1 | What is NUTRIM?

NUTRIM School for Nutrition, Toxicology and Metabolism acts at the forefront of translational research on chronic metabolic and inflammatory disorders with a focus on metabolism and nutrition, contributing to a personalized lifestyle and use of medicine. Nutrition is at the basis of obesity related chronic diseases that rapidly increase in prevalence and pose a high burden on society. In advanced stages, disease progression is characterized by malnutrition that significantly contributes to complications and physical disability with high medical and non-medical costs. The focus of our research is on chronic diseases in which Maastricht has established a unique critical mass and expertise, and has reached an international center of excellence position (metabolic syndrome/ diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). NUTRIM participates in the Graduate School VLAG (Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology, Nutrition and Health Sciences), accredited by the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

NUTRIM is a multidisciplinary research school including approx. 250 full time equivalents (350 researchers including 110 PhD students and 74 support staff). NUTRIM core research program is organized around integrated multidisciplinary themes in 4 research lines including 16 clinical and basic sciences departments of Maastricht University Medical Centre+ (MUMC+).

Research Line 1: ‘Metabolic syndrome’ investigates the etiology of the metabolic syndrome as related to lifestyle;
Research Line 2: ‘Gut-liver homeostasis’ investigates intermediary metabolism and intestinal integrity & defense during acute and chronic (patho) physiological conditions;
Research Line 3: ‘Chronic inflammatory disease and wasting’ studies mechanisms and modulation of lung impairment in relation to persistent chronic systemic inflammation and skeletal muscle pathology;
Research Line 4: ‘Gene-environment interactions’ investigates the combined effects of environmental (including dietary) exposures and genetic background on etiology and progression of chronic metabolic and inflammatory diseases.
2 | What do we expect from you as PhD student?

2.1 | Types of PhD Students
There are various types of PhD Students:
• PhD Students with a contract for 4 years
• PhD Students with a scholarship
• PhD Students/clinicians working at the hospital and doing a promotion track
• External PhD Students who are being supervised by a NUTRIM staff member

2.2 | Goals
The aims of NUTRIM's PhD programme are to cultivate research capabilities & broad understanding of human nutrition and metabolism to provide PhD students with specific knowledge and skills needed for top-level research and to stimulate interdisciplinary training. The PhD training programme results in well-trained graduates who have developed an integrated view on most advanced and state-of-the-art topics in the research domain of NUTRIM and have developed skills needed for top-level research in a multidisciplinary and international oriented environment. The PhD programme will be completed after successfully defending your dissertation.

2.3 | Employment
In order to meet the demands and to reach these goals, NUTRIM PhD Candidates are committed to a 4 year programme of education and supervision. Within three months after appointment, each PhD student and their supervisor jointly design a personalized Supervision and Education Plan - POP (appendix 2). Courses are planned, as much as desired, when the student needs the knowledge and skills for a particular topic, depending on the stage of the research project. External courses, exchange visits and international conferences may be selected and, after positive evaluation, will be included in the NUTRIM portfolio. The Supervision and Education Plan is approved by NUTRIM's PhD Students Coordinator. It is discussed during the annual assessment interviews during the PhD track. Discussion of end terms for acquiring the PhD title with the PhD Student is part of the personalized Supervision and Education Plan and made clear from the start.

Before the first year is finished an evaluation takes place in order to determine whether the PhD Student is allowed to continue his/her PhD track. Present are: the promoter, the HR manager, the supervisor and the PhD Student. An evaluation will take place each following year (also see section supervision and monitoring).
From the PhD Student a large commitment is expected. If the employment is extended, he/she will receive a new contract for the extension of the employment, usually up to four years in total. If, at that moment or any moment during the employment the PhD Student decides to end his/her PhD program or the supervising team decides that the work of the PhD Student is of too low a quality or shows little progress, the Scientific Director and the PhD Students Coordinator are informed immediately.

2.4 | PhD Student tasks
A PhD Student’s task comprises three elements: research, education / supervision and teaching. A PhD Student in a clinical setting also provides patient / health care. At least 75% of the employment is reserved for research. Details are stated in the Supervision and Education Plan.

2.4.1 | Research
The PhD Students will perform scientific research that will eventually lead to the writing of a dissertation. As time is limited, 4 years by fulltime employment, as are financial means we expect dedication, perseverance, diligence, a great feeling of responsibility and initiative towards the research he/she will be carrying out. As to viability and scientific content the research topic is checked and approved by the Research Line Leader, Scientific Director and head of the department. Title of research, research line and program are stated. By signing the Supervision and Education Plan both supervisor and PhD Student declare that they perused the document and agree to it.

