



## WIMEK Honours Research Programme

The WIMEK Graduate School (Wageningen Institute for Environment and Climate Research) offers a *maximum of 15* excellent MSc students *currently* enrolled at WIMEK related MSc programmes at Wageningen University the opportunity to participate in the ‘WIMEK Honours Research Programme’. This programme prepares highly motivated MSc students for an academic research career by further developing their research vision and by supporting them in writing a full PhD research proposal on a self-selected subject within the field of ‘Environmental and Sustainability Sciences’.

*After* finishing the WIMEK Honours Research Programme all participating MSc students will be in an excellent position to pursue a career as PhD candidate in one of the participating WIMEK research groups (or anywhere else in the world).

**Succeeding in this programme will give you an excellent preparation for a career in science!**

If the written proposal fits within the [research lines of WIMEK](#), participants are encouraged to submit their proposal to WIMEK (note: not necessary to complete the programme itself). Selected candidates will then need to present their research proposal for a WIMEK Grant call Jury *after* the conclusion of the WIMEK Honours Research Programme. This jury decides to which participants it will offer **one available PhD position**. If the number of participants to the Wageningen Honours Research Programme that plan to submit their proposal to the WIMEK grant call exceeds ten participants, and/or WIMEK is convinced there are enough high potential candidates in the remaining participants, then only WIMEK Honours Research Programme participants will be eligible for this WIMEK PhD grant. Please check our website for information which chair groups are part of WIMEK: <https://www.wur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/Graduate-Schools/www.wur.nlwimek/WIMEK-organisation/Clusters-and-chairgroups.htm>

## Participating MSc programmes

The WIMEK Graduate School is a cross-cutting network of 17 research groups in environmental and sustainability research at Wageningen University and Research. The participating MSc programmes are:

WUR	Participating MSc programmes
	Environmental Sciences (MES)
	Climate Studies (MCL)
	Earth and Environment (MEE)
	Urban Environmental Management (MUE)
	OTHER WIMEK related MSc programmes *

\* If you follow a MSc programme which is linked to the WIMEK Graduate School, but not listed here, please contact us at [wimek@wur.nl](mailto:wimek@wur.nl).

## Target Group and selection criteria

The nomination can only be done in agreement with a WIMEK chair group; formally, the chair group nominates you. One candidate per chair can initially be nominated. The selection of the MSc students will be based on the following criteria:

- (i) Letter of recommendation by a WIMEK staff member (assistant, associate or full professor) containing:
  - a. motivating that you are a potential PhD student
  - b. a statement that they will be your writing coach before and during Research Master Cluster in period 5, and stating they have enough time available to discuss your proposal at least one hour per week; at minimum starting February 1<sup>st</sup>.\*
- (ii) Letter by chair group holder confirming the nominee is seen as a high potential candidate by the chair group.
- (iii) Letter of motivation for a research career and participation in the WIMEK Honours Research Programme, also referring to [WIMEK's Grand Challenges](#), written by you, the MSc student (max 500 words). Also indicate when you plan to finalise your MSc degree (Month, Year).
- (iv) Your exam results (transcript of your BSc and MSc grades).
- (v) Your CV
- (vi) Confirmation by the study advisors that you have talked through your planning (WIMEK will ask this for you once you have applied; make sure that you have discussed your planning with them before you apply!). Note that planning the whole program is hard; certainly at this late notice. Discuss all consequences well!

The student is responsible for making sure all the documents are in order. Send these to the staff member that will nominate you (and hence will be your writing coach). They then need to forward your email with all the documents attached to: [wimek@wur.nl](mailto:wimek@wur.nl).

The WIMEK Honours Research Programme is intended for top class MSc students, who are highly motivated to prepare for a scientific career. The Programme Committee will decide which students will be offered the chance to join the WIMEK Honours Research Programme. MSc students should have an average grade average grade of  $\geq 7.5$ , ideally have no delay (unless with good reason), and a strong motivation to do a PhD. If your grades do not meet this criteria, or you have a good reason for study delay, refer to this in your own motivation letter, and make sure the nominating WIMEK staff member very clearly explains the high potential of the nominee in the nomination letter. When you are in doubt whether you fit the criteria, please contact us at [wimek@wur.nl](mailto:wimek@wur.nl).

## Content of the WIMEK Honours Research Programme

The WIMEK Honours Research Programme is embedded in the second year of your MSc programme and consists of the following three course elements:

1. Three workshops: 1) Expectations from a PhD candidate 2) Doing a PhD 3) From interest to research motivation (5<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday), 13<sup>th</sup> (Thursday) and 19<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) of February 2025 from 15:00-17:00; including preparation 1 EC).
2. Master Class 'Grasping Sustainability': During this PhD-level course, you will join PhD candidates to explore and understand sustainability and the different frames that are used, applied to your own prospected research. This will let you also determine the role you would like to take as a future researcher (3-7, March, 4th week period 4- 2025; one week **full-time**; 2 EC).

3. Research Master Cluster (YEI-60312) – Proposal writing: Professional training sessions, including scientific writing, argumentation, presentation, review of proposals and writing a rebuttal, are strategically alternated with writing your PhD research grant proposal under supervision of a personal coach (period 5 2025; **full-time**; 12 EC).

In the other months, you follow the regular courses of your MSc programme, including your major MSc thesis, and an internship (for some WUR MSc programmes compulsory), which can be conducted abroad. Please note, that it is strongly recommendable to have successfully completed your (major) MSc thesis before you start with the Research Master Cluster in March 2025.

## Nomination of excellent MSc students

MSc students who believe they are realising excellent results and who are highly motivated to join the WIMEK Honours Research Programme, should a) make sure your chair group where you want to do your PhD will support your nomination. So indicate your interest to your thesis supervisors early, and discuss the best way to get accepted into the programme b) inform their **study advisor** of their MSc programme about their willingness to apply. **You need to discuss with them how the programme will fit in your study planning.** Ideally, you should do this before applying; but considering the late note of this call, it is ok the have scheduled a meeting for January as well; you can always decide to stop the program if it doesn't fit your planning, or your ambitions. The way it can fit into your schedule depends on the Master programme you are in. For MES students, RMC can be taken as an alternative to AMC. However, for some other studies, this does not replace AMC or other compulsory requirements (**such as the internship**). Planning the internship around the program may be hard! So planning this well is of utmost importance. Hence, it is important to make an appointment with your study advisor prior to applying to discuss your planning.

**The deadline for submitting nominations is: 16th December 2024; 12:00 pm.**

**To apply: please send the documents (i -v on page 3) in attachments to your nominating staff member; they will then need to forward this to [wimek@wur.nl](mailto:wimek@wur.nl).**

## Selection of MSc students to the programme

The WIMEK Honours Research Programme Coordinator **will select a maximum of 15 MSc students**. The decision of acceptance will be announced in the week of 17-20 December 2024. So make sure you have back up planning in case you are or are not selected.

**Contact:** If you have any questions around this programme, also seen the FAQ document on our webpage. Also, please do not hesitate to contact us at [wimek@wur.nl](mailto:wimek@wur.nl).

