PhDs in the Humanities

Call for proposals

Social Sciences And Humanities

2020
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The committee National Plan for the Future of the Humanities (in brief the Cohen Committee) in its report of 2008 entitled 'Sustainable Humanities' made nine recommendations aimed at ensuring a sustainable future for the humanities. The so-called National Plan for the Future of the Humanities contains, for example, the proposal to give research talent more opportunities. One of the things to emerge from these recommendations is the joint initiative of the Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and NWO to increase the number of PhD positions within the humanities faculties. The call for proposals PhDs in the Humanities is a concrete elaboration of this.

1.2 Available budget

The Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities have made an amount of € 3,200,000 available for 2020.

A matching of 20% by the submitting universities of the budget of every funded project is required.

1.3 Deadline for submission

The deadline for the submission of proposals is 5 March 2020, 14:00:00 hours CET.
Chapter 2: Aim / PhDs in the Humanities

2 Aim

The aim of the programme PhDs in the Humanities is to provide research talent with the opportunity to carry out an independent PhD project.¹

¹ National funding rounds will be organised each year. The Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities evaluate the funding instrument each year and can – if necessary and insofar it is possible within the funding framework – then decide to adjust procedures, quotas and/or criteria.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / PhDs in the Humanities

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply

Applications can only be submitted
- for PhD students who have been selected by the deans of the following Humanities faculties:
  - Erasmus University Rotterdam
  - Leiden University
  - Maastricht University
  - Open University
  - Protestant Theological University
  - Radboud University Nijmegen
  - Theological University Apeldoorn
  - Theological University Reformed Churches
  - Tilburg University
  - University of Amsterdam
  - University of Groningen
  - University of Humanistic Studies
  - Utrecht University
  - VU University Amsterdam
- by applicants who have a contract of appointment (duration of appointment) with one of the universities mentioned above for at least the duration of the research for which funding is requested.\(^2\)

The applicant, i.e. the person who actually submits the PhD project, is the supervisor (beoogd promotor).\(^3\) A second supervisor may act as co-applicant. Candidates must have completed a (research) master’s degree before 1 September 2020.\(^4\)

*Please note: if you submit a PhDs in the Humanities proposal (regardless of whether or not the project gets funded), this may have effect on the eligibility of your proposal in the funding instrument NWO Open Competition – SSH. See the FAQ on this website and the call for proposals for the NWO Open Competition – SSH for more information.*

University selection

The internal selection of the candidates and the submission of a limited number of candidates to NWO (see Allocation formula) is the responsibility of the deans of the faculties concerned. Each faculty is responsible for organising an open and transparent pre-selection procedure to determine which proposals can be submitted to NWO.

A dean may allow a candidate to participate in a maximum of two funding rounds. A candidate may not be involved in more than one proposal per funding round: therefore he/she cannot be nominated by different universities at the same time.

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\(^2\) Personnel with a zero-hour appointment is excluded from applying.

\(^3\) Full Professors or Associate Professors (who have been granted the right to act as promotor by their university) have to submit the applications since the applicant is the formal point of contact for NWO. If the proposal is awarded funding then correspondence will primarily be sent to the person who is responsible for the financial and research aspects of the project.

\(^4\) If a candidate is expected to graduate before 1 September 2020, but has not yet graduated at the time of the deadline for submission of this call for proposals, a signed letter of confirmation from the thesis supervisor containing the expected graduation date of the candidate is part of the application.
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / PhDs in the Humanities

Allocation formula

An allocation formula has been devised for the submission of applications. The maximum number of FTEs that may be submitted to NWO for funding each year by the dean of the faculty concerned:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Number of FTEs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Amsterdam</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utrecht University</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Groningen</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leiden University</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radboud University Nijmegen</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VU University Amsterdam</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erasmus University Rotterdam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilburg University</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maastricht University</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open University</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological University Reformed Churches</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theological University Apeldoorn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Theological University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Humanistic Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38 FTE</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This allocation formula does not apply to the awarding of proposals. If the maximum number of FTEs that may be submitted to NWO is exceeded by a university, a guarantee has to be provided that states that additional funds will be matched for this specific application. If this specific application is selected for funding, the matching commitment still applies (independent of the total number of projects being financed from that university).

