



**WAGENINGEN**  
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

# **Annual Report of the Academic Board**

Academic year: 2019-2020

DATE

January 20, 2021

AUTHOR

Dr. ir. Rixt Becx-Komduur



## Table of contents

1	Academic Board	4
1.1	Tasks of the Academic Board	4
1.2	Members	4
1.3	Appointment of former members of the Academic Board	5
1.4	The Dean of Research	4
2	PhD graduations	5
3	Doctoral Degree Regulations	6
4	Professors	7
4.1	Special and exceptional chair groups	7
4.2	New format for proposals for special chairs	7
5	Objections and Appeals	7
6	IUS promovendi UHD1	7
6.1	Requests to the academic board from UHDs outside tenure track for ius promovendi	7
6.2	Evaluation December 2019	7
7	Joint degrees	8
8	Additional advices for the rector	8
9	Other decisions	9



#### 1.4 Appointment of former members of the Academic Board

In addition to the members of the Academic Board, any of its former members may be appointed to serve as deputy rector for the purpose of chairing public PhD defence ceremonies. The following former members of the Academic Board were appointed to serve as deputy rector during the reporting year:

- Prof Tiny van Boekel
- Prof Pim Brascamp
- Prof Erwin Bulte
- Prof Martien Groenen
- Prof Wouter Hendriks (now advisor)
- Prof Bert Holtslag
- Prof Carolien Kroeze
- Prof Herbert Prins
- Prof Paul Struik
- Prof Richard Visser
- Prof Just Vlak

## 2 PhD graduations: key indicators

During the reporting year 282 PhD candidates have earned their doctorate at Wageningen University, of whom 13 were nominated for designation cum laude. Of these 13 candidates, 10 were awarded the designation cum laude (3.5 %).

A total of 73 graduation ceremonies were executed online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The distribution across the departments of PhD candidates who graduated in this reporting year was as follows:

Agrotechnology and Food Sciences Group (AFSG)	79,5
Animal Sciences Group (ASG)	30
Social Sciences Group (SSG)	56
Environmental Sciences Group (ESG)	71
<u>Plant Sciences Group (PSG)</u>	<u>45,5</u>
Total	282

The distribution across the graduate schools of PhD candidates who graduated in this reporting year was as follows:

Production Ecology and Resource Conservation (PE&RC)	54,5
Experimental Plant Sciences (EPS)	36
N.W. Posthumus Institute - Netherlands Graduate School for economic and social history	0,5
Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology and Health Sciences (VLAG)	67
Research School for Resource Studies for Development (CERES)	2
Wageningen Institute of Animal Sciences (WIAS)	25,5
Wageningen School of Social Sciences (WASS)	46,5
Wageningen Institute for Environmental and Climate Research (WIMEK – SENSE)	47
<u>Research and publications outside any graduate schools</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	282

The PhD graduations occurred as follows during the academic year 2019-2020:

September	29
October	43
November	31
December	33
January	21
February	24
March	23
April	20
May	17
June	23
July	5
<u>August</u>	<u>13</u>
Total	282

A total of 200 foreign nationals (71%) graduated during the reporting year and a total of 140 graduates were women (49,6%).

A total of 6 PhD WU graduations occurred at IHE Delft Institute for Water Education in Delft and 6 WU PhD graduations occurred at Wetsus location. A total of 9 PhD graduations were part of a joint PhD degree programme, 2 of these joint degree graduations occurred outside of Wageningen.

