

# PhD Guide

Wageningen University



WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY  
WAGENINGEN UR



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# Preface

# 1

About 1,500 PhD candidates from all over the world follow the Wageningen University PhD programme. This guide gives insight in the Wageningen PhD programme and contains information relevant for PhD candidates. For online information on the Wageningen University PhD programme, see [www.wageningenuniversity.nl/uk/informationfor/phd+programmes](http://www.wageningenuniversity.nl/uk/informationfor/phd+programmes).

This guide is also available at [www.PhDguide.wur.nl](http://www.PhDguide.wur.nl).

We hope that it will be of use to you.

Any comments or suggestions related to improving the PhD Guide will be appreciated. To this end, please contact Jorika Peterse at PhD services: [jorika.peterse@wur.nl](mailto:jorika.peterse@wur.nl) +31 (0)317 48 14 79

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## **Disclaimer**

We have done our best to provide you with correct information; however, no rights can be derived from this publication.

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# About Wageningen UR

## 2

The mission of Wageningen UR (University & Research centre) is 'To explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life'. The strength of Wageningen UR lies in its ability to combine the forces of Wageningen University, part of Wageningen UR, its specialised research institutes and the Van Hall Larenstein University of Applied Sciences, part of Wageningen UR. Its strength also lies in the interaction of the various fields of natural and social sciences at Wageningen UR. This union of expertise leads to scientific breakthroughs that can quickly be put into practice and be incorporated into education.

At the moment, 6,500 staff members, 10,500 students and 1,500 PhD candidates from over 100 countries are working all over the world from a fundamental and applied perspective in the pursuit of this mission. They contribute to scientific development for the benefit of science, policy, the business world and the community at large.

Within Wageningen University, the wide variety of disciplines focusing on human, animal and plant life and the environment, allow for an integrated approach to both fundamental and applied research.

Education and research at Wageningen UR come highly recommended. Student numbers are growing strongly. Students ranked Wageningen as the best university in the Reference Guide for Higher Education for the last seven years in a row. The top quality of research at Wageningen University is evidenced by the university's position within the top 6 most important citation indexes of its domain.

The above-mentioned qualities of Wageningen UR, combined with the university's pioneering research and innovative education, create an excellent setting for a PhD programme to flourish.

For more information visit: [www.wur.nl/uk](http://www.wur.nl/uk)

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# The Wageningen University

## PhD Programme

# 3

Wageningen University offers a four-year PhD programme. The focus of the programme is the PhD research project (setting up, planning and performing research, then writing it up and presenting it), which leads to a thesis and often also to publications. The research is done under the supervision of scientific staff.

PhD candidates are also required to spend 15% of their time on training and education activities such as courses, seminars, conferences and workshops and PhD candidates who are employed by a Dutch tax-paying organisation (like Wageningen UR) have the option to spend up to 10% of their time teaching.

### 3.1 Formal Admission to the PhD Programme

Dutch law stipulates that candidates must be formally admitted to a PhD programme. Wageningen University requires candidates to be formally admitted within 12 months (or 18 months at the very latest) of starting the PhD programme. This means that although a PhD candidate is invited by a supervisor to come to Wageningen, he/she still has to obtain formal admittance.

#### **To be formally admitted to the PhD Programme, the following requirements must be met:**

- 1 Proficiency in the English (or Dutch) language.  
PhD candidates from non-Anglophone countries are required to submit an internationally recognised certificate of proficiency in the English language (TOEFL or British Council, IELTS). This certificate is not a requirement for PhD candidates who have completed their higher education with English as

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the language of instruction or can prove that their Dutch language skills are at the VWO level.

- 2 Fees have been paid (applies only to certain categories of PhD candidates; see 3.3).
- 3 Research proposal has been approved by the graduate school of which the candidate is a member.
- 4 Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) has been approved by the graduate school of which the candidate is a member.
- 5 Evaluation of the PhD candidate's diploma(s) and academic records. For graduates holding an MSc degree from a Dutch university, this evaluation is a mere formality. Graduates from non-Dutch universities must have their diplomas evaluated by the academic board, which bases its decisions on the evaluations done by NUFFIC (Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education). When a diploma is rejected, the academic board decides, together with the supervisor, whether a qualifying examination is required and, if so, what it should consist of. If a qualifying exam is required, the candidate will not be formally admitted until he/she has passed this exam.
- 6 Evaluation of the PhD candidate's progress and performance after approximately one year (or 18 months at the very latest). This evaluation (the so-called 'Go/No-Go interview') determines whether a PhD candidate may remain in the PhD programme.

## 3.2 Categories of PhD Candidates

Wageningen University classifies PhD candidates into five categories. The candidates within these categories have different rights and positions within the organisation. The categories are:

- 1 **Research Assistant** (temporary employee of Wageningen University).
- 2 **Staff** (an employee of Wageningen University who is given the opportunity to conduct PhD research).
- 3 **Sandwich PhD** (fellowship candidate whose research is primarily conducted at the home institute or in his/her country of residence/origin).
- 4 **Guest PhD** (fellowship candidate whose research is primarily conducted at Wageningen University).
- 5 **External PhD** (PhD candidate not employed by Wageningen University who conducts research at an institute other than Wageningen University and whose only affiliation with Wageningen is via the supervisor).

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### 3.2.1 Research Assistant

#### **Employment contract**

Research Assistants are recruited and selected through vacancy announcements and interviews. They are generally appointed to full-time positions with temporary contracts for a maximum of 18 months. Contract extension for the remaining duration of the PhD programme (four years in total, as a full-time employee) is considered only if the first period has been positively evaluated (the Go/No-Go evaluation: there is a grievance procedure for 'No-Go').

At the request of the parties involved, the Executive Board of the university can appoint the PhD candidate to a 0.8 FTE position (80% of full-time equivalent).

In some situations, it is possible to have an additional contract extension. For more information, please contact the Human Resource Management office.

