



SELF-EVALUATION OF THE PHD SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

1 September 2016 – 31 August 2019

Abstract

This self-evaluation report covers the third year (September 2018 – August 2019) of the PhD Scholarship Programme at the UG and places the results of this year alongside those of the first two years.

The programme has been set up in the framework of the national Order in Council (AmvB: Algemene Maatregel van Bestuur) published in the Official Gazette on 8 January 2016 concerning the PhD Scholarship Programme Experiment (Besluit experiment promotieonderwijs).

The Experiment, and the UG programme, has started on 1 September 2016 and will end on 1 September 2024.

The present report starts with summarizing some recent developments, provides an update on the development of the Career Perspectives Series, gives all numbers related to the programme, and details the appreciation of the programme by the participants.

Further information on the background of the programme is provided in the appendix.

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Recent developments

Commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), the first two years of the national experiment have been evaluated by an independent bureau (CHEPS). The results were laid down in the report [‘Het experiment Promotieonderwijs: een tussenevaluatie’](#) (CHEPS report) and presented to the Minister in April 2019. The external evaluation confirms the conclusions of the [self-evaluation of the first two years by the UG](#).¹ Both reports clearly show that the UG’s approach to the PhD Scholarship Programme experiment not only amply meets all the requirements formulated by the Minister in the Order in Council, but also that the University has developed a unique training programme for PhD students within the framework of that experiment (the ‘Career Perspectives Series’). Moreover, the large PhD survey carried out in May 2017 and the more targeted one in September 2018 show that, on average, PhD scholarship students are equally satisfied as PhD students with employee status. Although slightly unhappy with their income, the vast majority of them indicated to opt for a PhD scholarship position again if they had to remake this choice. The most recent large PhD survey issued in May 2019 (to be published in December this year; some relevant data are already shown in the present report) confirms these earlier results.

In the period from September 2016 to August 2019, 825 PhD students started the programme, which was considerably more than was originally estimated. In November 2018, already the quota of 850 places, as assigned to the UG, came close. Therefore, the Board of the UG proclaimed a stop on the intake and distributed the last 30 ‘free’ (i.e. not yet reserved) places evenly over the faculties. As a result, the programme had to be put on hold and faculties had to return to the old situation of employing (lower amounts of) directly funded PhD students (*Eerste Geldstroom*; see below for more information). This unfortunate situation was a result of the fact that the national interim evaluation, which was stipulated by the Order of Council to be held in 2018, took place only one year later. It goes without saying that this has put the UG programme in a difficult position. It also inspired the group of MD/PhD students² at the UMCG to ask for an employment position (as a student assistant) retroactively. This is still under discussion and will be handled by the UMCG.

Since a possible second application round would only be issued after a positive evaluation, it is fortunate that the CHEPS report provided such a positive outcome. A subsequent motion on this issue adopted by the Dutch parliament (*Tweede Kamer*) has incited the Minister to announce a second application round (with deadline on 1 January 2020). This decision led to questions in Parliament (*Kamervragen*) again, however, which were [answered by the Minister on 22 October](#). As a part of this, she announced that an additional independent party will verify the soundness of the scientific methods used in the national interim evaluation.

A new application round gives the UG the opportunity to apply for more places and, hopefully, to continue with the programme. To prepare a new application and to discuss the options, the Dean of Graduate Schools is now making a round along the faculties and Graduate Schools. Though the Minister does not require the new application to go through any advisory body if the rules applied

¹ The University Council discussed the self-evaluation report on 28 March 2019 and the CHEPS report on 27 August 2019.

² The MD/PhD programme offers medical and dental students the opportunity to combine their Master phase with a PhD training to obtain a (D)MD and PhD degree upon completion. In this programme students spend an additional two years (financed) on scientific research next to the regular medical or dental education. Students obtain their PhD in two years instead of the regular four years of PhD research.

within the programme remain the same, it will be presented for information and discussion to the University Council of 14 December.

A second positive development has been the approval of the Minister (in January 2019) and subsequently the Tax Authorities of the UG's request to be allowed to pay supplementary (top-up) scholarships to international scholarship PhD students also *outside the national experiment*. This means that since 1 January 2019 the UG can provide these top-up scholarships without having to include them in the present or future quota assigned by the Minister. It is important to stress here that the Board of the University has decided that PhD scholarship students receiving a top-up outside the quota have the same rights, duties, and total net income as their colleagues with a top-up that has started before January 2019. Also in the Dutch parliament, the benefits of paying top-ups in the way it is pioneered in Groningen — with notional employments, giving the PhD scholarship students good social and legal guarantees (see the appendix) — has been noticed. Together with the motion on a second application round, also a motion was approved to allow all Dutch universities to pay top-ups in this way. The Minister has promised to start a discussion on this with the VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands) soon.

After putting the PhD Scholarship Programme on hold and waiting for further legislation allowing to restart this, the Board of the University has set up a new ('bridging') programme for the financial support of directly funded PhD students (*Eerste Geldstroom*), which is in effect since January 2019 retrospectively. With this new 'Ubbo Emmius programme' the Board is supporting the faculties in attracting PhD students with employment status (including sandwich programmes with foreign universities). Part of the budget of the programme is reserved for paying the top-up scholarships to international scholarship PhD students. Since the programme is mainly about PhD students with employment status, the costs per PhD student are much higher than in the previous PhD Scholarship Programme and therefore the strategic goal of 600 PhD graduates per year had to be adjusted to 545. This new programme was discussed and approved by the University Council on 27 June 2019.

As already touched upon above, all PhD scholarship students at the UG, both with a full and with a supplementary (top-up) scholarship, receive a notional employment. This means that taxes and social security premiums are being paid for them, which makes them part of the Dutch social security system. These PhD students also qualify for social security benefits (*toeslagen*) if their scholarship does not exceed the relevant thresholds. However, they will not pay pension contributions and they will not receive a year-end bonus (*eindejaarsuitkering*) or holiday pay (*vakantiegeld*). All PhD scholarship students will receive the same total net income, either by means of a full scholarship or of a supplementary (top-up) scholarship. As fixed in their contracts, the PhD scholarship students receive an indexation to their (gross) scholarships in September each year (following the CBS consumer price index). In September 2018, the gross amount of a full scholarship was raised from €2099 to €2120 (leading to a net amount of approximately €1766). In September 2019, the gross amount was raised again to become €2181 (and a net amount of €1841). The supplementary (top-up) scholarships are raised proportionally, such that the total net income of international scholarship PhD students stays in line with that of PhD scholarship students with a full scholarship. In the appendix a detailed overview is provided showing the financial consequences.

Objectives of the programme

The three objectives of the PhD Scholarship Programme, as stipulated by the Order in Council, are:

1. to increase the number of PhD ceremonies;
2. to improve the opportunities for PhD students to formulate their own research proposals;
3. to continue to improve training programmes for PhD students, focusing specifically on preparing them for their future careers after graduation – regardless of whether they choose to work in academia or elsewhere.

For more information about the context of these objectives see the appendix.

A fourth, additional objective, as agreed with the University Council, is to create a sound legal and socially responsible status within the programme for *all* PhD students with a scholarship. This therefore includes international PhD students with a competitive scholarship from a body other than the UG or the UMCG. See the appendix for more details.

About this report

Since the CHEPS report has made some remarks on the communication within the UG programme, we start this report with a short discussion on this issue and we will indicate possible improvements.

Subsequently, we discuss the progress with the Career Perspectives Series (CPS), which has been set up in the framework of the third objective, i.e. to improve the preparation of PhD students for future careers after graduation, inside or outside academia.

Next, we will present the numbers of incoming PhD scholarship students, the numbers of the first graduations, and the numbers concerning premature termination of contract, long-term illness and pregnancy.

Then, we will provide the updated information, as requested by the Minister in the Order in Council to be included in the final evaluation, as to

- whether there were changes in the PhD student intake since 1 January 2016 in terms of type of student, country of origin and educational field;
- whether the university awarded more PhD degrees as a result of the programme (compared to the period 2010-2016; objective 1), and, if so, whether this differed for each educational field;
- whether the number of PhD graduates and the number of PhD students has changed since 1 January 2016 in terms of category, country of origin and educational field.

Finally, we will present some of the results from the recent PhD survey (May 2019) on the programme rating of PhD scholarship students compared to their colleagues with an employment status. Here, we will also address the appraisal of the opportunities for PhD students to formulate their own research proposals (objective 2). Also some relevant results from the supervisor survey (May 2018; the final report is not yet ready) will be shown and discussed.

In the appendix, we give some detailed information on issues that have been discussed earlier, like the background of the programme legal basis, administrative duties and arrangements in the event of illness and pregnancy (objective 4). These issues have been discussed extensively in the previous evaluation reports, as well as in the CHEPS report, and there have been no major changes since then. Also, extensive information about the Career Perspectives Series, as was presented in the previous self-evaluation, is included in the appendix.

Communication

The CHEPS report shows that the UG programme runs smoothly, but that improvement in the dissemination of information about the rules is still possible (and needed). We have noticed that, though the necessary information is available, PhD scholarship students, supervisors and support staff cannot always find it. Consequences are that:

- PhD scholarship students do not always know in sufficient detail what their rights are (e.g. that they cannot be forced to teach, and that they have the right to (paid) maternity leave, benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act (*WW*), and a similar research budget and other facilities as their colleagues with an employment status). This leads to a feeling of being a second-rate PhD student, which is not necessary.
- supervisors do not always know what the rights of their PhD scholarship students are, they cannot advise them in a proper way and they may sometimes wrongly think that their PhD students have teaching duties (PhD students should only teach if they want to and if they follow the training Start to Teach simultaneously).
- support staff may not always be aware of the fact that PhD scholarship students should have the same research facilities as their colleagues with employee status.

The information channels that have been available up to now are:

- the PhD Scholarship Desk is the (virtual) central information desk at which all the information about the programme is available. They are the central point when it comes to the start of a programme and any other relevant issues and questions. They send newsletters with relevant information to all PhD scholarship students on a regular basis.
- a web page on the public UG website <http://www.rug.nl/phd-scholarship>, created just before the start of the programme to provide general information about it and clarify which rules and regulations apply. It is also used as a landing page for recruiting PhD scholarship students. Specific information on training for PhD (scholarship) students can be found on <http://www.rug.nl/phd-training>, information on the Career Perspectives Series on <http://www.rug.nl/phd-cps> and information on support in case of mental problems on <http://www.rug.nl/phd-support>.
- a web page on My University with information for both PhD scholarship students and staff members involved in the programme. The format of the PhD contract, the accompanying addendum, a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and many other useful documents (like the first- and second-year evaluations of the programme) have been posted on this site.
- the contract plus addendum, which the PhD scholarship students sign before the start of their programme and which contains a lot of useful information (see the template on the page on My University). Also the supervisor signs this contract and should read it before doing so

- a comprehensive [letter to all UG staff members](#) involved in the PhD Scholarship Programme, which was sent in December 2016 by the Board of the University. Also this letter can be found on the My University web page.

The programme has been set up at a corporate level, but in close collaboration with the faculty Graduate Schools. The latter are responsible for all other communication within their own faculties and monitoring compliance with the regulations.

Notwithstanding the already existing information channels mentioned above, we agree with CHEPS that the communication could still improve. Presently, plans are being made for this. A part of the plans will definitely be to use the training and *peer-to-peer* sessions for (new) supervisors that are being set up, to disseminate the PhD policy of the UG, including the information about the PhD Scholarship Programme.

Training and Career Perspectives Series (CPS)

The [Career Perspectives Series](#) (CPS) is a new learning pathway developed for the PhD Scholarship Programme, aimed at career development for PhD scholarship students. This learning pathway offers PhD scholarship students an opportunity during their PhD programme to prepare for their future career, either within academia or elsewhere. PhD student organizations have insisted that this pathway should be opened up also for other PhD students. This has been granted, but PhD scholarship students have first rights and reduced fees.

