

PE&RC PhD Council

PhD Handbook



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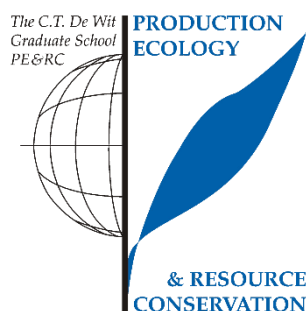


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Introduction

Welcome to Wageningen University! The Production Ecology and Resource Conservation (PE&RC) Buddy System is an initiative of the PPC (PE&RC PhD Council). The Buddy System pairs a new PhD with a PhD who has more experience with challenges and opportunities that can arise in the PhD journey. Some issues are administrative – for example, where to get the health insurance or how to open a bank account – while other issues have a cultural basis, such as: how to survive in the Dutch culture?

We hope that the helping hand of a buddy and this handbook can assist you to take on the challenges of arriving to and starting a PhD at Wageningen University!

The PE&RC PhD Council (PPC)

The PPC is formed by a group of PhDs in the graduate school PE&RC. Members represent all research fields and categories of PhD candidates within the graduate school. The main objective of the PPC is to advise the PE&RC PhD Programme coordinators and the PE&RC Board and Committees, both at their request and on its own initiative. Additionally, PPC serves as a knowledge and experience base for junior and senior PhD candidates. The PPC does so by organizing events such as the annual PE&RC Day, programmes such as the Buddy System, as well as various social events throughout the year, including bike excursions, new year's drinks, Sinterklaas celebration, and more. These are nice opportunities to meet new people and talk to members of the PPC in an informal setting. The PPC meets about once a month. If you're interested in joining the PPC, or just looking for more information, please find us on the website of PE&RC ([PE&RC](#)).

This handbook

This handbook tries to provide you with the necessary information to have a good start in your PhD. You can find practical information here: tips and suggestions, links to useful websites, a list of frequently asked questions.

This handbook is there to help you get started, and we hope it points you in the right direction for many things you will face when starting your PhD. However, there are many different situations depending on the type of your PhD funding (employee, sandwich PhD, guest PhD, etc.) and your country of origin (with regards to residence permits, etc.). Therefore, it is best to ask lots of questions! Your daily supervisor, the secretary of your group, your human resource management (HRM) advisor, the staff of PE&RC, and (if applicable) your international advisor are great sources of information and have lots of experience with any of these administrative issues!

We would appreciate your input regarding this handbook. If things are not clear, or if you can think of items that make a useful addition to this handbook, please let us know.

Welcome to Wageningen!

Wageningen University Campus

Find all information at: Wageningen University



Before you arrive

Finding a place to live

It can be a challenge to find housing in Wageningen. It is wise to start looking for a place to live early – many PhDs arrange a short-term room of a few months when they first arrive to Wageningen, to give themselves a chance to find something more permanent once they are here. Informing the secretary of your chair group and your supervisors that you are looking for a place to live is also wise, as they may hear of suitable housing that may not be advertised broadly.

There are several platforms that are frequently used by people looking for a renter, or for other students that need someone to sub-rent their room for a short(er) time:

- **Facebook groups:**
 - Wageningen Room Subrent: [Wageningen Room Subrent](#)
 - Wageningen Room sublets: [Wageningen Room sublets](#)
 - Room Rent Wageningen: [Room Rent Wageningen](#)
 - Wageningen Student Plaza: [Wageningen Student Plaza](#)
- **Housing Desk Wageningen:**
 - [Housing Desk Wageningen](#)
- **Idealis:** A large housing agency in Wageningen is “Idealis”
 - you can find a room here: [Idealis](#)
 - remember to subscribe on rooms [Room](#)
- **Other online sources for housing:**
 - [kamernet.nl](#) (Dutch and English)
 - [directwonen.nl](#) (Dutch and English)
 - [pararius.nl](#) (Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Spanish)
 - [vormvastgoed.nl](#) (Dutch only)
 - [entree.nu](#) (Dutch only)
 - [huiswaarts.nu](#) (Dutch only)
 - [rotsvast.nl](#) www.rotsvast.nl/en/ (Dutch and English)
 - [www.funda.nl](#) (Dutch and English)

If you cannot find a place with the above resources, there is also temporary housing and bed and breakfasts. For information on B&Bs and hotels in Wageningen, please visit [proefwageningen.nl](#). Another option is [Short Stay Wageningen](#). Furthermore, [Airbnb](#) offers several rooms in the area. Finally, more information about [B&Bs](#) can be found.