2.4.2 | Education
Each PhD Student is entitled to 200 full days of education and supervision.

Four categories are distinguished:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1 - Discipline-specific activities</td>
<td>60 credit points (= 8.5 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2 - General support courses</td>
<td>45 credit points (= 6 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3 - VLAG/NUTRIM activities</td>
<td>70 credit points (= 10 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 4 - Free category</td>
<td>35 credit points (= 5 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>80 credit points (= 11 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>290 credit points (= 41.4 ECTS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For all categories applies: \( \frac{1}{2} \) a day = 1 point. For presentations (poster or oral), 3 extra credit points are obtained; Attending the Capita Selecta = 2 x 12 points (when complete participation); Research line meetings offer 10 credit points per year; Writing a MEC / DEC application: 5 credit points; Writing a research proposal: 5 credit points; As to administrative activities: Only the above mentioned tasks yield credit points; Visiting another (foreign) institution yields 1 credit point per day, with a maximum of 60 credit points. European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) = the NUTRIM system divided by the factor 7.

In the supervision and education plan the titles of courses to be attended by the PhD Student are listed by category (see appendix 2). Apart from attending scientific courses each PhD Student is entitled to participate in congresses, symposia, seminars etc. However as participation mostly involves fees and also often travel expenses, plans for attending congresses etc. must be approved by the supervisor. Since the VLAG PhD Week is compulsory for first-year PhD Students, NUTRIM covers the fee and travel expenses.

10 Golden rules for PhD Students

01 You're are stakeholder #1 in your project - be the captain of your ship
02 Discuss mutual expectations about supervision
03 Get an overview - make a project plan with your supervisors
04 Manage your time well - and make sure you do it your way
05 Work hard, play hard
06 Ask for what you need - and address it if you don't get it
07 Make use of all available sources of support
08 Organize peer support
09 Invest in your future - build your network, expand activities and skills and LEARN as much as possible
10 Remember you're smart - Yes, You can!

Courtesy of CAPHRI PhD Students, PHD Coordinator, Tessa Training & UM Staff Development Centre.
The aim of education:
• To cultivate research capabilities and broad understanding of human nutrition in all its aspects;
• To provide PhD students with specific knowledge and skills needed for top-level research;
• To improve international interaction and promote (international) visibility of the education program to attract foreign master/graduate students;
• To stimulate interdisciplinary training by organizing weekly seminars of all four research lines.

Secondary goals of the training program are:
• To stimulate participation in small scale journal clubs,
• To facilitate participation in ‘thematic meetings’ (e.g. training in knowledge transfer, valorization and patent screening, career development),
• To support participation in research management and/or board and council meetings (e.g. PhD council and departmental boards).

2.4.3 | Teaching
Being a member of departmental staff, the third aspect of a PhD Student’s job is teaching. 3rd and 4th-year PhD Students teach FHML-Bachelor and Master Students. The amount of time of input may vary. FHML regulations state a maximum of 15% of a full employment. Teaching may comprise being a tutor in a tutorial group; Supervising a student during traineeship or during writing a Master thesis; Lecturing; Giving practical skills training etc.

2.5 | Qualifications of a PhD Student after 4 years
Science / research
The main task of a PhD Students is research. A NUTRIM PhD Student must be able to think and act evidence-based. A PhD Student should also be able to present research in a scientific way. Next to this he/she should be able to implement the newest findings of the field into his/her ongoing research. Apart from having written scientific publications as first author a PhD Student is expected to have several publications as second author. Also he/she is expected to have the lead in the discussions of several articles during journal clubs. Examples of UM courses to achieve this are: English Writing; Presenting in English; wetenschapsfilosofie, software training (word, PowerPoint, excel en endnote), use of the internet (biomail, pubmed), Statistics; and good supervision in writing of articles and composing research presentations / lectures. Articles and research proposals are ways of assessing these qualifications as are poster presentations during congresses, presentations at research meetings as well as lectures. The last category is also evaluated by Master and Bachelor students.

Teaching
A NUTRIM PhD Student must be able to independently teach Master and Bachelor students i.e. lecturing, being a tutor in a tutorial group, give practicals etc. The department of O&O offers ample courses on education. In order to actually be a teacher the ‘Introduction into Problem Based Learning’ course is compulsory. Tutors are evaluated by the students. Since Maastricht University is strongly in involved in education, it offers the opportunity to scientific staff as well as to PhD Students to excel in teaching. Each PhD Student should at least give three lectures and should have performed one tutorship.

