



Course 'Taking charge of your PhD project'

Intended for

PhD students during their first year of employment.

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 ¹ 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.

Duration, time and place

Two separate days (from 10.00 to 17.00 hours) with an intervening period of 2 weeks. Until further notice, this course will be held online.

Trainers

The course is given on behalf of NWO-I by ElroyCOM Training (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.

¹ 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 the ElroyCOM trainer
10.20-10.45	Discussing success factors in the PhD project
10.45-11.15	Expectations and clarifying project conditions
11.15-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-12.15	Professional and social help network
12.15-13.00	Planning: the 4-year helicopter view
13.00-14.00	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	Preparing individual cases
14.15-15.15	Giving feedback: theory, exercises and cases
15.15-15.30	Coffee break
15.30-16.15	Peer-to-peer coaching on individual cases
16.15-17.00	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	Discussing homework and reader
10.30-11.00	Time management and personality traits
11.00-11.15	Coffee break
11.15-12.15	Setting priorities and planning your ideal day and week
12.15-12.30	Concentration and focus
12.30-13.00	Exercises in duos
13.00-14.00	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	Preparing cases
14.15-15.15	Negotiation skills: theory and exercises with the actor
15.15-15.30	Coffee Break
15.30-16.15	Conflict management: difficult cases with the actor
16.15-16.50	Peer-to-peer coaching on individual cases
16.50-17.00	Evaluation

Online setup

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

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