Please be aware that some people try to take advantage of the tight housing situation by advertising fake offers. If you are in doubt of the reliability of an offer, ask help (e.g. from your buddy) in judging the advertisement.

WUR W'App

This app is developed for new students at Wageningen University to give you all information needed in the first weeks in Wageningen. Search for **Welcome App Wageningen** in your app store.

Expat Center Foodvalley

To create easy access for Guest PhD candidates, sometimes Wageningen University and Research works together with Expat Center Foodvalley. The Expat Center Foodvalley helps foreign professionals to get their visas and insurance, and with contacts with IND and the municipality.

Upon arrival

Some websites that help you plan your trip to Wageningen are [9292](#) (All public transport), and [NS](#) (Trains)

(For more detailed information about traveling by public transport in the Netherlands see also page 17 of this document).

From Schiphol airport, you can take a train to Ede-Wageningen and then transfer to bus 88, 86 or 84 (at the North side of the station), which will bring you to the city centre of Wageningen in 20 minutes. Bus 88 and 84 also pass the Wageningen University Campus (bus stop Atlas/Campus for 88 and bus stop Campus/Forum for 84).

Step 1. Housing contract

Sign the house rental contract with Idealis or your landlord. You will need this in the next step when you register to the municipality.

Step 2. Registration at the Municipality

When you decide to move to Wageningen and you know you will reside in the Netherlands longer than four months, you have to register at the municipality. Dutch law stipulates that all new residents need to register address details in the Municipal Personal Records Database (Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie, GBA) within five days of their arrival. It takes a few weeks before you are registered. If you move within Wageningen, your address must also be changed within 5 days of moving at the Municipality office (Town Hall, 'Burgerzaken', Olympiaplein 1, Wageningen, [Municipality](#)). You will receive a unique Citizen Service Number (BSN, in Dutch: Burger Service Nummer) that you will need for the next step when you open a bank account. Human Resource Management (HRM) of your institute can help you with your registration at the municipality.

You need to bring the following documents for you registration:

- Passport
- International birth certificate (also called 'long form' birth certificate)
- Work visa (if you are from outside of the EU)
- Housing contract (or, in case you do not have a contract: agreement for registration from the person you are living with).

Register as soon as possible!

Step 3. Opening a Bank Account

To open a bank account, you need your newly acquired Burger Service Nummer (BSN). A bankcard is handy if you want to eat in the canteen of the university, because you cannot pay cash there.

Here are some banks that hold office in Wageningen:

- ABN AMRO: [ABN AMRO](#), Stadsbrink 519
- Rabobank: [Rabobank](#), Plantsoen 55 (website in Dutch only!)
- ING Bank: [ING Bank](#), Stadsbrink 445 (website in Dutch only!)
- SNS Bank: [SNS Bank](#), Hoogstraat 11 (website in Dutch only!)

Step 4. Picking up your Residence Permit (Verblijfsvergunning)

This will be part of the procedure for coming to the Netherlands (if you are from a nonEU country), so you will have seen it already. The office arranging matters is the Immigratie- en naturalisatiedienst ([IND](#)).

Do not forget that you have to renew your residence permit a number of times during your stay depending on your home country. The IND should send you the application form for the prolongation of your residence permit automatically.

Step 5. Taking Insurances

Healthcare Insurance

Everyone in the Netherlands is required to have a health insurance (Dutch: zorgverzekering). This factsheet explains what you need to do to be properly insured: [factsheet health insurance](#).

