

# Quality Agreements

2019-2024



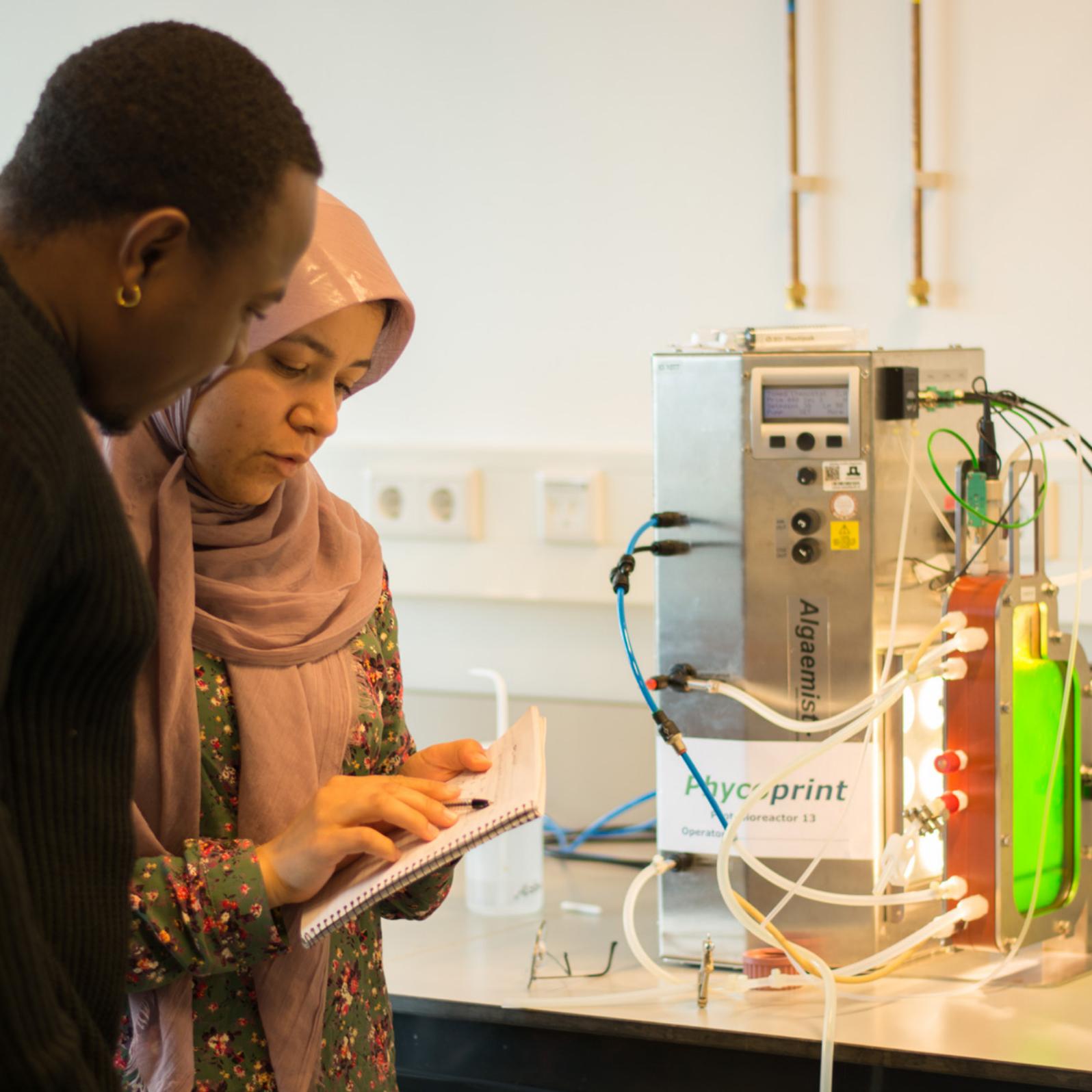
**WAGENINGEN**  
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



# Quality Agreements

2019-2024

21 November 2018



# Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1	Context	6
1.2	Assessment process	7
1.3	Development of the agreements at Wageningen University	7
1.4	Our Vision for Education	8
<b>2</b>	<b>Quality improvement measures 2019-2024</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1	Small-scale education	11
2.2	More and better study guidance	14
2.3	Education differentiation	16
2.4	Professionalisation	18
2.5	Adequate educational facilities	20
<b>3</b>	<b>Investing quality funding 2018 and 2019-2024</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	<b>25</b>
	Appendix 1 Student Loan Fund investments 2018	28
	Appendix 2 Consultations	29
	Appendix 3 Monitoring cycle	30

# 1 Introduction

In this document, Wageningen University<sup>1</sup> will present measures and investments to further strengthen the quality of education. We are entitled to receive an additional budget allocation from the Student Loan Fund to invest in the quality of our education, and we have agreed with students, academic staff and other relevant stakeholders on the extra measures outlined in this document. These additional Quality Agreements are aligned with our Vision for Education (2017) and the Strategic Plan 2019-2022 of WUR<sup>2</sup>.

In this chapter, we will describe the broader context of the Quality Agreements, the process of reaching agreements within WUR, and our Vision for Education as the guiding framework for the agreements. The measures we want to implement in 2019-2024 are presented in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, we will explain the investments made in 2018



and the planned investments for 2019-2024. The process of monitoring and evaluating the implementation is outlined in Chapter 4.

## 1.1 Context

The Coalition Agreement 2017 of the Dutch Government announced that financial resources known as the Student Loan Fund or Quality Funding<sup>3</sup> would flow back to education in order to enhance quality, based on Quality Agreements to be made with universities for the period 2019-2024. In the Sector Agreement between the Ministry of Education, universities (VSNU) and student organisations, six themes were established for these Quality Agreements:

- Small-scale and intensive education
- More and better guidance for students
- Study success
- Education differentiation
- Adequate education facilities
- Professionalisation

Universities were asked to translate the six themes for the Quality Agreements into specific ambitions and measures, resulting from a dialogue with students, lecturers, and other stakeholders. Each university may select only certain themes on the condition that they also explain why other theme(s) were not chosen. Ambitions can be formulated at study programme, faculty or institutional level. The Student Staff Council and Supervisory Board have approval rights over the Quality Agreements of the university.

<sup>1</sup> Wageningen University and Wageningen Research together form the legal entity Wageningen University & Research (WUR)

<sup>2</sup> The Quality Agreements are an addendum to the Strategic Plan 2019-2022

<sup>3</sup> We use the term Student Loan Fund for the funding for 2018 and Quality Funding for the funding for the period 2019-2024.