More information on employment can be found in the Collective Employment Agreement or CAO (*collectieve arbeidsovereenkomst*). It is available in English and Dutch at [www.vsnunl.nl](http://www.vsnunl.nl) and at the Human Resources Management office. For advice, contact your personnel adviser. The CAO that applies to research assistants financed by NWO can be found on the NWO website: [www.nwo.nl](http://www.nwo.nl).

Wageningen University has specific regulations for research assistants; see [www.phd.wu.nl](http://www.phd.wu.nl) and [www.wur.nl/hrm](http://www.wur.nl/hrm) (the HRM website of Wageningen UR, which is an intranet website with limited access).

#### **HRM adviser**

When a research assistant is appointed, he/she meets with the personnel adviser of the Human Resources Management (HRM) Office. The research assistant can contact this adviser concerning such matters as legal status, supervision problems or other personnel issues. Research assistants can also contact the PhD adviser of their graduate school when problems arise. To find the HRM adviser of your department, contact your chair group or visit the HRM website: [www.wur.nl/hrm](http://www.wur.nl/hrm) (this is an intranet website with limited access).

### 3.2.2 Staff PhD (not Research Assistant)

Staff PhD candidates are employees of Wageningen University who are given the opportunity to conduct PhD research. They are not charged any fees and

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they do not need to register at the Student Service Centre. If they already have significant teaching and/or research experience, their Training and Supervision Plans will take this into account.

### 3.2.3 Sandwich PhD Candidate

'Sandwich' PhD candidates are international PhD candidates who have a fellowship or grant and are not formally employed by Wageningen University. They usually spend the initial and the final six to eight months of the four-year PhD programme at Wageningen University. The first period is spent elaborating on the proposal, studying literature and taking courses, while the final period is spent completing the thesis. During the intermediate period, the PhD candidate performs research in his/her country of origin. These PhD candidates must have the support of both their home institute and their supervisors at Wageningen University. The actual research takes place in the PhD candidate's home country under local supervision. During this period, contact with the supervisor in Wageningen is maintained by email and annual visits.

#### **Institutional commitment**

The research proposal of a sandwich PhD candidate should preferably be linked to the applicant's country of origin, or should be of interest to research organisations in that country. The preliminary research proposal must demonstrate that the applicant is competent in independent scientific research and has the qualities necessary to be enrolled in the PhD programme.

Before admitting a sandwich PhD, Wageningen University will evaluate the following:

- Financial support provided by the home institute
- Academic supervision provided by the home institute
- The curriculum vitae of the supervisor in the home country

### 3.2.4 Guest PhD Candidate

Guest PhD candidates perform their research at but are not employed by Wageningen University. These candidates usually have a fellowship or grant from a local, national or international funding agency. When applying for a PhD programme, they must prove that they have appropriate financial support and a firm commitment from the relevant department or institute at Wageningen University.

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### 3.2.5 External PhD Candidate

PhD candidates in this category are not employed by Wageningen University and they conduct/have conducted their research at an institute other than Wageningen University. The link with Wageningen University is primarily via the supervisor. These PhD candidates do not pay a university tuition fee.

## 3.3 Tuition fee

**The table below shows the tuition fee for PhD candidates starting on or after 01-01-2012.**

Category	Tuition fee
<b>1 Research Assistant</b>	No
<b>2 Staff PhD</b> (not research assistants)	No
<b>3 Sandwich PhD candidate</b>	
Wageningen University Funding	No
NWO Funding	No
Funding by a third party	€ 1000,- / month
<b>4 Guest PhD candidate</b>	€ 1000,- / month
<b>5 External PhD candidate</b>	No

Note: The tuition fee is levied by sciences groups/chair groups, which may specify exceptions.

**The table below shows the tuition fee for PhD candidates who started before 01-01-2012.**

Category	University fee	Departmental fee	Education budget
<b>1 Research ssistant</b>	No	No	Yes
<b>2 Staff candidate</b> (not research assistants)	No	No	No
<b>3 Sandwich PhD candidate</b>			
Wageningen University funding	No	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>
NWO Funding	No	No	Yes <sup>1</sup>
Funding by a third party	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
<b>4 Guest PhD candidate</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>1</sup>
<b>5 External PhD candidate</b>	No	No	No <sup>2</sup>

1 Applies only to PhD candidates who started after January 2002.

2 External PhD candidates from a specified international education institute (ITC, IHE) who plan to earn their PhDs at Wageningen University and with a TSP, will receive an education budget from Wageningen University.

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## 3.4 The Graduate Schools

The PhD programme is coordinated by six Graduate Schools of Wageningen University. Each graduate school has a mission and research themes. The research groups of Wageningen University participate in one or more graduate schools. Researchers at other universities and research institutes can also be affiliated with a graduate school. The graduate schools have three main tasks:

- To stimulate and coordinate the development of a coherent university research programme within the mission of the graduate school
- To safeguard, monitor and stimulate the quality and progress of academic research (PhD candidates, postdocs and staff)
- To coordinate, develop and facilitate postgraduate education

Almost all researchers, postdocs and PhD candidates participate in a graduate school. The graduate schools of Wageningen University have been accredited by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and are therefore subject to quality control. Academic staff must meet the requirements set by the graduate school to be a member. PhD candidates become a member when their research proposal and Training and Supervision Plan are approved by the graduate school.

The Graduate Schools of Wageningen University together constitute 'Wageningen Graduate Schools' (WGS). WGS is led and coordinated by the Dean of Sciences, Prof. J.A.M. van Arendonk. His responsibility is to stimulate scientific quality and cooperation between the graduate schools and to address matters of common interest. The dean is also advisor of the Executive Board.

The graduate schools of Wageningen University and their areas of research are described below.

### 3.4.1 Experimental Plant Sciences (EPS)

EPS is an inter-university institution for collaborative research and PhD/postdoc training at Wageningen University, Radboud University Nijmegen, Utrecht University, Leiden University, VU University Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam and University of Groningen. It was founded in 1992 in order to organise and coordinate the collaborating universities' fundamental and strategic plant research, which aims at developing new principles in crop breeding, crop protection and crop growth for sustainable agriculture and horticulture.

