

# Wageningen University and Research – organisation and policies

## Contents

1.1 Wageningen University and Research .....	2
1.2 Wageningen University .....	3
1.3 Wageningen Graduate Schools .....	4
1.4 Chair Groups and Research Units.....	5
1.5 Shared Facilities.....	5
1.6 PhD Programme and Policy .....	6
1.7 Postdoc Policy.....	7
1.8 Academic Culture .....	7
1.9 Open Science .....	8
1.10 Human Resources Policy .....	10
1.11 COVID-19 .....	12

## 1.1 Wageningen University and Research

Wageningen University & Research (WUR) is a globally leading university and research organisation in the fields of agriculture, healthy food and the living environment. Rooted in the Netherlands, we collaborate with academic partners, companies, public agencies and NGOs worldwide on global, regional and local challenges and transitions.

WUR is a collaboration between Wageningen University (WU) and the contract based research organisation Wageningen Research (WR). The joint mission is 'to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life'. About 6,000 Bachelor and 6,400 Master students, 2,000 PhD candidates, and more than 5,000 fte staff work in the pursuit of this mission for the benefit of science, policy, business, and society at large.

WUR has the ambition to provide the highest quality knowledge, education and research to address global challenges and to design and accelerate required transitions. We use our expertise to find innovative technological, social and nature-based solutions towards bio-circular agri-food systems, protecting nature, enhancing biodiverse ecosystems and supporting liveable urban and rural communities.

The strength of WUR lies in its ability to combine the forces of Wageningen University and its application-oriented and field-based research institutes of Wageningen Research, which allows for an integrated approach to both fundamental and applied research. Another strength is the interaction of the various monodisciplinary fields of natural and social sciences, which allows a multidisciplinary, integrated approach towards complex research questions and societal problems. This union of expertise within WUR leads to scientific breakthroughs that can quickly be put into practice and be incorporated in education.

WUR is organised in five administrative units called Sciences Groups. Within each Sciences Group, a WU department and at least one WR research institute are functionally integrated (see Figure 1). The head of the Sciences Group is the General Director, who reports to the Executive Board of WUR

The Executive Board is responsible for the overall management of WUR. The Board is accountable to a Supervisory Board, appointed by the Ministers of Education, Culture and Science, and Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. The Rector is vice-president of the Executive Board. He/she holds the responsibility for education, student affairs, and research.

