



Social Sciences and Humanities

Call for proposals

PhDs in the Humanities

2019

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Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

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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 young research talent more opportunities and thereby to counteract the ageing of the tenured staff.

One of the things to emerge from these recommendations is the joint initiative of the Humanities Temporary Task Force and the former NWO Humanities division to increase the number of PhD positions within the humanities faculties. This call for PhD positions is a concrete elaboration of this.

1.2 Available budget

The Humanities Temporary Task Force and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities have made an amount of M €3.2 available for 2019. About twenty PhD positions can be financed with the budget available for 2019 (dependent on the requested budget).

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

1.3 Validity of the call for proposals

This call for proposals is valid until the closing date **March 7, 2019**, 14:00 hours CE(S)T.

2 Aim

The aim of the PhD programme is to attract research talent to gradually counterbalance the increasing age of academic staff within the humanities. The structure enhancing plan for education and organisation formulated by the universities/faculties forms the framework for this.

National funding rounds will be organised each year. The Humanities Temporary Task Force and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities evaluate the funding instrument each year and can – if necessary and insofar as it is possible within the funding framework – then decide to adjust procedures, quotas and/or criteria.

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 faculties involved in Sustainable Humanities, namely:

- Utrecht University
- University of Amsterdam
- University of Groningen
- Erasmus University Rotterdam
- VU University Amsterdam
- Leiden University
- Radboud University Nijmegen
- Maastricht University
- Tilburg University
- Open University.

The person who actually submits the PhD project is the supervisor (beoogd promotor).¹ A second supervisor can act as co-applicant.

Please note: The conditions in the NWO Open Competition – SSH may have effect on the eligibility of your proposal in the funding instrument PhDs in the Humanities. See 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.

During the assessment the faculty determines if a PhD proposal fits within the faculty plans, as were submitted to the Humanities Temporary Task Force. NWO does not assess appropriateness within the faculty plans after submission. However, during the ranking of *ex aequo* proposals with a good chance of funding the decision-taking body can take the quality and sustainability of the faculty embedding into account (see Section 4.2 Criteria).

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.

¹ 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.

3.2 What can be applied for

Funding can be requested for a standard PhD position (4 years, 1 fte or 5 years, 0.8 fte) or for a PhD position for a lecturer (5 years, 0.5 fte). Universities are free to determine whether they want to include lecturer PhD candidates in their selection procedure. Universities can decide to allow students who have not completed a two-year research master, but are of a comparable level, to enter the programme.²

The grants to be awarded for personnel costs are in line with the agreements made between NWO and the universities about this in the Approval for funding of scientific research 2008. See the NWO website for the [current salary tables](#).

Besides personnel costs the budget may only include material costs that are directly related to the research up to a maximum of € 5000 (specifications required) for the entire funding period. In addition, a benchfee of € 5000 for the entire funding period is available (no specifications needed).

The costs for the lecturer part of the combined appointment must be taken from direct government funding. The grants are awarded by NWO; the university is responsible for any additional costs, facilities services and supervision. A written confirmation is needed from the university that states that the PhD candidate will have a lecturer appointment for the whole duration of the project.

Remunerations for PhD students/PhD scholarship students at a Dutch university are not eligible for funding from NWO.

3.3 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:

University	Number of FTEs
	PhD candidates + lecturer PhD candidates
University of Amsterdam	4.5
Utrecht University	4.5
University of Groningen	4.5
Leiden University	4.5
Radboud University Nijmegen	4.5
VU University Amsterdam	4.5
Erasmus University Rotterdam	3
Tilburg University	3
Maastricht University	3
Open University	1
Total	37 FTE

² Universities decide for themselves whether they wish to expand the definition and include candidates with a 1-year master degree or candidates who are completing their master degree in the procedure or whether they wish to limit candidates to those who are completing a 2-year research master degree. Candidates must have graduated before 1 September 2019.

No allocation formula applies 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 being selected for funding, the matching commitment still applies (independent of the total number of projects being financed from that university).*

In the letter that deans submit to NWO to announce the proposals to be submitted, an annex should be enclosed with a list of applications assessed during the internal faculty pre-selection round. This list is divided into divisions or research schools and also states which proposals satisfied at least the NWO criterion 'Very good' in the dean's opinion.