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The mission of EPS is to organise the training of PhD candidates and postdocs to become self-reliant, societal skilled researchers in the field of basic and strategic research on healthy plants or plants affected by biotic or abiotic factors. The understanding of the functioning of plants offers new means for establishing sustainable agriculture and the sustainable production of food, feed, non-food and green energy and is also essential for the management of renewable nature resources.

EPS also aims to create a national platform for academic experimental plant scientists for mutual consultation, collaboration and coordination in research, research policy, fund raising, societal discussions and representation at the national and international levels, thus contributing to solutions for societal problems. The third aim is to create an international graduate schools network in north-west Europe for joint PhD activities and collaboration in research activities.

**Research programmes:**

- Developmental Biology of Plants
- Interactions of Plants and Biotic Agents
- Metabolism and Adaptation
- Genome Biology

**Scientific Director:** Prof. A.H.J. Bisseling

**Contact:**

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### 3.4.2 Production Ecology and Resource Conservation (PE&RC)

The C.T. de Wit Graduate School for Production Ecology and Resource Conservation (PE&RC) is a collaborative research and PhD training institute of Wageningen University that works on fundamental and strategic issues related to agricultural production systems and sustainable land use.

Within Wageningen UR, PE&RC collaborates with the institutes Plant Research International and Alterra, both part of Wageningen UR and outside Wageningen UR with the international institutes ITC and NIOO and the Plant Ecology Group of Utrecht University.

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Fundamental/strategic, disciplinary and interdisciplinary scientific research is conducted in an integrated fashion on issues related to both the agricultural and the natural components of the rural environment. Being a collaborative research network, the prime task of PE&RC is to facilitate and stimulate the scientific research process and PhD training/education of the participating groups. Academic research within PE&RC is a bottom-up activity that is largely carried out by the individual chair groups and its staff members.

The mission of PE&RC is to understand the functioning of (agro-)ecosystems to enable the design and development of sustainable and multifunctional production and land use systems. Research in PE&RC can be divided into four overlapping themes that range from sub-individual to global levels of integration:

- Systems biology
- Bio-/geo- interactions and Biodiversity
- Complex adaptive systems
- Innovative nature

**Scientific Director:** Prof. L. Brussaard

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www.pe-rc.nl

### 3.4.3 Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology, Nutrition and Health Sciences (VLAG)

The VLAG Graduate School was founded in 1993. It focuses on nutrition, food technology, agrobiotechnology and health sciences. VLAG is a cooperative endeavour involving research groups at Wageningen University and Maastricht University and five research institutes, namely Wageningen UR Food & Biobased Research, RIKILT, part of Wageningen UR, NIZO Food Research, TNO Quality of Life, and the RIVM (Dutch national institute of public health and the environment).

The vision of the graduate school is that society needs high quality scientists who are able to perform excellent science for impact. The mission is to develop

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the careers of young researchers and to promote research collaboration in food technology, agrobiotechnology, nutrition and health sciences areas. VLAG's comprehensive and challenging PhD programme trains its graduate candidates as highly qualified researchers in the areas of food technology, agrobiotechnology, nutrition and health sciences.

**Research Programmes:**

- Sustainable production: Bio(techno)logical production routes; New process principles and production systems
- Product and ingredient structuring and functionality: Sensory perceived properties of foods; New ingredient functionality
- Food safety: Toxicology; Microbiology
- Nutrition, metabolism and health: Cell; Individual; Population

**Scientific Director:** Prof. Dr. R.M. Boom

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### 3.4.4 Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)

Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS) brings together senior researchers, postdocs and PhD candidates in the social sciences and interdisciplinary fields of research. WASS currently (2011) hosts 365 PhD candidates, about 25 postdocs and some 160 senior researchers spread across a variety of chair groups and research institutes. The school is strongly internationally oriented in staff, students and research topics, works across disciplinary boundaries and multiple scales from a solid empirical basis, analyses social challenges and contributes to problem solving to improve the quality of life. WASS strives to make high-quality academic contributions, to critically engage in social debates and to contribute to societal problem solving and innovation. It offers in-depth training that provides PhD candidates with a suitable background for a career in academic and applied research, or other leading societal positions.

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The mission of WASS is to bring international, comparative, disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives and approaches to bear on core challenges and concerns related to food quality and food safety, environmental protection and sustainable resource use, healthy lifestyles and sustainable livelihoods, and equal access to development opportunities. In these domains, WASS focuses on exploring and understanding the interaction between institutions, practices and social change, often in relation to the material-physical world of natural resources, technologies and artefacts, and from a diversity of theoretical perspectives.

**Research Themes:**

- Disparities: poverty, wealth and distribution
- Responsible production and consumption: sustainability, health and quality
- Natural resources and the environment: conflicts, competition and collaboration
- Knowledge in society: contestation, boundaries and bridges

**Scientific Director:** Prof. Dr A.P.J. Mol

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### 3.4.5 Wageningen Institute of Animal Sciences (WIAS)

Wageningen Institute of Animal Sciences (WIAS) was established in 1993. Its mission is to improve our understanding of animals and their various roles for mankind through fundamental and strategic research, and the training of early stage researchers.

WIAS combines the research of ten chair groups of Wageningen University and three contract research organisations of the external Animal Sciences Group, namely the Central Veterinary Institute, part of Wageningen UR, Wageningen UR Livestock Research, and the Institute for Marine Resources and Ecosystem Studies (IMARES). The research programme encompasses the life science fields of zoology, genetics, immunology, epidemiology, physiology and ecology. Research is carried out in livestock (e.g. cows, pigs and poultry), companion

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animals (e.g. dogs, cats and horses) and fish. Three core research themes have been identified: animal health and welfare, healthy and safe products, and sustainable systems. These three themes represent the main issues faced by society in its responsibility towards animals and animal production.