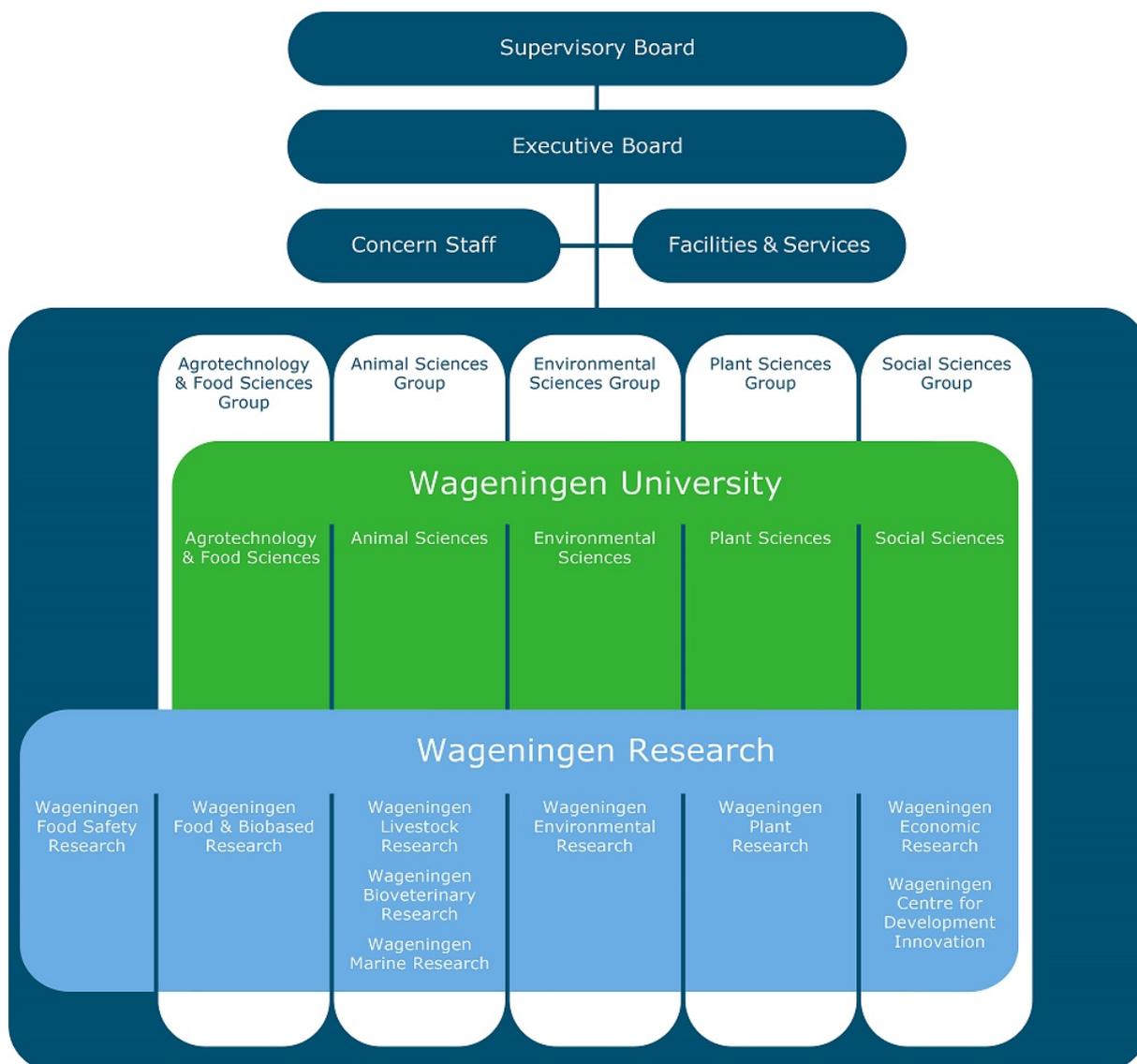


Figure 1. Organisational scheme Wageningen University and Research

## 1.2 Wageningen University

Wageningen University is the only university in the Netherlands that specifically focuses on the theme “healthy food and living environment”. Wageningen University has one faculty, with five departments coinciding with the Sciences Groups (Figure 1). Within Wageningen University, a matrix is created where the lines of accountability converge to the Executive Board. On the vertical axes of the matrix are the Sciences Groups; on the horizontal axes are the Board of Education and the Graduate Schools. The graduate schools are content driven and are therefore not restricted to working in one single Sciences Group (Figure 2).

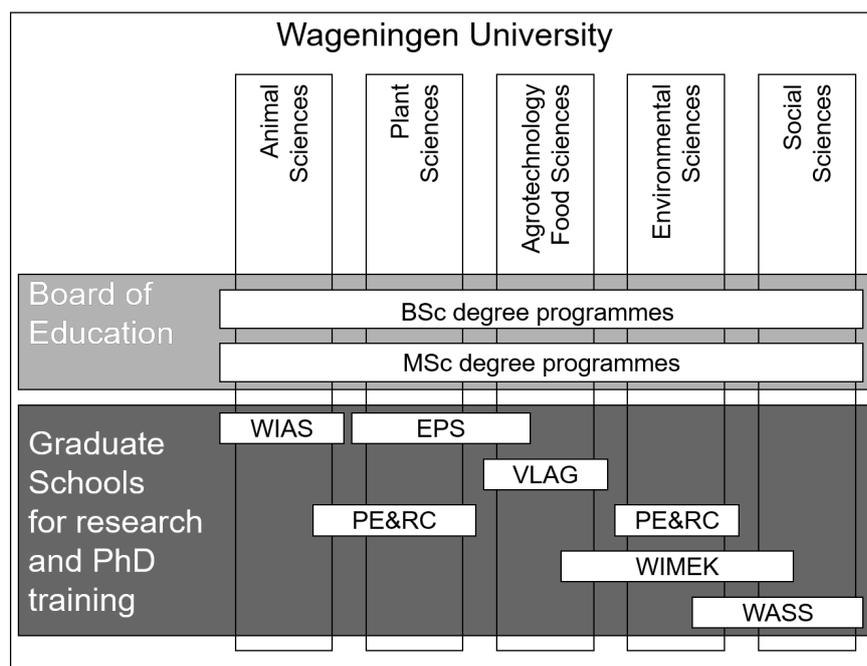


Figure 2. Organisational scheme of BSc, MSc, and PhD programmes in the five Sciences Groups

### 1.3 Wageningen Graduate Schools

Graduate schools at Wageningen University have three main tasks:

- To coordinate, develop and facilitate doctoral education and training;
- To stimulate and coordinate the development of a coherent research programme within the mission of the graduate school;
- To safeguard, monitor and stimulate the quality and progress of research by staff, postdocs and PhD candidates.