There is a collective health insurance for employees of the university at AON, but you are free to choose for any other insurance company (the choice can also depend on the length of your stay and kind of PhD). To check the insurance at AON go the website [iak.nl](#). Press "Nee" and type "Wageningen" at "Kies uw collectiviteit". An overview of other health insurance agencies can be found via: [independer.nl](#).

If you are obliged to take a Dutch public healthcare insurance you may be eligible for compensation for your insurance costs. This compensation is called healthcare allowance (Dutch: zorgtoeslag). It may be helpful to ask a Dutch peer the help you navigate the system.

Liability Insurance

A legal liability insurance (Dutch: Aansprakelijkheidsverzekering voor particulieren) is a wise thing to take, but not compulsory. If you unintentionally damage someone else or his/her property and this person wants a refund, the insurance pays. Liability insurance can be arranged at the bank when you open your bank account.

Household Contents Insurance

If you have valuable material things, you can also take an insurance for the things in your house (Dutch: Inboedelverzekering), which covers damages caused by things like burglary from your home and fire. This can be arranged when you open the bank account but this is not a compulsory insurance.

Step 6. Registration at WUR and Intake meeting at PE&RC

Registration at WUR

Information on the general admission procedure to WUR can be found here: [Admission procedure](#)

Intake meeting

All PhDs of the Graduate School PE&RC will have an intake meeting with one of the PhD Programme Coordinators: ([Intake meeting](#)) to acquaint them with the graduate school and Wageningen University. The graduate school will contact you to arrange this meeting soon after arrival, but you are also always welcome to reach out on your own initiative! Some things that will be discussed in this meeting:

- The general order of completing things in relation to your formal admission to the PhD programme of Wageningen University
- Training and supervision plan (TSP, a plan for your PhD, including what courses you would like to take, conferences you would like to attend, teaching duties, and other activities).
- Other questions and concerns you may have.

Taxes and Subsidies

The Dutch official forms for taxes and alike might seem quite complicated. Here is some information to help you to get started with that, and other things. Good luck!

Some basic rules:

1. Do not be afraid to ask anybody to help you. Most Dutch people speak English well enough to communicate with you. It is normal to ask for help. You can always call the info-phone number of the tax-office (Dutch: belastingtelefoon): 0800 – 0543 (calls are free of charge).
2. Forms are there to be filled. So always fill them in and hand them in unless you are really, really sure you do not have to.
3. Be in time! Often there is an expiry date and if you pass it, you can get into serious trouble. If you are not in time, call the office to explain and send it anyway.
4. Make a copy of every official or important form you hand in. Do not throw anything away.
5. If anything is wrong, contact the office which has sent you the form. Generally there is a phone number or address provided on the form or letter. Be aware that the tax office is generally not allowed to give information in English, because of legal issues. In this case, ask someone who reads Dutch and speaks English proficiently to help you.

DigiD

A great number of organisations offer online services with [DigiD](#). These are governments and organisations that perform a public service. You usually need it if you want to arrange things related to governance, e.g. tax arrangements or subsidy applications.

Taxes

Taxes are automatically subtracted from your income when you are a PhD. If you do not make a large amount of money, there is a possibility to get money back at the end of the year. This is called "Tax Return". More information on this and on all other tax issues can be found on the website of the tax office (in Dutch "Belastingdienst": [Taxes](#)). **Tax forms need to be declared between March and May, 1st of the following year.** A lot of information in the form is already filled in, so you only have to check and submit the form. This saves you a lot of time. You will receive a first notice on the outcome of your tax return request somewhere in June, if you were in time in submitting your information. Otherwise it can take over a year.

To Get Subsidies

30% facility for incoming employees

Coming to work in the Netherlands might bring additional costs (e.g. higher living expenses compared to your home country, costs for medical tests, travelling costs, etc). Your employer may provide you with 30% of the wage, including reimbursement, tax free. [More information.](#)

Child benefit (Kinderbijslag) or Childcare benefit (Kinderopvangtoeslag)

Under some circumstances, the Belastingdienst or SVB (Social Insurance Bank) can give money to support in the costs for raising children and for childcare (daycare). Be sure to ask your employer. You will have to ask for money yourself, it will not come automatically.

