



Your PhD at FSE STEM Graduate school
2023/2024

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Enrolling in a PhD programme at the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) is a fantastic opportunity to develop your talent. It is a personal development journey, throughout which you enhance your scientific expertise as well as teaching and management skills.

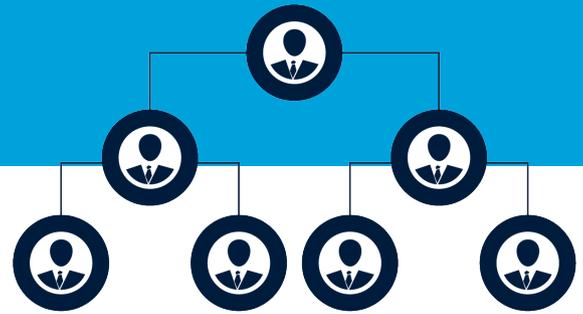
You need a proactive attitude: the success of your doctoral research comes down to you, but your supervisor and the faculty will support you.

The mission of the FSE STEM Graduate school is to enhance your horizon with the help of your supervisors, your colleagues, external specialists and fellow FSE PhD students.

FSE has an inclusive STEM Graduate school, meaning any kind of PhD is part of the STEM Graduate School: contracted, external or employed. The STEM Graduate school was founded in September 2020, and is rapidly growing with over a 160 active PhD students from diverse backgrounds working in a wide variety of fields.



1 Organisation



The Faculty of Science and Engineering is home to several outstanding departments in education and research. Students and scientists contribute to education programmes at bachelor’s, master’s and PhD levels and take part in innovative research in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

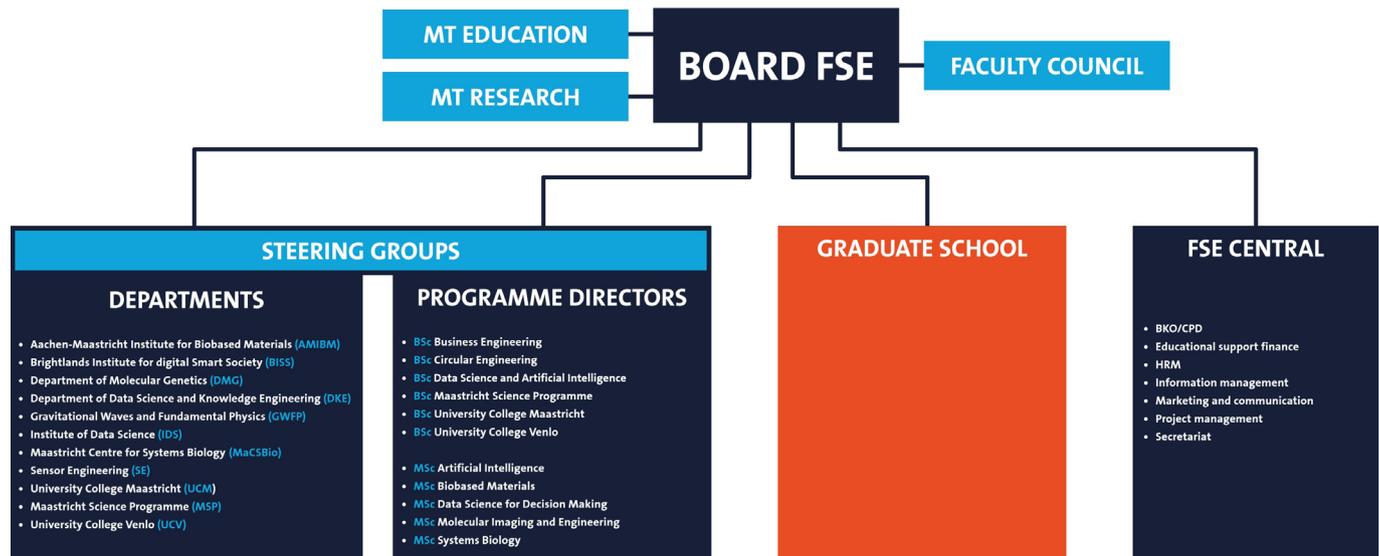
The rapidly growing FSE STEM Graduate school supports all PhD students of the Faculty of Science and Engineering. The FSE STEM Graduate school optimises education and training of PhD students, facilitates and monitors the quality and progress of research projects.

The objective of the FSE STEM Graduate school is to enhance the horizon of its PhD students and to offer a vivid community for PhD students to share experiences.

The STEM Graduate school is headed by a school director. The Graduate school is supported by a PhD coordinator.