In the matrix structure of Wageningen University, the mandate for managerial, personnel or financial issues is organised vertically, within the Sciences Groups and chair groups. The graduate schools operate horizontally within this matrix structure, i.e. across Sciences Groups, and do not have a mandate on these issues. Each Graduate School (GS) has a board, consisting of GS professors, a PhD candidate and optionally an external member. The board members are appointed by the Executive Board. The Board of the Graduate School is in charge of the development of the general policy and strategy of the Graduate School and decides on the budget. The Scientific Director is responsible for the daily management of the School. The Director and Secretary prepare and attend the meetings of the Board. They prepare its long-term vision, its scientific direction and an action plan, together with committees and participating groups.

The Scientific Director and Executive Secretary meet once every year with the General Director(s) of their Sciences Group(s), the Dean of Research and the Rector to discuss the quality and any emerging issues in the graduate school. In addition to the internal quality cycle, graduate schools are advised on strategy and research quality by their International Advisory Board. Each graduate school has a PhD council with representatives in the Wageningen PhD Council.

Each Graduate School receives a core budget for the financial compensation of the Scientific Director and the appointment of support staff. In addition, each Graduate School receives a budget for PhD education and training, a budget for research fellowships and a strategic research budget. These budgets are a fraction of the research revenues generated by academic staff within each of the graduate schools.

The six graduate schools together constitute Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS), which is led by the Dean of Research. His/her task is to stimulate the quality of research and doctoral education, to stimulate collaboration between the graduate schools and to address matters of common interest. The Dean is also advisor of the Executive Board of WUR and represents the Rector in national fora.

The Wageningen Graduate Schools organise the following activities:

- [WGS training programme](#)<sup>1</sup>: professional skills courses for PhD candidates and postdocs;
- Staff training for PhD supervision;
- Calls for sandwich PhD fellowships, either on a personal basis ([WGS Sandwich PhD Programme](#)<sup>2</sup>) or in interdisciplinary programmes ([INREF programme](#)<sup>3</sup>);
- Talent programme with calls to attract talented MSc students and postdocs.

## 1.4 Chair Groups and Research Units

The primary activities of education and research are embedded in the chair groups: BSc and MSc courses, the supervision of PhD candidates, and the execution of research projects. Chair groups are teams of assistant, associate and personal professors (personal chair linked to an outstanding researcher), lecturers, postdocs and PhD candidates, led by the chair holder (structural chair in the university 'chair plan') and supported by technical, secretarial and administrative support staff. Additionally, special professors from external organisations may be appointed part-time (usually for 20%, for a limited term) to explore specific research lines and to stimulate external collaboration. The chair holder bears responsibility for finances, personnel and the quality of education and research, in accordance with the Sciences Group management, the graduate schools and the study programme committees. Chair groups participate in at least one graduate school, and all tenured research staff of Wageningen University are member of a graduate school.

In addition to their monodisciplinary programmes, chair groups participate in larger research units (clusters, sections or themes) with a shared research vision and strategy. In these research units, the chair groups combine their expertise to address overarching scientific questions in research and teaching collaborations. Through their joint expertise, the research units can assume a unique strategic position in their domain and operate at the forefront of their field. Additional advantages can be found in shared support staff and equipment. As their formation is content driven, research units can either operate within a single graduate school or across graduate schools and may vary in size and structure. The research units are a relatively young organisational structure at Wageningen University.

On average, 40% of tenured staff time is available for research (including supervision of PhD candidates), about 40% of tenured staff time is spent on teaching (BSc and MSc level) and about 20% on management tasks and academic service. The university maintains a financing system that is largely output based: all chair groups receive a lump sum core funding which covers approximately 20% of the chair group budget; additional funding depends on the number of BSc and MSc courses taught, the number of PhD graduations and on other research and education projects. This funding model rewards time spent on teaching and participation in education programmes, and stimulates acquisition of external research funding, and adequate support for successful completion of PhD projects. The output-driven financial system also plays a role in the tenure track requirements (paragraph 1.10).

## 1.5 Shared Facilities

Wageningen University is conveniently situated at the Wageningen Campus, a place for exchanges and connections between the university, the research institutes of Wageningen Research, the business sector and start-ups. Various research facilities are shared across WUR through Shared Research Facilities and are available to WU scientists at low cost. Day-to-day exploitation and maintenance of the equipment is carried out by technicians and experts in the Wageningen University & Research groups where the instruments are located. Shared Research Facilities is governed by a Steering Group and Scientific Advisory Board. An overview of available facilities can be found [online](#)<sup>4</sup>.

Within Wageningen University, PhD candidates and staff have access to the large collection of the WUR library. The WUR Digital Library provides access from a Wageningen computer account to the collections of the WUR Library. This includes full-text versions of dissertations and other materials published by

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://wgs.crs.wur.nl/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/Categories-of-PhD-Candidates/Sandwich-PhD-Candidates.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Research-Results/Research-programmes/Cross-WUR-programmes-1/INREF-1.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Value-Creation-Cooperation/Facilities/Wageningen-Shared-Research-Facilities/Our-facilities.htm>

students and staff of Wageningen University as well as access to full-text versions of articles of most well-known journals in the relevant domains and disciplines.