The WIAS education programme aims to develop in candidates 'T-shaped' skills: a combination of broad personal skills and in-depth scientific knowledge. This combination is essential for a PhD candidate to become an independent, professional animal scientist with a high academic level.

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### 3.4.6 Wageningen Institute for Environment and Climate Research (WIMEK)

The Wageningen Institute for Environment and Climate Research (WIMEK) was founded in 1993 to bring together the environmental expertise of natural and socio-economic scientists at Wageningen University. In subsequent years, WIMEK played an important role in establishing a strong inter-university research school in the field of environment and climate research. This became the Netherlands Research School for the Socio-Economic and Natural Sciences of the Environment (SENSE), in which environmental research groups at ten Dutch universities, UNESCO-IHE and ITC currently participate. Wageningen University and VU University Amsterdam are the principal coordinators of the SENSE Research School ([www.sense.nl](http://www.sense.nl)).

#### *Mission*

WIMEK aims to develop an integrated understanding of environmental change and its impact on the quality of life and sustainability, by conducting innovative scientific research, offering PhD training and education, and disseminating emerging insights and recent research results.

WIMEK combines fundamental, strategic and participatory research in natural and social environmental sciences. WIMEK especially promotes interdisciplinary

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research focusing on the interactions between ecological, chemical and physical processes and their interactions with society, which is considered to be essential for a solid contribution towards solving complex environmental problems.

Research in WIMEK concentrates on the components of the cause–effect chain of environmental problems:

- The causes of environmental deterioration and climate change (human activities, sources and determinants of these activities)
- The behaviour of compounds within and transfer between the environmental compartments
- The effects on ecosystems and society
- The prevention, abatement and/or mitigation of the effects of environmental stress

### **Research themes and research clusters**

WIMEK's research programme is fully embedded in SENSE. In its research programme, SENSE concentrates on environmental problems in a multidisciplinary approach. The four core themes reflect the main research effort of SENSE with regard to environmental change:

- Core theme 1: Environmental contaminants and nutrients
- Core theme 2: Environmental processes and ecosystem dynamics
- Core theme 3: Global environmental change
- Core theme 4: Sustainable development and change: actors, institutions and governance

SENSE has 15 research clusters. Each cluster is a network within SENSE that covers a number of specific topics. The researchers within a cluster communicate actively with each other on these topics, look for cooperation possibilities and organise events. Additional research clusters will be added as new fields of research emerge.

**Scientific Director:** Prof. Dr R. Leemans

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## 3.5 PhD Training and Education Programme

The PhD training and education programme entails the candidate acquiring in-depth knowledge of research issues, improving his/her general skills and broadening his/her scientific scope. It also aims at integrating the PhD candidate's work into other research areas as well as placing this work in a societal context. The personal education programme and agreement on supervision are formulated in a Training and Supervision Plan (TSP) (this might not be applicable to external PhD candidates).

### 3.5.1 Training and Supervision Plan (TSP)

The PhD candidate and his/her supervisor must formulate a TSP in consultation with the graduate school, and submit it to the graduate school for approval within six months. The TSP formalises the education programme of a PhD candidate and contains agreements on training and education activities, optional teaching and supervision. The document must be signed by the candidate, the supervisor(s) and the chair of the graduate school's education committee. The TSP is a plan and PhD candidates may deviate from the original plan in consultation with their supervisor's.

The requirements laid down in a TSP may vary between the graduate schools. Additional information can be obtained from the specific graduate school. In general, up to 15% of a PhD candidate's time is spent on training and education activities. PhD candidates employed by Wageningen University can spend up to 10% on teaching duties/activities (i.e. lectures, supervision of practicals, MSc supervision). The remaining time is invested in research.

The budget to finance training and education activities (i.e. courses or travel, boarding and registration expenses for conferences) is provided by the research group to which the PhD candidate is affiliated (minimum of €2,500 for the 4-year period).

### 3.5.2 Training and Education Certificate

When the training and education activities of the PhD candidate meet the education criteria set by the graduate school, he/she can request a Training and Education Certificate. This certificate must be requested using a form that

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is specific to the candidate's graduate school and details the training and education activities that the candidate has performed. This form must be submitted to the graduate school at least 15 weeks prior to the public defence of the thesis. Besides the certificate, which is awarded directly after the thesis defence with the certificate of the PhD degree, the education activities must also be listed in the thesis. For detailed information on the preparation of the certificate, contact your graduate school and also see [www.phd.wu.nl/regulations](http://www.phd.wu.nl/regulations).

Note that the Training and Education Certificate determines the financial compensation for PhD supervision. If a PhD candidate does not obtain the certificate, this sum is reduced significantly.

### 3.5.3 Courses for PhD Candidates

#### **Courses organised by graduate schools**

All graduate schools at Wageningen University have an education programme focused on their disciplines and field of study and they regularly organise PhD courses, summer schools and seminars (see: [www.wageningenuniversity.nl/uk/research/Graduate+schools](http://www.wageningenuniversity.nl/uk/research/Graduate+schools)). External PhD courses can also be followed and credited on the Training and Education Certificate.

#### **WGS Skills and Competence Courses**

WGS offers a variety of competence strengthening, research ethics, career building and language skills courses. For an overview of the courses offered, see: [www.wageningenuniversity.nl/uk/informationfor/PhD+programmes/general+courses](http://www.wageningenuniversity.nl/uk/informationfor/PhD+programmes/general+courses).

Competence and skills courses can also be followed elsewhere.

#### **Courses from the Wageningen University BSc/MSc programmes**

Courses that are offered as part of the Masters programme at Wageningen University can be taken free of charge as part of a Wageningen University TSP. See [www.studyhandbook.wu.nl](http://www.studyhandbook.wu.nl)

#### **Educational Staff Development**

Wageningen University didactic courses for staff can be found at [www.esd.wur.nl](http://www.esd.wur.nl). With the exception of 'Teaching methodology and skills for PhD Candidates', they are not designed for PhD candidates.