Management
A NUTRIM PhD Student is expected to have some knowledge of managerial tasks. This is not only for those destined to science but also for the majority of PhD Students that will have a job in industry, government, health care or be running an own company etc Courses are offered by Maastricht University such as ‘Time Management’ ‘Career Management’, ‘Leading Complex Projects’ etc.

Fund raising
Each PhD Student is expected to be able to write research grant applications. For this supervisors may involve PhD Students in writing their applications, or PhD Students can apply for a Kootstra Talent Fellowship of FHML. Kootstra Talent Fellowships are obtained in competition. These fellowships, consisting of a 6-month grant, are made available by the FHML to develop talent amongst young scientific researchers and are matched by NUTRIM, and thus mount to a scholarship of 1 year in total. The fellowship is used to bridge the time between graduation of a talented Master student to the start of an official contract as a PhD student or of a PhD Student for the start of a Postdoc employment. See Maastricht University course ‘Acquisition power for researchers’.

Communicating skills / Media
Since (most of the) research is meant to be translational and beneficial to the community, or when a distinct grant is acquired, media will obviously be involved. Maastricht University offers a course ‘Communication skills’.
2.6 | Supervision
The supervisory team consists of at least two NUTRIM scientists. The supervision team offers support in e.g. methodological advice on data analysis and feedback during the writing process. The frequency of meetings with supervisors varies but generally it is common to have a meeting every two weeks of about one hour. For PhD Students: Be prepared and make concrete agreements together with your supervisor about these meetings. For the first go-no-go evaluation research, education, position in the group, skills and supervision is evaluated and reported.

2.7 | Obligations of the PhD candidate
The PhD candidate is obliged to adequately fulfill the tasks mentioned (research, education, and teaching). The candidate is aware that his/her performance in teaching (tutoring etc.) can be reviewed and he/she agrees to this. The results of the reviews can be used in the assessment. The PhD candidate is obliged to report annually on his/her tasks. In this context, the progress of the research in particular requires careful reporting. The candidate submits the reports to the daily supervisor and provides the mentor and PhD coordinator (if any) with a copy. The supervisor records receipt of the report and the agreements made based on it. At the end of the first year the report will be incorporated into the assessment procedure.

2.8 | Adjustment of the training and supervision plan
Adjustment of the training and supervision plan takes place after the first year and any time later during the PhD track when applicable, both by PhD Student and supervisor. The HR adviser and PhD coordinator are informed in writing of any adjustments. Concrete activities for each task are identified from year to year.
See attachment 2 for complete supervision and education plan.

3 | What do we offer?

3.1 | Quality assurance
NUTRIM is embedded in the faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences (FHML) and in the Academic Hospital (azM). These institutions provide teaching and research facilities as well as support staff. A code of good practice regarding supervision is laid down in the Maastricht UMC+ Research code, and is stipulated and agreed to by the supervisor in the student’s contract. The complete and detailed conditions for all parties involved in a PhD programme are stated in the Training and Supervision Plan (appendix 2).

Selection and training of supervisors
Supervisors are senior researchers in NUTRIM’s research program, the professor acting as main supervisor or “promoter” and the assistant or associate professor acting as secondary supervisor or “co-promoter”. New supervisors are required to follow the UM-training program “Supervision of PhD Candidates”. An experienced NUTRIM supervisor will coach a new supervisor (buddy system).

Accreditation: Role of external advisory boards in the improvement of education and supervision
The National Graduate School Accreditation Committee (ECOS) advises the KNAW on the reaccreditation of the Research School. Every three years alternately mid-term / end-term reviews take place. An external review committee of experts assesses NUTRIM’s parameters as to publications (number and quality), graduations, earning power, societal impact and valorization.

3.1.1 | The obligations of the supervisor
The PhD candidate has the right to continual supervision from the daily/official supervisor. The daily supervisor commits to continually supervising the candidate, focusing on the research content and methodology as well as progress of the project, and training the candidate. To this end, the daily supervisor makes fixed arrangements to meet regularly with the candidate. The daily supervisor also regularly meets with the PhD candidate to discuss the progress of the research, learning (supervision and education-related activities) and mutual cooperation. If desired the HR adviser and/or the PhD coordinator can be involved in these discussions. Furthermore the PhD candidate is given the opportunity to take courses and attend symposia and conferences by the daily supervisor.
3.1.2 | Progress monitoring
The quality of education and supervision is assured by an annual evaluation using a standard (PhD Students) progress monitoring procedure. The PhD Students Coordinator monitors these forms, and if needed discusses any striking or erratic results with the supervisor as well as with the PhD Student involved. A representative of the Human Resources management of Maastricht University is present during the first 2 annual meetings (for full questionnaire see appendix 2). All items of this monitoring procedure are being registered in a personal digital database. Each year an evaluation takes place.