Wageningen University is acknowledged for its excellent sports and computer facilities. All staff and students at Wageningen University have access to the university electronic network, which has allowed a rapid and smooth conversion to online teaching and homeworking upon the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown. PhD candidates and staff have their own computer with the required general software.

## 1.6 PhD Programme and Policy

The four-year PhD programme largely consists of conducting research (under supervision) and writing a thesis (dissertation). Furthermore, up to 15 percent of the time is used for training and education activities which include participation in courses, competence and skills training, seminars, conferences and international exchange, and a maximum of 10% of time is spent on teaching and supervision of BSc and MSc thesis students. The WUR PhD programme and policy are explained in detail in the document 'WU PhD policy' that is included in the background information documents for the peer review.

The PhD programme aims to deliver all-round scientists that:

1. Function as an independent practitioner of science, as shown by:
  - Formulating scientific questions, whether based on social issues or scientific progress;
  - Conducting original scientific research;
  - Publishing articles in leading journals, publishing books with leading publishers or making a technical design.
2. Integrate their research in, or place it within the framework of the corresponding scientific discipline and against the background of a broader scientific area.
3. Place the research aims and research results in a societal context.
4. Postulate concisely worded propositions in scientific and societal areas, formulated in such a way that they are subject to opposition and defense.

To obtain the PhD degree, the thesis has to be approved by the thesis committee consisting of (co)promotor(s) and four independent opponents. If all agree that the thesis is of sufficient quality, the candidate will be allowed to defend the thesis in a public defense. Immediately after the defense, the thesis committee decides whether to confer the degree and which grades are awarded for thesis and defence (from acceptable to excellent).

If the PhD candidate has a certificate from a Wageningen Graduate School, the graduation bonus that Wageningen University chair groups receive upon graduation is substantially higher. This incentive makes that both PhD candidates and their supervisors benefit from the candidate's graduate school membership.

### **Quality assurance by the graduate school**

The task of the graduate school to safeguard, monitor and stimulate research quality is reflected in the membership of junior and senior academic researchers, and through a quality check for PhD projects and the execution of a Training and Supervision Plan for PhD candidates.

1. Academic staff with research assignment who are involved in PhD supervision are part of the graduate school community. The schools promote knowledge of the research integrity frameworks, organise activities for the members, and improve supervision skills of PhD supervisors;
2. Within the first six months of a PhD project, a project proposal has to be submitted to the graduate school. Proposals that have not been reviewed earlier (for example in a grant call for NWO or ERC) are sent by the graduate school to external reviewers who are asked to advise on quality, originality and feasibility;
3. To manage the time spent on different activities over the entire project period, a planning for training and teaching activities, as well as agreements on the form and frequency of supervision, are formulated in a Training and Supervision Plan. This TSP has to be submitted to and approved by the graduate school at the start of the PhD project. The graduate schools monitor the progress of individual PhD projects and support supervisors to track the quality and progress of PhD candidates.

The Wageningen Graduate Schools have written a [WGS Guide for Supervisors](#)<sup>5</sup> to support supervisors to successfully guide PhD candidates towards their degrees (included in background documents for peer review). In addition to practical information on the programme and tasks and responsibilities of supervisors, the Guide for Supervisors includes a section on good supervision. To safeguard the quality of the PhD programme, the graduate schools regularly provide questionnaires on the PhD process and the quality of supervision, as well as exit interviews.

## 1.7 Postdoc Policy

Wageningen Graduate Schools have set up a postdoc career development programme. This programme focuses on career perspectives within as well as outside of academia, acknowledging the fact that tenured university positions are limited.

The career development programme starts with a [career development course](#)<sup>6</sup> on self-awareness and reflection on opportunities, ambitions, career values and competences. Accordingly, training and coaching activities are offered that focus on more specific career pathways in and outside academia as well as developing and strengthening the required skills and competences. These include modules on obtaining personal grants (ERC and the talent programme Veni-Vidi-Vici from the Dutch Research Council NWO), teaching and entrepreneurship. All academic skills, competence and career development courses in the WGS PhD Training programme are also open to postdocs.

## 1.8 Academic Culture

### Integrity

WUR is aware that in its activities it has a responsibility to firmly establish a culture of acting with integrity within the organisation. WUR aspires to offer a workplace that brings out the best in people, with respect for the cultural diversity within the organisation. All employees and students at WUR must comply with the [Integrity Code of Wageningen University & Research](#)<sup>7</sup> and its five principles for acting with integrity: scrupulous, reliability, independence, social responsibility, and inspiring and safe working environment. New employees sign the Integrity Code Wageningen University & Research in their letter of appointment. The code describes the behaviour desired of everyone at WUR, both staff members and students, towards students, colleagues, clients and partner organisations. In order to safeguard the various aspects of integrity, WUR follows regulations used in complaint procedures regarding abuse, such as the [Whistleblower's Regulations](#)<sup>8</sup> and the [Complaints procedure](#)<sup>9</sup> regarding undesirable behaviour. Help and support in dealing with improper behaviour is offered through confidential counsellors and social workers. An "Integrity Guideline" infographic is available on the intranet with links to background information and regulations.