Each dean submits a letter to NWO in which is stated which proposals are selected by their faculty and how the pre-selection was organized. In this same letter, the matching of 20% of the requested budget for all projects to be submitted must be confirmed by the dean.

3.2 What can be applied for

Funding can be requested for a PhD who is appointed for 1.0 fte for a duration of 48 months or for 0.8 fte for a duration of 60 months. The salary costs are funded in accordance with the VSNU salary tables applicable at the moment the grant is awarded (www.nwo.nl/salary-tables). A one-off individual bench fee of € 5,000 (no specifications required) is added on top of the salary costs. This bench fee is intended to encourage the scientific career of the project employee funded by NWO. Remunerations for PhD students/PhD scholarship students at a Dutch university are not eligible for funding from NWO.

A maximum of € 5,000 material budget (specifications required) per application can be applied for. The material budget is specified according to the three categories below:

*Project-related goods/services*

- consumables (glassware, chemicals, cryogenic fluids, etc.)

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*The universities based on philosophical or religious principles are allowed to submit one application in total. The Nationwide Network of Universities based on Philosophical or Religious Principles (NLU) is responsible for the execution of an internal selection round.*
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / PhDs in the Humanities

- measurement and calculation time (e.g. access to supercomputer, etc.)
- costs for acquiring or using data collections (e.g. from Statistics Netherlands)
- access to large national and international facilities (e.g. cleanroom, synchrotron, etc.)
- work by third parties (e.g. laboratory analyses, data collection, etc.)

**Travel and accommodation costs for the personnel positions applied for**
- travel and accommodation costs
- conference attendance (maximum of two per year)
- fieldwork
- work visit

**Implementation costs**
- national symposium/conference/workshop organised within the research project
- costs for Open Access publishing (solely in full gold Open Access journals, registered in the “Directory of Open Access Journals” [https://doaj.org/](https://doaj.org/))
- data management costs
- costs involved in applying for licences (e.g. for animal experiments)

Costs that cannot be applied for are:
- basic facilities within the institution (e.g. laptops, desks, etc.);
- maintenance and insurance costs.

### 3.3 When can applications be submitted

The deadline for the submission of proposals is **5 March 2020, 14:00:00 hours CET**.

When you submit your application to ISAAC you will also need to enter additional details online. You should therefore start submitting your application at least one day before the deadline of this call for proposals. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

### 3.4 Preparing an application

- Download the application form from the electronic application system ISAAC or from NWO’s website (on the grant page for this programme).
- Complete the application form.
- Save the application form as a pdf file and upload it in ISAAC.

Applications can only be submitted to NWO by the applicant (beoogd promotor).

### 3.5 Conditions on granting

The **NWO Grant Rules 2017** and the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research apply to all applications.

**Open Access**

All scientific publications resulting from research that is funded by grants derived from this call for proposals are to be immediately (at the time of publication) freely accessible worldwide (Open Access). There are several ways for researchers to publish Open Access. A detailed explanation regarding Open Access can be found on [www.nwo.nl/openscience-en](http://www.nwo.nl/openscience-en).
Chapter 3: Guidelines for applicants / PhDs in the Humanities

Data management
Responsible data management is part of good research. NWO wants research data that emerge from publicly funded research to become freely and sustainably available, as much as possible, for reuse by other researchers. Furthermore NWO wants to raise awareness among researchers about the importance of responsible data management. Proposals should therefore satisfy the data management protocol of NWO. This protocol consists of two steps:

1. Data management section
The data management section is part of the research proposal. Researchers should answer four questions about data management within their intended research project. Therefore before the research starts the researcher will be asked to think about how the data collected must be ordered and categorised so that it can be made freely available. Measures will often need to be taken during the production and analysis of the data to make their later storage and dissemination possible. Researchers can state which research data they consider to be relevant for storage and reuse.

2. Data management plan
After a proposal has been awarded funding the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. The data management plan is a concrete elaboration of the data management section. In the plan the researcher describes whether use will be made of existing data or a new data collection and how the data collection will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within a maximum of 4 months after the proposal has been awarded funding. NWO will approve the plan as quickly as possible. Approval of the data management plan by NWO is a condition for disbursement of the funding. The plan can be adjusted during the research.