3.1.3 | Talent policy
Talent policy for PhD Students within a Research School maneuvers within narrow frameworks. The arrival however of Graduate Schools offers opportunities to scout talented and promising PhD Students while being in their Master stage. Consequently PhD Students already get to know more about their possible employer for the next stage and can therefore better motivated and better informed become a PhD Student. This Works both ways: researchers get to know a future / possible PhD Candidate, know his/her attitude, know how he/she works. Suitable PhD candidates are informed of coming-up vacancies for PhD Students. PhD Students in their last year are encouraged and to write a Kootstra Talent Fellowship in order to finance their own employment as a Postdoc during one year. Supervisors will guide the PhD Student is this application.

3.1.4 | Introductory meetings
For all new PhD Students introductory meetings are organized twice a year, in which PhD Students are informed about their tasks and educational opportunities. A personality questionnaire (currently in a test phase), designed to improve the selection of PhD candidates as well as to provide information helpful in coaching and counseling PhD students throughout their research career may be part of the selection procedure.

3.1.5 | Participation in Top Institute Food and Nutrition
TI Food and Nutrition is a public private partnership of science, industry and government conducting strategic research in food and nutrition.

3.1.6 | Participation in VLAG
NUTRIM participates in the Graduate School VLAG (‘Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology Nutrition and Health Sciences’) hosted at Wageningen University. VLAG offers a wide range of specific courses for PhD Students, see www.vlaggraduateschool.nl/eduvlco.html. NUTRIM PhD Students are considered VLAG PhD Students, and pay the same, limited course fee.
3.1.7 NUTRIM’s Scientific (inter)national Network
Many NUTRIM researchers have bilateral (cooperation) contacts with researchers abroad. NUTRIM collaborates within several Dutch governmental and public private initiatives. NUTRIM researchers participate in several European research projects. Also NUTRIM collaborates worldwide with research institutes and universities.

3.1.8 Exit-interviews
Since after four years having been a PhD Student you have a lot of experience as to doing research, teaching and being supervised and monitored. In order to improve NUTRIM’s efforts in these aspects PhD Students that (almost) finished their PhD period are interviewed by the PhD Students coordinator about their experiences. Results are reported and saved in the database.

3.1.9 NUTRIM research facilities
NUTRIM has developed a state-of-the-art human metabolic infrastructure for research in healthy volunteers and patients including the following integrated facilities:

- Unique metabolic profiling unit including 5 advanced respiration chambers developed at NUTRIM, techniques for multi-compartment in vivo body composition assessment, a clamp unit, a metabolic ward for controlled in-patient studies, state of the art facilities for controlled dietary intervention studies and advanced exercise testing with metabolic monitoring under controlled environmental conditions.
- Human performance laboratory that in addition to standard muscle function includes a neuromuscular control and biomechanics lab, non-invasive functional imaging and the lab@home unit including wearable technology for monitoring physical performance outside the laboratory walls.
- Laboratory for invasive imaging and fluxomics (using stable isotopes) combined with human multiple sampling models (dept. of Surgery) to study in vivo nutrient trafficking and inter-organ metabolism.
- Non-invasive metabolic imaging facilities, housed at the department of Radiology for monitoring energy metabolites at rest and during exercise and for measuring ectopic fat distribution in muscle, liver and heart. For research on Neuroscience of food intake using fMRI, there is a close collaboration with Prof. Dr. R Goebel, Faculty of Psychology and Neurosciences.

This integrated infrastructure allows cutting-edge studies in human volunteers and patients for translational etiological and randomized human intervention studies. Within our chronic disease focus we have initiated and/or participate in the following cohorts:

- the South Limburg population based Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) cohort (n=3000; Prof. A. Masclee),
- the Flemish Twin Cohort (Prof. M. Zeegers),
- the ECCLIPSE COPD cohort (n=3000; Prof. E. Wouters),
- and the recently initiated Maastricht Study on diabetes and related chronic disease (n=10,000; Prof. C. Stehouwer).

