

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

PhD supervisors

CC to: PhD-office, General Directors, PhD council, Graduate schools

Dear PhD supervisors,

With this letter, we would like to inform you about recent changes implemented by the Academic Board to further improve the quality of the PhD Wageningen University programme.

The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

As of the 1st of October 2018, the revised Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity applies. Every person at Wageningen University & Research (staff, student or visitor) who is involved in any way in scientific research and education is individually responsible for monitoring and safeguarding scientific integrity. All academics and researchers at Wageningen University & Research are required to act in accordance and comply with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. PhD-candidates declare to act according to the Code of Conduct in the future when signing their PhD diploma. From now on PhD-candidates also make the commitment to act according to the Code at the start of their PhD, when signing their Teaching and Supervision Plan and their Research Proposal.

For more information and the revised Code, see <https://www.wur.nl/en/About-Wageningen/Integrity-and-privacy/Scientific-integrity.htm>.

Ius promovendi

As of March 2018, the *ius promovendi* ('promotierecht') is no longer restricted to persons appointed as professor but has been extended to associate professors 1 in Tenure Track. Upon promotion to associate professor 1, the *ius promovendi* is automatically bestowed on you. Other academic staff members who are not in Tenure Track can submit a formal request to the Academic Board to be granted the *ius promovendi*. The format for such a request can be found in Appendix 9 of the Doctoral Degree Regulations.

In the period between March 2018 and August 2019, 35 associate professors 1 in Tenure Track have been granted the *ius promovendi*. In addition, eight staff members received the *ius promovendi* via a request to the Academic Board.

NUFFIC evaluation of diplomas

The Academic Board would like to emphasise that to be eligible to start a PhD program at Wageningen University, candidates must have a degree that is comparable to a Master's degree obtained at a Dutch university. Master's degrees obtained in the Netherlands are automatically recognised while all other diplomas are subject to a case-by-case evaluation, mostly by NUFFIC.

DATE
November 21, 2019

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In case NUFFIC evaluates the diplomas as being equivalent to a Dutch Bachelor's degree, the candidate is in principle not eligible to start the Wageningen PhD program. The promotor has the responsibility to inform the candidate about the case-by-case evaluation and the consequences of rejection of the diploma by NUFFIC.

Diversity within and between thesis committees

The Academic Board is in favour of having both male and female opponents in each thesis committee. Although there are no formal requirements, the Academic Board would like to ask you to pay special attention to the gender diversity when inviting opponents.

In addition, the Academic Board would like to express the need for variation between thesis committees. Promotors need to ensure that they refrain from inviting the same opponent(s) on a regular basis.

The number of promotors and co-promotors

The Academic Board would like to simplify and clarify the possible number of promotors and co-promotors. The Academic Board will appoint at least two and at most three promotors / co-promotors, of which at least one is a promotor. In exceptional cases, the Academic Board can appoint four promotors / co-promotors, but only after a detailed written motivation by the promotors. Appointment of more than four promotors / co-promotors is never possible. In very exceptional cases, the Academic Board may decide to appoint only one promotor and to refrain from appointing a second (co)promotor. To clarify this aspect, Articles 4.4 and 5.1 of the Doctoral Degree Regulations have been modified.

Responsibility PhD thesis, authorship statement and propositions

The Academic Board reminds the promotor of her/his responsibility to personally approve the PhD thesis before it is submitted for evaluation by the thesis committee. The same holds true for the authorship statement and the propositions. Approving includes, amongst others, the verification that the names, titles and affiliations of the opponents are correct.

Resubmission of the PhD thesis

In case the thesis committee judges the submitted thesis being not defensible, the PhD candidate has the right to improve the thesis and/or to write a response. The Academic Board has decided that it is possible to do this only once.

The PhD candidate submits the response and/or the amended PhD thesis to the promotor. If the promotor determines that the thesis and/or the response adequately addresses the issues/points raised, the promotor will resubmit the amended thesis and/or the response. If the thesis committee maintains its judgement that the submitted thesis is not defensible, the PhD candidate cannot proceed with the defence of the thesis. The PhD candidate can request to start a new thesis evaluation procedure at the earliest six months after the final "not defensible" decision. Within the new thesis evaluation procedure, the same thesis committee will be asked to judge the revised thesis.

To clarify this aspect Articles 9.8 and 11.5 have been added to the Doctoral Degree Regulations.

PhD ceremony procedure

Recently the Academic Board updated the PhD ceremony procedure in the Auditorium. The following changes have been made:

- During the ceremony, all professors must take their beret off when seated.
- In principle, the promotor and co-promotor cannot act as opponent.
- The Academic Board emphasises that the *judicium* **and** the *laudatio* together may take no more than **five minutes** in total and must be formal and constructive in tone.
- The Deputy Rector will thank the committee members for their contributions. This should not be part of the *laudatio*.

Conventions during the PhD ceremony

The Academic Board would like to emphasise that the focus of the PhD ceremony is the practice of science. It is, therefore, unsuitable for the PhD candidate, paranymphs or members of the thesis committee to make any religious, political or nationalistic statements by means of clothing, words, gestures or in any other manner during the academic session and in the period of 30 minutes before the academic session, in or around the so called 'lekenpraatje'. Any other statements that do not adhere to the scientific and dignified character of the ceremony are also not permitted.

New diploma

To finalize this letter, we would like to inform you that all Wageningen University diplomas, including the PhD-diploma will have a new lay out. The new PhD-diploma will be handed out as of November 2019.

Unless stated otherwise, the above-mentioned issues will take effect from January 2020. The changes will be implemented in the Wageningen PhD programme in general and to some extent in the Doctoral Degree Regulations. We would like to thank you for your cooperation in implementing these modifications.

Kind regards,



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



Prof. dr. Wouter H. Hendriks
Dean of Research

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