Rent benefit (Huursubsidie, Huurtoeslag)

For a subsidy on the rent you have to ask to the Belastingdienst. If your income is not too high (also dependent on whether you are married or not), you can get money to support your rent (which also should fall under a certain limit). You have to ask for it yourself. The payment is monthly.

Health Care in the Netherlands

If you need a doctor at some point, Dutch people visit a General Practitioner (GP) (in Dutch 'Huisarts') in the first place and, if necessary, he/she can direct you to other specialists. It is a good idea to subscribe for a GP in the first months of your stay in the Netherlands and not just when you get ill, in order to avoid being put on a waiting list. The choice of a general practitioner is a personal matter and it means that everyone can ask for a registration at any general practitioner in the municipality of Wageningen ([List of all general practitioners in Wageningen](#)). After making a choice, you can request registration at the chosen doctor's practice. The general practitioners also have a choice: they can point out that there is no room for new clients at their practice. When you have a Dutch health insurance, visiting a GP is always covered by the insurance. More information about the Dutch healthcare system can be found here: [Healthcare](#).

If you reside in Wageningen or Bennekom, there is also the possibility to register to the Student Medical Center Wageningen. You can find more information on the website: [Student Medical Center Wageningen](#).

During weekdays you can visit GPs in Wageningen, while in the weekends you have to go to the GP post in Ede.

Working hours of GPs in Wageningen are Monday to Friday 08:00-17:00.

From 16.00-17.00 a GP can be reached **for emergencies only** at: tel.: (0317) 412600. *Some GPs will ask you to pay in cash; others will send the bill directly to your insurance company.*

From 17.00-8.00, during weekend and on national holidays, a GP can be reached **for emergencies only** through the collective service telephone number of the GP-post (in Dutch: *huisartsenpost*), located at:

Hospital Gelderse Vallei

Willy Brandtlaan 10, Ede

Collective service Tel.: (0318) 434444

Getting to the hospital: bus 88 to Ede-Wageningen and leave at stop 'Ziekenhuis Gelderse Vallei'.

Dentists

Working hours of dentists (Tandartsen) are Monday to Thursday 08:30-17:00, Friday 08:30-12:00. After working hours, during the weekend and on national holidays, a dentist can be reached **for emergencies only** through the collective service telephone number: **0318-611888**.

Getting to know the City

When you come for your PhD in Wageningen, you will build up your social life here. There are many places for social gathering, as you can see below.

In the following pages we've also added a series of supermarkets and shops, of different items, organised by the price level. We hope this information is useful for you, and if you have doubts, ask your buddy!

Supermarkets

Cheaper supermarket

A. Aldi markt

Churchillweg 92, 6706 AD Wageningen
Open: Mon-Sat 8-20, Sun closed



B. Lidl

Stadsbrink 4-10, 6701 AL Wageningen
Open: Mon-Sat 7-21, Fri 8-21, Sun 09-20



More expensive supermarkets

C. Albert Heijn

Stadsbrink 375, 6707 AA Wageningen
Open: Mon-Sat 7-22, Sun 8-22



D. Hoogvliet

De Arc 3, 6702 EC Wageningen
Open: Mon-Sat 8-21, Sun 10-21



E. Jan Linders

Nobelweg 2A, 6706 GA Wageningen
Open: Mon-Sat 8-21, Sun 9-20



F. Spar

Brinkmanlaan 9, 6708 RR Wageningen
Open: Mon-Thu 8-20, Fri 8-21, Sat 8-19, Sun 8-18



G. Jumbo

Tarthorst 1223, 6708 HZ Wageningen
Open: Mon-Thu 8-20, Fri 8-21, Sat 8-19, Sun 13-19



H. AH to Go

Bornsesteeg 40, 6708PE Wageningen
Open: Mon-Fri 7.30-19, Sat-Sun closed



I. Odin cooperative supermarket

Bevrijdingsstraat 22, 6703 AA Wageningen
Open: Mon-Thu 8-19, Fr 8-21, Sat 8-18



Specialised food shops

J. Toko Indrani

Plantsoen 58, 6701 AS Wageningen
Open: Mon 12-18, Tue-Thu 9.30-18, Fri 9.30-21, Sat 9.30-17.30, Sun closed