### **3 Doctoral Degree Regulations**

The board decided to make the following amendments to the doctoral degree regulations:

- Article 18.2 and 18.3 have been amended. The time at which the promotor can submit a written proposal to the Academic Board in which he or she can request to consider the thesis for a cum laude designation has been clarified. This request can only be sent simultaneously with the submission of the thesis. Moreover it has been clarified that when the thesis committee's assessment warrants a cum laude procedure but the promotor did not request a cum laude designation upon submission of the thesis, the promotor will be asked to provide the names of two external experts and a letter of support of the assessment by the thesis committee that the thesis is eligible for a cum laude. The proposal of the promotor to consider the thesis for a cum laude designation or his/her letter in support of the assessment of the thesis committee will be forwarded to the two external experts.
- The thesis evaluation forms and rubric, described in appendix 6 of the doctoral degree regulations, have been amended. In the form sent to the thesis committee, the question (yes/no) regarding eligibility for a cum laude has been removed. In case of an excellent (or very good/excellent) overall assessment by all four thesis committee members, the thesis will automatically enter the cum laude evaluation procedure. In the form for external experts (cum laude procedure), the question (yes/no) regarding whether the thesis can be defended has been removed. In criterion 5 of the "Rubric for evaluation of a PhD thesis" an additional sentence has been included to make clear that a score of "excellent" means that a cum laude is recommended for the thesis.
- An addendum to appendix 7 has been added so that the temporary guidelines regarding online, blended and life public defence ceremonies applied during the COVID-19 pandemic are included in the Doctoral Degree Regulations.
- The description of the public defence ceremony in appendix 7 has been updated. Also after the COVID-19 pandemic, the Academic Board will allow for one of the four thesis committee members to question the candidate via a video connection during the public defence on the condition that the thesis committee member is not residing in the Netherlands. The PhD office must be notified ultimately three weeks before the public defence. Only in exceptional cases, and with the specific permission of the Dean of Research, a second thesis committee member may

be allowed to question the candidate via a video connection.  
The amendments have been approved by the Executive Board (College van Bestuur), communicated and included in the doctoral degree regulations in the year 2020-2021.

## **4 Professors**

### **4.1 Special and exceptional chair groups**

The Academic Board has been consulted on the following proposals for special chairs:

- Nutrition during Recovery from Metabolic Stress and Disease
- Electrochemical Resource Recovery
- Healthy and Resilient Livestock (candidate has withdrawn)
- Dietetics
- Circular Resource Based Agriculture in Africa (still in consultation)
- Sustainable Marine Food Production

### **4.2 New format for proposals for special chairs**

The board approved a new format for proposals for special chairs and a new format for the teaching and research remits for special chairs. These formats are incorporated in the 'Policy and procedures for establishing chairs and appointing and reappointing professors at Wageningen University June 2020'.

## **5 Objections and Appeals**

The Academic Board did not receive any objections in the 2019-2020 academic year. Two objection procedures that started in the previous academic year, were completed in the reporting year. Appeals have been lodged in both cases.

## **6 IUS promovendi UHD1**

### **6.1 Requests to the academic board from UHDs outside tenure track for ius promovendi**

Grade 1 associate professors (UHD1) who have a Tenure Track position are conferred ius promovendi automatically for a period of five years. The board has set up a separate ius promovendi application procedure for people other than those with UHD1 status as part of the Tenure Track programme. A special committee with members of the Academic Board assesses such ius promovendi applications twice a year in accordance with the UHD1 Tenure Track criteria for research and the supervision of PhD candidates. In the academic year 2019-2020, two staff members have applied for an evaluation procedure for the ius promovendi. To both staff members the committee conferred the ius promovendi for a period of five years.

### **6.2 Evaluation December 2019**

In November 2019, at the request of the Academic Board, the extension of ius promovendi right to UHD1 has been evaluated.

Between June 2018 (start of the extension) and November 2019, 27 PhD candidates graduated with, at the time of their graduation, one of their promotors being UHD1 with ius promovendi. Of these 27 PhD candidates, four had a promotor who obtained his/ her ius promovendi by following the ius promovendi application procedure of the Academic Board. All 27 PhD candidates had at least two (co-) promotors and

22 graduated PhD candidates had next to a UHD1 with ius promovendi a second promotor. The academic board, the graduate schools and the executive secretaries of the appointment advisory boards are positive about the extension of ius promovendi right to UHD1.