### Research Integrity

For scientists, research integrity should be the basis for sound scientific practice. Not only to allow for the advancement of science itself, but also because scientific progress is an important driver of innovation from which society benefits. Hence acting with integrity is the main pillar of good scientific practice and is an essential prerequisite for creating trust in and maintaining the credibility of science. As all universities in the Netherlands, Wageningen University endorses the [Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice](#)<sup>10</sup> drawn up by the VSNU (the Association of Universities in the Netherlands).

The Integrity Code of Wageningen University prescribes that all research results are made accessible as soon as possible upon completion of the research, increasingly via Open Access channels. If the research

---

<sup>5</sup> WGS Guide for PhD supervisors: <https://www.wur.nl/nl/show/Guide-for-PhD-supervisors.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Career Development for Postdocs: Science and the Alternatives <https://wgs.crs.wur.nl/courses/details/99>

<sup>7</sup> Wageningen University & Research Integrity Code: [https://www.wur.nl/upload\\_mm/0/a/3/88afd23f-6fa6-4b9f-9ec8-3c9b7eca27f1\\_2019\\_%20Integriteitscode\\_WUR\\_1.0\\_UK.PDF](https://www.wur.nl/upload_mm/0/a/3/88afd23f-6fa6-4b9f-9ec8-3c9b7eca27f1_2019_%20Integriteitscode_WUR_1.0_UK.PDF)

<sup>8</sup> Whistleblowers regulations: [https://www.wur.nl/upload\\_mm/5/3/4/860488a7-6557-4a76-addc-dcb325826976\\_Whistleblower's%20regulations%20WUR%202017.pdf](https://www.wur.nl/upload_mm/5/3/4/860488a7-6557-4a76-addc-dcb325826976_Whistleblower's%20regulations%20WUR%202017.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Complaints procedure regarding undesirable behaviour: [https://www.wur.nl/upload\\_mm/7/8/2/d746efb6-f25e-4617-8079-4f74e451eb4d\\_complaints-procedure-regarding-undesirable-behaviour.pdf](https://www.wur.nl/upload_mm/7/8/2/d746efb6-f25e-4617-8079-4f74e451eb4d_complaints-procedure-regarding-undesirable-behaviour.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.wur.nl/upload\\_mm/e/8/6/1df70503-8388-4b75-97d2-98f76641f614\\_Netherlands\\_Code\\_of\\_Conduct\\_for\\_Research\\_Integrity\\_2018\\_UK.pdf](https://www.wur.nl/upload_mm/e/8/6/1df70503-8388-4b75-97d2-98f76641f614_Netherlands_Code_of_Conduct_for_Research_Integrity_2018_UK.pdf)

is funded by third parties, this party can designate research topics but the research questions remain independent of the financier.

Committees on Integrity at Wageningen University:

- Medical-ethical assessment committee (METC) – to evaluate research proposals on compliance with the Dutch Law on Medical Scientific Research (Wet Medisch Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek);
- Animal Experiments Committee (DEC) – to coordinate applications to the Central Committee on Animal Experiments, established in accordance with the Dutch Law on Animal Experiments (Wet op de Dierproeven);
- Social Sciences Ethics Committee (SEC) – to review ethical aspects of research projects involving human subjects;
- Scientific Integrity Committee (CWI) – to investigate complaints about violations of scientific integrity. The confidential counsellors are the first contact for questions about scientific integrity.

### **Integrity awareness and support by the graduate schools**

Implementation of the integrity code needs to take place at all levels of the organisation. The graduate schools have integrated a session on scientific integrity in their introduction courses, making sure that starting PhD candidates are aware of the code of conduct and what it implies. In addition, WGS offers the following courses:

- Ethics and Animal Sciences
- Ethics in Plant and Environmental Sciences
- Ethics for Social Sciences Research
- Philosophy and Ethics of Food Science and Technology
- Scientific Integrity

### **Third party income**

Wageningen University & Research employees have to list their work for third parties<sup>11</sup>, to prevent the (suggestion of) any conflict of interest. This also means that all employees must ask prior written permission to perform work for third parties.

### **Personal data and privacy**

WUR adheres to the European Privacy Act (GDPR) regarding personal data and privacy. Policy documents describing roles and responsibilities in handling private and personal data, including camera surveillance, are all available online<sup>12,13,14</sup>.