Further information about the data management protocol of NWO can be found at www.nwo.nl/datamanagement.

Nagoya Protocol
The Nagoya Protocol became effective on 12 October 2014 and ensures an honest and reasonable distribution of benefits emerging from the use of genetic resources (Access and Benefit Sharing; ABS). Researchers who make use of genetic sources from the Netherlands or abroad for their research should familiarise themselves with the Nagoya Protocol (www.absfocalpoint.nl). NWO assumes that researchers will take all necessary actions with respect to the Nagoya Protocol.

Scientific integrity
The NWO grant rules specify that all research funded by NWO must be carried out in accordance with nationally and internationally accepted standards of scientific conduct as laid down in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018). By submitting a proposal, applicants undertake to comply with this code. In the event of a (possible) breach of the above-mentioned standards in research funded by NWO, the applicant must inform NWO immediately and submit all relevant documents to NWO. More information about the NWO code of conduct and policy on scientific integrity can be found on the website: www.nwo.nl/en/policies/scientific-integrity-policy.

3.6 Submitting an application
An application can only be submitted to NWO via the online application system ISAAC. Applications not submitted via ISAAC will not be taken into consideration.

The applicant must submit his/her application via his/her own ISAAC account. If the applicant does not yet have an ISAAC account, then this account should be created at least one day before the application is submitted to ensure that any registration problems can be resolved on time. If the applicant already has an NWO-account, then he/she does not need to create a new account to submit an application.

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see Section 5.1.3.
4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

The first step in the assessment procedure is to determine whether or not an application is admissible. Only those proposals that meet the criteria stated in Chapter 3.1, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6 are admissible and will be taken into consideration.

Code for Dealing with Personal Interests


Data management

The data management section in the application is not evaluated and therefore not included in the decision about whether to award funding. However, the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section. After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants can use the advice from the committee when writing the data management plan. The project can start as soon as the data management plan has been approved by NWO.

Qualification

NWO will award a qualification to all full proposals. The applicant is informed of this qualification when the decision about whether or not the application has been awarded funding is announced. Only applications that receive the qualification “excellent”, “very good” or “good” will be eligible for funding. For more information about the qualifications please see [www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding-process-explained/nwo-qualification-system](http://www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding-process-explained/nwo-qualification-system).

4.1.1 Selection committee

After the selection and nomination by the universities, a selection committee uses the selection criteria to assess the actual and potential research qualities of the candidates and the quality of the research proposals. The committee draws up a ranking advice that is presented to the chairs of the Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities. They jointly take the funding decision.

The selection committee is made up of members drawn from different disciplines within the humanities. In principle, the selection committee has ten members, five (including the chair) to be appointed by NWO and five to be appointed by the Programme Office Sustainable Humanities. If members of the previous round’s selection committee are appointed for the current round, they will make up no more than two-thirds of the selection committee. The names of the members are announced on the NWO programme page after the final results of the round are communicated to the applicants.

The selection committee:

- invites all candidates for an interview;
- uses the NWO assessment scale in the assessment;
- ranks the applications and issues an advice to the decision-taking body.

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6 Appointed by the Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities.
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / PhDs in the Humanities

4.1.2 Decision-taking body

The decision-taking body is made up of the chair of the Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and the chair of the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities. The chairs marginally assess the selection process (emphasis on the procedures) underlying the committee’s advice and take a joint decision about which applications to award funding.

4.1.3 Settlement

If NWO awards funding then the faculty will appoint the candidate no later than 5 October 2020 and in accordance with the prevailing NWO granting conditions. Agreements are made with NWO about the progress and final reports and funding.