The CPS is built upon three pillars of activities:

[CPS courses](#)

Generally, the courses are of two to three days' duration and offered two to three times a year. The courses can be broken down into those focusing on the learning of transferable skills, and those that address career prospects inside and outside academia. The courses are offered both university-wide and within the faculty Graduate Schools (individually or in the framework of the Federation of SSH Graduate Schools) as is shown on the [website](#).

The first course PhD scholarship students (and all other PhD students) should take, and the only one that is discussed here in more detail, is the one-and-a-half-day Introductory Event. In this event, the participants are made acquainted with the University, the Graduate Schools and the University PhD policy. Furthermore, they learn about project and time management, presentation skills, scientific integrity, research impact strategy, career perspectives and assertiveness. For future events it is anticipated to include an introduction on mental wellbeing, with tips and tricks, and support opportunities in case of problems. During the event, the starting PhD students will build up useful networks with colleagues all over the University and they will be informed about PhD organisations in Groningen like Gopher.

[CPS workshops](#)

A series of short two-hour interactive workshops covering a wide range of career skills has been set up last year. These workshops have been given regularly on Friday afternoons (3-5 pm) since September 2018. PhD scholarship students can select from the various workshops to build up a 'tool

kit' for their future career, and, importantly, these workshops are set up in such a way that they also offer unique networking opportunities.

Employability and internships

In the final stage of their PhD programme, PhD scholarship students are given an opportunity to arrange short placements (ranging in length from 1 day to 3 months) at various local and national employers via the Employability Portal. This web-based programme is currently being set up together with the UG departments Career Services and Alumni & Funding, and employability officers at the faculties. Contacts have already been established with various local and national companies, which are willing and enthusiastic to make contact with PhD students and offering them opportunities for placements and 'job shadowing' with staff who have PhDs (preferably from the UG). There are also plans afoot for annual matchmaking events, where PhD scholarship students and employers can meet one another and exchange information.

The three Graduate School clusters – Science & Engineering, Medical Sciences, and Humanities & Social Sciences – organize their own career events aimed at careers inside and outside academia. These events focus on the specific disciplines within the clusters and are therefore supplementary to the university-wide CPS activities.

Related to the training programme of the Career Perspectives Series, and specifically the courses on transferable skills, are the activities focused on the mental wellbeing of PhD students which are under development now. A part of the monitoring project of the PhD Scholarship Programme ('Successful PhD'), set up by the group of Dr Ellen Jansen of the faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences (FGMW), was the PhD Wellbeing Survey in May 2018. Just as in similar surveys at other universities, high levels of unhealthy stress were found among (all) PhD students. In response to these results, the Board of the UG has proclaimed seven measures to help improve the mental wellbeing of PhD students (see the press release: <https://www.rug.nl/news/2019/03/stress-relief-for-phd-students>). The measures include the appointment of a PhD psychologist and PhD counsellors, and the development of a training programme targeted on a healthy work-life balance. In this programme the PhD students will be made aware of the support opportunities available throughout the University and within the faculties. Though these activities are a spin-off of the PhD Scholarship Programme, they will of course be made available to all PhD students at the UG. Another important measure is the development of a training programme for the supervisors of PhD students, in which among other things they will be updated on the PhD policy of the UG and learn how they can support their students in case of (mental) problems. This programme should also play a role in the improvement of the communication about the do's and don'ts of the PhD Scholarships Programme, as suggested in one of the conclusions of the recent CHEPS report.

Intake of PhD scholarship students

Tables 1a-b shows the intake of PhD scholarship students during the first three years of the programme, divided into faculty, intake year and type of scholarship (full vs supplementary).

Table 1a. Intake of PhD scholarship students in the period September 2016 to August 2019, divided into scholarship type (full vs supplementary), faculty and year (year 1 is September 2016 – August 2017, year 2 is September 2017 – August 2018, and year 3 is September 2018 – August 2019). For full scholarships, the tables show how many were awarded to students with Dutch nationality. Full scholarships are awarded by the UG or by the UMCG. The supplementary scholarships are top-up scholarships which are awarded by the UG to international PhD students who have a competitive scholarship from their country of origin.

Fac.	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
	Full		Suppl.	Tot.	Full		Suppl.	Tot.	Full		Suppl.	Tot.
		NL				NL				NL		
FEB	2	—	2	4	8	—	2	10	10	2	3	13
FGGW	6	2	1	7	4	1	1	5	3	2	—	3
FGM	—	—	3	3	10	5	6	16	10	7	2	12
FdL	11	7	3	14	18	8	2	20	14	6	5	19
FMW	64	35	38	102	83	46	49	132	61	35	23	84
FRG	7	6	2	9	9	8	1	10	8	7	—	8
FRW	4	3	3	7	6	2	—	6	6	2	2	8
FSE	39	11	65	104	59	15	57	116	38	7	40	78
FWB	4	3	1	5	5	1	—	5	5	3	1	6
CF	3	1	—	3	6	6	—	6	5	5	—	5
CART	1	—	—	1	3	1	—	3	1	—	—	1
Total	141	68	118	259	211	93	118	329	161	76	76	237

Table 1b. Similar table as 1a, but now with total numbers for September 2016 – August 2019.

Fac.	Total			
	Full		Suppl.	Tot.
	NL	I.		
FEB	21	2	6	27
FGGW	13	5	2	15
FGM	20	12	11	31
FdL	43	21	10	53
FMW	209	115	109	318
FRG	24	21	3	27
FRW	16	7	5	21
FSE	136	33	162	298
FWB	14	7	2	16
CF	14	12	—	
CART	5	1	—	5
Total	515	236	310	825

Full names of faculties:

FEB: Faculty of Economics and Business

FGGW: Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies

FGMW: Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences

FdL: Faculty of Arts

FMW: Faculty of Medical Sciences (UMCG/FMW)

FRG: Faculty of Law

FRW: Faculty of Spatial Sciences

FSE: Faculty of Science & Engineering

FWB: Faculty of Philosophy

CF: Campus Fryslân

CART: KVI-CART (Centre for Advanced Radiation Technology)

Table 1a shows that the number of PhD students who started with a full scholarship in the second year increased by 50%. The main reason for this was that, in view of the limited time to prepare the programme, some faculties (FEB, FGMW and FdL) decided not to start until September 2017. In addition, Campus Fryslân is a new faculty that officially opened in September 2018 and has started its intake later. Of the PhD students with a full scholarship, about half have Dutch nationality. The drop in the intake numbers in the third year is obviously caused by the temporary stop of the programme as proclaimed by the Board of the UG in November 2018. The places for full scholarships that were filled after that date concern the 30 'last' places distributed over the faculties as well as a number of places that were already 'reserved' at an earlier stage, e.g. for sandwich PhD students who did the first part of their programme at a foreign university and now enrol in the UG programme.

The number of supplementary (top-up) scholarships awarded in the second year was as high as in the first year. In the third year, the number of top-ups given within the experiment has dropped from 118 to 76. This is due to the fact that as of 1 January 2019 these scholarships do not have to be included in the experiment anymore. From January until August another 13 supplementary scholarships have been awarded outside of the experiment, making a total of 89 supplementary scholarships in the academic year 2018/2019.

Most scholarship programmes have fixed quota for certain countries, which explains why the number of supplementary scholarships has remained stable from the first to the second year. It is not yet clear what has caused the slight drop in the third year. It might be that Graduate Schools have been a little reluctant to attract international scholarship PhD students because of the unclear situation with respect to the UG programme, but it could also be due to statistical fluctuations.

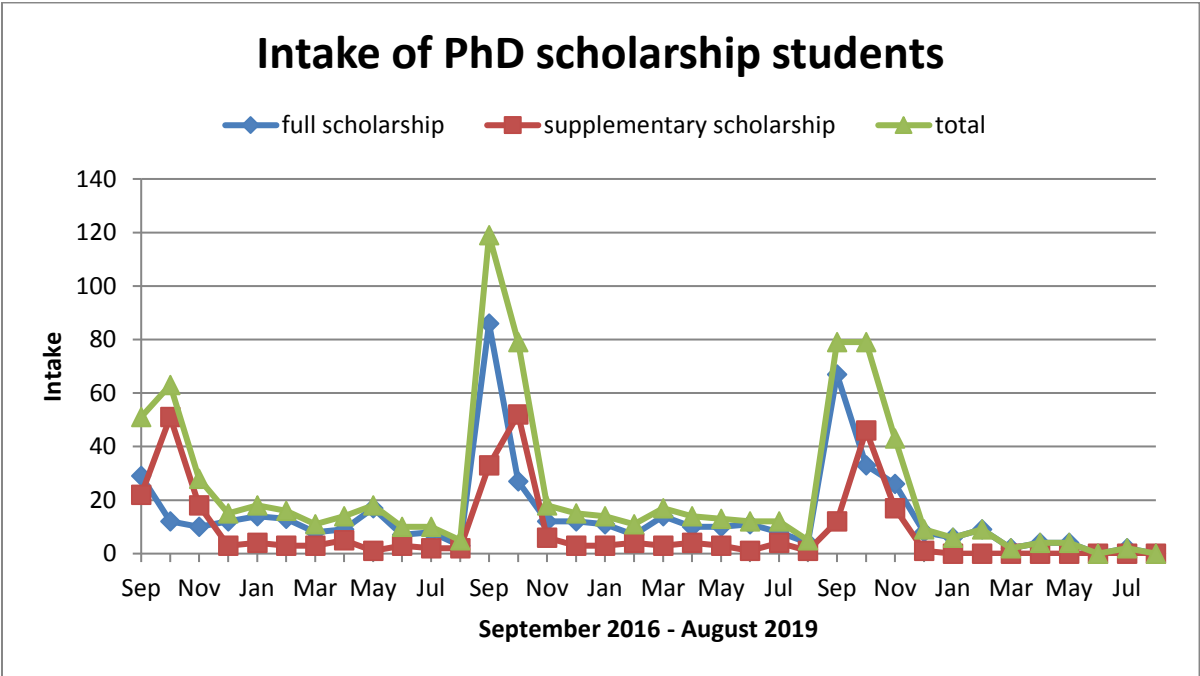


Figure 1. Intake of PhD scholarship students with a full (blue line) and supplementary (red line) scholarship for the period from September 2016 to August 2019. The total intake per month is shown in green.

Figure 1 shows how intake numbers changed over time, divided into full and supplementary scholarships. The figure clearly shows the impact of the programme launch and the fact that the majority of PhD scholarship students start their programme in September/October. Due to the lack of availability of accommodation at this time of year, it is advisable to stagger the intake of international PhD students with top-up scholarships (who are newly arrived in Groningen) over a longer period. The Graduate Schools have adopted policy to this effect and the initial results in the period September – December 2018 tentatively show a slightly better distribution. It is also clear from the figure that the supplementary scholarships are not in the programme anymore since January 2019 and that in 2019 only a small amount of full scholarships has started.

Graduations

Until August 2019, nine PhD scholarship students have completed their PhD programme with a graduation. All of them had a full scholarship. Seven of them did their PhD at FMS, one at FSE and one at FEB. Since the UMCG has the general policy of providing three-year positions (already from before the start of the PhD Scholarship Programme), it makes sense that the majority of early graduations comes from this faculty.

Five graduates have a postdoc position either at the UMCG or elsewhere, one has a research position outside academia, one is a teacher at the UMCG, and one has become a resident doctor at a UMC in China. One of the graduates does not have a job yet. As yet, nothing can be said with certainty concerning the relevance of the PhD Scholarship Programme to the job market, but the comprehensive support package in the Career Perspectives Series is expected to lead to a better tie-in. The Alumni module developed in Hora Finita will keep track of where the PhD students end up after their PhD.