To further develop and professionalise the setup of the FSE STEM Graduate school, The Faculty of Science and Engineering is also supported by a PhD representative team. The team's responsibilities are to build an active community among PhD students, to cooperate with and advise the director of the

FSE STEM Graduate school and PhD coordinator on the development of the FSE STEM Graduate school. One PhD student representative is the 'linking pin' to the Maastricht University PhD platform to advise the University Board.



Network

Within Maastricht University, PhD students are represented at the faculty and central level.

Maastricht University has a PhD academy offering a wide variety of networking events and training opportunities. As a PhD you may connect also with several national and international networks.

On a national level, PhDs are represented in the PhD network (PNN) and on an international level via Eurodoc, the European council for doctoral candidates and young researchers and the World Universities Network (WUN). FSE cooperates with a lot of national and international research schools like: NIKHEF, NWO-I, SIKS, DISC, LNMB and BIOSB / Elixir.

2 Whom to go to



At the start of your PhD research, at least two supervisors will be assigned to you. One of those supervisors has the daily supervisor role. Of course, you will have a main promotor responsible for the complete track. It may happen that a supervisor is added or replaced during your research. This only happens in consultation with all concerned.

You begin your PhD by formulating a personal research plan (PRP) and a training and supervision plan (TSP) with the help of your promotor. This plan contains both your short and long term plans and will be consulted and updated every half year. The aim of your work as a PhD student is to carry out independent research, summarise

your findings in publications and finally hand in a dissertation. Below you find an outline of the roles and responsibilities of the people involved to support you.

Promotor

The promotor is an (associate) Professor who will be the principal investigator in your research project. When you start, the promotor will facilitate a general research plan to depart from. He/she/they will see to it that you and the daily supervisor meet on a regular basis and will discuss changes to the research plan when necessary. Ideally a complete supervising project team is involved in your research project.

You will tailor this plan to your personal preferences in your personal research plan (PRP) at least every half year. The promotor has to officially approve your dissertation and will be clear about the progress and the expectations. Weekly contact with your promotor isn't necessary, but it is encouraged to schedule monthly meetings to monitor progress.

If you feel you don't meet each other enough, discuss this with your promotor and your daily supervisor. Once the dissertation is finished, it needs to be approved by your daily supervisor and your promotor. After approval, the dissertation will be handed to an assessment committee and a request for public defense can be made.

Daily supervisor

The daily supervisor (who often also is your co-promotor) is appointed in consultation with your promotor. All research-related questions must be discussed with your daily supervisor. In principle, you and your daily supervisor meet once a week. He/she/they will discuss the degree of independence that you have with your promotor.

The level of experience can vary between supervisors. Sometimes he/she/they will have a great deal of experience and seniority (e.g. associate professor or senior researcher) and in other cases he/she/they will have less experience (post-doctoral researchers, assistant professors).

The supervisory tasks will be divided between daily supervisor, your promotor and other project team members. If you feel this task division isn't correct, discuss this with your daily supervisor and/or your promotor. If the problem persists, you can contact the PhD coordinator.

PhD coordinator and confidential advisor

The PhD coordinator is your coach in a more general way. He/she/they will help you to kick start your PhD and provide you with essential information about your development opportunities. The first on-boarding, getting familiarised with your colleagues and organisation is taken care of within the department you are situated in and the PhD coordinator is there for you on a faculty level.

The PhD coordinator takes care of your progress, personal development and wellbeing. Your PhD coordinator will challenge you to take care of your employability and will talk with you about realising your ambitions. Your personal training and supervision plan is tailored to you and your aspirations either in academia or beyond.

The FSE board stresses the importance of your wellbeing and therefore an internal confidential advisor is appointed within the faculty especially for PhD students. Also at the university level a confidential advisor is in place. FSE strives for an open culture based on respect and trust. If you experience problems between you and your supervisors or peers that can't be solved, get in touch with your confidential advisor. He/she/they will listen, advise and explore how the problem can be resolved. In all circumstances, your issue will be treated confidentially and action will only be taken with your approval.

Fellow PhD students

Your fellow PhD students, especially the PhD representatives are happy to arrange a buddy for you to show you around at the university and in the region. A PhD community is in place to share experiences and interesting opportunities.



3 Your personal development



Undertaking a PhD is a challenging experience. Personal traits of successful PhD students are numerous including being intelligent, curious, well-organised, imaginative, thorough, original, methodical, independent, dynamic, confident, communicative, pro-active, dedicated and ambitious.

A PhD degree is after all the highest academic diploma you can obtain. You will contribute to the development of knowledge in your field and you will often contribute unconsciously to the contribution of your personal development and employability. You will experience a journey in which you prove to become step by step a more independent researcher. Meaning you will have a crucial role in organising events on your topic

and becoming the expert in your field. Towards the end of your PhD project your supervisors have become your advisors and your working relationship has transformed.