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## Language Services

Language Services offers languages courses as well as courses on scientific writing and presentation skills. [www.languageservices.wur.nl/](http://www.languageservices.wur.nl/). Courses at the PhD level are subsidised by WGS.

## 3.6 Requirements, Progress and Quality Control

PhD candidates are evaluated in various ways in order to maintain high quality PhD research.

- A. Before the start of the PhD programme: a check based upon entry requirements of the Wageningen University PhD programme.
- B. During the PhD programme:
  - 1 The PhD candidate and supervisor formulate a TSP in consultation with the graduate school, and submit it to the graduate school for approval.
  - 2 The research proposal is evaluated by the graduate school and external referees.
  - 3 Go/No-Go decision. Wageningen University admits new PhD candidates for an initial period of 12–18 months. The supervisor(s) decides within the first year (or 18 months at the latest) whether the candidate may continue the PhD programme under their supervision. It is one of the criteria that must be fulfilled to be formally admitted to the PhD Programme. The evaluation is based on the candidate's quality and progress in research and training. A Go/No-go evaluation form should be used for this purpose. It is suggested that, at the start of the PhD programme, the PhD candidate and his/her supervisor(s) agree upon when the evaluation will be carried out, the criteria to be applied and the procedure to be used. If a PhD candidate wishes to object to the outcome of the evaluation, he or she can appeal to his/her graduate school. Research assistants will usually initially receive an 18-month contract. Only after a positive evaluation can the contract be extended for the duration of the PhD programme (an additional 2.5 years if the candidate is appointed to a full-time position).
  - 4 An annual or a biannual progress evaluation is conducted by the graduate school.
  - 5 All PhD candidates should have an annual evaluation on progress and development. with supervisors (see below) (for employed PhD candidates this is called the performance and development meeting (R&O Meeting)).

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- 6 A check on completion of the training and education programme is made when the thesis is sent to the thesis committee for evaluation (approx. 15 weeks prior to thesis defence).
  - 7 On completion of the thesis, a thesis committee evaluates it and states whether it may be defended in public, after which the candidate can be awarded a doctorate degree.
  - 8 A public defence of the thesis.

### **Annual evaluation on progress and development**

Once a year, every PhD candidate and his/her supervisor(s) have a formal discussion about the progress of the PhD programme. For research assistants and other staff this is called an 'R&O discussion' ('R&O' is the abbreviation of the Dutch for 'results and personal development') and aims at clarifying how the PhD candidate and the supervisor(s) are functioning in their respective roles. This discussion is bilateral, since the performance of both parties is analysed. It offers a good opportunity to reflect on the working environment and to voice concerns. However, if any issues arise in the meantime, a candidate should not wait until the formal evaluation meeting: it is important to discuss concerns when they occur so that they can be dealt with in a timely fashion. When needed, the graduate school can assist when issues do occur. Finally, graduate schools also evaluate the progress of PhD candidates during their annual visit to the chair groups or as part of annual or biannual surveys.

## **3.7 End terms of a Wageningen PhD degree**

Upon completion of the PhD programme, a PhD candidate must be able to:

- Function as an independent scientist (hypothesis development, testing and communication)
- Integrate the research in a theoretical framework of the discipline as well as a broader area of research;
- Place own work in a societal context;
- Publish in peer reviewed journals or books or by communicating the design that is described in the thesis;
- Integrate his/her research within the framework of the scientific discipline in question and against the background of a wider scientific field

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## 3.8 Wageningen University Doctorate Conferral Regulations

The Doctorate Conferral Regulations (promotiereglement in Dutch) are formal regulations and protocol concerning thesis format and public defence. PhD candidates are strongly recommended to download a copy from [www.wageningenuniversity.nl/uk/informationfor/PhD+programmes/regulations/](http://www.wageningenuniversity.nl/uk/informationfor/PhD+programmes/regulations/) and familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations at the onset of their PhD programme.

The same applies to the code of conduct for scientists (on the same webpage), which PhD candidates must be aware of from the start of their PhD programme.

## 3.9 Timetable for a PhD Programme

Time period	Action	Who
Before the start of the PhD programme	1 PhD candidate approaches a graduate school, which facilitates contact with a potential research group. For details of the application procedure, see: <a href="http://www.wageningenuniversity.nl/UK/informationfor/PhD+programmes/Application/">www.wageningenuniversity.nl/UK/informationfor/PhD+programmes/Application/</a>	PhD candidate/ chair group
	2 Contact between PhD candidate and a professor (supervisor from a chair group) results in mutual wish for a new PhD project.	
	3 Chair group informs the graduate school about the new candidate.	Chair group
	4. Registration of PhD candidate in PROMIS (the university's PhD registration system).	Graduate school
	5 PhD candidates without a Master's degree from Wageningen University submit a certified scan of their BSc and MSc diplomas, a list of grades and their passport to PhD services. Note: 1 If not in English, Dutch, French, German, Spanish or Afrikaans, an official translation is required. 2 If no Master's degree is held, or the Master's degree does not allow admission to the PhD programme other relevant higher educational diplomas and/or proof of expertise must be presented. 3 When diplomas are not accepted, the supervisor defines a qualifying exam which must be approved by the academic board.	Chair group/ PhD candidate
	6 Non-Dutch PhD candidates from non-Anglophone countries must provide a certified document stating that the Master's education was in English or submit an internationally recognised certificate of proficiency in the English language (TOEFL or British Council, IELTS) to PhD services.	Chair group/ PhD candidate
	7 Contract or employment agreement with the department, including payment of tuition fees (not applicable to external PhD candidates; see definition of PhD categories).	Chair group/ potential PhD candidate