The final evaluation of the experiment will also look at the impact of the programme on the quality of theses. PhD scholarship students are generally selected through a more rigorous procedure than PhD students with employee status. In addition, the percentage of PhD scholarship students who received a negative opinion in the go/no-go interview (10 out of 825, or about 1%) indicates that the quality of the PhD scholarship students compares favourably with other types of PhD student.³ Following discussions nationwide, as well as in Groningen, about measuring thesis quality (minimum, typical and cum laude), the UG is now implementing a quality assessment system in its PhD monitoring system Hora Finita, which gives an indication of the quality of theses according to the following four criteria: contribution to scientific progress, scientific quality, reflection on the research, and quality of the written presentation. Therefore, for the final evaluation of the experiment scheduled in 2021, the UG will avail of two years of quality assessment data of the theses of PhD scholarships and all other PhD students.

³ On average, about 1% of all PhD students withdraw after the go/no-go interview.

Premature termination of contract, illness and pregnancy

The scholarship was prematurely terminated for 37 (of the 825) PhD scholarship students who began in the first three years: ten because of the negative outcome of the go/no-go-interview, two because of protracted illness, and 25 at their own request. Five of this latter group accepted another PhD place. 17 of the 37 PhD scholarship students who withdrew (about 2% of the intake) did so within a year. This 'drop-out rate' is on average as compared with other PhD students, 1-2% of whom usually pull out within a year. The 37 PhD scholarship students who withdrew (or who we know will do so in the coming months) represent 4.4% of the cohorts in the first three years. This percentage is similar to that for all other PhD students, 4% of whom on average stops within two years. Of the 37 PhD scholarship students who withdrew, 23 had a full scholarship. In other words, proportionately more PhD students with a full scholarship withdrew than with a supplementary scholarship. Ten had Dutch nationality, which is in line with the percentage of Dutch PhD students in the programme (29%: 236 out of 825). 19 of the PhD scholarship students who pulled out were from the Faculty of Science & Engineering, 13 from the Faculty of Medical Sciences and five from faculties in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

22 PhD scholarship students reported sick during the reporting period. 16 of them had a full scholarship and 12 had Dutch nationality. Because PhD scholarship students are only required to report sick after four weeks (see the appendix), all these cases involved relatively long-term illness. In most cases, the students resumed their PhD programme after some time, but in two cases they had to stop their programme prematurely (see above). Some of the complaints were stress-related. Eight PhD scholarship students took maternity leave in the first three years of the programme. The figures for illness and pregnancy are similar to those for other PhD students.

Impact of the PhD Scholarship Programme

Intake of PhD students

In the Order in Council, the Minister requested that information should be included in the final evaluation as to whether there were changes in the total PhD student intake since 1 January 2016 in terms of type of student, country of origin and educational field, or not. To this end, Tables 2a, 2b and 2c below show the breakdown for all new PhD students in 2015 - 2018.

Table 2a. Intake of all new PhD students in 2015-2019, divided into faculty⁴ (source: Hora Finita).

Faculty	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Economics and Business (FEB)	38	30	27	43	35
Theology and Religious Studies (FGGW)	16	8	10	6	9
Behavioural and Social Sciences (FGMW)	61	57	72	47	46
Arts (FdL)	58	64	55	62	47
Medical Sciences (FMW)	256	336	327	316	145
Law (FRG)	23	25	26	22	11
Spatial Sciences (FRW)	12	14	21	22	15
Science & Engineering (FSE)	188	212	262	250	194
Philosophy (FWB)	3	11	9	10	7
Campus Fryslân (CF)	0	3	10	13	9
KVI-CART	2	3	5	5	1
UG total	657⁵	763	824	796	519

*Provisional figures until 16 October 2019. The final intake in 2019 is expected to be approximately 640.

Table 2a shows that the increase in intake of (all) PhD students during 2016-2018 occurred mainly in the faculties of FRW, FWB, FEB, FMW and FSE. Campus Fryslân has started officially only recently; as such, it did not recruit its first PhD students until 2016. Here too, we see a further increase in 2017 and 2018.

The 2019 figures are provisional: these are the Hora Finita figures from 16 October 2019. Typically, 15% of the PhD students start their programmes in the last two-and-a-half months of a year. When we would take into account a backlog in registration in Hora Finita of approximately 20%, we would arrive at a final intake in 2019 of approximately 640. This number would make sense in the light of the stop of the intake of PhD scholarship students in 2019 and thus, as a result, the lower number of starting PhD students. The backlog in registration is most prominent in Medical Sciences, where work is still being done on a better and more timely registration in Hora Finita.

⁴ Due to the fact that, at all faculties, PhD students are sometimes being registered retrospectively, the intake numbers for the years 2015-2017 are slightly higher than those in the previous evaluation reports.

⁵ The average intake between 2011 and 2015 was about 642 PhD students per year.

Table 2b. Intake in the years 2015-2019, divided into the various VSNU PhD student status categories⁶ (source: Hora Finita).

VSNU PhD student status	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
1. PhD student (employee)	368	372	267	283	266
2. Employee completing a PhD	21	30	29	27	14
3a. Contract PhD student, scholarship UG/UMCG	29	71	218	213	43
3b. Contract PhD student, scholarship other inst.	88	137	139	116	58
3c. Contract PhD student, funding from elsewhere	45	68	79	59	37
4. External PhD student (<i>buitenpromovendus</i>)	94	80	84	91	69
Unknown/not filled in	12	5	8	7	32
UG total	657	763	824	796	519

* Provisional figures until 16 October 2019. The final intake in 2019 is expected to be approximately 640.

Table 2b clearly shows that the total number of yearly starting PhD students has increased as a consequence of the PhD Scholarship Programme. The 2017 intake was 150 higher than the 2015 baseline figure. PhD students with a full scholarship are categorized as type 3a (contract PhD student, scholarship from UG/UMCG), while PhD students with a scholarship from their country of origin are type 3b (contract PhD student, scholarship from another institution). Contract PhD students with a full scholarship who started in 2015 are international ‘sandwich’ PhD students (UG Ubbo Emmius programme). They began their programmes before 1 September 2016 and they fall outside the scope of the PhD Scholarship Programme.⁷ PhD students with a scholarship from their country of origin were already coming to the UG before the PhD Scholarship Programme was launched, but thanks to the appeal of the Programme, and the top-ups it provides, their number increased from 88 in 2015 to 139 in 2017. The number of PhD students with employee status has fallen slightly after 2016, but has been rather stable since. This drop is due partly to declining funding options for indirect and contract funding, and partly to the policy decision to recruit all directly funded PhD students to the UG as PhD scholarship students. This decision was made to create clarity about the position of PhD students. For the duration of the PhD Scholarship Programme, directly funded students (who can choose their research topic and supervisor) are PhD scholarship students, whereas PhD students with indirect and contract funding (who carry out research on behalf of others) are appointed as employees.

Table 2c. Intake in 2015-2019, divided into nationality (source: Hora Finita).

Nationality	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Dutch	346	388	361	360	247
EU (non-Dutch)	98	120	165	131	111
Non-EU	213	255	298	304	160
Unknown/not filled in	—	—	—	1	1
UG total	657	763	824	796	519

* Provisional figures until 16 October 2019. The final intake in 2019 is expected to be approximately 640.

⁶ See http://www.vsnu.nl/files/documenten/Feiten_en_Cijfers/Typering%20promovendi%202013-RH-def-20130719.pdf. PhD scholarship students are categorized as either status 3a (if they were awarded a full scholarship from the UG/UMCG) or 3b (if awarded a supplementary scholarship from the UG/UMCG). In 2019 the VSNU has adopted a new categorization, which still has to be implemented nationally. In this system the PhD students are categorized as status 2a and 2b, respectively.

⁷ In light of the agreements with the Tax and Customs Administration, for this cohort of ‘old PhD scholarship students’ payroll tax is paid in the same way as for PhD scholarship students (as notional employees; see next section).

Table 2c shows that the number of Dutch PhD students stayed about the same in 2015-2018. The growth in the intake of PhD students is mainly due to the increased intake of international PhD students, from both inside and outside Europe. It looks like the apparent decrease in 2019 is mainly caused by lower numbers in Dutch and, especially, non-EU PhD students (NB: provisional data; Dutch PhD students in especially the Medical Sciences often show a backlog in registration in Hora Finita).

Number of PhD ceremonies

In the Order in Council, the Minister requested that information be included in the final evaluation as to whether the university awarded more PhD degrees as a result of the programme (compared to the period 2010-2016), or not, and, if so, whether this differed for each educational field. The evaluation must also include information as to whether the number of PhD graduates and the number of PhD students has changed since 1 January 2016 in terms of category, country of origin and educational field, or not. To this end, as baseline measurements we are using the overviews generated in Hora Finita regarding the number of PhD graduates from the various faculties (i.e. educational fields) in the period 2010-2019 (see Table 3a) and the distribution per student status and country of origin of those who were awarded their PhD degrees in 2015-2019 (see Tables 3b-c).

Obviously, these data cannot tell us anything as yet about the PhD Scholarship Programme (the average time taken to complete a PhD programme is five years, which means that the impact of the PhD Scholarship Programme launched on 1 September 2016 will not really be felt until 2021); the numbers given here should be viewed as a 'baseline measurement'.

Table 3a. Number of PhD graduates per Faculty in 2010-2019 (source: Hora Finita).

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
FEB	26	31	33	24	26	29	23	25	22	28
FGGW	4	3	1	3	5	3	2	5	5	6
FGMW	24	24	26	24	33	50	28	37	35	32
FdL	28	26	34	33	24	34	30	29	35	31
FMW	147	156	188	157	197	209	224	192	195	225
FRG	10	15	13	15	13	12	16	16	18	16
FRW	10	8	8	10	6	13	21	13	15	11
FSE	139	133	137	146	134	146	185	170	177	152
FWB	2	3	5	3	2	3	5	11	2	2
CF	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
CART	7	8	4	7	3	2	1	4	3	2
UG total	397	407	449	422	443	501	535	502	507	506

* Provisional figures: number of ceremonies that took place or were definitively planned in 2019. Including tentatively planned ceremonies, the total number is estimated to be 546.

The number of UG PhD ceremonies shown in Table 3a is in line with the national trend: we see a rise until 2016, after which the numbers have stabilized (see Figure 2).