K. Zamzam markt

Stadsbrink 20, 6701 AL Wageningen
Open: Mon-Thu 9-18, Fri 9-19.30, Sat 9-17.30, Sun closed

Sustainable food shops

L. De Hoge Born - farm

Bornsesteeg 87, 6708 PD Wageningen
Open: Mon-Fri 12-17, Fri 9-19.30, Sat 10.30-14.30, Sun closed

M. De Vlijt - windmill

Harnjesweg 54A, 6706 AT, Wageningen
Open: Thu-Fri 9-18, Sat 9-17

N. De Gieterij – zero waste shop

Junusstraat 16, 6701 AX, Wageningen
Open: Tue-Fri 9-18, Sat 9-17

Open-air market

Held at Markt, Church square in the city center
Wed 8:30-13, Sat 8:30-17

Department Stores

Action

Plantsoen 56, 6707 AS Wageningen
Open: Mon-Thu 8-20, Fri 8.30-20, Sat 8.30-20, Sun 10-18



Blokker

Hoogstraat 79, 6701 BR Wageningen
Open: Mon 13-18, Tue-Thu 9-18, Fri 9-21, Sat 9-17.30, Sun closed



Onderdelencenter Jan Weernekens

Junusstraat 53, 6701 AX Wageningen
Open: Mon closed, Tue-Fri 9-18, Sat 10-17, Sun closed

Onderdelencenter Jan Weernekens

Hema

Hoogstraat 59, 6701 BN Wageningen
Open: Mon-Thu 9:30-18, Fri 9:30-21, Sat 9-17.30, Sun closed



Cheap Shops for Clothing and second hand

Zeeman

Hoogstraat 71, 6701 BP Wageningen
Open: Mon 12-18, Tue-Thu 9-18, Fri 9-21, Sat 9-17, Sun closed



Wibra

Schoolstraat 9, 6701 AZ Wageningen
Open: Mon 11-18, Tue-Thu 9-18, Fri 9-21, Sat 9-17, Sun closed



Emmaus Clothes, books and Records

Vijzelstraat 1, Wageningen
Open: Wed 10-14, Sat 10-16

Furniture Stores

New furniture

IKEA (not in Wageningen)

Amersfoort: Euroweg 101, 3825 HB / **Duiven:** Biograaf 2, 6921 EV / **Utrecht:**
Van Rensselaerlaan 7, 3526 AP Utrecht
Open: Mon-Fri 10-21, Sat 9-20, Sun 12-18

Second hand furniture

(in Dutch: kringloop winkel)

Emmaus

Heerenstaat 9, 6701 DG Wageningen
Open: Wed 10-14, Sat 10-16

Kringloop Wageningen

Churchillweg 46, 6706 AC Wageningen
Open: Wed - Sat 11-18 , Mond-Tue-Sun closed

2ndHeaven Kringloop & Vintage Wageningen

Nudepark 160A, 6702 DX Wageningen
Open: Mon 16-18, Thu-Sat 9.30-16.30 , Tue-Wed closed

Terre des Hommes winkel Wageningen

Kapelstraat 15, 6701 DD Wageningen
Open: Tue,Wed,Fri,Sat 10-16; Mon,Thu,Sun closed

Wageningen Student Plaza (Facebook group)

Restore kringloop

[Restore kringloop \(Ede\)](#)
[Restore kringloop \(Veenendaal\)](#)
[Restore kringloop \(Renkum\)](#)

Woord en Daad kringloop:

[Woord en Daad kringloop](#)

Public Library

Stationsstraat 2, [Public Library](#)

If you want to be able to borrow from the library, you have to become a member. Ask for the membership conditions in the library itself or check their website. Independently from borrowing items to read or watch, the library is a very agreeable place to be reading. Also it hosts interesting events regularly.

