



## 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 you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire (intake) 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 academic training 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.

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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.

## **Trainers**

The course is given on behalf of NWO-I by ElroyCOM Training ([www.elroycom.nl](http://www.elroycom.nl)). All trainers and training actors of ElroyCOM Training have an academic degree and international experience. They have trained more than 15.000 scientists over the last 15 years, and are specialized in training PhD students.

## **Registration and 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 hours	Introduction by the ElroyCOM trainer
10.20-10.45 hours	Discussing success factors in the PhD project
10.45-11.15 hours	Expectations and clarifying project conditions
11.15-11.30 hours	Coffee break
11.30-12.15 hours	Professional and social help network
12.15-13.00 hours	Planning: the four-year helicopter view
13.00-14.00 hours	Lunch break

#### *Afternoon*

*Practising cases with the actor. The participants practise conversation skills such as giving and receiving feedback, negotiation and conflict, with the help of a professional academic training actor.*

14.00-14.15 hours	Preparing individual cases
14.15-15.15 hours	Giving feedback: theory, exercises and cases
15.15-15.30 hours	Coffee break
15.30-16.15 hours	Peer-to-peer coaching on individual cases
16.15-17.00 hours	Receiving feedback: cases

#### *Homework*

- Plan a 1,5 hour meeting with your supervisor.
- Discuss with him or her the form 'Clarifying PhD project conditions'.
- Write down the answers on the appropriate form and bring it to the second course day.
- Read the entire reader.

### **Day 2**

#### *Morning*

10.00-10.30 hours	Discussing homework and reader
10.30-11.00 hours	Time management and personality traits
11.00-11.15 hours	Coffee break
11.15-12.15 hours	Setting priorities and planning your ideal day and week
12.15-12.30 hours	Concentration and focus
12.30-13.00 hours	Exercises in duos
13.00-14.00 hours	Lunch break

### *Afternoon*

Practising cases with the actor. The participants practise conversation skills such as giving and receiving feedback, negotiation and conflict, with the help of a professional academic training actor.

14.00-14.15 hours	Preparing cases
14.15-15.15 hours	Negotiation skills: theory and exercises with the actor
15.15-15.30 hours	Coffee Break
15.30-16.15 hours	Conflict management: difficult cases with the actor
16.15-16.50 hours	Peer-to-peer coaching on individual cases
16.50-17.00 hours	Evaluation

### **Online setup**

In the online training with the use of Zoom, the time schedule is as follows.

10.00-11.15 hours	Online Zoom session including exercises in subgroups
11.15-11.45 hours	Offline break
11.45-13.00 hours	Online Zoom session including exercises in subgroups
13.00-14.00 hours	Offline lunch break
14.00-15.15 hours	Online Zoom session including exercises in subgroups (with training actor)
15.15-15.45 hours	Offline break
15.45-17.00 hours	Online Zoom session including exercises in subgroups (with training actor)