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
Start of the PhD programme	Registration at Student Service Centre (SSC, in Forum building) if one of the following is required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSc or MSc courses</li> <li>• Student sports card (not applicable to employed PhD candidates)</li> </ul>	PhD Candidate
Within 6 months	1 Submission of TSP to graduate school. Note: this may not be applicable to external PhD candidates.	PhD Candidate/supervisor(s)
	2 Submission of project proposal to graduate school. Note: this may not be applicable to external PhD candidates.	PhD Candidate/supervisor(s)
Within 9 months	1 Approval of TSP.	Graduate School
	2 Approval of project proposal.	Graduate School
Within 12 months (18 months at the latest)	Admission to the full PhD programme is complete if encompassing:	
	1 Approval of Master's diplomas (if required) and/or positive result of qualifying exam (if applicable). Note: registered in PROMIS by PhD services.	supervisors/PhD candidate/PhD services
	2 Approval of proficiency in English (if required). Note: registered in PROMIS by PhD services.	PhD Candidate/PhD services
	3 Approval of TSP and research proposal (if applicable). Note: registered in PROMIS by graduate school.	Graduate School
	4 Positive Go/No-go evaluation by supervisor. Note: communicated by supervisor to graduate school and registered in PROMIS by graduate school.	supervisor, Graduate School
	5 Letter stating formal admittance to the PhD programme (when all requirements mentioned above have been met).	Dean on behalf of the Academic Board
Yearly	1 Registration at Student Service Centre (SSC, in Forum building) if one of the following is required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSc or MSc courses</li> <li>• Student sports card i(not applicable for employed PhD candidates)</li> </ul>	PhD candidate
	2 Annual evaluation on progress and development (for employed PhD candidates this is called the performance and development meeting (R&O Meeting)).	supervisor/PhD candidate

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
At least 6 months before desired date of public defence	PhD candidate submits a written request for the public defence of the thesis to be acknowledged by the supervisor.	PhD candidate
6 to 3 ½ months before the desired date of public defence	1 Supervisor(s) approves thesis and propositions.	supervisor
	2 Supervisor books tentative date for public defence and adds opponents in PROMIS.	supervisor
	3 Supervisor submits request for appointment of a thesis committee (the supervisor can download this letter from the 'cockpit' page of PROMIS).	supervisor
At least 15 weeks before the desired date of public defence	1 Supervisor submits 5 bound copies of thesis and propositions (on a separate sheet) to the doctorate secretary. This version of the thesis must contain: Table of Contents, Chapters, List of References, English Summary and General Discussion.	supervisor
	2 PhD candidate requests a Training and Education Certificate from the graduate school.	PhD candidate/ graduate school
	3 Thesis committee needs approval.	Dean on behalf of the academic board
At least 12 weeks before the desired date of public defence	Propositions needs approval (or date of public defence is postponed).	Academic board
After approval of the thesis by the committee (approximately 9 weeks before the date of public defence)	1 PhD candidate submits cover, the first four pages and a page summarising the education activities (issued by the graduate school) to the doctorate secretary of PhD services.	PhD candidate
	2 The doctorate secretary approves the cover and the first four pages. Final date for public defence is set.	Doctorate Secretary
At least 2 weeks before date of public defence	PhD candidate submits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 copies of the thesis to the doctorate secretary of PhD services</li> <li>• 15 copies and 1 PDF file of the thesis and an abstract in Word to the library</li> </ul>	PhD candidate
Just before the date of public defence	PhD candidate meets with Rector Magnificus or his representative.	PhD candidate/ doctorate secretary of PhD services

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## 3.10 The PhD candidate–supervisor relationship: communication and responsibilities

The PhD candidate is the driver of the project and carries responsibility for the content, quality and progress of the research. The supervisor can be seen as a back-seat passenger – advising, reflecting and facilitating – but he/she carries the final responsibility for quality and process. Here, quality refers to scientific quality, innovation, challenge and the feasibility of the project, while process refers to the progress of the PhD research as well as the steps to be taken during the PhD programme (e.g. approval of the project proposal and TSP by the graduate school, Go/No-go procedure and annual evaluation meetings).

The PhD proposal can initially be written by the candidate, and the supervisor(s) must see to it that the proposal is submitted to the graduate school. Proposals that have not yet been peer reviewed will go through a review process. PhD candidates benefit from a well-conceived proposal, and must take a critical approach towards the proposal from the beginning. They should challenge supervisors about their suggestions for altering the proposal or, if they did not write the proposal, about what has been written. This requires thorough discussion with the supervisor(s). The proposal is a guide for the final goal: the PhD thesis. The thesis generally consists of four papers, an introduction and a synthesis.

Good and open communication between the PhD candidate and supervisor(s) is crucial, and tasks and responsibilities for both parties must be as clear as possible. For some PhD candidates and supervisors this means weekly meetings, while others may meet only when the need arises. Particularly at the start of the project, meetings at fixed intervals are recommended. There are many things to discuss even if there appear to be few new developments. The supervisor is usually an expert in the PhD candidate's research field and much can be learnt from him/her that cannot be learnt from scientific literature. The supervisor may profit from new insights and knowledge acquired by the PhD candidate. Supervision is crucial for a pleasant and successful PhD programme and supplementing the supervisor with a daily supervisor is highly recommended.

All these aspects must be taken into consideration when completing the supervision section of the TSP.

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## 3.11 Solving Problems

Communication might not always be easy. This is understandable, since the PhD candidate is, in a sense, a 'scientific adolescent' who is breaking away from the 'scientific parent' (the supervisor). Miscommunication can lead to problems. Moreover, supervisors have limited time and the PhD research may be at the edge of their supervisor's expertise, which can lead to conflicting opinions on how to proceed. If this occurs, keep in mind that problems are undesired by both parties. The first person to experience a problem should approach the other with an open and constructive attitude rather than closing off and retreating. Closing off may be a natural reaction, but it will not help anyone and will not solve a problem.

It is best to discuss unpleasant feelings or problems when they occur. The PhD candidate should not wait until a problem becomes apparent to others or feel 'the underdog'. She/he has been selected by the supervisors to conduct the PhD research, so they have confidence in the candidate's capabilities and are committed to helping. Additionally, they have a profound interest in a successful completion of the project and are motivated to help solving a problem.