In this same letter, the matching of 20% of the requested budget for all projects to be submitted must be confirmed by the dean.

3.4 When can applications be submitted

The deadline for the submission of proposals is **March 7, 2019**.

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.

3.5 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 intended promoter.

3.6 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. See the [NWO website](#) for a detailed explanation regarding Open Access.

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 on the [website](#).

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.

3.7 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.

A principal applicant must submit his/her application via his/her own ISAAC account. If the principal applicant does not have an ISAAC account yet, then this 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 principal applicant already has an NWO-account, then he/she does not need to create a new account to submit an application.

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.

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see Section 5.2.1.

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

The first step in the assessment procedure is to determine the admissibility of the application. This is done using the conditions stated in Chapter 3 of this call for proposals.

The NWO Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interest applies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process.

The data management section in the application is not evaluated and hence not included in the decision about whether or not to award funding. However both the referees and the committee can issue advice with respect to the data management section. After a proposal has been awarded funding the applicant should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. Applicants can make use of the advice from the referees and committee when they write the data management plan. The project can start as soon as the data management plan has been approved by NWO.

NWO gives all full proposals a qualification. The applicant is informed of this qualification when the decision about whether or not to award funding is announced.

Only proposals that receive at least the qualification excellent, very good or good will be eligible for funding.

For further information about the qualifications see the [NWO website](#).

Broadly speaking the assessment procedure is as follows:

- the applications are tested for admissibility (administratively by an employee of the NWO office)
- the committee discusses the applications and establishes subjects for the interview
- *all* candidates are invited for an interview
- the committee assesses and ranks the applications on the basis of the entire dossier available (application and the interview) according to the selection criteria established for this funding instrument
- the chairs of the Humanities Temporary Task Force and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities take a joint decision about which applications to award funding.

N.B. In consultation with the deans it has been decided not to use external referees.

4.1.1 Selection committee

After the selection and nomination by the universities, a selection committee appointed by the Humanities Temporary Task Force and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities 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 Humanities Temporary Task Force 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 Humanities Temporary Task Force. 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 immediately after the committee's appointment on de [programme page](#).

The selection committee:

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

4.1.2 Decision-taking body

The decision-taking body is made up of the chair of the Humanities Temporary Task Force and the chair of 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 30 September 2019 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

Broadly speaking the timetable is as follows:

end 2018	Humanities Temporary Task Force and NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities publish call for proposals
before 7 March 2019, 14:00 PM	supervisors submit applications selected by respective faculty to NWO via ISAAC
Idem	deans inform NWO by letter about the PhD proposals selected by their faculty
March 2019	NWO determines admissibility of proposals submitted and informs applicants accordingly
April 2019	committee discusses the applications and establishes subjects for the interview
April / early May 2019	committee interviews all of the candidates and compiles an advice
end May / June 2019	chairs Humanities Temporary Task Force and NWO Social Sciences and Humanities Domain Board take decision; NWO informs applicants
30 September 2019	latest date for starting PhD-research by the successful applicants

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/lecturer PhD candidate

The following indicators will be considered for the assessment:

- study duration, number of studies, honours, prizes, travel grants, publications, relevant academic activities (such as internships, international activities, board activities)
- motivation for doing academic research
- experience relevant to carrying out the proposed PhD project

2. Quality of the research proposal

- 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

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

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

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E: m.lohaus@nwo.nl

W: www.nwo.nl/gw/promotiesindegeesteswetenschappen

W: www.nwo.nl/en/funding/our-funding-instruments/gw/phds-in-the-humanities/phds-in-the-humanities.html

5.2 Contact details Humanities Temporary Task Force

Committee Humanities Temporary Task Force

f.a.o. Drs. Dennis Smit

c/o Achter de Dom 20

3512 JP Utrecht

E: secretaris@regiegeesteswetenschappen.nl

W: www.regiegeesteswetenschappen.nl

5.3 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.

5.4 Contact details universities

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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