During your PhD research you have the opportunity to develop yourself on content related topics and more general skills. Together with your daily supervisor, you select essential technical trainings that will help you execute your research plan. On top of this, you have the opportunity to further develop yourself with courses and trainings offered by the FSE STEM Graduate school and Maastricht University.

The development framework is visualised in the picture below, providing you with the opportunity to develop your career roots at FSE.

A list of courses is embedded in this framework. To establish a good start, you will follow a kick start course.

To ensure your personal effectiveness you are invited to join the trainings e.g. on self and project management. For supervisors within FSE training is developed to ensure a positive learning climate. You can join the writing center to enhance your communication and academic writing skills in English. Besides the presenting club is there to help you communicate about your research.



To advance your knowledge transfer and collaboration skills you can follow two modules part of the University Teaching Qualification.

At UM level three mandatory basic PhD courses are developed: Open science, research ethics and integrity and impact and scientific communication linking to several roots of the framework. At the Language center you may develop e.g. your Dutch language skills.

Last but not least after reconciliation with the UM contact person you can join courses at our fellow research schools:

- NIKHEF
- NWO-I
- SIKS
- DISC
- LNMB
- BIOSB / Elixir

The school is considered a light-version of a graduate school, meaning that it is there to support you with minimal bureaucratic administration hassle and no target ECTS score. We invite you to grasp the opportunities.

4 Your teaching experience



FSE is a faculty with a continuous focus on teaching, providing it's staff with opportunities to develop careers in the teaching field and beyond.

Three liberal arts colleges are founded within FSE thriving in innovative and blended learning. Recognitions and rewards in the broad sense are incorporated for academic staff, also PhD students can make use of the opportunity to build on their teaching experience and develop themselves beyond their research skills.

During the intake with the FSE STEM Graduate school/PhD coordinator, you will be introduced to the FSE development framework including University Teaching Qualifications (UTQ) opportunities.

In the first and second year of your PhD trajectory, you can approach the coordinator of the FSE STEM Graduate school to informally discuss the possibilities of UTQ.

In year 1 and 2 of the PhD trajectory, PhD students can follow the two workshops which are also part of the UTQ trajectory and are offered by FSE: Supervision of Research and Written Assignment and Interactive Lecturing and Presentation Skills.

5 Your planning



A PhD research usually takes four years to complete. We realise that this is a challenge and we will do the utmost to provide you with feedback and support on your progress.

After 9 months a formal go/no go decision is made by your supervisors. Feedback by the supervisory team will encourage you to either take on the full challenge or maybe better look out for another opportunity.

The procedure is outlined in the assessment rulings of Maastricht University. For internal appointed PhDs this procedure is obligatory but also for other types of PhD researchers the assessment is done in a comparable way.

Each following year you will have a formal assessment of your performance to provide you with valuable feedback on your outstanding performances and development points. This may not always be easy but is executed in a fair way. Support is provided by HR and/or the PhD coordinator to help you in the best possible way.

Within Maastricht University, several faculties use “TRACK”. The PhD TRACK quality and monitoring system is developed for PhD students and their supervisors to monitor their progress.

The TRACK system has the following aims:

- To have PhD students build a research and teaching portfolio e.g. a Personal Research Plan (PRP) and a Training & Supervision Plan (TSP)
- To monitor the progress of PhD trajectories
- Evaluation of progress by the supervisor(s) every 6 months
- To register all categories of PhD students, their supervisors, and the units in which they are embedded

- To produce management information for the School, FSE/UM boards and national organisations such as the UNL (Universities of the Netherlands).

TRACK sends out questionnaires, reminders, etc. automatically.

Once or twice a year you will receive additional instructions, e.g., to complete an assessment of whether the project is proceeding according to plan.

The TRACK activities that we require you to perform are important but also quick and easy. PhD students as well as the supervising team will only be able to get full benefit of this system if both parties have activated the accounts and are willing to get familiar with how the system works.

Towards the end of your PhD research and after approval of your dissertation by your promotor you will have to calculate around 3 months in your planning to finalise the last formal steps like selection of the assessment committee. The public defense planning is supported by UM's PhD office.



Integrity code

For a PhD student it is essential to know what research ethics entail. Your supervisor will take you at hand and Maastricht University will ensure you know everything on Ethics and Integrity before starting your research project. We take as a guiding principle the principles of Honesty, Scrupulousness, Transparency, Independence, and Responsibility as established by the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018).

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PhD student Representation Team

Varies every academic year. Visit Umployee for an always an up-to-date list with whom to go to.



Maastricht University

www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/fse-stem-graduate-school