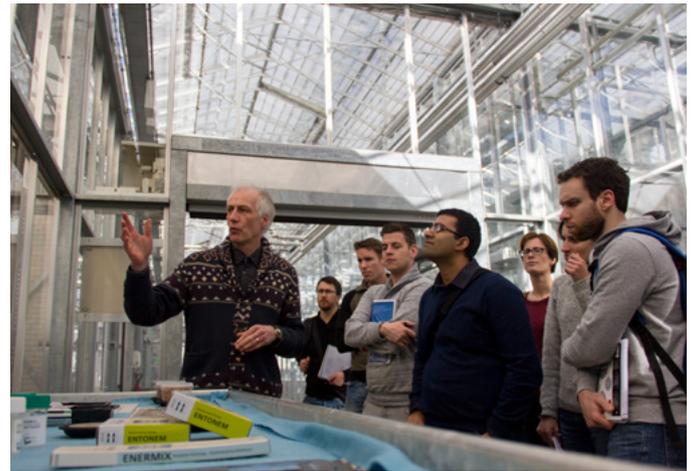
## 1.2 Assessment process

In the assessment protocol for the Quality Agreements, the NVAO is assigned to assess the Quality Agreements plan of the university, the progress and the final results. There will be financial consequences if universities have not implemented the presented and approved quality improvement measures.

The assessments are integrated both into the Institutional Audit and the annual reporting process. The assessment of the plan and final results will be a trail in the Institutional Audit. As Wageningen University has undergone the Institutional Audit in 2018, an additional visit for assessment of the Quality Agreements plan will take place in November 2019. The final assessment will be integrated into the Institutional Audit in 2024. An intermediate review is planned for 2022, based on the annual reporting. From 2019 onwards, the progress of implementing the investments and measures of the Quality Agreements will form part of the annual report. In an appendix to the annual report, the Student Staff Council will be given the opportunity to report independently.

## 1.3 Development of the Quality Agreements at Wageningen University

The Quality Agreements we propose are the result of an interactive process between academic staff, students, the co-participation council, external stakeholders, the Executive Board, and the Supervisory Board. The culture and quality assurance system of Wageningen University are characterised by bottom-up initiatives. In general, policies are developed in working groups comprising staff, students, and policy advisors, combined with broad consultation meetings, open to all staff and students. We have also applied this method of policy development to the Quality Agreements<sup>4</sup>. Working groups have been



assigned, a steering group formed to oversee the process and a project leader tasked with coordinating the process. The co-participation council, 'Student Staff Council' (SSC), has formed a sounding committee to act as the sparring partner for the steering group. The SSC has the right of approval over the Quality Agreements. Together, these stakeholders safeguarded the feasibility of the plan and its fitness to our organisation.

The Quality Agreements for Wageningen University are formulated at institutional level, leaving room for diversity at study programme level. The first decision was to spend the budget for the Quality Agreements primarily on four themes. More budget for each theme allows us to take greater steps in each theme. We have chosen to invest 98% of the Quality Funding in the themes small-scale education, more and better study guidance, education differentiation and professionalisation. These four themes were prioritised by staff and students who participated in the workshops and were eventually selected by the steering group and the rector magnificus. They coincide well with the ambitions in our Vision for Education and

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2 for a list of the meetings

Strategic Plan 2019–2022. We allocate 2% of the budget to the fifth theme adequate educational facilities.

The themes study success and facilities are also important topics, but our high study success rates and the continuous investment in facilities make additional investment less urgent. We continue to monitor study success and take tailored measures for each study programme when necessary. Similarly, we monitor our facilities and improve or expand them in response to growing student numbers. We have already increased efficient use of the facilities and rooms for education by implementing a new schedule, and we will commence construction of a third education building in 2019. In 2018, we invested some of the Student Loan Fund in a project Bring Your Own Device and we continue this investment, however the budget will decrease over the years.

Four working groups comprising staff and students have been assigned to formulate plans for the four selected Quality Agreement themes, based on an assignment of the steering group for each working group. The assignments incorporate the ambitions established in our Vision for Education (2017), the proposals of the Student Staff Council, and the criteria of the NVAO. The process started with two kick-off workshops on 29 August with all working groups, interested staff and students, the steering group, Student Council, sounding committee, and two members of the Executive Board. In these workshops, we discussed the six Quality Agreement themes and ideas from participants on the measures required and desired to help improve the quality of our education. Lively discussions and exchanges led to inspiring ideas.

The working groups have developed plans and reported regularly to the steering group, which has overseen the progress and content of the plans. The steering group analysed the potential risks and has made some requests

to the working groups to revise plans. The steering group has also determined the budgets required to implement the measures proposed.

Two consultation meetings, open to all students and staff, took place to discuss the intermediate plans of the working groups with the organisation. Where relevant, the working groups also used results of surveys amongst alumni, students, and external stakeholders and the input of external panels of the Institutional Audit and programme accreditation.

Representatives of the sounding committee of the Student Staff Council and representatives of the steering group have met regularly to discuss progress and the plans of the working groups. The Student Staff Council has also shared its ideas and priorities in two position papers. These proposals were shared with the working groups and incorporated into their assignment. The Student Council has also provided input on the plan of the working groups during the development process.

The resulting Quality Agreements was discussed with the Board of Education and programme directors. Ultimately, the Executive Board decided on the plan, and the Student Staff Council and Supervisory Board approved the plan.

#### **1.4 Our Vision for Education**

We would like the Quality Agreements to fit our organisation and to contribute to the implementation of our Vision for Education. Wageningen University is an internationally renowned scientific research and education institute. We educate students from around the world to become academic professionals, who can contribute to sustainable solutions for existing and future global complex issues in our domain of healthy food and the living environment.

Our education is multidisciplinary and student-centred.



Personal contact between students and lecturers is one of our core strengths. Our diverse student population and internationalisation are important assets. The strong link between research and teaching results in a high quality of education. Both students and professionals come to Wageningen University to participate in our expanding portfolio of programmes, training, and courses, all of which are combined within our Education Ecosystem.

In 2017, we developed a new Vision for Education. In summary, our vision is as follows:

Wageningen trains students to be able to accelerate the global sustainability transitions in our domain. To remain at the top, we will have to respond to several important developments: changes in the labour market, changes in laws and funding of education, the digitalisation in education and professions, and growing student numbers.

To realise our ambitions, we have to act, building on and extending our solid base of current high-quality education and research. We want our education to focus on the optimal development of students by offering:

- State of the art knowledge through intensive interaction between research and education, thereby guaranteeing a high quality of knowledge.
- A rich learning environment that activates students and provides them with learning experiences to acquire new skills, needed for the envisaged transitions.
- More flexibility in learning paths for initial and post-initial learners, both in content and form, to fit their individual talents, interests, abilities, and their stage of life.

These three lines in the innovation of our education will demand extra effort and new skills of both teaching and support staff and students. We know that we can make these innovations a success as we know that staff and students are all very dedicated to the quality of education and prepared to make the necessary effort.

We invite staff and students to contribute, by bringing in ideas and by changing courses, programmes, and supporting processes in line with these main goals, as fits their own situation. We will support staff and students as good as possible in this process.