3.2 Educational events
NUTRIM PhD Students are exposed to a challenging environment with a well-balanced critical mass & expertise, energetic leadership and informal communication. NUTRIM offers its PhD Students an attractive playing field to translate their ideas in high quality, unique research in an exciting, multidisciplinary research and care setting, with an excellent infrastructure. This is achieved by a mixture of professional courses that are organized by NUTRIM and generic courses that are organized at the faculty level. All courses given are free of charge. NUTRIM PhD Students have full access to the VLAG courses. To create more awareness among PhD students on the entire research portfolio of NUTRIM and to stimulate informal interaction between our staff, MSc and PhD Students on a bi-weekly base, Capita Selecta are organized during which NUTRIM senior scientists provide state-of-the-art lectures on their area of expertise. All courses given are evaluated instantaneously and updated if appropriate on an annual basis.

Participation in small scale journal clubs, “thematic meetings” (e.g. training in knowledge transfer, valorization and patent screening, career development) is stimulated as is participation in research management and/or board and council meetings (e.g. PhD council and departmental boards). Successful participation of the PhD training program results in well-trained graduates who have developed an integrated view on most advanced and state-of-the-art topics in nutritional epidemiology and toxicology science, nutrition and metabolism in health and disease.

---

### NUTRIM PhD-Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUTRIM events</th>
<th>Other educational events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master Classes</td>
<td>Seminar/Lectures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capita Selecta</td>
<td>Specific or General Courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUTRIM symposium</td>
<td>International Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summerschool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• VLAG-PhD week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Educational activities
In order to obtain the above stated qualifications Maastricht University, FHML, NUTRIM and VLAG offer courses, trainings and workshops.

NUTRIM Lecture Series
In order to enhance the scientific standard of nutrition and to stimulate international exchange in this field, NUTRIM organizes five lectures yearly for which an international recognized expert in the field is invited to give a lecture and a Master class. The lectures cover all main research areas of NUTRIM and are not only aimed at a NUTRIM-wide audience but also at Dutch Universities and institutes within the field of nutrition, metabolism and toxicology, all food and pharma industry in the Netherlands and international universities and institutes within the EU region.

Master classes
The visiting Professors also give master classes for PhD Students and young Postdocs. During the Master class 6 PhD Students and Postdocs present their ongoing research followed by discussion and comment by the expert. Apart from the PhD Students presenting their research other PhD Students are welcome to be present. Apart from the scheduled lectures and master classes Professors visiting Maastricht University at the occasion of a dissertation defense by being a corona member will be invited to give a lecture and a master class.

Annual NUTRIM Symposium
Each year a NUTRIM Symposium is organized in November for all NUTRIM-researchers, PhD Students and support staff. For this day an (inter)national expert is invited to give a Key lecture for a NUTRIM-wide audience. NUTRIM-PhD Students are encouraged to present a poster of their ongoing research. A jury selects the winning posters for the Poster Presentation Prizes.

Capita Selecta
In order to create more awareness among PhD students on the entire research portfolio of NUTRIM all 1st and 2nd year PhD Students are encouraged to participate in the NUTRIM Capita Selecta. The importance of broad education of NUTRIM PhD Students in health and nutrition was also stressed during VLAG’s reaccreditation by the Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). Leading institutional scientists provide state-of-the-art lectures on the area of their expertise including their own data. The lectures are organized in two modules and comprise a total of approximately 24 lectures. Each lecture takes 45 minutes followed by 15 minutes of discussion. The Capita Selecta comprise of 2 modules of approx. 10 lectures each. The modules can be attended in random sequence. Each module is completed by an exam. Attendance of at least 16 lectures exams is required for obtaining a certificate.

Research line meetings
Each research line organizes research meetings for research and support staff and for PhD Students. Researchers / PhD Students give a presentation of their ongoing research followed by discussion. Even from the very start of a PhD Student’s employment he or she is involved in presenting about his/her research.

Literature clubs
PhD Students are encouraged to join literature clubs organized by their (common) supervisor(s) so as to be informed of new developments shown in recent publications. Literature clubs gather at least once a month to discuss recent publications. If there is no literature club in a specific area, it is recommended to start one.