## **1.9 Open Science**

WUR embraces developments and policies in Open Science, in line with the [National Plan Open Science](#)<sup>15</sup> (NPOS). According to the Dutch National Plan on Open science, Open Science is the practising of science in a sustainable manner which gives others the opportunity to work with, contribute to and make use of the scientific process. In July 2019, WUR's Open Science & Education (OSE) Programme was launched. The programme stimulates the adoption of Open Science principles and serves as an umbrella for connecting ongoing activities and defining new ones.

---

<sup>11</sup> Regulation on Work for Third Parties: <https://www.wur.nl/en/download/Regulations-Side-activities-Wageningen-UR.htm>

<sup>12</sup> Policy document for processing personal data: [https://www.wur.nl/upload\\_mm/5/e/7/6ee98c92-d1b3-4ff6-b156-f1cc4b133bad\\_Policy%20document%20for%20processing%20personal%20data%20WUR.pdf](https://www.wur.nl/upload_mm/5/e/7/6ee98c92-d1b3-4ff6-b156-f1cc4b133bad_Policy%20document%20for%20processing%20personal%20data%20WUR.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Regulation on the protection of personal data: [https://www.wur.nl/upload\\_mm/7/1/6/d773c3d6-ba4f-4a52-8346-9376376cf53a\\_Regulations%20for%20the%20protection%20of%20personal%20data%20WUR.pdf](https://www.wur.nl/upload_mm/7/1/6/d773c3d6-ba4f-4a52-8346-9376376cf53a_Regulations%20for%20the%20protection%20of%20personal%20data%20WUR.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Regulation on camera surveillance: [https://www.wur.nl/upload\\_mm/2/8/1/a94b5342-9ecb-474a-afb3-5ba26ca74b6e\\_Regulations%20for%20Camera%20Surveillance.pdf](https://www.wur.nl/upload_mm/2/8/1/a94b5342-9ecb-474a-afb3-5ba26ca74b6e_Regulations%20for%20Camera%20Surveillance.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.openscience.nl/files/openscience/2019-02/nationalplanopscience\\_en.pdf](https://www.openscience.nl/files/openscience/2019-02/nationalplanopscience_en.pdf)



Figure 3. Focus areas of WUR Open Science and Education programme, modified after [EU FOSTER Open Science Portal](#).

### Open Access

WUR aims to publish all results of (publicly funded) research Open Access ([WUR Open Access policy](#)<sup>16</sup>). Ongoing negotiations with publishers resulted in a series of national and institutional Read-and-Publish agreements, allowing for Open Access publishing in 19,000 journals without extra costs for WUR staff. In 2020, 84% of peer-reviewed articles with a WUR corresponding author were published Open Access. To aim for 100% Open Access for these articles, WUR articles published via closed access will be made available to the public six months after publication via the [WUR Repository](#)<sup>17</sup>, in line with the Dutch Copyright Act ([Amendment 'Taverne'](#)<sup>18</sup>, which allows researchers to share short scientific works regardless of any restrictive publisher's guidelines). The risk of predatory journals and the quality standards in Open Access publishing will also be addressed.

WUR PhD theses are normally published open access. An embargo period of 1 year (with possible extension) can be implied in case the (draft-)articles in the thesis still have to be published. Such an embargo period can also be implied in case of particular interests (such as commercial interests in case of a patent application).

In 2020, WUR guidelines on authorship, affiliations and citations have been revised. The [guidelines](#) are based on the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice<sup>9</sup>, in particular on its sections on reporting results and assessment and peer review. In 2020, a WUR [Copyright Information Point](#)<sup>19</sup> has been installed that can be consulted about copyright issues related to research and education.

### FAIR data

In the context of "WUR is serious about data", a [research data policy](#)<sup>20</sup> is implemented based on FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) with the leading principle: as open as possible, as closed as needed. The [Wageningen Data Competence Centre](#)<sup>21</sup> and an emerging WUR data stewardship network play a crucial role in helping researchers to properly store and share their data and to fulfil the requirements of (inter)national policies and research funders.

WUR's current research data [policy](#)<sup>22</sup> for the storage, archiving and registration of research data focusses on safety and accessibility, both during and after research. The policy lists storage solutions that can be used during research to keep data safe from loss and corruption whilst accessible to certain (groups of) people. The policy also requires the archiving of publications' underlying datasets, as well as the registration of these datasets in WUR's research output system Pure. The policy also requires all PhD candidates and university groups to have a Data Management Plan (aligned to the university research data policy).