Pubs, Restaurants and Attractions

Restaurants and Pubs on WUR Campus

The Spot – Orion Building

The Spot is the official Student Café of Wageningen University, run by a student board in cooperation with caterer OSP.
Open: Mon-Fri 8-22

Restaurant of the future – Impulse building

The restaurant works exclusively with organic, sustainable products, most of which come from entrepreneurs in the area.
Stippeneng 2, 6708 WE Wageningen
Open: Mon-Fri 11.30-13.30

Forum restaurant and Grand Café – Forum building

The restaurant is located on the first floor and offers sandwiches, soups, salads, juices, smoothies, and warm and cold snacks. The bar Grand Café is on the ground floor and offers coffee, tea and warm and cold snacks.
Droevendaalsesteeg 2, Building 102, 6708 PB Wageningen
Open: Mon-Fri 8-17

Find the complete list of restaurants and bars on campus at :
[Campus restaurants](#)

Wageningen centre and surroundings

Find the information on attractions and activities in Wageningen and surroundings in the brochure [A taste of Wageningen](#) and [Wageningen Centrum](#) (only in Dutch, unfortunately).

Living in the Netherlands

Dutch News

To stay up to date with the news in the Netherlands, or to be able to participate in the subjects of discussion during the coffee breaks, you may find this website with Dutch news in English quite useful: dutchnews.nl.

NOS in English is a page has been set up by Dutch students from the University College Utrecht who want to provide their fellow non-Dutch speaking students and other internationals with translations of news articles and programs currently unavailable in English: NOSinEnglish

Learning the Language

There are a number of facilities in Wageningen that offer Dutch courses. It is highly recommended to discuss the several options with friends or colleagues who have followed a course. This way, you can make a good choice in terms of costs, level and speed of progress. Moreover, some of the groups are willing to pay part of the language course costs. Ask your group leader whether this is the case!

- The university Language Services (Wageningen in'to Languages) offers Dutch classes in different levels. For students, there are 4 different levels, where level 1 and 2 are for free (at least until end of 2020) and each of the rest levels costs €90 (excl. books). For staff members, there are 5 levels of Dutch classes and each costs €490 (excl. books). Languageservices
- International Students Association Wageningen (ISOW) offers Dutch classes for beginners. More informal language is taught here. ISOW

Traveling by Public Transport

In general, the public transport system in the Netherlands is good and most of the places can be reached by trains and buses. However, it might be complicated to get to the more isolated places because there are no buses going there. Most general places can be reached by public transport within 4 hrs.

Suitable websites:

- Dutch Railway NS
- Planning your journey by public transport: 9292. **9292** also has an App that you can download from the app store. **92**

In the public transport system, the 'OV chipkaart' is used, which is a card to pay for the train, bus, tram and metro. In some cases (for the train and bus) it is still possible to use paper tickets, but for the subways you can pay with the chipcard only. If you use the chip card, you need to **check in** at the pole when you enter (Fig. 1), and **check out** when you leave the transportation unit of use. In case you travel by train, most of the trains are provided by NS, but there are some tracts that have a different provider. Make sure you use the correct check in pole (the provider is mentioned on the pole).



Fig. 1: Pole to check in and out.



Fig. 2: NS card machine.

On the train stations, you can find machines where you can buy paper tickets, anonymous OV- chipcards and where you can recharge your personal OV-chip card (Fig 2). You can choose English as language and you will be guided through the process. More methods to load your personal OV-chip card can be found at: [OV-Chip](#) . Pay attention to the fact that you cannot buy a train ticket on the train itself. If they catch you without tickets or you haven't checked in, you have to pay for the ticket together with an extra fine of € 50.

If you plan to use the train more frequently, you can consider buying a 'Dal-voordeel' card. This card costs € 5 a month and you can travel in the train paying 60% of the normal price outside business hours. You can travel cheaper on weekdays between 9:00-16:00 and 18:30-6:30. The time of check-in determines whether you travel with a discount. In the weekends and during public holidays you can travel with discount the whole day. [Abonnementen](#) (in Dutch).

Corona measures on the NS trains can be found at: [Corona](#).