## 2 Quality improvement measures 2019-2024

As explained in Chapter 1, we present our plans and investments on five Quality Agreement themes: small-scale education, more and better study guidance, education differentiation, professionalisation, and adequate educational facilities. For each theme, we explain which topics are relevant and what measures we plan to take with the Quality Funding.

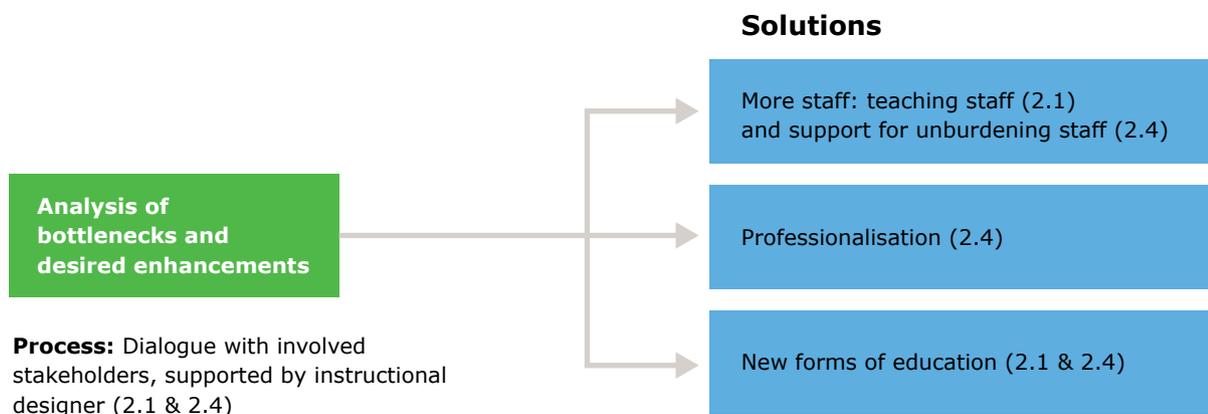
The themes are to some extent interlinked. The themes small-scale intensive education and professionalisation in particular are interdependent, and to a lesser degree this also applies to the themes education differentiation and more and better study guidance. Maintaining and further developing small-scale education is a top priority for Wageningen University. Personal student-lecturer contact and interactive, small-scale teaching methods are key ingredients to our high-quality education. Growing student numbers have caused bottlenecks and have increased staff

workload, which hampers professionalisation. Resolving the bottlenecks in small-scale education, diversifying teaching tasks, and giving staff more time will allow lecturers and chair groups to invest more in professionalisation.

The themes more and better study guidance and education differentiation are also strongly related. In the theme education differentiation, we focus on personal development and career preparation. By offering more guidance, support, and training we offer students more opportunity to develop themselves and to prepare themselves for their future career.

Each of the following sections presents the plans for each theme. At the end of each section, we explain which part of the budget will be spent on that theme. More detailed information about the budgets and the investments in 2018 is provided in Chapter 3.

**Figure 1** Relationship between small-scale education (Section 2.1) and professionalisation (Section 2.4)



## 2.1 Small-scale education

Theme description in Sector Agreement: *'The relationship between teachers and students is crucial for effective education. That is why further intensification of the contact between students and teachers is important. This can be achieved, for example, by committing to smaller teaching groups and the formation of communities, and by making more time available for personal feedback and individual supervision. To achieve this, the student-teacher ratio needs to be reduced. Appointing more teachers also makes it possible to link the teaching content to societal themes and research, increasing curiosity among students and enhancing their research skills.'*

Small-scale, intensive education is a strong characteristic of Wageningen University, and according to our Vision for Education, one of the keys to achieving high-quality education. Small-scale education at our university is tailored to each study programme and even each course. The growing student numbers put the intensive and personal approach of Wageningen University at risk. Most of the Quality Funding for the Quality Agreements will, therefore, be spent on maintaining and strengthening small-scale and intensive education.

We already promote and facilitate new forms of (digital) education, including activating learning, peer-to-peer learning, and bottom-up innovations. These innovations help us to maintain our high-quality small-scale education with growing student numbers. Increasingly, study programmes and lecturers implement blended learning, combining large-scale and small-scale, online and face-to-face teaching. Lecturers are trained and supported in didactics for blended learning and teaching larger groups. We blend a variety of digital methods with face-to-face



contact, aiming at deeper learning experiences through discussion and applied assignments. All of these developments result in a large variety of designs and didactical approaches to small-scale education.

### Defining small-scale education

Small-scale education is not a single type or form of education. The form of small-scale education that is needed depends on the learning outcomes. The learning outcome level increases as students advance in their education. As the level increases, more intensive education is required. High-level learning outcomes for large groups can only be achieved by combining large-scale and small-scale intensive teaching methods. The learning outcomes levels, determined according to the taxonomy of Bloom<sup>5</sup>, defines which form of, and to what extent, small-scale education is needed. Lower learning outcome levels can benefit from more intensive teaching methods, but these intensive methods are not crucial to attaining the learning outcomes.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson LW (Ed.), Krathwohl DR (Ed.), Aira-sian PW, Cruikshank KA, Mayer RE, Pintrich PR, Rath K, Wittrock MC. A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Abridged Edition). New York: Longman; 2001.

Small-scale education with large groups of students is possible by organising education differently, from forming smaller classes and applying other interactive teaching methods to (digital) innovations to ensure that students are actively involved. David Mills and Patrick Alexander March (2013)<sup>6</sup> concluded that, in general, small-scale education is not defined by numbers, but by dialogue and collaboration within the groups, integrated into the learning process of students. Maintaining dialogue and collaboration while the student population is growing requires us to adopt new and different ways of teaching and organising education.

We cannot, therefore, quantify small-scale and intensive education as a number indicating preferred group sizes or ratios. Appropriate group sizes and ratios depend on the specific learning outcomes and content, and should be determined at programme or even at course level. Simultaneously, bottlenecks due to growth cannot be generalised. At Wageningen University, we apply the following interpretation of the concept of small-scale and intensive education, valuing and allowing the many tailored didactical approaches in our education: *'All study programmes of Wageningen University are small-scale and intensive, as we apply interactive teaching and feedback methods with personal student-lecturer contact. The interactive teaching methods depend on the learning outcomes. Large-scale methods are always combined with more intensive education. Students receive answers to their questions in a personal way, as they proactively ask for help, knowing where to find the answer to their questions.'*

### Maintaining and further developing small-scale education

Chair groups hire the staff they need to offer small-scale education to larger groups. We have concluded that it is

not always possible for chair groups to hire additional staff with the budget that they receive for education. When hiring additional staff is not an option, alternative solutions are to increase the size of the groups, shorten or discontinue excursions, provide less feedback, or use more extensive supervision. These solutions might, however, put achieving the learning outcomes at risk. Bottlenecks differ between courses and study programme and require tailored solutions based on a clear understanding of the exact problem. We can, nevertheless, determine a general baseline for a bottleneck: when students cannot acquire the learning outcomes, the quality of our education is at risk and needs to be strengthened.

