



## Course 'Taking Charge of your PhD Project'

Doctoral research is a fantastic opportunity to develop your talent as a scientific researcher. Besides enhancing your scientific skills, a doctoral programme provides you with plenty of opportunities for personal development. You need a proactive attitude to get the most out of this unique period in your life and to make sure you realise your objectives. After all, the success of your doctoral research is basically down to you!

Knowing what it takes to successfully complete your PhD will enable you to take responsibility for your own doctoral research. Of course, your doctoral research will not be all plain sailing. There will be setbacks and at a national level, many PhD projects take longer than expected. Research<sup>1</sup> reveals that the relationship with your supervisor(s) at both an interpersonal and scientific level is crucial for the successful completion of your doctoral research. That is why you should make clear agreements with your supervisor(s) about the supervision (e.g., progress meetings) and the planning of your project. Each PhD student can benefit from some assistance in planning and managing the project. Moreover, building up or making use of a relevant network has a strong motivational and scientific value.

Being aware of the importance of these factors and employing relevant communication skills contributes to the successful completion of your doctoral research.

### **Objective**

The aim of this course is to help you as a PhD student to manage your project as well as possible by optimising the success factors (formal conditions, planning, professional and social network). Practising communication skills is an important part of the course.

### **Contents/approach**

The course is specifically aimed at and developed for NWO-I PhD students. We try to make the course as relevant as possible to your work situation and the everyday practice of doctoral research. To facilitate this process we will send you a questionnaire prior to the course.

During the course we will explore the success factors of doctoral research and the importance of conversation techniques. We will consider the formal framework the NWO-I PhD student works in and will clarify your rights and responsibilities. We will discuss the use and necessity of a good planning and ways of conceiving this. We will practise conversation techniques (such as providing feedback, negotiating, managing conflicts) with the help of an actor using several case studies and we will give each other tips.

### **Intended for**

PhD students during their first year of employment. This course is a compulsory part of the NWO-I training programme for PhD students.

### **Duration, time and place**

Two separate days (from 10.00 to 17.00 hours) with an intervening period of two weeks. Until further notice, this course will be held online.

### **Trainer**

The course is given on behalf of NWO-I by 'ElroyCOM trainings for scientists, [www.ElroyCOM.nl](http://www.ElroyCOM.nl)'. The trainer, Dr. E. Cocheret de la Morinière, obtained his doctorate in the natural sciences and has specialised in training and coaching PhD students.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g., Berger, J. en Jonge, J. de: 'Rendement verkend. Succes- en faalfactoren van promotietrajecten aan Nederlandse universiteiten' [Performance explored: Success and failure factors of doctoral research programmes at Dutch universities], EIM Onderzoek voor Bedrijf & Beleid, Zoetermeer, August 2005.

## Registration & costs

During their first year of employment, PhD students will receive an invitation to participate in the course from the Central Personnel Department at NWO-I. Each course has a maximum of 12 participants. NWO-I pays for the course.

## Programme

### Day 1

#### Morning

10.00-10.20	Introduction by NWO-I personnel officer and the ElroyCOM trainer
10.20-10.45	Discussing drives and barriers in the PhD-project
10.45-11.30	Formal conditions and clarifying working conditions
11.30-11.45	Coffee break
11.45-12.30	Planning research projects
12.30-13.00	Professional and social help network

#### Afternoon

Practising cases with the actor. Participants practise conversation skills such as progress meetings or discussions about planning, negotiations and (professional and emotional) conflicts with their supervisor (played by the actor).

14.00-14.30	Preparing cases
14.30-15.15	Case 1
15.15-15.30	Coffee Break
15.30-16.15	Case 2
16.15-17.00	Case 3

#### Homework

- Plan a 1.5-hour meeting with your supervisor.
- Discuss with her/him the formal conditions with the help of the 'Clarifying conditions' form. Try to answer all the questions and set up an extensive agreement. Include the documents 'Planning and Evaluation' and the Training and Supervision Plan in the discussion.
- Construct a planning for the full PhD-project duration in cooperation with your supervisor. Include in your planning: milestones, go/no-goes, and plans B. Bring your planning to the second course day.
- Read the entire reader.

### Day 2

#### Morning

10.00-10.30	Discussing homework: formal conditions, planning and reader.
10.30-11.00	Time management: getting things done!
11.00-11.15	Coffee break
11.15-12.15	Exercises in duos
12.15-12.30	Time management in your daily work
12.30-13.00	Exercises in duos

#### Afternoon

Practising cases with the actor.

14.00-14.30	Solving problems from the perspective of negotiation theory
14.30-15.15	Case 1
15.15-15.30	Coffee Break
15.30-16.15	Case 2
16.15-16.50	Case 3
16.50-17.00	Evaluation