In addition, an [ownership policy](#)<sup>23</sup> has been formulated in which WUR has access to and control over research data created by its employees, and (when needed and possible) other persons involved in WUR

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Library/Researchers/Open-Access/WUR-Open-Access-policy.htm>

<sup>17</sup> <https://research.wur.nl/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.openaccess.nl/en/events/amendment-to-copyright-act>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Library/copyright-information-point.htm>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Value-Creation-Cooperation/WDCC/Data-Management-WDCC/Data-policy.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Value-Creation-Cooperation/WDCC.htm>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Value-Creation-Cooperation/WDCC/Data-Management-WDCC/Data-policy.htm>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Value-Creation-Cooperation/Collaborating-with-WUR-1/WDCC/Data-Management-WDCC/Data-policy/Data-ownership-Policy.htm>

research such as PhD candidates, students, and visiting staff members.. Decisions regarding accessibility of the data is included in the Data Management Plan, depending on the requirements of subsidy providers, contractual obligations, personal data protection, etc.

### **Outreach to the public and Open Education**

WUR research results are disseminated through all kinds of (social) media, focussing on enhancing the dissemination of research results and knowledge by WUR researchers. We aim to not only share the exciting research results with the public, but also to engage in dialogue with the general public and jointly look for solutions. WUR is making considerable progress on Open Education by developing new forms of open education (MOOC's, open textbooks). From 2020, there is support and training for WUR researchers to actively use and explore these possibilities within the Open Science & Education Programme.

### **Citizen Science**

WUR increasingly involves society in its research activities via Citizen Science. Throughout the last years, WUR has successfully completed various citizen science projects in which the public was actively involved in formulating research questions and data collection. In 2020, a WUR community has been established to exchange best practice and improve skills for Citizen Science research, in order to enhance the quality of our projects and to create opportunities for new ones.

## **1.10 Human Resources Policy**

Human Resources plays a key role in realising WUR's ambitions by contributing to sufficiently high-quality, sustainable staff in a vital organisation. Within WUR, corporate HR is responsible for HR policy development, conditions of employment, legal affairs, personnel- and salary administration and other specialist HR tasks. Additionally, each of the five Sciences Groups has a local HR department to support their managers and employees.

### **Tenure Track**

Most new scientific staff members are appointed in the Tenure Track system, which sets clear criteria for successive career steps (Assistant Professor 1-2, Associate Professor 1-2. Personal Professor). The goal of the Wageningen University Tenure Track is to enhance the quality of scientific research and education by attracting top level (inter)national academics and retaining talented staff through career development support. The first step in the Tenure Track is a temporary Assistant Professor position of four to seven years, depending on the history of the candidate. After this initial period the temporary position will progress to a permanent one. Usually this will be combined with promotion to the next level of Associate Professor. Assessments are carried out by a BAC (Broad Assessment Committee), who advises the General Director of the Sciences Group on promotion (and/or permanent position). The final (optional) step of Personal Professor is assessed by the university-wide BAC Personal Professor. The BAC Personal Professor sends its advice to the Rector, and the Executive Board takes the final decision. The candidate is initially appointed as a Personal Professor for five years and will be evaluated every five years.

The assessment criteria in the Tenure Track include the quality of teaching, research, PhD and Postdoc supervision, funding acquisition, management and the competence to work in a team. Teaching and research qualities are both important and the effort to obtain credits for teaching and research are comparable. Major tasks, other than education and research, are taken into account.

- The quality criteria are predetermined and transparent. They may differ per Sciences Group or specific domain. Quantitative criteria include research output such as publications, number of postdocs and PhD candidates supervised and number of PhD graduations. Teaching criteria include number of annual teaching hours, teaching qualifications and course evaluations by students.
- Candidates, having collected the predetermined required number of credits, have access to the assessment process;
- Having obtained the required number of credits does not guarantee promotion; the BAC makes an overall assessment of the candidate's academic performance and vision on research and education;
- (inter)national scientists will review the scientific quality.

Once the Tenure Track has started, career steps are made whenever quality criteria are met (and upon a positive BAC advice). There are no financial restrictions for promotion. Apart from the recruitment

procedure, there will be no competition between candidates during the Tenure Track. To help guide them through their career path, new Assistant Professors are individually coached by a Full Professor.

### **Recognition and Rewards**

WU is currently reviewing the process of 'Recognition and Rewards' of academics ('Erkennen en Waarderen'). In November 2019, the Dutch science organisations VSNU, NFWO, KNAW, NWO and ZonMW have published a [position paper](#) on recognition and rewards of academics<sup>24</sup>. In January 2020 a Wageningen University committee has been installed that explores a translation of the national position paper into institution-specific assessment criteria and narratives for all key areas (education, research, impact and leadership) and team achievements.