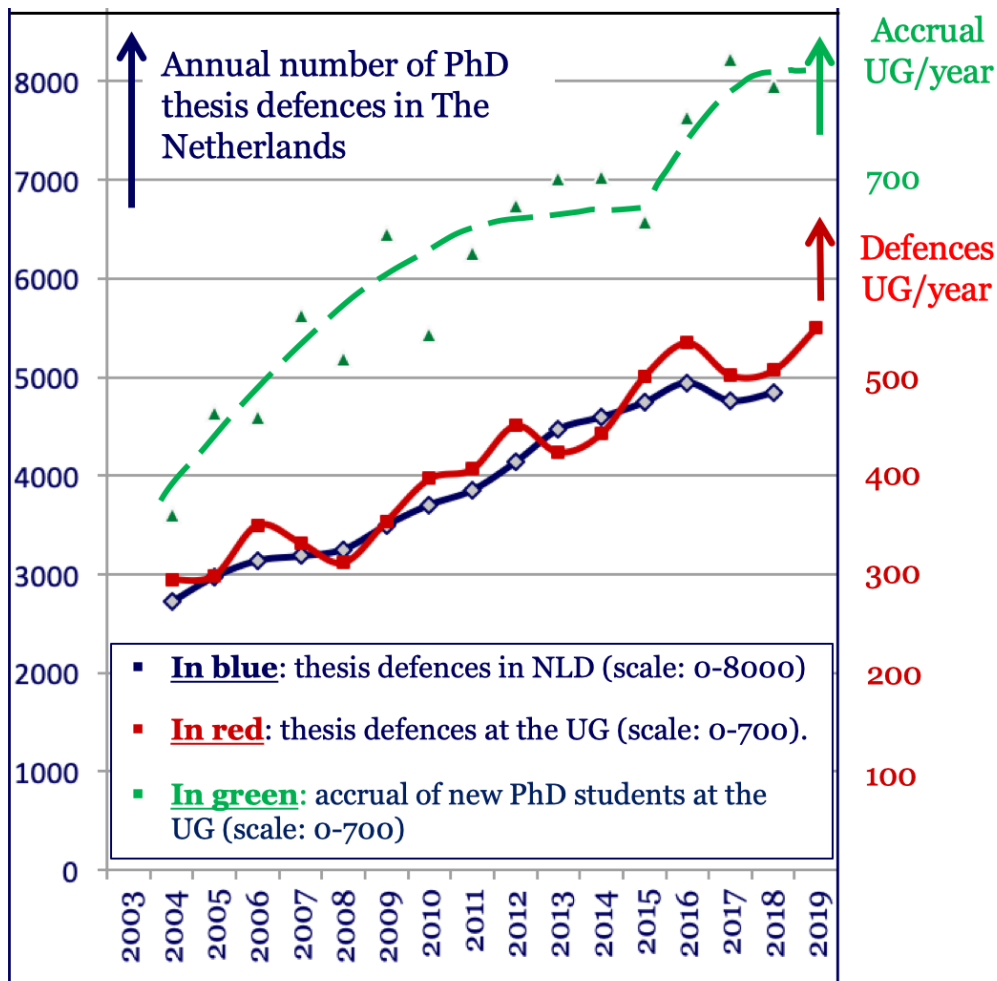


Figure 2. Number of PhD ceremonies per year during the past fifteen years in the Netherlands (in blue) and Groningen (in red). NB: the scales on the Y-axis differ with a factor of ten. There was a steady increase until 2016, after which the numbers levelled off. Interestingly, a slight increase is seen in Groningen in 2019, which could be a first outcome of the PhD Scholarship Programme. The intake of PhD students in Groningen (in green) was fairly stable in the period 2011-2015 but has increased from 2016 to about 800 per year. This is clearly the result of the start of the PhD Scholarship Programme. As yet, it is unclear how the intake numbers will develop further after 2019. Source: Hora Finita.

Given that the number of new PhD students remained the same until 2016 (about 670 per year, see Tables 2a-c; Hora Finita), we expect⁸ that the number of PhD ceremonies will stagnate at just over 500 a year until 2021. With a rise in intake to about 800 (see Tables 2a-c) and with the number of PhD students who eventually graduate at about 80%, an increase to over 600 PhD ceremonies a year is a realistic expectation. In view of the size of the University of Groningen and its ambition to become an excellent research university, this is an appropriate target (see the 2015-2020 University of Groningen Strategic Plan).

⁸ On average, it currently takes around five years to complete a PhD programme with a success rate of 80-85%.

Table 3b. Number of PhD graduates in 2015-2019, divided into the various VSNU PhD student status categories (source: Hora Finita).

VSNU PhD student status	PhD gained				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
1. PhD student (employee)	267	312	292	305	271
2. Employee completing a PhD	34	37	31	24	40
3a. Contract PhD student, scholarship UG/UMCG	69	42	41	31	40
3b. Contract PhD student, scholarship other inst.	30	46	51	53	55
3c. Contract PhD student, funding from elsewhere	21	33	27	42	40
4. External PhD student (<i>buitenpromovendus</i>)	61	53	56	50	60
Unknown/not filled in	19	12	4	2	—
UG total	501	535	502	507	506

* Provisional figures: number of ceremonies that took place or were definitively planned in 2019. Including tentatively planned ceremonies, the total number is estimated to be 546.

Logically, the number of PhD ceremonies for contract PhD students with a full scholarship (type 3a) is declining; since 2010 only a few ‘sandwich’ PhD students with a scholarship have started at the UG. The small increase that can already be seen in the tentative numbers for 2019 is due to the first PhD scholarship students who graduated. The number of PhD ceremonies for international PhD students with a scholarship from another institution (type 3b) is slowly increasing, a trend that was already evident before the launch of the PhD Scholarship Programme. The number of PhD ceremonies for PhD students with employee status has remained fairly constant over the last few years.

Table 3c. Number of PhD graduates in 2015-2019, divided into nationality (source: Hora Finita).

Nationality	PhD gained				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Dutch	285	300	267	262	259
EU (non-Dutch)	73	86	92	97	80
Non-EU	137	148	142	148	167
Unknown/not filled in	6	1	1	—	—
UG total	501	535	502	507	506

* Provisional figures: number of ceremonies that took place or were definitively planned in 2019. Including tentatively planned ceremonies, the number is estimated to be 546.

Table 3c shows a tentative increase in the number of PhD ceremonies for non-Dutch EU PhD students. For the rest, the numbers are fairly constant.

With regard to the first objective of the PhD Scholarship Programme (increasing the number of PhD ceremonies), we can provisionally conclude from the number of such ceremonies in Groningen, combined with the intake data mentioned above, that roughly a 20% increase in the number of PhD ceremonies at the UG appears realistic as a result of the PhD Scholarship Programme.

Programme rating by participating PhD scholarship students

In order to monitor the appreciation of the PhD scholarship students, their supervisors and the Graduate Schools for the programme, the ‘Successful PhD’ research project was launched by Dr Ellen Jansen’s research group (Faculty of Behavioural and Social Sciences (GMW), in collaboration with Educational Support and Innovation (ESI)) in 2017. This is a long-term study which runs parallel to the period specified for the PhD Scholarship Programme in the Order in Council.

As part of this project, large-scale surveys are carried out and analysed. The detailed analyses of these various surveys are, or will soon be, published on the UG Graduate Schools’ website, under ‘[PhD surveys](#)’ or, in the case of specific surveys concerning PhD scholarship students only, under ‘[Evaluation](#)’ of the PhD Scholarship Programme. The most relevant recent results in the context of the PhD Scholarship Programme (extracted from the latest biannually conducted PhD survey issued in May 2019) will be given and discussed below.

All PhD students registered in Hora Finita were approached and asked to take part in the comprehensive survey (which takes 30-45 minutes to complete). A large number of PhD students (average response rate of 31%) filled in this survey. Of these, 395 were PhD scholarship students with a full scholarship, 132 PhD scholarship students with a ‘top-up’ scholarship, and 522 PhD students with employee status.

Table 4 shows that there are differences between the three groups in terms of gender, nationality and the institution at which the previous degree (MSc) was obtained. These differences can be largely explained by the fact that, as is also shown in Table 1, 38% of the PhD students on the PhD Scholarship Programme are international students with a supplementary scholarship.

Table 4. Sample characteristics: affiliation, gender, nationality, previous degree (in percentages).

a. Affiliation

Affiliation	Total (%)
Employed (by UG/UMCG, NWO I, ASTRON or SRON)	531 (45.9)
PhD scholarship student (with full or top-up scholarship)	395 (34.1)
Other (e.g., external, spare time, ‘old’ bursary)	231 (20.0)
Total	1157 (100)

b. Background characteristics

Gender (in %)	Employed	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
Female	59.3	57.6	50.0	57.5
Male	38.8	41.2	49.3	41.0
Prefer not to say	1.3	.8	.7	1.1
Other	.6	.4	-	.4

c. Nationality

Nationality (in %)	Employed	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
Dutch	54.6	45.5	1.4	44.2
European	21.3	19.8	1.4	17.9
Non-European	22.4	33.5	94.9	36.3
Dual nationality	.9	.8	.7	.9
Prefer not to say	.8	.4	1.4	.8

d. *University where master was obtained*

Obtained at (in %)	Employed	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
UG	44.1	46.9	3.0	38.4
Other Dutch university	19.4	5.7	1.5	13.2
University in Europe	23.4	23.4	7.6	20.9
University outside Europe	12.2	21.5	86.4	26.1
Other	1.0	2.4	1.5	1.4

Table 5 shows how PhD scholarship students and PhD students with employee status experience both their and their supervisor's contribution to the design of their PhD project. The majority of PhD scholarship students ($5.8 + 25.7 + 43.2 = \mathbf{75\%}$, if projects are included that were designed in joint consultation, which is possibly the best approach) **and top-up** PhD students ($6.5 + 13 + 43.5 = \mathbf{63\%}$) stated that they made a significant contribution to the design of their project. Interestingly, a considerable number of PhD students with employee status ($2.1 + 13.2 + 28.5 = \mathbf{44\%}$) also said that they made a significant contribution.

With regard to the second objective of the PhD Scholarship Programme (improving the opportunities for PhD students to formulate their own research proposals), we can conclude that this indeed occurred in the majority of cases within the current programme.

Table 5. Designing the project.

Answer category	Employed (in %)	Full scholarship (in %)	Top-up (in %)	Total (in %)
Project is entirely designed by supervisor	26.4	6.2	13.8	18.9
Project is mostly designed by supervisor	22.1	17.9	21.7	20.9
Project is co-designed by PhD student and supervisor	28.5	43.2	43.5	34.8
Project is mostly designed by PhD student	13.2	25.7	13.0	16.6
Project is entirely designed by PhD student	2.1	5.8	6.5	3.8
Project was designed by a national or international consortium	4.7	.4	-	2.8
Other	3.0	.8	1.4	2.2

Table 6 shows that a significantly larger number of PhD scholarship students think that the final year of their Master's degree tied in seamlessly with their PhD project, that their project is more of a stand-alone project (less connected to other projects) and that it is hardly ever part of a large consortium. These results are consistent with the structure of the PhD Scholarship Programme and the objectives stipulated in the Order in Council.

Table 6. Position of the project in relation to other projects in the group.

Answer category	Employed (in %)	Full scholarship (in %)	Top-up (in %)	Total (in %)
Can the final year of your (Research) master's degree be considered part of your PhD project?	18.0	45.2	25.6	25.9
My project is a stand-alone project; I am the only one in my department who is working on this topic	45.6	60.7	40.6	49.0
My project is closely linked to other PhD students' projects	39.0	28.0	35.5	35.4
My project is closely linked to research by a postdoc or other colleagues	20.2	9.3	18.8	17.0
My project is closely linked to my daily and/or primary supervisor's research	40.1	38.9	47.8	40.9
My project is part of a national or an international consortium	18.6	7.0	5.8	13.5

The survey also asked the PhD students about the importance of the rights and facilities associated with their situation. The research showed (see Table 7) that both PhD students with employee status and PhD scholarship students consider this to be an important factor. Equally important is the extent to which PhD students are free to design and structure the course of their project, satisfaction with supervision, feeling at home in the group and satisfaction with the PhD programme in general. All of these issues scored highly for all groups.

In the previous survey (issued in 2018) only PhD scholarship students and no PhD students with an employment were asked about their satisfaction with a number of the above subjects. This was done because these issues were related to their status as a scholarship student. Having a lower income appeared to be the most frequently cited disadvantage in this earlier survey, which did not come as a surprise since PhD scholarship students indeed have a lower income than PhD students with an employment status. In the present, May 2019, survey this and other items were tested again, but now also PhD students with an employee status were asked to give their opinion. PhD scholarship students proved to be quite neutral about their income and only moderately less satisfied as compared to employee PhD students. PhD scholarship students have a 20% lower net income in cumulative terms than PhD students with employee status over a four-year programme if everything (annual salary grade increments, holiday pay and end-of-year bonus) is included. This has been agreed within VSNU and with the Ministry; in accordance with the Order in Council, it makes it possible to offer more PhD scholarship students a place if funding remains constant.⁹

A second interesting finding was that PhD scholarship students are in addition to this, also somewhat less satisfied with their conditions regarding sick leave and maternity leave as compared to PhD students with an employee status. This is remarkable, since these conditions are exactly the same for both groups. Apparently, not all PhD scholarship students are aware of this.