If a PhD candidate has difficulty approaching the supervisor with a problem, feels misunderstood or cannot find a solution to the problem, the best thing to do is to talk to others. Perhaps other PhD candidates (who may even have the same supervisor), members of staff or the professor of the chair group can provide good advice. If a PhD candidate desires confidentiality, this will be respected. In such a situation, a staff member or professor can take an intermediary role, or if needed, can have a serious 'closed door' conversation if a supervisor is not fulfilling his/her role. Moreover, the PhD programme coordinator of a graduate school can give advice and support in problematic situations. Unless stated otherwise, all issues will be dealt with confidentially.

Although this happens infrequently, a problem may appear to be unmanageable. Rather than resigning, a PhD candidate should ask his/her colleagues on the PhD council or the confidential advisers of the university or the graduate school, for a confidential conversation. All these people will listen and take or suggest appropriate action to help solve the problem.

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## 3.12 Confidential advice

Confidential advisers support WU staff and non-staff PhD candidates with work-related complaints and problems, including conflicts with colleagues, the daily adviser or supervisors, and problems related to the appointment or the work evaluation. PhD candidates should also contact a confidential adviser if they are subjected to undesired sexual attention, other undesirable behaviour or believe that they are being treated in a discriminatory fashion. The confidential adviser can take immediate, confidential action concerning a complaint. The confidential advisers have a supportive, advisory and guiding role. All information given to a confidential adviser is of course treated confidentially.

### Contact:

Martie Wagenaar  
martie.wagenaar@wur.nl  
T +31(0)317 48 45 53

### Graduate school confidential advisers

PhD candidates may also contact their graduate school for a confidential conversation regarding issues related to the PhD training/supervision. Confidential advisers of the graduate schools are:

<b>EPS</b>	<b>WASS</b>	
Douwe Zuidema T +31(0)48 49 26 E douwe.zuidema@wur.nl	Eveline Vaane T +31(0)48 41 16 E eveline.vaane@wur.nl	
<b>PE&amp;RC</b>	<b>WIAS</b>	
Claudius van de Vijver T +31(0)48 51 16 E claudius.vandevijver@wur.nl	Marianne Bruining T +31(0)48 34 42 E marianne.bruining@wur.nl	Or: Geert Wiegertjes T +31(0)48 27 32 E geert.wiegertjes@wur.nl
<b>VLAG</b>	<b>WIMEK</b>	
Yvonne Smolders T +31(0)48 51 08 E yvonne.smolders@wur.nl	Johan Feenstra T +31(0)48 48 36 E johan.feenstra@wur.nl	

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### **Departmental personnel advisers (Wageningen UR staff only)**

Wageningen UR staff can approach this adviser with matters concerning legal status, problems regarding supervision or other issues affecting them as employees. Contact information for the personnel advisers is available via a chair group or the Human Resource Management department.

### **Scientific integrity**

Confidential advisers for scientific integrity can be contacted in the case of suspected improper scientific acts such as fraud, plagiarism, infringement of copyright or incomplete information. Members of staff (and all PhD candidates) who experience a moral dilemma can contact the confidential adviser for scientific integrity:

Prof. T. De Cock Buning, chairman of the Ethics Committee:

tjard.de.cock.buning@falw.vu.nl

T +31(0)20 44 470 31

The guidelines concerning the ethical aspects of research and teaching can be downloaded (in Dutch and English) via the Wageningen UR intranet (limited access).

### **Social workers for Wageningen University staff**

Staff social workers can help with problems related to a PhD candidate's work or private life. In consultation with the social worker, a PhD candidate seeks the most suitable solution to his/her problem. A social worker can provide a PhD candidate with information on (or refer him/her to) internal or external organisations and help providers. PhD candidates can ask for an extensive pamphlet or can make an appointment with the social worker directly. All information is treated confidentially.

T +31(0)317 47 41 58

E bedrijfsmaatschappelijkwerk@wur.nl

### **PhD candidates not employed by Wageningen UR**

The student psychologist can be consulted by PhD candidates who are not Wageningen UR staff.

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### 3.13 PhD Councils

At Wageningen University each graduate school has a PhD council (see: [www.phd.wu.nl/wpc](http://www.phd.wu.nl/wpc)) that acts in the interest of all PhD candidates at the graduate school by means of active participation on the graduate school's education committee and board and by acting on developments that could affect the PhD candidates.

Representatives from all the PhD councils participate in the Wageningen PhD Council (WPC). Issues that concern Wageningen PhDs or issues that are brought forward by one of the PhD councils are discussed by the WPC with the dean of WGS, as well as representatives of the Wageningen Graduate School Course and Corporate Education & Research. If necessary, action is taken or the issues are brought to the attention of responsible units of the organisation.

Contact person for the Wageningen PhD Council:

Onno Möller

[onno.moller@wur.nl](mailto:onno.moller@wur.nl)

T +31(0)317 48 16 42

### 3.14 PhD Network of the Netherlands (PNN)

PNN represents local PhD councils at meetings of national policy makers (NWO, VSNU, KNAW, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). The mission of PNN is to understand, discuss and tackle the problems PhD candidates encounter during their work. PNN exchanges information between local PhD councils at both the national and the international level. PNN representatives meet approximately five times per year. Visit [www.hetpnn.nl](http://www.hetpnn.nl).

### 3.15 International Student Organisation Wageningen (ISOW)

The ISOW is a social organisation for international students. It was founded in 1995. ISOW is a place where all international students in Wageningen can meet and socialise. Visit [www.isow.wur.nl](http://www.isow.wur.nl).

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# Additional Funding

## 4

There are options for additional funding for PhD candidates who have started their PhD programme.

### 4.1 Education Budget

The total education budget is €2500 (Training and Education backpack) and is intended for the entire PhD programme PhD candidates are entitled to this budget when they have an approved TSP.