The Student Staff Council and the Executive Board share the opinion that we need to hire more staff to maintain small-scale education. In our financial allocation system for education and innovation programme, we will increase the budget for chair groups to maintain and strengthen small-scale education. With this additional budget, chair groups can hire more staff. In 2018, we concluded that the financial compensation for the thesis was too low to maintain the desired level of supervision. This bottleneck is solved by increasing the compensation for thesis support.

An important condition is that the allocation of additional budget for maintaining and further developing small-scale education should be based on an analysis of the problem and a plan for the solution. Hiring more staff can be the outcome of the analysis, but it is not automatically the answer. The bottleneck analysis and proposed solution will be developed by the chair groups, together with an instructional designer. In the analysis, we will investigate whether changes are needed to realign the learning

<sup>6</sup> David Mills and Patrick Alexander, 2013, 'Small group teaching: a toolkit for learning', page 12, [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/small\\_group\\_teaching\\_1.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/resources/small_group_teaching_1.pdf)



outcomes, teaching methods, and organisation of education. The analysis includes consultation with stakeholders such as the programme committees, programme directors, and/or science directors in order to judge the implementation and impact of the solutions on other courses of the study programme(s). As the analysis is supported by a centrally located instructional designer, he or she can signal interlinkages between different proposals and can suggest cooperation between chair groups or study programmes to enhance efficiency.

Another step in the bottleneck analysis is to define the roles and tasks that need to be fulfilled and which staff can fulfil these tasks. We want to differentiate teaching tasks and roles, including organisational, administrative, and technical supporting tasks in laboratories. Student assistants, tutors, technical staff, administrative assistants, PhD candidates, and other functionaries can fulfil the educational tasks of academic staff, giving them more time for tasks that require their specific expertise. We also take into account the changing role of lecturers. Interactive and intensive teaching methods require academic staff to have a stronger role in supporting and

coaching students in the process of acquiring knowledge and developing competences. The bottleneck analysis and the proposed solution should also take into account what will be done if student numbers decrease again and the additional staff would no longer be needed.

The final proposal is discussed and assessed based on didactical criteria. Once it has been verified that the learning outcomes are at risk and this problem cannot be solved by using other teaching methods or organisational changes within the current budget, budget will be allocated to solve the bottleneck by hiring additional staff. Additional budget for hiring staff will be allocated to the chair groups through the financial allocation system or the innovation funding programme. The budget can only be spent on hiring more staff or the expanding contracts of current staff (more hours). More staff can be hired to redesign a course, to execute small-scale teaching methods, and to offer structural continuity for students throughout the programme. This can be a one-time financial injection or longer term support.

Chair groups are also stimulated to create pools of staff

for multiple chair groups, by hiring staff together with other chair groups, or to hire staff at science group level. Academic staff can also opt for the education career path we develop, enabling them to dedicate more time to education. Chair groups can also hire temporary staff of Wageningen Research for thesis supervision to support the academic staff of the chair groups who remain responsible for supervision and examination. New staff or WR staff will need training to fulfil their tasks in education.

**In summary, the budget (around 58%) will be spent on:**

- Additional staff for chair groups needed to maintain and further develop small-scale and intensive education based on the bottleneck analysis.
- Extra instructional designers who support and coordinate the bottleneck analyses and, when needed, the redesign and innovation process of courses and programmes.
- Continuation of extra compensation for thesis supervision, initiated in 2018.

### **Measuring the implementation of measures**

The budget will be used to hire more staff to maintain and further develop small-scale education. We will report on the additional staff hired with the budget, which should correspond with the proposals to maintain and strengthen small-scale education. We will also monitor the extra compensation for thesis supervision.

## **2.2 More and better study guidance**

Theme description in Sector Agreement: *'It is the responsibility of universities of applied sciences/research universities to offer the same opportunities to all their students, regardless of background, origin, or prior education. This should not only be on an incidental basis, when things look likely to go wrong, but also proactively and structurally. One way of attaining this is through intensive supervision by and support from professionally trained tutors, for example, study advisors, psychologists,*

*deans, and study-career supervisors. Better supervision prevents problems and ensures the best-possible development of every student.'*

At Wageningen University, many instruments to guide students are already in place. In our Vision for Education, we reaffirmed our ambition to offer students the guidance and support they need to take their degree or course, and to make informed choices in developing their own learning paths. In the Strategic Plan 2019-2022, we have emphasised our commitment to ensuring the well-being of our students. Our support should match the changing needs of our students and the new Vision for Education, aiming at more active learning and flexible, personalised learning paths.

Students are supported both professionally and informally through a network of study advisors, student counsellors, student psychologists, lecturers, associations, peers, and external parties. We did not, therefore, look primarily into new measures or initiatives, but how all students can optimally use the available support network.

### **Strengthening the existing support infrastructure**

The student population at Wageningen University is growing and the number of students in need of additional support is increasing simultaneously. We will ensure that the support offer grows at the same pace. At the same time, we see that students ask for more or other help. Students today face higher stress levels and need more guidance on the stress-related issues that impact their study. The increased demand for support requires us to expand the support we offer even more.

Increasing the availability of support will reduce waiting times and will result in more opportunities for students to receive guidance. In addition to more support, we also focus on preventive measures. In 2019, a campaign will be launched at Wageningen University on coping with stress.

We want stress to become a more acceptable discussion topic, and we hope that this means more students will find the way to study advisors, counsellors, and psychologists.

We plan to attract more study advisors and/or expand contracts with current study advisors, to decrease the number of students consulting each study advisor. The additional capacity will be spent on more time for personal contact with students. The task of study advisors could be extended to include student issues of a more personal nature (rather than merely study-related issues), but the extra tasks will be determined in 2019.

We also plan to expand the capacity of student psychologists. This will reduce the waiting times for students and one of the extra student psychologist will coordinate stress prevention measures for students. When necessary, the budget can also be used for additional student counsellors.

To maximise the effectiveness of help offered by other actors, we develop additional training for teaching staff on recognising and dealing with student issues, on intercultural differences, and on promotion of a culture of 'openness'. Rapid identification and recognition of the problem can prevent issues from getting worse. An inventory will be carried out to examine whether lecturers would benefit from a special counsellor for teaching staff, supporting lecturers by answering their questions.

#### Filling gaps in the existing support infrastructure

We offer a wide variety of guidance and training to students, but we also acknowledge that students do not always know where to find the guidance that is available. We want to create one place where students turn to for help, training, and information about the guidance. To increase visibility, accessibility, and awareness, we will invest in a training centre with a virtual portal for students to give them an online overview of the extracurricular



courses and workshops that are on offer. What exactly will be on offer at the training centre may vary according to the (changing) needs of students. In addition to existing skills training in the study programmes, students can also go to the training centre to acquire additional skills such as self-management skills or stress reduction workshops. Essentially, the training centre will be the place where all study-related extracurricular support and training comes together.

