# Appendix 2: Evaluation of PhD training and supervision in the faculty graduate schools [1]

## Introduction

The guidelines below[2] apply to the assessment of:

a) all faculty-based Graduate Schools (Groningen GradSchools), and
b) those inter-university GradSchools with Groningen as leading University that strive for national (re)accreditation[3].

Each GradSchool assessment will be part of and/or complementary to the regular SEP evaluation of the participating Groningen research institute(s) [4], referred to as SEP-institute(s). The PRC concerned must comprise at least one expert in evaluating PhD education / supervision.

In faculties with no more than one SEP-institute, the Groningen GradSchool will be evaluated as part of that institute's assessment.
In faculties with more SEP-institutes, not assessed simultaneously, the Faculty Board will indicate when / in which assessment its GradSchool will be included. The results of this GradSchool evaluation can be referred to in the self-evaluations of the next SEP-institutes. The timing of the evaluation of GradSchools follows that of the SEP-institutes.

A SEP-institute coordinating an inter-university GradSchool will comply with the procedures and regulations agreed between VSNU and SODOLA[5]. As part of the faculty-based GradSchool, it will organize the evaluation of the entire inter-university GradSchool. This includes the writing of a self-evaluation document describing the PhD education and supervision in all participating institutes (where possible referring to existing self-evaluations), and the organization of a meeting between the PRC, the management and the PhD students of these institutes.

## Current organization and synchronization[6]

### 1. Faculty-based, Groningen Graduate Schools

At five Groningen faculties, research is organized in a single SEP-institute (Faculties of Religion, Culture & Society, Spatial Sciences, Economics and Business, Law, and Philosophy).

[1] At the University of Groningen the management of PhD student education is the responsibility of faculty-based Graduate Schools, some of which are also responsible for the faculty-based research master student education.
[2] These guidelines have been adapted from the protocol developed by the KNAW to evaluate ECOS accredited Research Schools (ECOS/AV/4365). These Research Schools are now called inter-university Graduate Schools.
[3] According to an agreement between SODOLA (SODOLA stands for 'Structureel Overleg Directeuren met Landelijke Accreditatie' and is the branch organization of ECOS accredited inter-university Graduate Schools) and the VSNU, inter-university Graduate Schools will also be assessed within the SEP 2015-2021. For those Schools where Groningen is in the lead, the present regulations apply. For other inter-university Graduate Schools, the participating Groningen institute will comply with the regulations and assessment activities proposed by the leading university.
[4] The Groningen main units of assessment. Research collaboration takes place in many more forms and networks, often labelled as 'Institute' as well, but these are not evaluated as such under the SEP.
[5] VSNU, Vereniging Samenwerkende Nederlandse Universiteiten, is the predecessor of Universiteiten *van* Nederland, UNL; SODOLA is a former association of Directors of national Graduate Schools in the Humanities.
[6] Situation in May 2026.

The activities of their Groningen GradSchool coincide with those of the SEP-institute and can be assessed simultaneously by the same PRC. See GREP Appendix 1.

In four faculties, the faculty-based GradSchool is responsible for the training and supervision of PhD students of several SEP-institutes:

1) Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (FMNS) with the GradSchool of Science (GSS). The PhD training in all 10 FMNS' SEP-institutes will be assessed in 2029, when most institutes will undergo a simultaneous local SEP evaluation by one PRC that will also assess the GSS.
2) Faculty of Medical Sciences (FMS/UMCG) with the GradSchool of Medical Sciences (GSMS): all three UMCG's SEP-institutes (including one in lead of the inter-university GradSchool '*Behaviour and Cognitive Neurosciences*', BCN, see below) and GSMS will be evaluated simultaneously in 2027 by the same committee.
3) Faculty of Behavioural & Social Sciences (FBSS) with the GradSchool of Behaviour and Social Sciences(GSBSS) : all three FBSS's SEP-institutes (including the one in lead of the '*Inter-university Center for Social Science Theory and Methodology*', ICS, see below), will be evaluated separately in three national evaluations (Psychology 2029, Pedagogics and Education Science 2030, Sociology 2031). GSBSS will be included in the Psychology assessment. The other two PRC's will receive (a summary of) the GSBSS evaluation by the PRC Psychology plus an update of the relevant part of the self-evaluation.
4) Faculty of Arts (FoA) with the GradSchool for the Humanities (GSH): all three FoA institutes will be evaluated by three separate local PRC's in 2028. All three will receive the same GSH documentation and will be asked to evaluate GSH as well.

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### 2. Inter-university GradSchools

The University of Groningen is in lead of two accredited inter-university GradSchools (former 'Research Schools') with the following participants:

i. Inter-university Center for Social Science Theory & Methodology (ICS): with the Groningen Faculty of Behaviour and Social Sciences, and groups from the universities of Utrecht and Nijmegen. Last ECOS accreditation: 2012. ICS may be included in the national SEP evalution of Sociology in 2031.
ii. Behavioural & Cognitive Neurosciences (BCN): with the Groningen Faculties UMCG (coordinator) + FMNS + FBSS + FoA. BCN may be evaluated separately in 2028.

## Guidelines for inter-university schools that strive for (re)accreditation

- The Board of the University in lead ('penvoerder') is responsible for the appointment of the PRC that will assess the inter-university GradSchool. The Board will ask the inter-university GradSchool Director for advice on the composition and instruction of the PRC, to be included in the Terms of Reference and to be approved by the Boards of all participating Universities.

- The evaluation of the inter-university GradSchool will be a 'light' procedure, complementary to (and not a repetition of) regular SEP evaluation of the participating units including, where applicable, the Groningen GradSchool.

- The assessment will focus on 3 criteria:
  a. The training and supervision of PhD students in the context of the inter-university network.
  b. The effectiveness of management (independence, budget).
  c. Cross-border research and/or educational collaboration between participants to enhance at least 2 out of 3 added values:
     - interdisciplinary research / training,
     - international collaboration,
     - interaction with societal stakeholders.

The former ECOS accreditation will remain valid until the GradSchool's next SEP evaluation. Preferably, this will coincide with the regular SEP evaluation of the unit acting as coordinating institution.

## Division of labour between GradSchools and SEP-institutes

The Groningen GradSchool will provide the text and data needed for the PhD section of the self-evaluations of each participating SEP-institute. It will describe the organization of the GradSchool at both University, Faculty and Institute level. If appropriate, e.g. when the GradSchool has been assessed before (see next point), the results of this assessment are provided in a separate appendix.

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