The budget is provided by the chair group, not by a graduate school. When the TSP is approved, the relevant graduate school informs the PhD candidate and the supervisor; the chair group can then allocate the education budget.

The aim of the Training and Education backpack is to support the realisation of the TSP. This means that the budget is to be used for:

- Courses
- Conferences, seminars, symposia and workshops
- Working visits

Note that the education budget is limited, and PhD candidates and chair groups are advised to seek additional funding, especially for travel and lodging costs. Possible sources are described below.

The supervisor is responsible for the proper use of the budget, i.e. for the realisation of the TSP.

### 4.2 LEB Foundation

The LEB Foundation (Stichting Fonds Landbouw Export Bureau 1916/1918) stimulates developments in agricultural research at Wageningen UR – including

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the environmental sciences – and the publication of the results of such research. The LEB Foundation provides financial support for visits to scientific meetings, study trips, publication of proceedings of scientific meetings held in the Netherlands and, in special cases, the publication of theses.

The LEB Foundation supports the activities of PhD candidates at Wageningen University, junior scientists at Wageningen UR who do not have an employment contract, guest lecturers of Wageningen UR and researchers from developing countries who have limited financial means.

On the basis of co-financing, the LEB Foundation provides funding for 50 per cent of the total costs. Moreover, there is a maximum funding amount for each activity. Funding is not provided for personal expenses, costs of capital goods, normal publication expenses or regular travel expenses.

**Contact:**

Esther Dorland

Droevendaalsesteeg 4 Building 104

T +31 (0)317 48 14 99

F +31 (0)317 48 48 84

E wuf@wur.nl

P.O. Box 9101

6700 HB Wageningen

Internal Postal Code 75

[www.fondsen.wur.nl/uk/subsidies/phd/](http://www.fondsen.wur.nl/uk/subsidies/phd/)

## 4.3 Researcher's Mobility Programme

Fellowships, grants and research jobs in Europe can be found at:  
[ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/general/index](http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/general/index)

## 4.4 Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)

The NWO provides grants for research and training through foundations and offices. For information, contact the relevant foundation group administration listed in the NWO Subsidy Guide.

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Postal address: P.O. Box 93138, 2509 AC The Hague  
T +31(0)70 34 40 640  
F +31(0)70 38 50 971  
[www.nwo.nl](http://www.nwo.nl) (English, under 'Subsidy Guide')

## 4.5 Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)

The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences:

- Awards grants for research, conference visits or periods of residence abroad. It also manages a variety of other funds and foundations.
- Contributes to the cost of organising international conferences, workshops and colloquia in the Netherlands.
- Manages the secretariat of numerous private funds.
- Promotes international communication and partnerships.

[www.know.nl](http://www.know.nl) (English, under 'Funding')

## 4.6 Private Grants

The Central Student Desk has some information on private grants. In most cases, these grants are intended to finance a specific group. Visiting address of the Central Student Desk:

FORUM, Droevendaalsesteeg 2, Building 102, Wageningen.

Opening hours Central Student Desk:

Monday – Thursday: 9.00-14.00 hours

Friday: 9.00-12.30 hours

Postal address: P.O. Box 414, 6700 AK Wageningen

FIN – the association of grant providers in the Netherlands – produces the *Fondsenboek* (Grants Book), which is published by Walburg Pers. This book contains an overview of private grants, many of which are intended for target groups with special objectives and are subject to specific conditions. The book (in Dutch) is available at bookstores and at the Central Student Desk. There is also a CD version of the book.

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## 4.7 Travelling and Postings Abroad

Wageningen University staff can get financial compensation for travel in the Netherlands and abroad. (see the intranet). Note that financial compensation for travel and postings abroad must be paid from the project budget. There are three categories in the new regulations for international travel:

- Short stay abroad
- Long stay abroad: longer than 60 days abroad for work-related activities.
- Mission: work abroad that is related to rural development projects in specified countries (see HRM website for a list of countries/regions concerned). A mission can be a period of between 7 days and 6 months

There are no provisions for stays abroad that are longer than 6 months. However, PhD candidates who spend a significant time overseas and receive a salary from Wageningen UR can apply for a tax refund.

## 4.8 Miscellaneous

Below are some websites with useful information on funding possibilities:

- Fondswijzer: [www.siswo.uva.nl/facta/subsidie.html](http://www.siswo.uva.nl/facta/subsidie.html)
- Nuffic 'Beurs Opener': [www.beursopener.nl](http://www.beursopener.nl) (in Dutch)
- [www.grantfinder.nl](http://www.grantfinder.nl)
- [www.scholarshipportal.eu](http://www.scholarshipportal.eu)

## 4.9 Grants for Theses

The costs of the five copies of the thesis that are required for the doctoral committee are reimbursed by the relevant department of Wageningen University (this applies to all PhD candidates who defend their thesis at Wageningen University).

In addition, a grant is available to reimburse the printing costs of the 30 copies of the thesis that must be provided to Wageningen University. This grant is intended for all Wageningen University PhD candidates who are financed by Wageningen University or a third party. The actual printing costs for the 30 copies, as well as the initial costs (machine set-up etc.), can be reimbursed. The maximum grant €1,250.

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There are separate arrangements for PhD candidates who are financed by the NWO. They can obtain a supplement from Wageningen University through the mediation of the Graphic Service Centre Van Gils B.V. For so-called DLO research assistants, an arrangement can be made at the specific DLO Institute where they are posted.

Information on how to obtain this grant is provided by the executive secretary for doctorate conferrals. PhD candidates will receive this information when they hand in the draft version of the thesis at the secretary for doctorate conferrals (see the Timetable).

## 4.10 Emergency Fund for International Students

In cases of extreme emergency, it is possible for international PhD candidates to obtain financial support to return to their home country. In exceptional cases, sandwich PhD candidates can obtain funding to extend their final period at Wageningen University for a maximum of three months. To apply for this financial support, make an appointment with one of the student deans.



[www.phd.wu.nl](http://www.phd.wu.nl)  
January, 2012