The training centre will give a clear overview of what we offer and will provide easy access to the guidance we offer as a university. In addition to the more formal guidance we organise, study associations, student associations and other associations or groups can also provide support. To enhance this informal support network we will create a fund to subsidise initiatives to help students. Some examples: a degree programme wishes to organise activities to integrate new international students; a study association aims to set up a buddy system and would like training for their buddies; the local Red Cross Student Helpdesk organises a meeting on depression amongst students; a student association sets up a project in which students make short vlogs about personal issues. In this



way, we will facilitate bottom-up student guidance initiatives helping students to build a support network. We will develop a process and criteria for the allocation of this fund.

**In summary, the budget (around 11%) will be spent on:**

- More study advice for students by hiring more study advisors.
- More mental support for students by hiring (more) student psychologists.
- Creating a fund to subsidise student initiatives to support students.
- Launching and running a virtual training centre.
- Training for staff to recognise and deal with student issues.
- Continuation of the stress prevention campaign we started to develop in 2018.

**Measuring implementation of measures**

We will report on the capacity of the study advisors and student psychologists and others in the support infrastructure. Allocation of the budget is accounted for.

The virtual training centre will be realised when accessible for students. Staff will (be able to) participate in training on dealing with student issues. Realisation of the stress campaign will be monitored.

### **2.3 Education differentiation**

Theme description in Sector Agreement: *'Universities of applied sciences/research universities respond to the different backgrounds and ambitions of students and the needs of the labour market. They do so by offering a varied range of educational programmes at different levels (AD, BA, and MA). Investments are also being made in talent programmes, such as 'honours' programmes or those in the field of social involvement, for example, or business, art, or sport. Universities of applied sciences/research universities can also differentiate themselves in terms of teaching concepts.'*

We believe that students perform best and more fully develop themselves when they have the opportunity to follow their own learning path and to benefit from extracurricular activities that match their talents, interests,

and abilities. In the implementation of the Vision for Education, we will create flexible learning paths for students. The Quality Funding for education differentiation is narrowed down to strengthening talent development and career preparation. We broaden the concept of talent development by incorporating personal development. We want students to achieve their potential by developing their interest, talents, ambitions, and identity.

All students should receive the information, opportunities, support, and time to discover and develop their interest and talents, and to be better prepared for their future career. To achieve this ambition, we offer students various possibilities to develop themselves. Many students of WU are already active, but we see room for improvement. The opportunities are available, but often reach only the active students. We want to reach all students and therefore more incentives are needed. Simultaneously, students need more information and guidance in selecting extracurricular activities, including the active students. Our menu of extracurricular activities should motivate all students to participate.

### Strengthening talent development and career preparation in the curriculum

Personal development starts with discovering talents and personal motivations. Several study programmes have integrated the Bachelor Assessment course into their programme, in which students discover their interests, drivers and talents. The assessment is also available for other bachelor and master students on the 'Personal Motivation Assessment' course. In the coming years, we want this or a similar course to become obligatory for all students. Study programmes will have freedom in the way in which they incorporate the course into the programme. With the knowledge of their own drivers and talents, students can make motivated and intentional choices for both curricular and extracurricular opportunities to further develop themselves.

In their study programme, students have the freedom to select courses and tracks of their interest. There are also extra-educational opportunities, such as the honours programme and student challenges. Not all interests and talents of students are related to and covered by the study programme, but it remains important for students to develop them anyway. The extracurricular activities we offer can help students in their personal development, resilience, and talent development, complementary to the career preparation in the study programme. The Vision for Education and the input of students will be our framework for expanding the menu of extracurricular activities.

The assessment course can also help students to form ideas about their future career. Career preparation takes place in the curriculum but should be further enhanced and strengthened. The National Student Survey (NSE in Dutch) and surveys among alumni have informed us that we can improve the career preparation of students. We want to better inform students about the demands of and developments in the professional field, and the process of career development, to obtain a realistic perspective.

Students should be confronted with career preparation 4 to 5 times per year on average over their studies to gain an idea of what kind of career they wish to pursue, the possibilities they have, and preparation efforts that could contribute to their career. When students actively think about their career prospects, they make better use of the experiences and opportunities we do offer in the curriculum, such as internships, projects for external stakeholders, and excursions. We ask study programmes to offer more information and create extra inducement within courses and programmes for students to think about their career perspective, making use of the opportunities already present in the courses. For example, guest speakers often share content and expertise, but can also share more about their career and the professional field. We want students to have more professional role models in their field.

In addition to the guidance offered in the assessment course, we will ensure that coaches are available who are familiar with all curricular and extracurricular options and who can advise students in making choices in their personal development journey. The guidance should prevent an increase of stress among students and should help students deal with the fear of missing out. We also investigate the expansion of the capacity of the course Career Planning and Development, which could be a follow-up course to the assessment course.

### Increasing the extracurricular activities and the participation of students

We offer students extracurricular activities focusing on personal development, 'Bildung', broadening horizons, discovering and developing talents, and career preparation. Extracurricular activities often attract active students and are indirectly linked to personal development or career preparation (for example membership of a Programme Committee, the Board of Education, or the board of a study, sport, or student association). We want to expand our menu of extracurricular activities reach all students and to emphasise how these activities contribute to personal development and career preparation.



To offer a more coherent and complete menu of extracurricular activities for personal development, we will expand the extracurricular opportunities that we offer. The expanded menu of extracurricular activities will be based on input from students and alumni. The activities offered by Student Career Services are favoured highly by students, which is why we will expand the activities of the Student Career Services to meet their demand.

In summary, the budget (around 14%) will be spent on:

- Expanding extracurricular activities, including the opportunity to receive more coaching on personal development and career preparation.
- Improving communication concerning extracurricular activities.
- Continuation of the Student Challenge and skills development project initiated in 2018.

### Measuring implementation of measures

We report on the extra activities and support we have offered to students with the additional budget. We monitor the continuation of Student Challenges and the skills development project.

## 2.4 Professionalisation

Theme description in Sector Agreement: *'Good and involved teachers are the key to high-quality education. Efforts could be made at improving the professional qualities of teachers. This should also include greater appreciation of the work of teachers, by placing greater emphasis on teaching performance at university level, for example. Teachers should also be kept up-to-date with the most recent developments from a substantive, didactic, and digital perspective. It would help here if they were able to share their own course material and to use that of others. Teachers should have more opportunities to work on their own development, by carrying out research, for example (in the case of university of applied sciences teachers).'*

Our teaching staff offer high-quality education. In our Vision for Education, we share our ambition to maintain this high quality by supporting teaching staff in their ongoing efforts to keep their education up to date, peer reviewed, and strongly interlinked with research. In addition, we invest in the development and implementation of various new and innovative teaching and assessment methods to strengthen our small-scale education and to enable flexible learning paths. New innovations, increased flexibility, and activating learning change the role of lecturers. To implement these innovations and continuous enhancements, and to fulfil new roles, we want to strengthen and facilitate professionalisation.