The position paper calls for a system for academics and research that addresses five important aspects:

- Enable the diversification and vitalisation of career paths, thereby promoting excellence in each of the key areas: education, research, impact and leadership;
- Acknowledge the independence and individual qualities of academics as well as recognizing team performances;
- Emphasize quality of work over quantitative results using narratives supported by responsible metrics;
- Encourage all aspects of open science;
- Encourage academic leadership.

### **Talent Management**

WUR aims to attract and support career development of talented and ambitious scientists at all career stages. The graduate schools organise graduate programmes for MSc students that includes a competitive grant call for several PhD positions. This is a successful means to bind talented MSc students to the graduate schools, and results in very motivated PhD candidates. The WGS graduate programme is described in more detail in the document 'WU PhD policy'.

At the postdoc level, the [WGS Postdoc Talent Programme](#)<sup>25</sup> has a similar goal as the WGS graduate programme: to create opportunities for exceptional talents to start their career in Wageningen. The programme aims to identify talented postdocs who reside outside the Netherlands and give these postdocs an opportunity to continue their career at Wageningen University & Research.

The Tenure Track system aims to attract and retain academic talent at the next step in the academic career path. There is also an education career path for lecturers who are interested in taking a step forward in the development of their education career.

Further support for talented young scientists is offered in the form of courses that prepare early stage postdocs/Tenure Track staff for applications in personal grant programmes such as the VENI programme. A similar support system for advanced career staff is available at Wageningen University & Research.

There are several development possibilities in project management up to the advanced level and WUR offers a leadership programme which provides in the development of leadership skills at all levels. Career paths such as programme management, business development and value creation are currently under HR attention. Such development tracks contribute to WUR goals and offer a variety of future perspectives to WUR employees.

### **Diversity**

WUR strives to be an inclusive organisation with equal opportunities in career development. Increased mobility, diversity and rejuvenation of WUR staff are high on the agenda to embrace different backgrounds and qualities and create an inspiring work environment. A special inclusivity department has been set up within corporate HR, which focuses on three pillars: diversity & gender, internationalisation, and people

---

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.vsnul.nl/recognitionandrewards/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Position-paper-Room-for-everyone%E2%80%99s-talent.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.pe-rc.nl/node/20897>

with a [functional disability](#)<sup>26</sup>. Four types of activities have been developed to engrain diversity in the organisation:

- Anchoring at the top: increasing awareness of unconscious bias amongst managers and leaders;
- HR interventions: increasing awareness of (gender) bias and best practice regarding diversity in hiring and selection processes;
- Culture interventions: awareness of norms and values and changing organisational culture if necessary;
- Empowerment: enable employees to tackle problems and improve career development (e.g. through mentoring programme).

Regarding internationalisation, HR is setting up a dual career centre for partners of international employees to make them feel welcome in their new country and the organisation. Training and awareness sessions on cultural differences are offered to all WUR employees, and the use of English in relevant spoken and written communication is actively encouraged.

### 1.11 COVID-19

WUR was and continues to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020. The organisation as a whole has proven to be resilient, but reduced maximum capacity in labs and buildings, as well as travel restrictions and caring responsibilities have had a profound impact on especially (young) scientists on temporary contracts (PhD candidates and postdocs).

The following measures were put in place to deal with COVID-19 impact on research:

- People are stimulated to rethink experiments in a COVID-19 proof manner;
- Supervisors together with PhD candidates reschedule the road to dissertation;
- Supervisors of PhD candidates are asked to consider the thesis requirements fit for graduation in light of the ongoing 'Recognition and Rewards movement' in the Netherlands and plan the remaining time accordingly;
- It was made possible to defend the PhD thesis online (or with online opponents);
- In 2020, young scientists could apply for compensation. A committee that included a representative from the PhD council considered these cases and generously provided compensation when criteria were met. In most cases the compensation led to an extended contract.
- In 2021, funds have come available through the 'Nationaal Plan Onderwijs' (NPO) of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to compensate researchers on a temporary contract to finish their research project. Although scholarship PhD candidates are not part of this plan, Wageningen University and Research has chosen to compensate them as well, to ensure equal treatment.
- The joint Wageningen graduate schools offer a course for supervisors on how to support a PhD or postdoc in times of crisis.
- PhD candidates and postdocs were encouraged to take their mental well-being into account, and to be proactive in discussing concerns and experiences with their supervisor, PhD advisor, HR-advisor, or the occupational social work department.
- PhD candidates and postdocs are encouraged to try to stay together and connected, also in these times of physical distance. When feeling lonely, they are stimulated to contact a colleague to have a (virtual) coffee break or make an appointment to go for a walk.
- Under the umbrella of Vital@work, WU offers tips and activities to support employees in their work. These include tips for a sustainable work pace, workshops on for example brain friendly working and taking active breaks and a walking challenge with the Ommetje app.

---

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.wur.nl/en/Jobs/Why-choose-WUR/Working-functional-impairment.htm>