FHML Courses
The faculty of health, Medicine and Life Sciences offers a wide range of general support courses not only for PhD Students in the following subjects:
• General supportive subjects e.g. Career development, etc.
• Research methods
• Statistics
• (Communicating and writing in) Scientific English
• Biomedical skills training (e.g. working with lab animals)

Temporary stay at a research institute abroad
Through the structured (inter)national collaboration and since many researchers have bilateral contacts with other institutes, national as well as international, it may be possible to arrange a ‘Visiting PhD Student-ship’, a kind of traineeship of maximally 6 months. Working at such a setting broadens the view, is very informative and offers important contacts. It is also a way of working on a PhD Student personal network.

VLAG Graduate School
(Advanced Studies in Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology, Nutrition and Health Sciences
VLAG specific courses
Since NUTRIM research is very broad, from molecular level to behavioral science level it is
difficult to organize specific courses relevant to all NUTRIM PhD Students. It is therefore advised to frequently visit http://www.vlaggraduateschool.nl/, the website of the Graduate School VLAG of Wageningen University in order to find interesting specific courses. The graduate school organizes a large number of discipline-specific advanced courses. Topics covered by these courses are areas of particular interest to the research groups within VLAG. Some courses are given annually, but most courses are organized every two or three years. These courses are open to VLAG PhD students and external participants. All courses are given in English. Since NUTRIM participates in VLAG NUTRIM PhD Students are allowed to attend the VLAG courses at the same fee as VLAG PhD Students. Some of the VLAG courses are organized / take place in Maastricht.

VLAG PhD Week
All NUTRIM / VLAG PhD Students participate (compulsory) in the VLAG PhD Week for 1st year PhD Students. Starting PhD Students receive an invitation for the next coming up PhD Week through the NUTRIM office. The course fee is paid by NUTRIM.

3.3 | Support

3.3.1 | PhD Student Coordinator

PhD Students’ Coordinator Dr. Roger Godschalk, Assistant Professor, Department of Toxicology, is NUTRIM’s PhD Students Coordinator. The PhD Students Coordinator monitors the continuity of progress of each individual PhD Student using the NUTRIM progress monitoring procedure, approves the supervision and education plans within 3 months after employment of a PhD Student and ensures their annual adaptation. He furthermore acts as an ombudsman for the PhD Students, exercising a critical attitude towards all parties involved (PhD Student, mentor, supervisor, program leader) and, if necessary, meeting with personnel consultants. He coordinates a program of high-quality special courses, he represents the School in the Interfaculty PhD Students Committee (IPC) and he is a member of NUTRIM’s Council.

3.3.2 | NUTRIM PhD Students’ Council

NUTRIM’s PhD Students Council is a committee representing the PhD students from all four NUTRIM Research Line. PhD student coordinator Dr. Roger Godschalk is chairman, Secretary is Mrs. Yvonne Sondeijker. Meetings are held every 3 months. To ensure continuity in the council each research line is represented by two PhD Students, who will in their fourth year approach suitable candidates for their replacement. The aim of the PhD council is to inform the NUTRIM associated PhD students about issues that are discussed at School level, and to take care that PhD issues, like supervision and courses, are brought to the School Council’s attention. This will be accomplished by staying in contact with the NUTRIM Council, the Interfaculty PhD Committee (IPC), the national PhD council (‘Landelijk AIO-overleg’, LAIOO), the general PhD society Provum and of course all the PhD students that are affiliated with NUTRIM. The NUTRIM PhD Council has an advisory role towards the institute council. Besides, the PhD coordinator attends the School Council meetings. When advice is needed from specific advisors, they can incidentally be invited to attend the PhD Students Council meeting. If any PhD Student has as issue for discussion, or wants to comment on issues, he/she is very welcome to approach one of the members.
4 | Graduation

By writing a PhD dissertation a PhD Student will develop into a well-equipped researcher and learn how to conduct high-quality scientific research. The PhD dissertation and all submitted/published papers must be in English.

End-terms are clear from the start of the PhD programme and are communicated to the PhD student by the (co)promoters and PhD coordinator. Once the team of promoters judges the PhD dissertation of sufficient quality, it is presented to a review committee consisting of several independent assessors, assembled by the promoter. This review committee will assess the quality of the dissertation and will decide whether the dissertation is of sufficient quality to be defended at Maastricht University.

For the exact admission procedure of dissertation defense, see 'Attainment of doctoral degrees' at www.promotiewijzer.nl. The whole approval procedure, starting with submission of the dissertation to the review committee and ending with the PhD defense ceremony, takes at least 20 weeks. Estimated printing costs for printing the dissertation in the Netherlands is 2000 euro. Participants are free to choose where they have the dissertation printed. Maastricht University supports financially by reimbursing € 0.36 per page of the ten dissertation copies you have to send to the Deans’ Office.