We have concluded that a lack of time is a major impediment to lecturers making use of options for professionalisation. Measures are needed to give more time to lecturers for professionalisation without adding to the currently high workload. We will facilitate and stimulate chair groups to give their staff more time for professionalisation, and we want to unburden staff and support them with on-the-job professionalisation.

#### Stimulating chair groups to facilitate professionalisation

We will create a fund to offer financial compensation for professionalisation of staff. Chair holders will be able to request compensation for the costs of and time spent on courses and attending training.

Chair holders can promote professionalisation in multiple ways. Staff can visit the Teachers' day, participate in the 4TU Centre for Engineering Education, apply for an educational sabbatical, conduct peer reviews, consult instructional designers, participate in innovations, and much more. Chair holders will be able to give academic staff the option to follow the Education Career Path, acknowledging the importance of teaching and lecturer professionalisation. The Education Career Path offers



academic staff the opportunity to spend more time on education.

Part of the fund for professionalisation will be allocated to peer reviews, one of the multiple evaluation instruments we apply to strengthen our quality. Through peer reviews, teaching staff receive feedback on courses from external peers. Conducting peer reviews is standing practice at Wageningen University, but the relatively large effort this requires makes it difficult to incorporate peer reviews into the already full schedule of teaching activities. We will expand the support and facilities for peer reviews to execute them more easily.

#### Support for lecturers

In many cases lecturers know what they want to improve but do not have the time to do it or to participate in the training that is available. We want to unburden teaching staff to give them time for professionalisation, by delegating administrative, organisational, and other tasks related to courses to trained support staff. In order to increase efficiency, we will organise a pool of trained support staff, instructional designers, and student assistants that can take over some of the tasks of lecturers. The pool will be hired by multiple chair groups

in the science group. Individual lecturers will be able to make use of this resource in order to spend more time on professionalisation.

Instructional designers and education coordinators can help lecturers to implement the improvements or innovations and provide on-the-job support. They will not only give advice and training on enhancements but will also help with implementing them. The extra support staff will be hired at the level of multiple (robust) chair groups or the science group. Being part of the educational staff of chair groups enables them to offer the help and training needed. One of their tasks will be to support teaching staff in implementing the new electronic learning system.

In the coming years, we will also promote other forms of professionalisation. In addition to peer reviews conducted by external peers, we also want to stimulate peer feedback within and across chair groups by creating professional teaching communities. We will investigate whether a mentorship training programme for senior lecturers could help them to guide junior lecturers in their development towards fully trained professionals. In addition, we will also examine whether a new teaching helpdesk for educational support can support lecturers in finding the help they need.

**In summary, the budget (around 17%) will be spent on:**

- A fund to give lecturers more time for professionalisation by compensating the time and costs of courses and training paid by chair groups. The fund will also be used to compensate peer review expenses.
- Unburdening and supporting lecturers by hiring staff and instructional designers at the level of chair group or sciences group.
- Continuing the PhD skills training initiated in 2018.

### Measuring implementation of measures

We will report on the deployment of additional instructional designers and the organisation of the pool of support staff to unburden lecturers. The allocation of budget of the fund will be accounted for. We will monitor continuation of the PhD skills training.

### 2.5 Adequate educational facilities

In Chapter 1, we explained that investment in adequate educational facilities is less urgent due to our ongoing investment in facilities. We have expanded facilities, space and places for education, group work, and studying. This remains a continuous process to meet the requests of the chair groups, science groups, students, and the buildings that are available. A third education building will resolve bottlenecks in the educational facilities, especially in respect of thesis workplaces and laboratories. We will stimulate innovation to use new technologies and educational designs, facilitated by the increased flexibility of our education buildings, digital infrastructure, and Bring Your Own Device. Some of the Quality Funding will be used to implement Bring Your Own Device to enhance flexibility of students and their access to the digital learning environment. We will continue the investments initiated in 2018.

**In summary, the budget (around 2%) will be spent on:**

- Implementation of Bring Your Own Device. Continuation of the investments started in 2018 until 2021. After 2021, the investment will decrease.

### Measuring implementation of measures

Monitoring of the allocation of the budget needed for the implementation, including licences for digital programme that students require.

### 3 Investing Quality Funding 2018 and 2019-2024

Wageningen University will receive additional budget between 2019 and 2024 based on the Quality Agreements and the progress that has been achieved. In 2018, we already received additional budget from the Student Loan Fund (known as Quality Funding for 2019-2024). In this chapter, we will outline how investments from the Student Loan Budget in 2018 link to the investments established for 2019-2024 in Chapter 2. The total allocated budget is more than we receive from the government.

In 2018, we received around €3 million to spend on specific topics similar to the themes established for the Quality Agreements. The approved proposal for the allocation of the Quality Funding in 2018 is presented in Appendix 1. The budget allocation was based on discussions with and proposals from the Student Staff Council.

A majority of the Student Loan Fund 2018 investments require continuation in the Quality Agreements 2019-2024 as they are, by nature, investments with a longer horizon, which cannot easily be reversed in the short term. Some investments were of more a temporary nature, such as developing new training programmes. These short-term budgets will be reallocated to the Quality Agreement plans for 2019-2024 if possible and if deemed necessary. The Quality Agreements for 2019-2024 are linked and complementary to the investments commenced in 2018. How the measures complement each other is outlined for each theme below.

The Quality Funding we receive from the Ministry increases over time, beginning at around €3 million and

most likely increasing to around €9 million. In 2019 and 2020, we will invest some additional money to continue some of the projects commenced in 2018, while starting to implement some of the new plans simultaneously. The temporary overspend is included in the new programme, although the final report on the expenses for the overall programme will remain at the level of the funds committed for the Quality Agreements by the Ministry of OCW.

In 2019, we will continue the measures and investments commenced in 2018. The detailed implementation plans for the Quality Agreements for the years 2019-2024 will be developed with the involvement of students and staff and will be discussed with the sounding committee of the Student Staff Council. Once the implementation plans have been established and approved, the additional investments for 2019 will be allocated.



**Table 1** Quality Funding 2018-2024

Year	Estimated quality funding for WUR	Investment in Quality Agreements	Advance investments own account WUR
2018	€ 3,055,000	€ 3,200,000	€ 145,000
2019	€ 3,009,823	€ 4,100,000	€ 1,091,000
2020	€ 3,571,052	€ 5,180,000	€ 1,609,000
2021	€ 6,063,926	€ 6,063,926	€ 0
2022	€ 7,568,838	€ 7,568,838	€ 0
2023	€ 7,991,626	€ 7,991,626	€ 0
2024	€ 9,020,180	€ 9,020,180	€ 0

### Small-scale education

A large percentage of the Quality Funding for 2018 was allocated to chair groups to intensify or maintain supervision. We increased the compensation for thesis support. The science groups received additional budget to hire educational staff and to take other tailored measures to maintain and further develop small-scale education.

