQ/CENA and WU; number of PhD candidates and place of defence could not be indicated).
- Joint PhD programme ERAIFT-NATURA with the University of Kinshasa
- Joint PhD degree between: Institut des sciences et industries du vivant et de l'environnement (APT),(AgroParisTech), Universität für Bodenkultur Wien (BOKU), University of Eastern Finland (UEF), University of Hohenheim (UHOH), Alma Mater Studiorum (UniBo) and WU: Design and Sustainability Assessment for Optimized Biomass Production and Supply Systems in the Bioeconomy (DESTINY)

8 Additional advice

- Advice on the relocation of doctoral defence ceremonies to the Omnia building in May 2022.
- Advice for the improvement of the use of hora finita. For example, how to handle problems with affiliations of opponents, implementation of the cum laude procedure in hora finita, and implementation of the grading system in hora finita.
- Advice on the recruitment procedure of the rector magnificus to the supervisory board of Wageningen University & Research described in the Administrative and Management Regulations Wageningen University & Research.

9 Other decisions

- It was decided that the Academic Board is the degree awarding board for the Engineering Doctorate programme (EngD), a two-year postgraduate qualification in technological design, starting in January 2023. The Academic Board has the final responsibility for awarding the degree but delegates the task of the EngD programme to the EngD college. The Dean of Research reports, as EngD director, on the EngD programme to the Academic Board.
- Approval of the Engineering Doctorates regulations.
- Approval of the WU regulations governing the advisory committee objection.
- Decision to have all defence ceremonies in Omnia as of 10 May 2022.
- Nominations of three honorary doctorates to be conferred on the dies natalis of 9 March 2023.
- Revision of the regulation of joint doctorate degrees implemented in the doctoral degree regulations of 2022/ 2023:
 - An even distribution of the defence ceremonies reflecting the input of the institutions in the supervision of PhD candidates over the different locations should be strived for. But in the new regulations, programmes can deviate from this equal distribution when there are legitimate reasons to do so. Instead, at least a minimum of 1-year physical stay at both institutions is required.
 - Indication of the type of joint doctorate programme in the joint doctorate proposal. The Academic Board discerns three types of joint doctorate programmes: strategic collaborations of WU(R) with a partner institute laid down in an MoU with the wish to make it possible to confer joint doctorate degrees; collaborations that need an approved joint doctorate programme to apply for funding; and collaborations of one (or a few) chair groups with one (or a few) research groups at a partner institute.
 - Including the effect of the programme on the balance of nationalities for the WU PhD populations in the joint doctorate proposal.