4.1.4 Timetable

Roughly speaking the timetable is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>end 2019</td>
<td>Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities publish call for proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>before 5 March 2020, 14:00:00 PM</td>
<td>supervisors submit applications selected by respective faculty to NWO via ISAAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idem</td>
<td>deans inform NWO by letter about the PhD proposals selected by their faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2020</td>
<td>NWO determines admissibility of proposals submitted and informs applicants accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2020</td>
<td>committee discusses the applications and establishes subjects for the interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April / early May 2020</td>
<td>committee interviews all of the candidates and compiles an advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>end May / June 2020</td>
<td>chairs Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and NWO Social Sciences and Humanities Domain Board take decision; NWO informs applicants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 October 2020</td>
<td>latest date for starting PhD research by the successful applicants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Criteria

The quality of the research proposal is assessed on the basis of two criteria. Each criterion carries equal weighting in the overall assessment. The criteria are:

1. Quality of the PhD candidate
   The following indicators will be considered for the assessment:
   - studies, honours, prizes, travel grants, output, relevant academic activities
   - motivation for doing academic research
   - (other) experience relevant to carrying out the proposed PhD project

2. Quality of the research proposal
   The following indicators will be considered for the assessment:
   - scientific importance
   - originality/innovative character of the objectives and methodology (originality)
   - clarity of the problem posed; operationability in sub-questions
   - suitability of the approach chosen and methodology for the objectives set
   - feasibility of the work plan
   - satisfactory composition of the supervision/research group
Chapter 4: Assessment procedure / PhDs in the Humanities

Ranking criteria for applications on ex aequo positions
– distribution of applications across disciplines
– quality and sustainability of the faculty embedding
5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about PhDs in the Humanities and this call for proposals please contact:

Maudy Lohaus
T: +31 (0)70 349 4215
E: m.lohaus@nwo.nl
W: www.nwo.nl/onderzoek-en-resultaten/programmas/promoties+in+de+geesteswetenschappen
W: www.nwo.nl/en/research-and-results/programmes/phds+in+the+humanities

5.1.2 Contact details Programme Office Sustainable Humanities

Programme Office Sustainable Humanities
f.a.o. Dennis Smit
c/o Achter de Dom 20
3512 JP Utrecht
E: secretaris@regiegeesteswetenschappen.nl
W: www.regiegeesteswetenschappen.nl

5.1.3 Technical questions about the electronic application system ISAAC

For technical questions about the use of ISAAC please contact the ISAAC helpdesk. Please read the manual first before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours CE(S)T on +31 (0)20 346 71 79. However, you can also submit your question by e-mail to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will then receive an answer within two working days.

5.2 Contact details universities

**Erasmus University Rotterdam**
L. (Linda) Jansen
Faculty Services
T: +31 10 408 9128
E: grants@eshcc.eur.nl

**Leiden University**
M.C. (Marcel) Belderbos
Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen
T: +31 71 527 3870
E: m.c.belderbos@hum.leidenuniv.nl

**Maastricht University**
M.J.S. (Merle) Achten
Cluster Coordinator Research Support Office
T: +31 646 705509
E: merle.achten@maastrichtuniversity.nl
Network of Universities based on Philosophical or Religious Principles (NLU)

A. (Annelies) van Velze
Medewerker Kennisvalorisatie en Subsidieadviseur
T: +31 30 239 0143
E: a.vanvelze@uvh.nl

Open University
R. (Rein) de Wilde
Faculty of Humanities and Law
T: +31 45 576 2307
E: rein.dewilde@ou.nl

Radboud University Nijmegen
P.B. (Peter) van der Heiden
Faculty of Arts
T: +31 24 361 5559
E: gshcoordinator@let.ru.nl

Tilburg University
L.M. (Loes) Jongen
Faculty of Humanities
T: +31 13 466 2643
E: l.m.jongen@tilburguniversity.edu

University of Amsterdam
S.A. (Simon) Speksnijder
Faculty of Humanities
T: +31 20 525 6234
E: s.a.speksnijder@uva.nl

University of Groningen
M.M. (Mireya) Harmsen
Graduate School for the Humanities
T: +31 50 363 7647
E: gsh-groningen@rug.nl

Utrecht University
A. (Aad) Haverkamp
Beleidsmedewerker Onderzoek
Faculteit Geesteswetenschappen
T: +31 30 253 2681
E: a.haverkamp@uu.nl

VU University Amsterdam
E. (Liesbeth) Geudeke
Faculty of Humanities
T: +31 20 598 6468
E: e.geudeke@vu.nl