Investments of the Quality Funding in 2018 were extended as the investments in additional staff are considered as structural in nature. The additional staff deployed by the science group will contribute to the implementation of the plans for maintaining and further developing small-scale education in 2019-2024, as presented in Chapter 2.

**Table 2** Budget for small-scale education (in €1,000)

Small-scale education 58% of total budget	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Thesis supervision	1700	1700	1700	1700	1700	1700	1700
Science groups <sup>7</sup>	500	500	500	1350	2200	2206	2800
Hiring staff to resolve bottlenecks	0	725	850				
<b>Total</b>	<b>2200</b>	<b>2925</b>	<b>3050</b>	<b>3050</b>	<b>3900</b>	<b>3906</b>	<b>4500</b>

### More and better study guidance

In 2018, we hired an additional student psychologist to develop preventive measures to reduce stress among students. The implementation of these measures will

commence in 2019. We will maintain additional student psychologist capacity in the coming years to develop and coordinate implementation of the stress prevention measures and to strengthen guidance for students.

<sup>7</sup> The budget for the Science Groups to hire extra staff for small-scale education will end on 31 December 2021. As from 2022, the budget will go to the chair groups to hire extra staff to resolve bottlenecks.

**Table 3** Budget for more and better study guidance (in €1,000)

<b>More and better study guidance</b> <i>11% of total budget</i>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Stress prevention campaign	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
More study advice for students by hiring more study advisors		30	115	268	515	675	755
More mental support for students by hiring more student psychologists <sup>8</sup>		50	200	200	200	200	200
Fund to subsidise student initiatives to support students		5	20	20	40	50	50
Launch and running of a virtual training centre, hire of coordinator		10	50	50	50	50	50
Training for staff to recognise and deal with student issues		55	40	40	40	40	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>1065</b>	<b>1145</b>

**Education differentiation: personal development**

In 2018, we launched a new *Student Challenge* to create an additional learning and personal development opportunity outside of the regular curriculum. The second Student Challenge in 2019 will also be financially supported through the Quality Funding. If the Student Challenge is evaluated positively in 2019, we will continue the investments in 2020-2024.

The Student Staff Council requested that the university invest budget for education differentiation in basic (scientific) study skills such as writing a report, quoting scientific articles, providing feedback to others, and learning how to work in a group. In its position paper for the Quality Agreements 2019-2024, the Council added intercultural communication to the basic study skills, in view of the launch of international bachelor's programmes.

Implementation of this plan began in 2018. We created a digital learning environment for educational practices related to writing and group work skills. In two study programmes we started a pilot to integrate and strengthen skills with the help of an instructional designer. We carried out an inventory of the various innovations and quality enhancement projects for skills, aligned these initiatives, and facilitated exchange of ideas and experiences between study programmes.

Skills education will be further strengthened and developed in 2019-2024 to support implementation of the Vision for Education. Continuing the skills education developed in 2018 will require less budget in 2019 and 2020, and we will spend the extra on expanding extracurricular activities. In 2020 and 2021, we will start developing education for other new skills.

**Table 4** Budget education differentiation (in €1,000)

<b>Education differentiation: personal development and career preparation</b> <i>14% of total budget</i>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Student challenge	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
Skills development (group work, writing, etc.)	300	225	285	320	345	350	350
Expand extracurricular activities, including coaching on personal development and career preparation	0	75	130	315	340	345	345
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>995</b>	<b>995</b>

<sup>8</sup> Where necessary, the budget will also be used for additional student counsellors.

## Professionalisation

Increasing differentiation in educational tasks requires more training for different target groups of educational staff. In 2018, we invested in training PhD candidates for education to supervise theses and internships and to teach courses. In 2018, 60 PhD candidates took part in the

course and more PhD candidates are expected to do so in 2019. We continue to offer the course. The development costs that we spent in 2018 will not be needed in coming years. In 2019-2024, we will invest in two new measures to stimulate and support teaching staff to spend time on professionalisation, as outlined in Chapter 2.

**Table 5** Budget for professionalisation (in €1,000)

<b>Professionalisation</b> <i>17% of total budget</i>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
PhD skills training	150	75	75	75	75	75	75
Fund to compensate chair groups for professionalisation and peer review expenses		25	80	175	213	300	455
Unburden and support lecturers by hiring support staff and instructional designers at decentral level		75	300	700	1100	1300	1550
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>1388</b>	<b>1675</b>	<b>2080</b>

## Adequate facilities

We continue the investments in Bring Your Own Device,

which we initiated in 2018. As implementation progresses, the budget required will decrease.

**Table 6** Budget for adequate facilities (in €1,000)

<b>Adequate facilities</b> <i>2% of total budget</i>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Bring Your Own Device	200	200	200	200	100	50	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>

## Free space

Education at Wageningen University is constantly evolving and changing. We are implementing our new Vision for Education and are anticipating changing demands in the professional field and from students. Flexibility is required

in order to be able to respond to new insights, new governmental policies, and new unforeseen challenges. We have allocated budget to cover measures needed for unforeseen changes, which we will develop and discuss with the Student Staff Council.

**Table 7** Budget for free space (in €1,000)

<b>Free space</b> <i>4% of total budget</i>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Determine annually	0	0	300	300	300	300	300

## 4 Monitoring and evaluation

Implementation, evaluation, and enhancement of the measures we take are integrated into our quality assurance system. The quality assurance system is described in our Quality Assurance Policy, which was positively assessed in the Institutional Audit of 2018. In this chapter, we will outline how we will monitor and evaluate realisation of the Quality Agreements. Evaluation may lead to adjustments to ensure that the Quality Funding is spent effectively. Changes will be discussed with and approved by the Student Staff Council.

We implement, monitor, and evaluate via three processes: 1) Education, 2) Staff and 3) Support. In our quality assurance system, we ensure and improve the quality of our *education* via the Board of Education and Programme Committees, supported by the Programme Directors. The

Board of Education reports to the Executive Board. The Board of Education and Programme Committees are the demand side in our demand and supply education matrix (explained in our Quality Assurance Policy), and the chair groups supply the education that is requested. The chair groups hire *staff* for education and research. Quality Agreement measures related to personnel are implemented by the chair groups. The coordination and *support* of policy implementation is assigned to the department of Education and Student Affairs (ESA). Programme Directors, study advisors, and the career service centre are all stationed within ESA. ESA follows its own monitoring and evaluation process.

The table below presents which measure is monitored in which process: education, staff, or support.