## **7 Joint degrees**

Since 2016 the Academic Board must give its approval for joint PhD degree programs with joint governance of PhD projects that may result in 'joint, 'double' or 'dual' degrees (more information can be found in appendix 8 of the doctoral degree regulations) before the included PhD candidates start their research. The Dean of Research has been mandated by the Academic Board to decide about the proposed joint PhD degree programs.

Prior to the evaluation of a proposal for a joint PhD degree program by the Academic Board, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) approved by the partner universities involved, needs to be signed at corporate level.

This year no new joint PhD degree programs have been evaluated.

The Dean of Research did approve the following ten partnership agreements for governing the joint supervision and awarding of PhD diplomas for PhD candidates that participate in joint PhD degree programs already approved by the Academic Board:

- Two agreements between Wageningen University and Ruhr-Universität Bochum within the framework of the H2020 PhotoBioCat project (ETN-EJD) period 2018-2022;
- Seven agreements for 36 to 48 months in the framework of the INSECT DOCTOR program. Between Wageningen University and
  - o The University of Tours (UT) in France with WU as recruiting party.
  - o The University of Copenhagen (UCPH) in Denmark and WU with UCPH as recruiting partner.
  - o Two agreements with the University of Valencia (UVEG) in Spain with WU as recruiting partner in one of these agreements.
  - o Two agreements with the University of Exeter (UNEXE) in the United Kingdom with WU as recruiting partner in one of these agreements.
  - o One agreement with National Institute of Research in Agronomy in collaboration with University AgroParis Tech (INRA/AGROPARISTECH) with INRA/AGROPARISTECH as recruiting partner.

## **8 Additional advices for the rector**

- The Academic Board has noticed that the number of personal professors has tripled since 2005. There is no specific policy with regard to the ratio of personal professors, chair holders and other positions within the chairs, but the Academic Board considers it important that there is a good balance between the positions within the chair groups and that there is sufficient capacity to provide education.
- There is uncertainty to what extent PhD candidates may refuse the maximum of 10% of their total time that they are expected to outsource to teaching. The rule is beyond the responsibility of the Academic Board, but the Academic Board considers it important that more clarity is given to what extent teaching is compulsory.
- The Academic Board has given a positive advice to the proposal from corporate legal services to establish an independent permanent objection advisory committee.



## 9 Other decisions

- The Academic Board decided against a request from IHE Delft to grant associate professors of their organization the ius promovendi through WU, since the granting of ius promovendi at WU by the Academic Board is strongly linked to the tenure track system of WU. The Academic Board deems that it is undesirable and perhaps not possible to organize comparable evaluations for associate professors of IHE Delft as those organized for associate professors from WU outside tenure track applying for ius promovendi.
- The Academic Board decided to grant a thesis committee member's request to rectify his/her abstention from voting cum laude during the defence of a PhD candidate. Consequently, the Academic Board has awarded this PhD candidate's thesis the designation cum laude a few weeks after the PhD defence ceremony took place.
- The Academic Board decided that in case NUFFIC evaluates a non-Dutch Master's programme (with the exception of a programme in social sciences) from a potential PhD candidate as being equivalent to one-year of a two-year Dutch Master's programme, and the promotor requests an exception for a qualifying exam (QE), the relevant graduate school will assess the courses followed by the candidate for the Master's degree on the basis of an extended report requested from NUFFIC by the PhD office. The graduate school will determine whether the Master's programme of the potential candidate corresponds to a Dutch two-year Master's programme and will send its assessment and recommendation for requirement of a QE to the Dean of Research. Based on the various documents, the Dean of Research will make a final decision.
- The Academic Board has decided that it is no longer required to submit hardcopies of the thesis, approval letter, the propositions and the authorship statement 15 weeks for the intended date of the thesis defence ceremony. The submission of PDFs of these documents is sufficient.