⁹ If funding remains constant, this would produce a little less than double the number of places. In addition, a considerable number of extra places are funded at the UG (see the appendix under 'Funding').

Table 7. The importance of rights and facilities (a), the extent to which students are free to design their programme (b), students' experience of the availability of and support from supervisors(c), the atmosphere in the group (d), satisfaction with the PhD programme in general and the supervision (e), and satisfaction with income, research budget, sports and health facilities, and the conditions of sick leave (f). The average score (M) and Standard Deviation (SD) is given on a scale from 1 to 5.

a. The importance attached to job benefits

Value attached to job benefits	Employed	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
	M and (SD)	M and (SD)	M and (SD)	M and (SD)
Having a regular monthly income**	4.85 (.39)	4.86 (.39)	4.91 (.40)	4.86 (.39)
Having a pay rise every year**	4.03 (.88)	4.19 (.85)	4.26 (.87)	4.11 (.87)
Receiving a holiday allowance (i.e. the equivalent of one month's pay, paid out in May)	4.09 (.89)	4.22 (.90)	4.08 (.92)	4.13 (.90)
Receiving an end-of-year bonus (i.e. the equivalent of one month's pay, paid out in December)	4.05 (.89)	4.09 (.99)	4.09 (.92)	4.07 (.92)
Having good conditions regarding sick leave and maternity leave*	4.47 (.78)	4.63 (.69)	4.43 (.81)	4.51 (.76)
Having access to a good range of sports facilities***	3.20 (1.24)	3.36 (1.31)	4.15 (.79)	3.38 (1.25)
Having access to a good range of health facilities, including mental health services***	3.78 (1.11)	4.16 (.98)	4.43 (.71)	3.98 (1.05)
Having the freedom to make my own choices in my project	4.43 (.67)	4.36 (.75)	4.51 (.66)	4.42 (.69)
Having flexible working hours*	4.37 (.82)	4.19 (.87)	4.31 (.73)	4.31 (.83)
Being allowed to teach and supervise Bachelor's and Master's students***	3.61 (1.08)	3.91 (1.00)	3.47 (1.00)	3.67 (1.06)
Being able to go abroad to do research at another university***	3.75 (1.14)	4.12 (.93)	4.19 (.84)	3.92 (1.06)
Being able to follow an internship at a company or government organization**	3.31 (1.21)	3.41 (1.22)	3.74 (.97)	3.40 (1.19)
Total rights & benefits scale (a = .79) ***	4.00 (.52)	4.13 (.47)	4.22 (.45)	4.06 (.50)

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

b. Freedom

Appreciation of freedom	Employed	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
In my PhD there is much room for my own ideas	4.11 (.86)	4.25 (.75)	4.05 (.75)	4.14 (.82)
I have the freedom to make my own choices about the direction of my project and the methods to be used	3.86 (.94)	4.01 (.84)	3.88 (.84)	3.90 (.90)
I have the freedom to choose which conferences to attend*	3.83 (.93)	4.03 (.89)	3.82 (.91)	3.89 (.92)
I have the freedom to choose which courses to take	4.12 (.78)	4.20 (.82)	3.99 (.81)	4.12 (.80)
I have the freedom to choose which journals to publish in*	3.40 (.91)	3.47 (.97)	3.55 (.82)	3.44 (.92)
I have the freedom to choose when and where to work**	3.82 (1.03)	3.97 (.99)	3.93 (.92)	3.88 (1.00)
Total freedom scale (a = .81)*	3.86 (.65)	4.00 (.62)	3.87 (.62)	3.90 (.64)

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

c. Supervision

Appreciation of the supervision	Employed	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
Availability daily supervisor (a = .86)	4.28 (.74)	4.31 (.78)	4.32 (.70)	4.29 (.75)
Availability primary supervisor (a = .87)*	3.98 (.82)	4.12 (.84)	4.20 (.86)	4.05 (.84)
Total availability supervisors (a = .85)	4.12 (.66)	4.24 (.73)	4.25 (.75)	4.17 (.70)
Academic support daily supervisor (a = .92)***	3.64 (.85)	3.73 (.73)	4.06 (.75)	3.72 (.81)
Academic support primary supervisor (a = .93)***	3.31 (.86)	3.54 (.77)	3.79 (.80)	3.45 (.85)
Total academic support supervisors (a = .95)***	3.45 (.77)	3.65 (.68)	3.88 (.76)	3.57 (.76)
Personal support daily supervisor (a = .96)	4.01 (.80)	4.07 (.75)	4.06 (.73)	4.04 (.78)
Personal support primary supervisor (a = .96)*	3.79 (.85)	3.98 (.74)	3.98 (.79)	3.87 (.82)
Total personal support supervisors (a = .96)	3.89 (.77)	4.04 (.69)	4.01 (.76)	3.95 (.75)
Autonomy support daily supervisor (a = .81)	4.05 (.58)	4.10 (.50)	4.20 (.56)	4.09 (.56)
Autonomy support primary supervisor (a = .81)*	3.95 (.61)	4.05 (.57)	4.09 (.61)	4.00 (.60)
Total autonomy support supervisors (a = .89)**	3.98 (.55)	4.09 (.48)	4.13 (.59)	4.03 (.54)
High expectations daily supervisor (a = .68)**	2.67 (.62)	2.72 (.63)	2.96 (.64)	2.73 (.63)
High expectations primary supervisor (a = .67)*	2.77 (.67)	2.70 (.61)	2.93 (.58)	2.78 (.64)
Total high expectations supervisors (a = .82)**	2.74 (.63)	2.69 (.59)	2.95 (.57)	2.75 (.62)

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

d. Atmosphere in research group

Appreciation of atmosphere	Employed	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
Formal relationships (a = .88)*	3.65 (.71)	3.58 (.69)	3.49 (.65)	3.61 (.70)
Informal relationships (a = .88)***	3.56 (.88)	3.50 (.86)	3.26 (.62)	3.50 (.85)
Sense of belonging (a = .89)**	3.86 (.74)	3.86 (.66)	3.70 (.68)	3.84 (.71)

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

e. Satisfaction, considering to quit, and workload

Overall satisfaction	Employed	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
Satisfaction with PhD trajectory*	3.65 (.83)	3.54 (.91)	3.77 (.85)	3.64 (.86)
Satisfaction with supervision*	3.97 (1.03)	4.14 (.93)	3.86 (1.21)	4.00 (1.03)

* $p < .05$

Considering to quit	Employed (in %)	Full scholarship (in %)	Top-up (in %)	Total (in %)
Yes, very often	5.3	3.1	1.5	4.1
Yes, often	6.0	2.3	1.5	4.3
Yes, sometimes	28.8	26.1	17.6	26.4
No, never	59.9	68.5	79.4	65.2

Workload	Employed (in%)	Full scholarship (in %)	Top-up (in %)	Total (in %)
Too high	9.3	9.7	1.5	8.3
High	49.8	51.8	35.1	48.2
Normal	37.9	37.4	60.4	41.0
Low	1.7	.8	.7	1.3
Too low	-	.4	-	.1
I don't know	1.3	-	2.2	1.1

f. *Satisfaction with income, research budget, sports and health facilities, and the conditions of sick leave*

Statement	Mean (SD) Employed (n = 516)	Mean (SD) Full scholarship(n = 253)	Mean (SD) Top-up (n = 130)	Differences
I am satisfied with my income.	4.01 (.88)	3.04 (1.17)	3.50 (.93)	Significant at $p < .001$ between all three categories.
I am satisfied with my research budget.	3.91 (.92)	3.36 (1.06)	3.36 (.99)	Significant at $p < .001$ between employed and the other two categories.
I am satisfied with the conditions regarding sick leave and maternity leave.	3.99 (.85)	3.36 (1.11)	3.70 (.83)	Significant at $p < .01$ between all three categories.
I am satisfied with the sports facilities the UG offers (i.e. ACLO and SPR).	3.56 (.92)	3.69 (.89)	3.69 (.87)	No significant differences.
I am satisfied with the health facilities (including mental health facilities) the UG offers.	3.30 (.90)	3.36 (.90)	3.36 (.84)	No significant differences.

1 = completely disagree; 5 = completely agree

The 2019 survey also asked a number of questions (multiple-choice and open-ended) that only had to be answered by PhD scholarship students.

The first of these questions related to the extent to which PhD scholarship students were aware of the differences between a position as a PhD scholarship student and that of a PhD student with employee status. Despite the ample information about this on the website, Table 8 shows that only 30% were well aware of these differences beforehand (27% regular PhD scholarship students and 37% of the top-ups), while about half (44%) reported being only partly aware (46% regular PhD scholarship students and 41% of the top-ups) and 26% not at all (28% regular PhD scholarship students and 22% of the top-ups). At the time of completing the survey, 60% was aware of the differences (see Table 9). In response to the question as to whether they would still opt for a PhD scholarship student position if they were to choose again (see Table 10), 63% said 'yes' (55% regular scholarship and 84% top-up PhD students) and only 13% 'no' (15% regular PhD scholarship students and 6% of the top-ups).

Table 8. The extent to which PhD scholarship students are aware of the differences between a PhD scholarship student and a PhD student with employee status at the time of starting versus the time of filling in the survey (given in %).

Previous awareness of differences	Full scholarship (in %)	Top-up (in %)	Total (in %)
No	71 (28.1)	28 (22.4)	99 (26.2)
Somewhat	115 (45.5)	51 (40.8)	166 (43.9)
Yes	67 (26.5)	46 (36.8)	113 (29.9)
Total	253 (100)	125 (100)	378 (100)

Table 9. PhD scholarship students' current awareness of the differences between the conditions of their contract versus the contract of an employed PhD student (given in %)

Current awareness of differences	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
No	10 (5.4)	12 (15.2)	22 (8.4)
Somewhat	45 (24.5)	39 (49.4)	84 (31.9)
Yes	129 (70.1)	28 (35.4)	157 (59.7)
Total	184 (100)	79 (100)	273 (100)

Table 10. As a follow-up to the questions in Table 8 and 9, PhD scholarship students were asked if they would have chosen a position as a PhD scholarship student again if they had been aware of the conditions beforehand (given in %).

Make choice again	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
No	26 (15.2)	4 (6.0)	30 (12.6)
Yes	94 (55.0)	56 (83.6)	150 (63.0)
I don't know	51 (29.8)	7 (10.4)	58 (24.4)
Total	171 (100)	67 (100)	238 (100)

Table 11 shows the students' reasons for choosing a position as a PhD scholarship student. PhD full scholarship students rate the importance of writing their own research proposal and having more freedom as 'average', and indicate that they rate the number of available positions in the relevant research area as somewhat more important.

Table 11. Reasons for taking a PhD scholarship student position, satisfaction with that position and the perceived comparison with PhD students with employee status (mean score, scale 1-5).

Reason	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
Because I wanted to write my own research proposal*	2.75 (1.31)	3.07 (.96)	2.85 (1.22)
Because I liked the freedom it would offer**	2.90 (1.29)	3.39 (.98)	3.06 (1.22)
Because there was no employed position in my field of interest or I could not obtain an employed position	3.54 (1.33)	3.65 (1.10)	3.57 (1.26)
Because I did not know about other types of PhD positions	2.69 (1.32)	2.86 (1.14)	2.74 (1.27)
Because my current PhD supervisor offered it to me	3.15 (1.36)	2.84 (1.11)	3.06 (1.30)

Note: Answers on these items were given on a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

With regard to satisfaction, the results in Table 12 and 13 show that, in line with the responses to the earlier questions, PhD scholarship students are quite neutral about their choice to take a PhD scholarship position, and the fact that they didn't have to teach. They are somewhat less satisfied when they compare themselves with the position of a PhD student with an employee status. With regard to other aspects of the perceived comparison with PhD students with employee status, it is regrettable that they don't experience a lot of extra freedom, probably because all PhD students experience in fact a lot of freedom anyway (see table 7b). On the other hand, it is very good to note

that they are treated just as well as PhD students with employee status, have good access to research facilities and feel valued a lot in their group.

