

Wageningen University & Research MSc Research Practice Learning Agreement

This Wageningen University & Research (WUR) MSc research practice learning agreement sets out the agreements between a **master's student** and a **chair group**. The agreement registers the rights and duties of both parties and is a further supplement and elaboration of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), Education and Examining Regulations and the Student Charter.

The form has to be completed for each master's research practice by the student and a representative of the chair group before starting work on the research practice.

The student and supervisor sign the form and the supervisor takes care of archiving the learning agreement (ultimately this will be done in OSIRIS; until that is possible the chair group secretary archives the document).

Following the actual form two appendices are provided:

1. Additional explanation and clarification of each of the questions.
2. Guidelines for formulation of personal learning goals.

For complaints regarding supervision or assessment, the student can appeal to:

- The study advisor for advice and support
- The Examining Board for advice on procedures or an official complaint
- The Examination Appeals Board
- A Dean or a Confidential student advisor

1. Information on student and chair group

Student name: _____
Student registration number: _____
Study programme: _____
Specialisation: _____
Study advisor: _____
Chair group: _____
Supervisor: _____
Examiner: _____
Course code: _____
Course size (EC): _____

→ The student has been informed about the (written) guidelines and rules of the chair group for research practice students. yes/no

In case the data collection takes place abroad:

→ The student has been informed about the covid-19 measures applicable in the country in question and taken by the contact organisation. yes/no

→ The student and supervisor(s) came to an alternative how the data collection will be done if the student is unable to complete the work on location. yes/no

2. Information on the local contact organisation in case the data collection takes place abroad:

Name organisation:
Name contact person:
Phone number:
Email address:
Country:

3. Admission to the research practice

The student declares that study progress, the topic and the selection of the chair group has been discussed with the study advisor before the start date of the research practice.

The student fulfils the requirements regarding prerequisite knowledge for the start of the research practice.

Course code: Passed:

yes/no

Course code: Passed:

yes/no

4. Description of the project

5. Planning

Start date:
Progress evaluation date:
Completion date:
Special planning arrangements:

6. Personal learning goals

For the research practice you need to formulate a minimum of two personal learning goals, e.g. related to your professional career ambitions, specific domain knowledge you want to obtain or specific skills you want to improve. For each learning goal you follow the steps mentioned in the appendix 2 of this learning agreement.

Describe personal learning goals that you want to work on during the research practice.

1.

2. ...

Further clarification of the link of this research practice to your career interest (type of work) and future career ambition (type of organisation):

Explain what motivates your choice:

7. Arrangements regarding supervision

(Arrangements regarding the type and frequency of meetings between student and supervisor. If multiple supervisors or multiple chair groups are involved: roles and responsibilities of the different supervisors.)

8. Arrangements regarding facilities

(Work place (office/lab), access to buildings and locations. Availability and use of equipment, materials and facilities.)

9. Arrangements regarding progress evaluation

(What will be evaluated, what are the criteria for evaluation, who is involved?)

10. Arrangements regarding report

(Language and lay out, time and format of transfer of results and data (data management plan), agreements on secrecy of results, and publicity of the research report.)

11. Arrangements for individual situations.

(Special/unforeseen circumstances, disability, absence for special reasons)

12. Signature

The student agrees to report any relevant changes in circumstances which may affect the research practice to the supervisor.

The student declares to be familiar with rules and regulations specific to the chair group and with rules and procedures related to assessment. The chair group declares that they have provided the student with all the relevant information (including rules, regulations, and information on safety issues).

Wageningen,

	Name	Date	Signature
Student:	_____	_____	_____
Supervisor:	_____	_____	_____

Appendix 1: Explanation

1. Information for student and chair group

The examiner will be the chair holder or another staff member appointed by the examining board. The supervisor is responsible for daily supervision. Supervisors from an external organisation cannot have a formal role and cannot be involved in the grading. If multiple supervisors and/or chair groups are involved, each role should be explained under item 7.

2. Information on the local contact organisation in case the data collection takes place abroad

In case of emergency the supervisor has to be able to reach the local contact organisation abroad.

3. Admission to the research practice

The student is required to discuss the possibility to start a research practice (in terms of study progress and selection of chair group) with the study advisor in advance. Chairs may determine a maximum of two prerequisite courses (in total 12 credits) for starting a research practice. These prerequisites have to be published in the study handbook. The student has to pass the exam(s) before being granted access to the research practice.

4. Description

The description includes the subject of the project and activities. If relevant, reference can be made to an existing chair group project proposal. An important aspect is that the student has to be aware of all the consequences with respect to type of activities, intensity and planning of work.

5. Planning

It is required make agreement on dates for progress evaluation and completion of the project, with regard to regulations for delay. If the student intends to combine the project for one or more periods with course work, to interrupt the project for exams or a period of leave/absence, this has to be agreed with the supervisor in advance.

6. Personal learning goals

Setting up your personal learning goals supports you to focus on your learning process and progress during the research practice. These learning goals are the behaviour and knowledge areas that you identify as important for your learning. Your goals should be useful for you, yet they should not be only self-serving. Working on your personal intended learning goals should enhance your functioning within chair group and result in a higher quality end-product. Your previous lecturers or peers with whom you worked during earlier projects, might already have some useful feedback that provides you with input for defining your personal learning goals. A guideline for defining your personal learning goals is included in appendix 2.

