

P.O. Box 9101 | 6700 HB Wageningen | The Netherlands

PhD supervisors

CC to: PhD-office, General Directors, PhD council, Graduate schools,  
Emeriti with IUS promovendi

Dear PhD supervisors,

Please find below a list of changes to the doctoral degree regulations and policy in general which have been implemented by the Academic Board to further improve the quality of the Wageningen University PhD programme.

#### **From one to two rubrics**

Instead of one, two rubrics for the assessment of PhD theses by members of the thesis committee will be available. The new rubrics were developed to do justice to multi-, inter-, trans- and disciplinary dissertations in the evaluation process. To this end, a rubric for disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research and a rubric for inter- and trans-disciplinary research were developed.

The rubric for disciplinary and multidisciplinary research (a) is developed for dissertations that either mainly consist of research chapters that each belong to the same discipline, or mainly consist of disciplinary research chapters that belong to several disciplines. This rubric is largely the same as the previously used rubric for the assessment of Wageningen PhD theses.

The rubric for inter- and transdisciplinary research (b) is developed for dissertations that either mainly attempt to connect and integrate questions, concepts, theoretical frameworks, methodologies and/or findings from different scientific disciplines, possibly leading to the breaking of boundaries between disciplines and the formation of new domains of science, or mainly report on research that is based on active engagement with non-academic groups during part of the research process - usually with the aim of addressing real-life societal challenges - whereby the knowledge and understanding of stakeholders is connected to and/or integrated with scientific understanding.

The main criteria for the rubrics are the same, but in the operationalisation of the criteria rubric (b) places a relatively greater weight on the level of integration achieved between different bodies of knowledge and the extra effort and skills that was demonstrated to achieve this.

After consultation with the co-promotors and the candidate, the promotor will decide which rubric will be used for the assessment of the thesis by the thesis committee when informing the Academic Board of approval of the thesis (art 9.6).

Appendix 6 of the doctoral degree regulations has been updated accordingly.

#### **Letter opponents**

In the letter to opponents, the rebuttal procedure has been clarified.

Appendix 6 of the PhD regulations has been updated accordingly.

#### **Added note to question 5 in the thesis evaluation form**

An addition has been made to question 5 of the thesis evaluation form. This addition clarifies that a judgment of excellent for a PhD thesis can only apply when a cum laude procedure has been followed. For theses which have not followed a cum laude procedure, the judgement of "excellent" is not possible. This does not apply to the defence of the thesis which can still be judged to be "excellent".

Appendix 6 of the PhD regulations has been updated accordingly.

DATE  
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### **Practicalities in arranging the defence of joint degrees**

For the defence of a thesis which is part of a joint degree agreement, the PhD office requires you to:

- register the promotion date in Promis/Hora finita as soon as possible if the defence takes place at the partner university;
- provide the joint degree PhD programme proposal, that has been approved by the Academic Board or Dean of Research before the start of the joint degree programme, and the relevant PhD candidate joint degree agreement when registering a joint degree defence at WU or the partner university;
- send the assessment forms and final thesis to the PhD office when the defence takes place at the partner university;
- make sure that the library will receive a Pdf and hard copy of the final thesis.

### **Article 21**

A new procedure for the establishment of an objection advisory committee has been developed. Article 21 describes the procedure which has to be followed in case of objections and complaints, has been amended in line with this new procedure.

### **Article 3**

It was unclear in Article 3.3 that the candidate should always fulfil the language requirements for English and when the candidate decides to write the thesis in the Dutch language, also the Dutch language requirements should be met. This has now been clarified.

### **Appendix 4: publication pdf thesis and propositions**

In appendix 4 an addition has been made, so that propositions are included immediately after the cover as part of the pdf file of the thesis for the library.

### **Reminder online opponent**

For the latest updates and frequently asked questions in relation to PhD defences and PhD research in general, please check the [internet<sup>1</sup>](#) page for PhD candidates and supervisors.

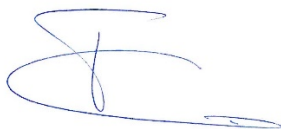
As a reminder, also after the COVID-19 pandemic the Academic Board will allow for one of the four opponents to question the candidate via a video connection during the public defence. This opponent should reside in a country other than the Netherlands and should not be the first (WU) opponent. The PhD office must be notified no later than three weeks before the public defence. Only in exceptional cases, and with the specific permission of the Dean of Research, a second opponent may be allowed to question the candidate via a video connection. Please make sure that opponents, also those who attend online, are on time and wear the appropriate attire.

### **Propositions**

Finally, we would like to remind promoters that they are expected to evaluate propositions and revised propositions before they are (re)submitted to the Academic Board. Information regarding criteria of acceptance can be found in the doctoral degree regulations and in the document "criteria of acceptance of propositions" that can be found on the internet page of the [Academic Board<sup>2</sup>](#).

Unless stated otherwise, the above-mentioned changes/additions will take effect on 1 January 2022.

With kind regards,



Prof. dr Arthur P.J. Mol  
Rector Magnificus Wageningen University



Prof. dr Wouter H. Hendriks  
Dean of Research

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/wageningen-university/About-Wageningen-University/Academic-board.htm>