Table 12. Satisfaction with several aspects of PhD scholarship: mean and standard deviation.

Aspect	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
Satisfied with choice to take a PhD scholarship***	3.03 (1.26)	3.83 (.81)	3.27 (1.19)
Satisfied with not having to teach or supervise students	2.89 (1.34)	3.63 (.87)	3.12 (1.26)

*** $p < .001$

Table 13. Comparison with employed PhD students.

Comparison	Full scholarship	Top-up	Total
I feel just as valuable as employed PhD students***	2.87 (1.41)	3.64 (1.02)	3.11 (1.35)
My supervisors have as much time and attention for me as their employed PhD students*	4.17 (.89)	3.93 (.90)	4.10 (.90)
My colleagues treat me the same as they treat employed PhD students	4.02 (1.01)	4.06 (.81)	4.03 (.95)
I have access to the same research facilities as employed PhD students	4.05 (.93)	4.20 (.68)	4.10 (.86)
I have the same research budget as employed PhD students*	3.23 (1.27)	3.54 (1.06)	3.33 (1.21)
I notice that I have more freedom than employed PhD students***	2.60 (1.31)	3.42 (1.05)	2.85 (1.29)

Note: Answers on these items were given on a scale of 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree).

* $p < .05$

*** $p < .001$

In March 2018, a survey was issued among supervisors. This was a broad survey covering all aspects of the supervision of PhD students in general. The results will be published on the Graduate School's website in due time. A few of the results have already been used by CHEPS in their [midterm evaluation](#) and also here we will show and discuss the results relevant for the PhD scholarship programme. The response rate was 30% and as shown in table 14 40% of the respondents indicated that they were not or hardly familiar with the aims and conditions of the PhD Scholarship Programme. This is a disappointing finding since all supervisors received an extensive letter from the Board of the University with all information needed (this letter and much more information is available on the [My University website](#) of the Graduate Schools) and also the contract of each PhD scholarship student (also signed by the supervisor) provides such information. This issue is also discussed in the section 'Communication'. The lesson to be learned from this is that, apparently, there is a need for more and also more frequently provided information.

Table 14. Familiarity of supervisors with the aims and conditions of the PhD Scholarship Programme.

Answer category	% and frequency
Not familiar at all	22.0 (97)
Hardly familiar	17.7 (78)
Somewhat familiar	28.4 (125)
Quite familiar	22.3 (98)
Very familiar	9.5 (42)

Table 15 gives the opinion of supervisors on a number of statements concerning the status of PhD scholarship positions. For most statements the opinion was quite neutral. A somewhat positive opinion was found concerning the attractiveness of a scholarship position, especially for international PhD students and for those who want to continue his/her research master's research in his/her PhD project. This matches with the idea behind the PhD scholarship experiment. Supervisors were somewhat negative about the idea that PhD scholarship student positions are better suited to do curiosity driven research and even more negative about the idea that PhD scholarship students would finish their project faster than PhD students with an employment position.

Table 15. Agreement with statements about the accrual of PhD scholarship students.

Statement	Mean + SD
A PhD scholarship is an attractive option if you want to pursue a PhD.	3.44 (1.06)
A PhD scholarship is especially attractive for international students.	3.47 (.96)
A PhD scholarship is an attractive option for highly talented students.	3.19 (1.19)
A PhD scholarship is only an attractive option if you cannot obtain an employed position.	3.16 (1.16)
The PhD scholarship offers a useful opportunity to pass smoothly from master's degree to PhD track.	3.33 (1.01)
A PhD scholarship offers more opportunity for PhD students to do curiosity-driven research than an employed position.	2.66 (1.18)
PhD scholarship students will finish faster because their intrinsic motivation is higher.	2.25 (1.02)
Because PhD scholarship students apply with their own research proposal, you obtain a good impression of the prospective PhD student's quality.	3.16 (1.05)
It is problematic for supervisors that PhD scholarship students are allowed to choose their own working hours and location.	2.62 (1.10)

It is interesting to note in table 16 that the supervisor's opinion on the PhD scholarship student's contribution to the writing of his/her project is not compatible with the opinion of the PhD scholarship students themselves (see table 5). Whether this opinion is formed in retrospect, or not, is hard to know, but this aspect of the relation between PhD student and supervisor needs more attention. It is also interesting to note that supervisors treat their PhD scholarship students very similar to their PhD students with an employee status. This is compatible with the results shown in table 13, where the opinion of the PhD scholarship students is given, and also compatible with the results in table 14 (supervisors are not familiar enough with the aims and conditions of the PhD Scholarship Programme). Whether this will pose problems, for instance when PhD students want to pursue a route in their PhD programme that deviates from the supervisor's ideas, remains to be seen. To our knowledge this has occurred only a few times, and in those cases the Graduate School has ruled in favour of the PhD scholarship student.

Table 16. Agreement with statements about supervising PhD scholarship students.

Statement	Mean (SD)
The PhD scholarship students I supervise have made a larger contribution to their project proposal/design than my employed PhD students.	2.73 (1.15)
My PhD scholarship students more often have unique, new projects.	2.51 (1.04)
My employed PhD students more often work on larger, existing projects.	2.40 (.99)
I give my PhD scholarship students more room for their own ideas than my employed PhD students.	2.08 (.91)
I give my scholarship students more freedom to make their own choices about the direction of the project and the methods to be used.	2.16 (.91)
I give my PhD scholarship students more freedom to choose which conferences to attend.	1.95 (.80)
I give my PhD scholarship students more freedom to choose which courses to take.	2.02 (.88)
I give my PhD scholarship students more freedom to choose which journals to publish in.	1.88 (.72)
I give my PhD scholarship students more freedom to choose when and where to work.	2.18 (.98)
I give my PhD scholarship students more freedom to engage in alternative activities, e.g., to do an internship at a company.	2.03 (.85)

Conclusions

This self-evaluation looks back on the third year of the PhD scholarship programme, but puts this also in the perspective of what has been built up in the preceding two years. In the following the main conclusions are given.

The first conclusion is that the programme has been very successful in attracting extra PhD students. All faculties have joined the programme and the intake of PhD scholarship students proved to be almost double the amount as foreseen at the start. This is a nice outcome, but also made it necessary that the programme was put on hold in November 2018 with only a few places left to be filled in during 2019. This unfortunate measure had to be taken to make sure that the allotted quota of 850 was not exceeded in the course of the third year. As stated in the 'recent developments' section, the possibility for applying for a second round will close on 31 December 2019, and, if granted in February 2020, this causes a gap of about one year in the accrual of new PhD scholarship students in the programme. This is very unfortunate and caused by the fact that the official interim evaluation commissioned by the Minister started almost one year too late. Further discussions will be needed to decide how to cope with this situation.

The UG has opted for including international PhD students with a scholarship from their country of origin in the PhD Scholarship Programme by giving them an additional, notional 'top-up' scholarship. This gives them a decent income, as well as the same level of fiscal, social and legal security. Thanks to an earlier decision of the Minister new (international) PhD students with a 'top-up' scholarship can be attracted on top of the quota as of January 2019. The UG has decided that this doesn't change their position. The only change is that these PhD students are not included in the administration of the programme anymore from that time on. Also, it is fortunate that through this decision of the Minister it remains possible to attract international PhD students and to give them a top-up scholarship despite the earlier discussed decision of the Board of the University to put the PhD Scholarship Programme on hold.

The intake of PhD students into the PhD Scholarship Programme was very high in the first (2016/2017) and second (2017/2018) academic years, at 259 and 329, respectively, but declined in the third (2018/2019) year to 237. The latter was the result of putting the programme on hold in November 2018 and of excluding the top-up scholarship PhD students from the administration of the programme as of January 2019 (as explained above). This has brought the total intake in the first three years of the programme to 825. As a result of the increased intake of PhD students in 2016-2018 we anticipate a 20% increase in the number of PhD ceremonies in Groningen in 2021-2023. It is interesting to see that some of the first participants in the programme have already graduated in 2019. This appears to be reflected in the modest growth of the total number of graduates in Groningen already this year (507 in 2018 and probably 546 in 2019).

The second conclusion relates to the objective stipulated in the Order in Council concerning the opportunities given to PhD students to formulate their own PhD research proposals. There is room within most UG Research Master's programme to write such a proposal. Thanks to the large number of places available within the PhD Scholarship Programme, there is a high chance of applications being awarded. The results show that 75% of the current PhD scholarship students report that they have either designed their PhD programme on their own or together with their (prospective)

supervisor. In the present report this item was also assessed for international PhD students with a top-up scholarship. It is interesting to see that writing a proposal independently also applies to them, since 63% indicates having either designed their PhD programme on their own or together with their (prospective) supervisor (as compared to only 44% of PhD students with an employee status).

The third conclusion is that within the framework of the PhD Scholarship Programme a training programme - the Career Perspectives Series (CPS) - has been developed that prepares PhD scholarship students well for a job after their PhD. The CPS contains a comprehensive package of courses and workshops. Almost all PhD scholarship students have taken CPS components in their first three years and have appreciated these (as evidenced in the evaluation forms completed at the end of the various courses). In addition to providing relevant courses and workshops, a start has been made with the last part of the CPS now, which is creating good matchmaking opportunities between PhD scholarship students (in their last year before graduation) and future employers.

Although it is not possible until the end of the programme to properly measure whether – in line with the objective stipulated in the Order in Council – PhD scholarship students actually do have an increased chance of securing a good job both inside and outside academia, we can conclude that they have at least an optimum training package at their disposal with these additional CPS training opportunities.

The fourth conclusion is that PhD scholarship students are satisfied, as evidenced by the outcome of the surveys that were conducted in May 2017, September 2018, and, most recently, in May 2019. The results show that PhD scholarship students are quite satisfied with in fact all assessed aspects. The only deviating point is that they rate their income as ‘average’, compared to the ‘good’ of the PhD student with employee status. But it is interesting to note that the vast majority said ‘yes’ in response to the question whether they would again choose to become a PhD scholarship student.

In conclusion, it can be said that all aspects of the PhD Scholarship Programme (structure, intake, range of programmes available and ratings) are performing well. The results achieved in the first three years are in line with the objectives as stipulated in the Order in Council. One point of potential improvement is the communication about the PhD Scholarship Programme. This is true for both the internal communication (too many starting PhD scholarship students as well as supervisors are not familiar enough with the ins and outs of the programme) and the external communication (there is too much ignorance and/or disinformation about the programme in the lay press). This calls for a clear communication plan for the near future.

We hope to be able to continue to build upon the achievements shown in the present report and make the PhD Student Programme a success in the coming years.

Appendix

Background of the programme

The PhD Scholarship Programme was made possible by an Order in Council (*AmvB: Algemene Maatregel van Bestuur*) published in the Official Gazette on 8 January 2016 concerning the PhD Scholarship Programme Experiment (*Besluit experiment promotieonderwijs*). This opened up the first round for the submission of proposals for participation. This round closed on 15 March 2016 and despite the very short time period, both the University of Groningen (850 places) and Erasmus University Rotterdam (15 places) submitted proposals. The University of Groningen's proposal was approved on 26 April 2016 and the first cohort of PhD students started the PhD Scholarship Programme on 1 September 2016.

In its Policy Vision for Higher Education (*Beleidsvisie 2025, keuzes voor de toekomst*), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science announced an 'experiment with PhD scholarship students'. The aim was to examine whether and how the Netherlands might fulfil agreements made in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, Bologna Process, in which PhD programmes form the third stage of academic education). An Order in Council to regulate this 'experiment' was discussed on 2 June 2015 in the Dutch House of Representatives and approved on 9 June 2015. The Order in Council was published on 8 January 2016, and the first PhD scholarship students started on 1 September 2016. The national quota was set at 2000 places. The first round of submission for participation closed on 15 March 2016, but the Order in Council states that a second and possibly third round can be opened if the quota is not filled.

