



Call for proposals, PhDs in the Humanities, Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek

Social Sciences And Humanities
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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 2021.

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 4 March 2021, 14:00:00 hours CET.

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.



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 Aruba
 - University of Curaçao
 - University of Groningen
 - University of Humanistic Studies
 - University of St. Martin
 - Utrecht University
 - VU University Amsterdam
- by applicants who have a contract 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 2021.⁴

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 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.

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
University of Amsterdam	4.5
Utrecht University	4.5
University of Groningen	4.5
Leiden University	4.5
Radboud University Nijmegen	4.5

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 when 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 2021, but has not yet graduated at the time of the deadline for submission for 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.



University	Number of FTEs PhD candidates
VU University Amsterdam	4.5
Erasmus University Rotterdam	3
Tilburg University	3
Maastricht University	3
Open University	1
Theological University Reformed Churches	1
Theological University Apeldoorn	
Protestant Theological University	
University of Humanistic Studies ¹	
University of Aruba	1
University of Curaçao	
University of St. Martin ²	
Total	39 FTE

¹ The universities based on philosophical or religious principles are allowed to submit one application in total. The Nationwide Network of Universities based on Religious Principles (NLU) is responsible for the execution of an internal selection round.

² The universities of Aruba, Curaçao and St. Martin are allowed to submit one application in total. The rectors of these universities are responsible for the execution of an internal selection round.

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 specification 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.)
- 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, citizen science, 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/>)



- 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 **4 March 2021**, 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 web page (on the grant page for this programme);
- Complete the application form;
- Save the application form as a pdf file and upload it in ISAAC.

3.5 Conditions on granting

If NWO awards funding then the faculty will appoint the candidate no later than **4 October 2021** and in accordance with the prevailing NWO granting conditions. The NWO Grant Rules 2017 and the Agreement on the Payment of Costs for Scientific Research apply to all applications.

Ethical declaration or permit

It is the responsibility of the applicant to check whether or not an ethical declaration or permit is necessary for the proposed research. The applicant needs to make sure this declaration or permit is obtained in a timely manner from the relevant institution or ethics committee. In case the grant is awarded, it will be awarded on the condition that the necessary ethical statement or permit has been obtained before the final project start date. The research project cannot start until NWO has received a copy of the ethical statement or permit.

Open Access

As a signatory to the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities (2003), NWO is committed to making the results of scientific research funded by NWO freely available in open access on the internet. In doing so, NWO is implementing the ambitions of the Dutch government to make all publicly funded research openly available. All scientific publications of research funded on the basis of this call for proposals should therefore be available in open access immediately (at the time of publication). NWO accepts various routes:

- publication in a full open access journal,
- deposit of a version of the article in a repository or
- publication in a hybrid journal covered by one of the agreements between the VSNU and publishers. See www.openaccess.nl.

Any costs for publication in full open access journals can be incurred in the project budget. NWO does not reimburse costs for publications in hybrid journals. These conditions apply to all forms of scholarly publications arising from grants awarded on the basis of this call for proposals. Also academic monographs, edited volumes, proceedings and book chapters. For more information on the NWO's open access policy, see: <https://www.nwo.nl/en/open-science>.

Data management

The results of scientific research must be replicable, verifiable and falsifiable. In the digital age this means that, in addition to publications, research data must also be freely accessible. As much as possible, NWO expects that research data resulting from NWO-funded projects will be made publicly available for reuse by other researchers. "As open as possible, as closed as necessary" is the guiding principle in this respect. As a minimum, NWO requires that the data underpinning research papers should be made available at the time of the article's publication. The costs for doing so are eligible for funding and can be included in the project budget. In the data management section, and in the data management template if the project is awarded funding, researchers explain how they plan to manage the data expected to be generated by the project.



1. Data management section

The data management section is part of the research proposal. Researchers are asked to prospectively consider how they will manage the data the project will generate and plan for which data will be preserved and be made publicly available. Measures will often need to be taken during the production and analysis of the data to make their later storage and dissemination possible. If not all data from the project can be made publicly available, the reasons for not doing so must be explained in the data management section. Due consideration is given to aspects such as privacy, public security, ethical limitations, property rights and commercial interests.

2. Data management plan

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. In this plan, the researcher describes whether use will be made of existing data, whether new data will be collected or generated, and how the data will be made FAIR: Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable. The data management plan must be completed in consultation with a data steward or equivalent research data management support staff at the home institution of the project leader. The plan should be submitted to NWO via ISAAC within four 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 on the NWO data management protocol can be found at <https://www.nwo.nl/en/research-data-management>.

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

It is of essential importance that scientific research which is carried out with finance of NWO is in accordance with the leading national and international principles of scientific integrity – honesty, care, transparency, independence and responsibility. The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018) forms the guiding principle for NWO's integrity policy. Everybody who submits an application to NWO must state that they are familiar with the code and that they are complying with it. Also after an application has been awarded funding, NWO requires researchers to state in the progress reports that they are adhering to the Code. More information: <https://www.nwo.nl/en/netherlands-code-conduct-research-integrity>.

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.

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.

For technical questions please contact the ISAAC helpdesk, see Section 5.2.3.

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

The first step in the assessment procedure is to test whether an application is admissible. Only those proposals that satisfy the criteria stated in Chapter 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6 are admissible and will be taken into consideration.

The NWO Code for Dealing with Personal Interests applies to all persons and NWO staff involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process. See also: www.nwo.nl/en/code.



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, both the referees and 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 referees and the committee when writing the data management plan. A project awarded funding can only start after NWO has approved the data management plan.

Qualification

NWO will award a qualification to all proposals and will make this known to the researcher with the decision about whether or not the application has been awarded funding. Only applications that receive the qualification "excellent", "very good" or "good" will be eligible for funding.

4.1.1 Selection committee

After the selection and nomination by the universities, a selection committee⁵ 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.

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 assess the selection process underlying the committee's advice and take a joint decision about which applications to award funding.

4.1.3 Timetable

Roughly speaking the timetable is as follows:

November 2020	Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities publish call for proposals
before 4 March 2021, 14:00:00 hours CET	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 2021	NWO determines admissibility of proposals submitted and informs applicants accordingly
April 2021	committee discusses the applications and establishes subjects for the interview
May 2021	committee interviews all of the candidates and compiles an advice
Second half June 2021	chairs Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and NOW Social Sciences and Humanities Domain Board take decision; NWO informs applicants
4 October 2021	latest date for starting PhD research by the successful applicants

⁵ Appointed by the Programme Office Sustainable Humanities and the NWO Domain Board Social Sciences and Humanities.



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

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 Privacy statement

NWO processes personal data obtained in the context of this programme in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Please also see the [privacy statement](#).

5.2 Contact

5.2.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about the 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: <https://www.nwo.nl/onderzoeksprogrammas/promoties-de-geesteswetenschappen>

W: <https://www.nwo.nl/en/researchprogrammes/phds-humanities>

5.2.2 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

5.2.3 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.

5.3 Contact details universities

Erasmus University Rotterdam

C. (Christel) Theunissen & A. (Adhemare) de Rijk

Faculty Services

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Leiden University



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Network of Universities based on Philosophical or Religious Principles (NLU)

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