The following text has to be included in the dissertation:

‘The research presented in this dissertation was conducted at NUTRIM School for Nutrition, Toxicology and Metabolism of Maastricht University which participates in the Graduate School VLAG (Food Technology, Agrobiotechnology, Nutrition and Health Sciences), accredited by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences’. The logos of NUTRIM and VLAG should be added as well.

Maastricht University offers a preparation course ‘Defending your PHD dissertation’, see: www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/main/sitewide/content/defendingyourphddissertation.htm

For information on PhD matters such as dissertation, printing costs etc. go to: www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/main/research/postgraduateresearch/researchtraining1/practicalmatters.htm

5 | Your life after a NUTRIM PhD

5.1 | Career perspectives

In the PhD Students Progress Questionnaire / Appraisal and Personal Development Plan (POP) both PhD student and supervisor(s) are asked to discuss the future career perspectives of the PhD Students as of the second year of the programme. It is of great importance to know about the (inter)national career possibilities. (Inter)national cooperation as described under 5.10 Quality offers sometimes jobs, PhD Students may use of the (international) network of their supervisors. Also supervisors encourage the PhD Students to attend Career Events that are organized every year. This goes also for Postdocs. Furthermore PhD Students are stimulated to apply for a Kootstra Talent Fellowship. This will cover one year salary as a Postdoc. During this period grant applications can be written and submitted leading to a follow-up job.

5.2 | Alumni

NUTRIM keeps record of its graduated PhD Students. Figures about their jobs are published in the annual reports. At specific occasions, such as the Annual NUTRIM Symposium or a congress organized by NUTRIM etc. alumni are invited. Graduated PhD Students are kindly requested to send information on their next job to y.sondeijker@maastrichtuniversity.nl
6 | Helpful links and contact information

Dr. Roger Godschalk, PhD Students Coordinator
T: +31-43-3881104, E: r.godschalk@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Prof. Annemie Schols, NUTRIM Director
T: +31-43-3875046 / 3881476, E: a.schols@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Mrs. Yvonne Sondeijker, NUTRIM contact for PhD Students
T: +31-43-3882117, E: y.sondeijker@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Prof. Ronald Mensink, Research Line 1 Leader
T: +31-43-3881308, E: r.mensink@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Prof. Ad Masclee, Research Line 2 Leader
T: +31-43-3875019, E: a.mascllee@mumc.nl

Prof. Luc van Loon, Research Line 3 Leader
T: +31-43-3881397, E: l.vanloon@maastrichtuniversity.nl

Prof. Frederik-Jan van Schooten, Research Line 4 Leader
T: +31-43-3881100, E: f.vanschooten@maastrichtuniversity.nl

For UM information on a PhD track from start to finish go to:
www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/show/id=6488698/langid=42

www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/nutrim

Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice: Principles of good scientific teaching and research (scroll down to the bottom of the page)

Appendices

Appendix 1 | NUTRIM PhD Students Progress Questionnaire / Appraisal and Personal Development Plan (POP) (to be completed by PhD Student)

Form:
www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/institutes/fhml/nutrim/aboutnutrim/informationfornutrimstaff.htm

Appendix 2 | Supervision and Education Plan

Form Personal Research Plan and Training and Supervision Plan:
www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/web/institutes/fhml/nutrim/aboutnutrim/informationfornutrimstaff.htm

Appendix 3 | Categories of courses and credit points

Category required
1: Discipline-specific activities: courses, symposia, seminars congresses, NWO meetings etc. nationally as well as internationally 45
2: General support courses
   General support courses like English, statistics, presenting, project management, PBL training etc. organized within Maastricht University or elsewhere
3: VLAG/NUTRIM activities
   Capita Selecta, Annual NUTRIM Symposium, VLAG-PhD Week, research line meetings, research meetings, literature clubs 70
4: Free category
   Credit points in this category are obtained by following extra education in 1 of the 3 other categories, or by writing a MEC/DEC application or a research proposal or by performing administrative activities such as being a member of NUTRIM’s PhD Students Council, U-Council or F-Council, chairman PhD Students meetings 35

Supervision
80

Total 290 credit points (≈41.43 ECT)
For all categories applies: 1/2 a day = 1 point;  
- For presentations (poster or oral), 3 extra credit points are obtained;  
- Attending the Capita Selecta = 12 points (when complete participation);  
- Research line meetings are 10 credit points per year;  
- Writing a MEC / DEC application: 5 credit points;  
- Writing a research proposal: 5 credit points;  
- As to administrative activities: Only the above mentioned tasks yield credit points;  
- Visiting another (foreign) institution yields 1 credit point per day, with a maximum of 60 credit points.  
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) = the NUTRIM system divided by the factor 7.