The first objective of the PhD Scholarship Programme, as stipulated by the Order in Council, is to increase the number of PhD ceremonies. The second is to improve the opportunities for PhD students to formulate their own research proposals. The third is to continue to improve training programmes for PhD students, focusing specifically on preparing them for their future careers after graduation – regardless of whether they choose to work in academia or elsewhere. The final and additional objective, as agreed with the University Council, is to create a sound legal and socially responsible status within the programme for *all* PhD students with a scholarship. This therefore includes international PhD students with a competitive scholarship from a body other than the UG.

Legal basis, administrative duties and arrangements in the event of illness and pregnancy

The University of Groningen developed and introduced a new system for *all* UG PhD students with a scholarship based on (a) the decision issued on 24 April 2013 by the courts of Arnhem and Leeuwarden in the appeal lodged by the University of Groningen against the previous verdict issued by the district judge (on 13 August 2009), (b) the Order in Council (*AMvB; Algemene Maatregel van Bestuur*) published on 8 January 2016, (c) the Assessment of Employment Relationships (Deregulation) Act (DBA, published on 1 May 2016), which makes it possible to treat PhD scholarship students as notional employees for tax and social security purposes, and (d) the further agreements

on this between the University of Groningen/UMCG and the local tax inspector. As such, it was possible to create a legally sound and accepted system before the start of the programme. This system applies to both PhD students with a full UG/UMCG scholarship and international PhD students with a scholarship from their country of origin ('top up'). In the new system, PhD students with international scholarships (which tend to be much smaller amounts) receive a supplementary UG scholarship. As a result, they receive the same monthly income as a PhD student with a full UG/UMCG scholarship and they also have the same social and legal guarantees. In the 2016-2017 academic year, PhD students with a full UG/UMCG scholarship received €2027 per month (after the deduction of tax and national insurance contributions this left a net income of about €1700 per month). As of 1 September 2017, all scholarships were increased (for those with a full scholarship to a gross amount of €2099 per month) such that both the PhD scholarship students with a full scholarship and those with a 'top up' would receive a monthly income of about €1750 net per month. As agreed with the University Council, the scholarship is indexed annually to the CBS consumer price index. On 1 September 2018, this led to a further increase in the full gross scholarship to €2120 per month, providing a net monthly income of about €1766.¹⁰ On 1 September 2019, the gross amount was raised to €2181 and a net income of €1841.

PhD scholarships are paid from a secure sub-fund of the Graduation Fund (*Profileringfondsen*), meaning that regular payments from this fund are never at risk. It has been agreed that the notional salary payment administration for scholarships of PhD students will be done by the UMCG at least until the end of 2020. This is because the salary administration system used by the UMCG is better at processing non-standard salary payments than the system used by the UG. In 2020, the UG will implement a new system, which will be occupied for doing notional salary payments. The concerning part of the programme will probably be brought into use at the start of 2021.

Since PhD scholarship students are not covered by the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities (or in the case of PhD students at the UMCG, the Collective Labour Agreement for University Medical Centres), the decision was made to define all rights and duties of both PhD scholarship students and the UG/UMCG in a PhD agreement (like all other relevant documents for those involved in the PhD Scholarship Programme, the format for the agreement can be found at My University.¹¹ This agreement is signed by the PhD student and the director of the faculty Graduate School (on behalf of the Board of the University or the Board of Management of the UMCG) at the start of the PhD programme. The first supervisor also signs the agreement to acknowledge that he/she has read it.

In order to reflect the student status of PhD scholarship students, the decision was made to assign them an S number (in addition to their P number, which they need to access Hora Finita).¹² This means that PhD scholarship students have access to Progress and can become student members of ACLO.¹³ They can also participate in activities organized by the USVA¹⁴ and Language Centre at the student rate. As of September 2019, PhD scholarship students also have the option to take a UG student card.

¹⁰ Due to changes in the size of the payable social security contributions, this is €1805 net per month as of 1 January 2019.

¹¹ Intranet for UG staff.

¹² Hora Finita is the registration and tracking system developed by the UG in collaboration with the Groningen-based companies Fargeau and Strik Design.

¹³ Student Sports Organization Groningen.

¹⁴ Cultural Student Centre Groningen.

Although Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) were not discussed in the Order in Council, the UG decided that there should in fact be Teaching and Examination Regulations for the PhD Scholarship Programme. The reason is that PhD scholarship students are technically students and follow a teaching programme. All faculties now have Teaching and Examination Regulations which have been approved by their Faculty Council. Since the autumn of 2017, these Teaching and Examination Regulations have been included in the standard yearly cycle.

The recruitment of new PhD scholarship students, i.e. those who have not first completed a Research Master's degree at Groningen or who have not been awarded an international scholarship, is organized separately in TIS manager.¹⁵ As is the case for regular employees, the Vacancy Portal (*Vacature Meldpunt*) is the main portal where positions are posted.

The virtual PhD Scholarship Desk was set up to take on the role of central contact point and source of information within the PhD Scholarship Programme. A separate email address for this service was also created (phd-scholarship@rug.nl), from which regular newsletters are sent to PhD scholarship students. Both prospective and current PhD scholarship students, as well as Graduate School coordinators and professors, regularly contact the desk with inquiries and questions. The desk works well, with questions answered promptly, adequately and almost always satisfactorily.

Although PhD scholarship students, as mentioned above, have the same rights as regular employees in the event of illness or pregnancy, the current social laws and regulations concerning these issues were not easy to apply due to the absence of a formal relationship of authority. To ensure that these laws and regulations are applied correctly, it was decided that, if it is suspected that a PhD student will be ill for a long time, the PhD student is responsible for informing the Office of the faculty's Graduate School as soon as possible, and always within four weeks. The Office then informs the PhD Scholarship Desk, which in turn ensures, via the appropriate channels, that all relevant institutions and individuals are informed in a correct and timely manner. The first day of illness is then recorded in the system, so that this can be used as the start date for any benefit payments and for calculating extensions. Extensions due to pregnancy are also calculated in the same way.

PhD students represent a special group with special requirements when it comes to facilities for physical and psychological issues. The fact that many PhD students are suffering from too much unhealthy stress has received a great deal of national and international media attention in recent years. A survey conducted in May 2018 in Groningen shows that this is also a serious problem in Groningen (see UG press release 15 March 2019¹⁶). Unhealthy stress can lead to psychological conditions such as burnout. This can result in long-term illness and even cause a student to drop out of the programme. As part of the PhD Scholarship Programme, a project was launched last year to set up a support system for PhD scholarship students with psychological or physical problems. Since this affects all PhD students, the decision was made to extend this support system beyond just PhD scholarship students. The project attempts to pool the current facilities for PhD students as well as develop new ways to approach and handle psychological and physical issues. The aim is to provide a comprehensive package of facilities which covers the entire spectrum: from prevention, early diagnosis, mentoring, treatment by psychologists to social work and the role of occupational physicians. This package is accessible online (www.rug.nl/phd-support) and fits in well with the range of programmes available for PhD students. This includes courses/workshops on 'empowerment' and

¹⁵ Vacancy system.

¹⁶ <https://www.rug.nl/news/2019/03/stress-relief-for-phd-students>.

‘dealing with stress’ (see below), which could help prevent the development of psychological problems.

All legal, financial and administrative issues concerning the programme for PhD scholarship students¹⁷ have now been arranged.

Funding

The Ubbo Emmius programme was launched in 1995 to fund the old ‘bursary’ PhD students at the UG. Within that programme, faculties paid 60% of the scholarship costs and the remaining 40% was matched from central funds. Scholarships could initially be granted only to international PhD students (both full scholarships and scholarships for ‘sandwich’ places, in which half of the PhD period was spent at and funded by a foreign university). From 2003 onwards, Dutch PhD students were also able to join the programme. Following a court ruling in 2009,¹⁸ the Ubbo Emmius programme was not terminated but the places funded by the programme were temporarily (i.e. until the introduction of new legislation) converted into employee positions. The distribution of costs (60% and 40% for the faculty and university funds respectively) was retained. In 2014 and 2015, the programme comprised only 22 full positions (3 or 4 year) and 35 sandwich positions (2-year appointment at the UG). In addition, the programme paid for 60 supplements for international students with a scholarship from their country of origin (a maximum contribution of €400 per month for accommodation). With the launch of the PhD Scholarship Programme, scholarship positions could once again be granted within the Ubbo Emmius programme (but this time involving notional payments). To provide a further incentive for the experiment, additional funding from the UG (university and faculty funds) was used to pay for extra scholarships (full and top-up) within the programme. This resulted in the following funding in the Ubbo Emmius programme:¹⁹ €6.5m in 2016, €9.7m in 2017 and €19.2m in 2018. If the programme is continued, this would involve about €17.9m as of 2019,²⁰ after which a steady state would be reached (a PhD programme is funded for a maximum period of four years; from 2019 on, the number of new PhD students would match the number of outgoing PhD students). In this way, the scholarship numbers²¹ presented in Table 1 can

¹⁷ In the current UG system, PhD scholarship students have a clear legal status, are taxed at source, have access to the Dutch social security system and follow a customized training programme. As such, their situation cannot be compared to that of the old ‘bursary’ PhD students (*bursalen*).

¹⁸ The district judge issued a verdict in 2009 in a court case brought by Abvakabo FNV that the UG was not permitted to have ‘bursary’ PhD students. Although this verdict was later overturned (in 2013) by the courts of Arnhem and Leeuwarden in an appeal lodged by the University of Groningen (see also p. 2), it led to a situation in which the UG no longer funded the old ‘bursary’ PhD students (the former *bursalen*) after 2009. The Order in Council concerning the PhD Scholarship Programme Experiment has made this possible once again.

¹⁹ This is the cumulative total (UG-central and faculty) of costs for (notional) full and top-up scholarships. Alongside the rising costs for the PHD Scholarship Programme, the costs that are not yet incurred for (the last part of) the ‘old’ Ubbo Emmius programme also have to be included in the expenditure for the Ubbo Emmius programme. For 2018, for example, this is a further €1.95m.

²⁰ The total costs of the ‘old’ Ubbo Emmius programme in a steady state came to about €7.8m a year, whereas the costs of the ‘new’ Ubbo Emmius programme in a steady state are €17.9m. Therefore, the UG is not saving any money with the PhD Scholarship Programme, but has more than doubled its expenditure on it.

²¹ A full scholarship, including tax, premiums and other employer contributions, costs the institution about €30,000 annually (in cumulative terms, this is about 40% cheaper for the University than an employee

be funded (about 200 new full scholarships and 120 top-ups on an annual basis).²² The costs of the materials budget and additional teaching must also be included alongside the scholarship costs. The materials budget, which is funded by the faculties, differs for each discipline. To set up and run the CPS, the DGS budget has increased by €0.3m.

The scholarships of the PhD scholarship students, including taxes and premiums, are fully paid from the Graduation Fund. A sub-fund of the Graduation Fund has been set up for this purpose, the size of which matches the total amount of the payable scholarships. The PhD Scholarship Programme does not therefore affect the regular operation of the Graduation Fund.

A detailed specification of the total costs of a PhD scholarship student as compared with a PhD student with an employee status (November 2019, UMC scales; NU scales are somewhat lower) is given below. Costs are calculated on the basis of a 100% contract for four years. No possible salary raises because of a possible, new collective labour arrangement or raises in the amount of scholarship payments as a result of corrections for inflation have been taken into account.

