



---

# Guidelines for Promotors, Chair Holders and Chair Groups related to the PhD programme



**WAGENINGEN**  
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

---

---

# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1 Responsibilities of the promotor</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 Responsibilities of the chair holder</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 PhD supervision policies in chair groups</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Additional information</b>	<b>5</b>

---

---

# Preface

This document outlines responsibilities of promotors and chair holders, as well as policies that Wageningen Graduate Schools expect to be in place regarding supervision of PhD candidates at Wageningen University. The document aims to ensure similar supervision and treatment of the various PhD candidates across graduate schools.

## 1 Responsibilities of the promotor

Article 4 of The Doctoral Degree Regulations describes the qualifications and tasks of the promotor. The Academic Board amends these regulations regularly to adhere to the Dutch Higher Education and Scientific Research law (*Wet op hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*). Promotors are expected to know and understand these regulations (and the latest amendments) and act accordingly. The promotor can be a Wageningen University professor, or an associate professor who has been granted the *ius promovendi* by the Academic Board of Wageningen University.

The composition of the supervisory team is described in a Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) which is developed by the candidate and supervisors at the start of the PhD. It is part of the PhD registration at the graduate school. The Academic Board formally appoints, at least, one promotor and a co-promotor<sup>1</sup> where the promotor is responsible that supervision is well organised. The supervisory team, therefore, consist of at least one supervisor in addition to the promotor. In this way, the PhD candidate does not depend on one supervisor for guidance and expertise, and depending on the topic(s) addressed in the PhD research, the supervisory team can contain several experts.

The promotor is responsible for the development of the candidate towards becoming an independent scientist. The promotor is, similar to the co-promotor, committed to providing supervision in terms of scientific input and expertise, and is informed at all times about the progress of the research and is supportive when it comes to the wellbeing of the PhD candidate. On the right is a non-exhaustive list of what is expected of promotors in PhD projects.

### **A promotor is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that the project is feasible (logistically, financially and time wise)
- Recruitment and selection of the candidate
- Involving specific experts as part of the supervisory team to successfully guide the PhD candidate
- Performing procedural/administrative duties related to the WU PhD programme
- Assistance with accommodation (especially sandwich PhD candidates)
- Guiding the PhD candidate in the ethical conduct of science according to the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity
- Discussing, reading, commenting, analysing data and critically reflecting on the performance of the PhD candidate whereby these tasks can be divided over promotors
- Ensuring co-authors follow the WU guidelines for co-authorship; the promotor is not automatically a co-author
- Discussing the tailor-made training and education plan reflecting the personal development goals (improving skills and competencies) of the PhD candidate
- Exercising duty of care for all PhD candidates
- Planning and monitoring of progress of the PhD candidate
- Discussing career perspectives of the candidate
- Monitoring social well-being of the candidate
- Providing a go/no-go decision and ensuring that the process that leads to the decision is followed
- Safeguarding local supervision in the country where field studies occur (*if applicable*)
- Annual performance evaluation of the candidate
- Informing and updating chair holder (*if applicable*)
- Approval of the PhD thesis and rebuttal before submission to the PhD office

---

<sup>1</sup> Doctoral Degree Regulations allow deviation from two or three supervisors but only in cases approved by the Dean of Research.

---

## 2 Responsibilities of the chair holder

The chair holder has overall responsibility for the balance between the number of PhD candidates and the available supervisory capacity in the group, the quality of supervision, and is supportive when it comes to the wellbeing of the PhD candidates in the chair group.

### **A chair holder is responsible for:**

- The proper implementation of the WU PhD programme in the chair group
- Ensuring that the PhD supervisors in the chair group are familiar with the prevailing rules and regulations of the WU PhD programme, and encourages them to follow a PhD supervision course and attend at least one PhD supervisor workshop every two years
- The quality of the supervision, and the monitoring of the quality of supervision, e.g. via the Performance & Development (R&O) cycle
- Developing and implementing chair group policies regarding PhD supervision (*see below*)
- The financial viability of all PhD projects in the chair group, including scholarship, sandwich and external PhD candidates; every PhD project should have funding available for research and training for at least four years
- Monitoring the progress of the PhD projects in the group
- An inclusive academic environment in the group
- Research integrity in, and data management of the chair group
- Exercising duty of care for all PhD candidates
- Ensuring that potential teaching activities of the PhD candidate adhere to the rules set by Wageningen University and the collective labour agreement (CAO), so that they have sufficient time for the PhD training and research and are not overloaded with teaching duties
- The number of PhD candidates a supervisor can have depends among others on the type of project, the skills of the supervisor and the degree of independence of the PhD candidate. Chair holders monitor the supervision load of supervisors in their groups and ensure that all supervisors have sufficient time to deliver quality supervision.

## 3 PhD supervision policies in chair groups

The chair group is the most important 'home' for PhD candidates within the university. It has to be clear for PhD candidates what they can and cannot expect from their supervisors and the chair group. The chair groups should have, therefore, policies that support the supervisors in their duties towards the PhD candidates including:

- A recruitment and selection procedure by a panel of staff members
- A policy to ensure a social, supportive and dynamic academic environment for PhD candidates
  - develop a buddy system for new PhD candidates
  - organise PhD peer consultation groups per chair group or together with adjacent chair groups
  - appoint an easily accessible staff member as a contact person for PhD candidates in case of personal issues
- A policy to provide structure to PhD candidates, ensuring that every PhD candidate:
  - has a supervisory team with the required expertise
  - has a realistic planning and the necessary funding for research, training, conference visits, etc.
- has a project that can be completed in four years
- has a project in line with their own wishes and career perspective
- develops a Training and Supervision Plan in cooperation with the supervisory team that includes an agreement on the composition of the supervisory team and the availability and responsibilities of each supervisor
- is entitled to regularly scheduled supervisory meetings
- has annual progress meetings
- attends PhD courses and is involved in academic exchange
- A policy for management of research data produced in PhD projects
- A policy regarding publishing and co-authorship with PhD candidates, in line with Wageningen University policy and the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity
- A platform to exchange PhD supervision experiences amongst the supervisors in the group.

---

# Additional information

Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS) has published a Guide for Supervisors, <https://www.wur.nl/en/show/WGS-Guide-for-PhD-Supervisors-2019.htm>. In this guide, PhD supervisors are provided with information on the PhD programme, the rules and regulations and tips and tricks regarding supervision. Furthermore, WGS organises courses for PhD supervisors and regular lunch meetings to exchange experiences on specific issues and topics related to PhD supervision.

In case PhD candidates, after discussion with their promotor(s), remain concerned about any aspect described in this document in relation to their own PhD studies, they are advised to contact their graduate school.