7. Arrangements regarding supervision

Making these arrangements explicit is important to manage expectations for both parties. Supervisors have their own guidelines for planning meetings with students and for involving co-workers. In particular in cases where multiple supervisors and chair groups are involved, the student should not be confronted with conflicting rules and opinions: one supervisor should be the focal point for the student.

8. Arrangements regarding facilities

The chair group arranges the facilities required for the student. In general, it should be assumed that the student is unfamiliar with the policy concerning priorities for use of equipment and facilities, and is not aware who is in charge of them. The student needs to be informed that arrangements made are never a guarantee for availability, and that due to unpredictable circumstances, the research

practice project may have to be adapted with respect to time planning and/or content. The chair group and the student then have to agree solutions together.

9. Arrangements regarding progress evaluation

The progress evaluation is a meeting between student and supervisor that takes place before the student is halfway through the project. It is up to the chair group if this meeting is scheduled right after the completion of the research proposal or later on, but should be agreed upon with the student in the Learning Agreement. In this meeting, all aspects of the research practice at that point (i.e. Research proposal, supervision, performance) are discussed. The principle of two-way feedback applies to the progress evaluation.

In case of severe problems regarding the dedication, skills, knowledge or communication, only the examiner may decide to terminate the research practice after consultation of the supervisor and student. In order to prevent this, it is essential to make expectations regarding the progress evaluation explicit in the Learning Agreement. In case the research practice is terminated, this decision should be thoroughly substantiated and archived by the chair group.

10. Arrangements regarding report

Specific rules on the form and lay-out of a report (report, paper or otherwise), the transfer of data sets and processed results (data management) have to be agreed.

The research practice may be part of a larger project in which external partners are involved, or in which results may be generated that require confidentiality. The university has guidelines regarding protection and embargo of scientific results. Research practice reports can be registered with a restriction on disclosure of contents. The examiners and supervisor(s), however, always need a full copy to be able to assess the student.

All MSc research practice reports should be archived. It is up to the chair group and student to decide whether the report will be made public or not in the Digital Library.

11. Arrangement for individual situations

Students can ask for specific facilities for example in the case of disabilities. The student and chair group can ask the study advisor or Dean for students for advice. Additional arrangements for Double Degree students can be included here if needed.

Appendix 2: Guidelines for defining your personal learning goals

Step 1. Choose elements from the different domains of learning (academic/scientific and social learning), as an inspiration to set up personal learning goals. Choose elements you feel personally motivated for to work on in the coming months.

Step 2. Describe in one sentence the learning goal in general terms. Start with “I” and formulate your goal positively and active. Describe what you aim for. Make it active in the sense that you state the desired outcome. Do not state what you do not want, state what you want. Examples:

- ‘I accept and use received feedback’.
- ‘I determine if the tasks, structure and working environment of the research practice provider is an appropriate career goal for me’.

Step 3. Create a visual analogue scale running from 0 to 5, and define the level of attainment you aim at. A ‘5’ means an optimal performance in relation to the specific learning goal you want to improve. Describe the desired level you are aiming to achieve in a short description. It can be a combination of the three aspects knowledge, skills and your personal attitude (or conviction).

E.g. aspects related to

- Knowledge: learning to know and apply knowledge.
- Skills: learning to do.
- Attitude: learning to be (i.e. related to others and yourself, sense of care, sense of responsibility (integrating values in your own value system)).

Example of the desired attainment level in case of *‘I accept and use feedback’*.

‘I have an open attitude and pro-actively ask for feedback. Furthermore, I have a conversation about that feedback to truly understand it. Based on this conversation, I design a plan to implement relevant feedback and consciously use that plan during my research practice. I welcome feedback from my colleagues and host supervisor. I check with them whether I have improved regarding the feedback they gave me.’

Step 4. Indicate your current level of performance.

Make a description of your current level of performance regarding the learning goal (assess your own abilities, e.g. by including elements of knowledge, skills and attitude). It helps you to make clear which steps need to be taken to be able to improve.

Example present performance:

‘I am open to receive feedback from most of the involved persons, but only if I trust them. I hardly ask for feedback. I struggle with selecting relevant feedback, but do create and partially execute my plan to implement the feedback if it seems relevant to me.’

Step 5. Indicate the way you are going to achieve your personal learning goals. Determine what is reasonable for you to act upon within the coming months. Make sure that you set yourself SMART action points (specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic, well-timed).

Example: Within the forthcoming two months ...

- -I ask the host supervisor and I will look on internet to provide me with elaborate information on receiving feedback and set up my own rules.
- I practice receiving feedback from my research practice colleagues by asking them for feedback about my behaviour.

How to use your personal learning goals?

The personal learning goals are the basis for your reflection report (by means of a self-assessment). They are key elements of your development throughout the research practice and help you to prepare for your future career.

Although setting up personal learning goals supports you to focus on what you want to learn, they should always be related to your functioning at the research practice. It is important to realize that learning goals are not static. You are free to adjust them in between if necessary, for example during the **progress evaluation**.