**Table 8** Monitoring of quality measures

Measures linked to monitoring processes <b>Process</b>	Measure per theme
Education	Small-scale education: bottleneck analyses to maintain and strengthen small-scale education. Education differentiation: strengthen career preparation in the study programmes (Students should be confronted with career preparation 4 to 5 times per year on average over their studies).
Staff	Small-scale education: lecturers redesign courses and hire staff to maintain and further develop small-scale education. Professionalisation: fund to stimulate professionalisation and peer review.
Support	More and better study guidance: training centre and more study advisors and student psychologists. Professionalisation: hiring more assistants to unburden lecturers to give them more time for professionalisation on the job through the additional instructional designers that we hire. Education differentiation: expand extracurricular activities and training for students focusing on talent development and career preparation. Hiring extra staff to organise and/or offer the expanded menu of options.

We will develop detailed implementation plans in 2019. Monitoring will take place in three cycles of four months – in April, September, and January/February. This

frequency is aligned with the annual budget cycle. More information on the monitoring cycle is provided in Appendix 3.

All progress reports retrieved from the three cycles will be sent to the steering group, and the steering group will provide integrated advice about the implementation of all measures to the Executive Board. The steering group will discuss the progress with the sounding committee of the WUR Council. The final progress report will look at the progress over the whole year.

The Executive Board will account for the progress in the annual report. The Student Staff Council will be given the

opportunity to report independently on the progress of the Quality Agreement plan in an appendix to the Annual Report.

### Responsibilities

The responsibilities in the three quality assurance processes described above differ per process. The roles of the Executive Board, steering group, sounding committee, and Student Staff Council are the same in each process.

**Table 9** Responsible actors in quality assurance

Responsible actor	Tasks
Supervisory Board	The Supervisory Board supervises and advises the Executive Board in the performance of its management tasks, including the realisation of the Quality Agreements. The Supervisory Board receives progress reports and discusses the progress with the Executive Board annually.
Executive Board	The Executive Board is responsible for the Quality Agreements of Wageningen University. The board receives progress reports from the steering group three times a year with advice from the steering group and sounding committee.
Steering group	The steering group oversees the progress and coherence of the Quality Agreements, signals and ensures solutions for risks and problems, and safeguards the conditions required for the implementation. The steering group monitors progress three times a year (April, September, December/January) and reports to the Executive Board. The steering group ensures that interventions take place when necessary. Steering group members: Dean of Education Arnold Brecht (chair), Manager ESA Frank Bakema, Director CSA Ron Mazier, Director F&C Bas Wessels, Board of Education member Hans Komen, Policy Advisor CSA Eva Verschoor.
Sounding committee	The sounding committee of the co-participation council remains the sparring partner for the steering group. The steering group and sounding committee will discuss the implementation plans in 2019 and the progress of implementation twice a year. The SSC has the right of approval over changes in the Quality Agreement plan.
Student Staff Council	The Student Staff Council has approval right over the Quality Agreement plan and, where relevant, on the adjustments proposed in the period 2019-2024.
Board of Education (education)	The Board of Education is responsible for the content and quality of the study programmes. Changes to the programmes are formally approved by the Board of Education. The programme committees advise the Board of Education with regard to the content, design, and quality of the study programmes. The Board asks the chair groups to provide the requested education and allocates the required budget through the financial allocation system.
Programme committees (education)	Analyses bottlenecks in courses and solutions together with chair groups and the Programme Director. Ensures that more attention is given to career preparation in the curriculum.
Programme directors (education)	Coordinates changes relating to the study programme.
Course coordinator of chair groups (education)	The course coordinators of the chair groups report to the programme committee on the implementation of enhancement measures to maintain small-scale education in the course.

Dean and Manager of Education and Student Affairs (support)	Responsible for implementation of measures related to support. The Dean and Manager assign the coordination of implementation to a head of department within ESA or to a project leader. The head of the department or project leader reports to the Dean and Manager. The Dean and Manager report to the steering group.
Project leader or head of a department of ESA (support)	Coordinate implementation of a measure. They report on the execution of plans, bottlenecks, budget spending, and results of the plans to the Dean and Manager of ESA.
Chair groups (staff)	The chair holder hires staff for the research and education tasks of the chair groups and invests in professionalisation. Chair holders execute measures in the Quality Agreements for hiring extra staff for education. The chair holder decides which staff are needed and for which tasks and applies for the final approval of the science group when it comes to hiring additional staff.
Managing directors of science groups (staff)	The managing directors of the science groups direct the chair groups belonging to the science group. The director takes the final decision on hiring additional staff for the chair group.

## Appendix 1 Student Loan Fund investments 2018

Theme	Budget 2018	Explanation of proposed budget	Involvement of Student Staff Council (SSC)
Small-scale and intensive education	€2,200,000	€1.7 m thesis support €0.5 m in total for the five science groups to tackle problems in education by investing in pools of staff for education	SSC approved the proposal by approving the budget for 2018.
More and better study guidance	€50,000	For extra student counselling	SSC approved the proposal by approving the budget for 2018. The proposal by the SSC was adopted.
Education differentiation: talent development	€600,000	€0.3 m for student challenges €0.3 m for general skills/talent development	SSC approved the proposal by approving the budget for 2018. The proposal by the SSC for general skills development was adopted.
Professionalisation	€15,000	PhD skills training	SSC approved the proposal by approving the budget for 2018.
Adequate educational facilities	€200,000	MyWorkspace	SSC approved the proposal by approving the budget for 2018.
<b>Total</b>	<b>€3,200,000</b>		

## Appendix 2 Consultations

Overview of all consultations and number of participants.

Consultation	Number of participants (students and staff together)
Workshop 1	21 staff and students
Workshop 2	18 staff and students
Workshop 3	Steering Board and two members of the Executive Board in total 7
Workshop 4	Student Council with 12 members
Working group 1	8 members: 7 staff and 1 student
Working group 2	8 members: 7 staff and 1 student
Working group 3	7 members: 6 staff and 1 student <sup>9</sup>
Working group 4	9 members: 8 staff and 1 student
Open consultation 1	19 staff and students
Open consultation 2	22 staff and students
Board of Education	4 staff and 4 students
Programme directors	19 programme directors
Formal consultation	Programme directors: 18 Board of Education: 8
Sounding committee	15 participants (8 students and 7 staff)
<b>Total</b>	<b>173 staff and students<sup>10</sup></b>

<sup>9</sup> Two members became sick during the process

<sup>10</sup> Including some overlap between participants who joined two consultations or meetings

## Appendix 3 Monitoring cycle

Planning	Planning & control cycle	Monitoring cycle for Quality Agreements
January/February	Annual report	Report and discuss the realisation of investments in the previous year.
April	Framework letter	Reflect on Q1 and look forward to next year.
September	Headlines budget	Reflect on realisation of investments in Q1 and Q2, improve realisation where necessary.



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