



university of  
 groningen

Academic year 2023-2024

## Learning Community Interfaculty PhD programme

PhD/I – Groningen Graduate Schools

Course Coordination:  
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Intervision Interfaculty Phd's





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## 1 / Type of course unit and admission requirements

- a. **Type:** PhD support module
- b. **Admission requirements:** registration as PhD candidate at a UG Graduate S

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## 2 / Content of the course unit

Depending on the shared learning goals and needs of the participants, the contents may include:

- Group projects around shared learning needs. For example, participants will be asked to discuss and plan a collaboration in small groups of 2 to 3 students to learn how different fields could be combined and how to set up a collaboration.
- Exchange of best practices and discussion of progress
- Learning about, and sharing resources to handling the administrative challenges of interfaculty and interdisciplinary projects
- Learning about and formulating work and publication strategies for linking disciplines around a common interdisciplinary research object and finding a suitable journal for publication
- Dilemma games and hypothetical situations to practice approach to challenges related to interdisciplinary and interfaculty projects, such as communication, cultural differences, boundary setting and mental wellbeing, expectation management vis-a-vis supervisors
- Interview assignments, in which groups of participants find experts, interview them, and report back to the other course participants
- A shared electronic learning environment/wiki with the aim of sharing the insights of the participants
- A field trip to an interdisciplinary research institute
- Regular meetings with 10-20 participants, supported by a coach to share experiences, review the progress and to formulate action points.
- Enable further collaboration through self-organised (in)formal networks
- Provide a budget for participants to choose guest-speakers/activities

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## 3 / Position of the course unit

The aim of the training course is to establish a learning community focused on interdisciplinary research. This approach is aimed at professionalizing the process and providing tools to the students to discover and take control of their own PhD trajectory. This



will provide PhDs who conduct interdisciplinary research with a shared community and distinguishable identity within the UG Graduate Schools organisation.

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## 4 / Learning outcomes of the course unit

**Upon successful completion of the course unit, participants are able to:**

1. have a general overview of the University of Groningen, its main strategic partners and relevant processes for the realisation of a PhD project and have an insight into the disciplinary and institutional organisation of the University of Groningen and its faculties, and where relevant, the partner university.
2. are skilled to take over a communication and mediating role with the PhD supervisors and between the different scientific fields. The students are able to bridge cultural differences, navigate the relationship with their supervisors and to set and communicate their boundaries.
3. have an understanding of the data management and publication cultures of the RUG, the faculty(s) where they perform their research and, where relevant, that of the partner institution in question
4. have developed the skill to formulate innovative ideas by means of an interaction of disciplinary approaches and have developed the ability to identify, formulate and solve problems of inter- and multidisciplinary research collaboration
5. are aware about how to find possible career options in their own interdisciplinary field and on the labour market in general. Students are able to build their own academic profile and niche.
6. have the ability to formulate at levels of abstraction that transcend disciplinary and institutional boundaries
7. are skilled in scientific debating with respect for diversity of (academic) cultures.

## 5 / Mode of instruction and learning activities

### **Learning atmosphere and confidentiality**

In order to learn optimally during these sessions, an open atmosphere is crucial. Sharing doubts and difficulties, being genuinely interested in your fellow participants, and their specific situations, and asking open questions all contribute to establishing such an atmosphere. Anything that is brought up during these sessions will be treated confidentially.



### **Mode of instruction and learning activities**

Onsite meetings take place approximately every two weeks for a minimum of six sessions. During the first meeting the participants can adjust the time and frequency of the following meetings to their needs after consultation with the coach.

Each session is divided into different parts. The total number of participants is between 10 and 20 PhD students.

In the first part of the session, the participants split up into smaller subgroups (e.g. 5-10 students), to discuss their projects, progress and personal challenges.

In the second part of the session, participants work on specific assignments in groups of 2 to 5 (e.g. planning a collaboration, discussing literature, planning interviews, discussing hypothetical scenarios, dilemma games).

For the final part of the session, the whole group comes together. Participants can present their results, shared reading material can be discussed and general issues can be brought up for further clarification.

The sessions end with an informal part that leaves room for networking and personal conversations between participants. The participants are encouraged to plan activities in an informal context.

At least twice during the program workshops or social networking events are planned, which are also open for other interdisciplinary PhD students and interdisciplinary researchers to join.

The role of the coach is to moderate the session, take care of timing and structure of the session and provide help and feedback. The coach should be flexible in picking topics that are relevant for the PhD students. The coach should provide the scientific backing or resources for the topics discussed. In agreement with the students, guest speakers (e.g. speakers from the career office and directors of interdisciplinary research schools) should be invited to join one of the sessions and to provide further insights.

Guest speakers e.g. from the career office or directors of interdisciplinary schools should be invited to provide insides and talk about their experiences. The PhD-students should play an active part in picking guest speakers.



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## 6 / Calculation of workload

The module requires a workload of:

5 meetings of 3 hours: 15 hours

Per meeting 1 hour preparation: 5

Participants will be remunerated with 20 hours of reduction from their Task Allocation

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## 7 / Literature

Literature suggestions can be found on the PHD/i Brightspace