**PhD student,
employee status**

	Gross per month	Including employer's contribution		Gross per year	
Pay grade Pro - 0	€ 2,422.00	€ 3,636.92	x12	€ 43,643.04	
Pay grade Pro - 1	€ 2,826.00	€ 4,219.20	x12	€ 50,630.40	
Pay grade Pro - 2	€ 2,961.00	€ 4,413.77	x12	€ 52,965.24	
Pay grade Pro - 3	€ 3,103.00	€ 4,618.40	x12	€ 55,420.80	
		Total		€ 202,659.48	+ 18.05% (surcharge percentage ²³)
					€ 239.239,48

**PhD scholarship
student**

	Gross per month	Including employer's contribution		Gross per year	
Scholarship as of September 2019	€ 2,181.00*	€ 2,563.74*	x12	€ 30,764.88	
				x 4 year	
		Total		€ 123,059.52*	+ 18.05 % (surcharge percentage)
					€ 145.271,76*

* In the previous self-evaluation report (and the CHEPS report) a gross amount for a scholarship of €2120 was given as this was the amount that was in place in February 2019. Including the regular

position). For a top-up scholarship, this is a little over €7,600 annually. At the end of 2018, the cumulative total of 486 full scholarships and 305 top-up scholarships were funded.

²² The income from the PhD premiums (in 2018: €77,400 per successful PhD) is not included here because this is not settled until several years later and only a portion of the total costs are reimbursed (to be spent on supervision and infrastructure costs).

²³ A surcharge percentage of 18.05% is the percentage charged in all projects done at the UMCG/UG to cover for the risks for unemployment & illness as well as for overhead (i.e., all indirect personal costs).

employer's contribution this leads to €2492 costs per month, which in turns leads to €119,616 during four years. When the usual 18.05% surcharge percentage is applied, this leads to €141,207.

In our previous report the total costs of a PhD student with employment status and a PhD scholarship student were rounded up as €240,000 and €140,000, respectively. Only PhD students in the UMC (40% of all PhD students) cost €240,000. PhD students in the other faculties (scales according to the cao NU) get a little less.

The important point that can be learned from this detailed data is that PhD scholarship students cost the institution 40% less than PhD students with an employment position (38% less in the case of PhD students from other faculties than the Medical Faculty). Any pay rise (both for PhD scholarship students and PhD students with an employment status) during the last years haven't change these figures significantly.

Training and Career Perspectives Series (CPS)

The Career Perspectives Series is a new learning pathway developed for the PhD Scholarship Programme, aimed at career development for PhD scholarship students. This learning pathway offers PhD scholarship students an opportunity during their PhD programme to prepare for their future career, either within academia or elsewhere.

About 70-80% of PhD graduates (depending to some extent on the research area) will ultimately find a job outside academia. However, few PhD graduates feel well prepared for such jobs (according to the results of national and international surveys; a survey conducted in Groningen in 2018 produced similar results) and they often do not have a clear idea of the job opportunities outside academia.



Figure A1. Cover of the flyer for the Career Perspectives Series (CPS). The flyer contains information on the aim and structure of the CPS.

As part of the CPS programme, PhD scholarship students can take courses and workshops aimed at developing their transferable skills and linking these skills to a wide range of career options after their PhD.

The CPS has been developed in collaboration with the Dean of Talent Development at the UG. Professor Ingrid Molema especially has played a key role in the design of the programme. Many others have contributed (e.g. the faculty Graduate Schools, the faculty PhD councils and UG PhD student organization GOPHER) and there is now broad support for the underlying ideas.

The learning pathway has three main components: CPS courses, CPS workshops and the CPS Employability programme. The latter is primarily intended for the final year of the PhD programme and is still being developed.

Introduction to the CPS

The first step in the learning pathway is participation in the two-day university-wide Introductory Event for PhD students, organized by the Dean of Graduate Schools (DGS). This event, aimed at all PhD students, begins with a general introduction to the University and the Graduate School organization. During the event, all PhD students are introduced to topics such as presentation skills, time management, assertiveness and how to deal with their supervisor, diversity in academia, academic integrity and networking. They are informed about facilities available to them university-wide and within the faculties and they learn about the organizations for PhD students in Groningen. They also receive their first introduction to the Career Perspectives Series. Almost all new PhD scholarship students, as well as many other PhD students, take part in this event. Evaluations show that they are highly appreciative.

CPS courses

CPS courses are often organized by and/or in consultation with others (such as the Talent Development Team or HR). They may be offered both university-wide and within the faculty Graduate Schools. They are generally of two to three days' duration and are offered two to three times a year. The courses can be broken down into those focusing on the learning of transferable skills, and those that address career prospects inside and outside academia.

The series of training courses dealing with transferable skills are [The Empowered PhD](#), [Women's Paths to Leadership](#), [Time Management](#) and [My Future Career](#). The latter course acts as a fulcrum within the CPS and targets PhD students at the end of their second and start of their third year of the PhD programme. This two-and-a-half-day course gives them a greater awareness of their own skills and abilities, which are linked to the various career options. This gives students a solid foundation, placing them in a stronger position to make decisions about their future career.

The Inside Academia series offers several courses relating to Grant Writing, which gives the PhD scholarship students a better understanding of the importance of writing research proposals for an academic career. The series begins with a brief introduction in the [Beginner's Guide to Grant Writing](#), followed by [From Chaos to Focus](#), the [Rubicon Grant Writing Training](#) course and finally [Writing your Grant Like a Pro](#). In this last course, students are expected to write and submit a Rubicon proposal to NWO or a proposal to another Dutch or European research funding body.

The Outside Academia series offers [Entrepreneurship Training](#), followed by [Venture Lab North](#), which can support students in setting up their own company.

PhD scholarship students wishing to gain teaching experience (which they can do on a voluntary basis and as part of their programme) are required to take [Start to Teach](#) or a comparable training course,

which provides them with supervision and support. There are also plans to develop a 'UTQ light' programme, for PhD students seeking further university teaching qualifications, and a programme aimed at teaching at VWO and HBO level.

CPS workshops

A PhD programme is obviously an intensive time. For this reason, the [CPS Workshops Series](#) has been developed alongside the time-intensive CPS courses. This is a series of short two-hour interactive workshops covering a wide range of career skills. PhD scholarship students can select from the various workshops to build up a 'tool kit' for their future career. The workshops, which end with networking drinks, have been held regularly on Friday afternoons (3-5 pm) since September 2018. The workshop series is repeated each year. Additional workshops can be added in response to high demand. At present, the main focus of the workshops is on careers outside academia. These can be broken down into workshops for the development of transferable skills (general skills development), job application and job process workshops, and career-focused workshops. Topics covered as part of general skills development are assertiveness, networking skills ('networking for people who hate it'), teamwork and team selection, project management and media training. The job application and job process workshops look at writing a CV and application letters for jobs outside academia, interview skills and negotiation skills. Lastly, the career-focused workshops address consultancy work, entrepreneurship, patenting and jobs at universities of applied sciences. The full list of CPS workshops can be found at www.rug.nl/phd-cps.

All workshops are presented by experienced trainers from inside and outside the UG. The career-related workshops are given by PhD alumni employed in various fields outside academia who are invited to speak about their current job and how their career developed after their PhD. The speakers are keen to share their experiences and participants find it extremely useful for charting their future career.

Most workshops are well attended (attracting 25-30 participants on average). In general, the evaluations are very positive. One point to consider is that some workshops focus too much on the medical and exact sciences. Consideration is currently being given to developing parallel workshops with a greater focus on other disciplines. There are also plans for workshops on careers within academia, addressing topics such as an introduction to peer review, from PhD to professor, and what leading a research team entails.



Figure A2. How the Career Perspectives Series is structured over time. The main focus at the start of the PhD programme is on providing information and raising awareness. Mid-PhD, the focus is on helping students make choices, and at the end of the PhD programme the focus is on preparation for the next career step, including 'matchmaking'.

The Employability programme

In the final stage of their PhD programme, PhD scholarship students are given an opportunity to arrange short placements (ranging in length from 1 day to 3 months) at various local and national employers via the Employability Portal. This web-based programme is currently being set up. Contacts have already been established with various local and national companies, who are willing and enthusiastic about making contact with PhD students and offering them opportunities for placements and 'job shadowing' with staff who have PhDs. There are also plans afoot for annual matchmaking events, where PhD scholarship students and employers can meet one another and exchange information.

Career events at the faculty Graduate Schools

The three Graduate School clusters – Science & Engineering, Medical Sciences, and Humanities & Social Sciences – organize their own career events aimed at careers inside and outside academia. These events focus on the specific disciplines within the clusters and are therefore supplementary to the university-wide CPS activities.

ECTS and costs

PhD scholarship students earn ECTS credit points for taking part in the CPS programme. Because the CPS has been developed for the PhD Scholarship Programme, PhD scholarship students always take precedence. They can participate in most activities free of charge or for a small contribution. If there are still unfilled places, other PhD students can take part in the activities (at cost, to be paid from their personal training budget).

Communication about the CPS

All CPS courses and workshops are posted on the CPS website www.rug.nl/phd-cps. The CPS activities can also be found on the UG's Corporate Academy website www.rug.nl/corporate-academy. The latest addition is that CPS activities now also appear in Ocasys, the UG online course catalogue, and in the faculty course registration systems. A quarterly newsletter with information on upcoming activities is sent to the Graduate Schools and to GOPHER, the PhD student organization. The Graduate Schools include this information in their communications to PhD students. A monthly reminder is sent about the activities for the coming month. The CPS organizing team is regularly invited to provide information at events organized by faculties and PhD student organizations.

Career Perspectives Series

Preparing for your career after your PhD!

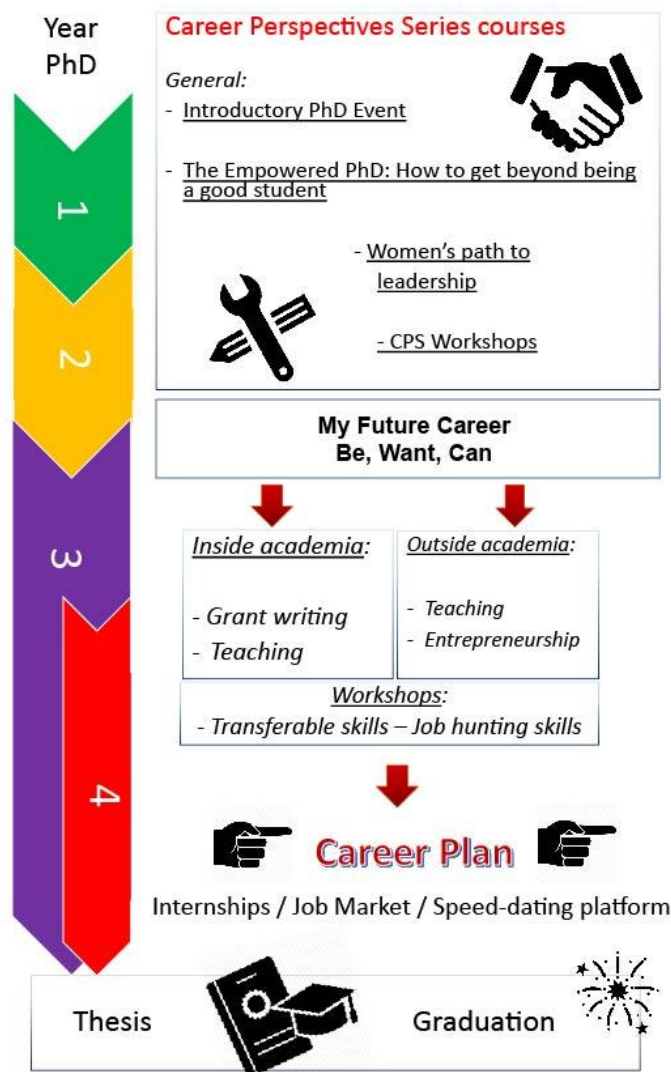


Figure A3. Details of the Career Perspectives Series (CPS) over the years.