**Appendix 4 | Interview with Roger Godschalk, PhD Students Coordinator and Tine van de Weijer, PhD Student “Pillar of support for NUTRIM PhD Students”**

Each year approx. 20 new PhD candidates begin their research at one of the departments of NUTRIM. Some 115 PhD Students are active at NUTRIM at any one time. To ensure that their interests are well looked after, but also that they have someone to turn to if they have problems for example with their supervisor, NUTRIM has a PhD Students’ coordinator and PhD Students’ Council. Roger Godschalk is the former, while Tineke van de Weijer is one of the eight members of the latter. Below, they explain a little about the “NUTRIM family”.

Roger Godschalk is genetic toxicologist at the Health Risk Analysis and Toxicology Department. “I look at how chemicals in our environment can damage DNA, and what role nutrition plays in this.” Almost three years ago he was asked to take on the extra job of PhD Students’ coordinator. “Right from the start I felt that it would be highly rewarding. I enjoy working with young researchers; at 38 I myself still feel pretty young. You really can support them in their development. It only takes a few hours each month to keep things running smoothly, but that’s not the intention. I want to take things to the next level.”

The PhD Students’ Council comprises two PhD candidates from each of the NUTRIM research lines. When a new representative from her Department of Human Biology was being sought for the council Tineke van de Weijer was inspired to put herself forward. She hopes to obtain her doctorate in 2012 on the harmful effects of fat accumulation in the heart among people with diabetes. “During my studies I’ve also been involved in organizational and administrative matters. There are usually only very few people who want to do that, but I feel it’s important that individual interests are looked after. I also attend the meetings of the Daily Board of the department so I get to find out things that I otherwise wouldn’t know about as a PhD Student. That interests me.”

**Trust person**

The tasks of the PhD Students’ Coordinator are varied. “I organize courses, workshops and master classes for the PhD Students – in other words, PhD Students’ education. Sometimes ideas for these are brought up during the PhD Students’ Council meetings, and it’s my job to implement them. I chair the council meetings, and am also the trust person for the PhD Students. If they have any problems, they can come to me. And I represent the PhD Students in the NUTRIM School Council, which advises the director. Finally, we have a progress monitoring form that all PhD candidates complete each year together with their supervisor. I use these forms to keep my finger on the pulse for each PhD Student: how are they developing, are there any problem areas, how do they perceive the quality of supervision, and so on.”

The PhD Students’ Council, too, represents the interests of the 120 PhD Students. It helps to organize the Annual NUTRIM Symposium where all PhD candidates can present their research with a poster. And the council is also readily accessible to all PhD Students. “If they have problems with their supervisor because they can’t talk about the workload, for example, or about taking their many holiday hours, they can come to us too”, explains Tineke. “Generally speaking the professors in Maastricht are very accessible, but there are exceptions, and this is not always reported in the progress monitoring form which you fill in together with the supervisor. After all, you have to work together for several more years.”

Roger: “Mainly to deal with this particular issue, I’m currently working with the council to develop a mini-questionnaire which we want to use from time to time to analyze the work satisfaction of our PhD Students. Plenty of attention is already being paid to performance, but enjoying your work is just as important.”

**Rights and obligations**

And Roger has even more plans to better organize PhD Students’ affairs. He has already ensured that the progress monitoring form is available in English, and that every six months an introductory meeting is held for new PhD Students, where they can meet him. “I draw their attention to their rights and obligations. One of their rights, for example, is to take courses. There are PhD Students who obtain their doctorate without having completed any course at all. I think that’s a pity.” Tineke adds: “That really
shouldn’t happen. There are courses, for example, on statistics or writing in English. That’s all part of your personal development, what being a PhD Student is also partly about.” Roger: “They’re given the opportunity to develop into a full edged academic; they simply have to grasp this opportunity with both hands. It would also be a good thing if supervisors were to be more supportive of courses lasting several days. These are too often viewed as a burden rather than a benefit.” Tineke: “And I believe that the VLAG graduate school, which NUTRIM is part of, could be published even better among PhD 20 candidates. They can obtain a VLAG certificate with their dissertation.”

Roger: “That’s right - many qualify for, but don’t take up the opportunity.” Tineke: “If you want to pursue a career in nutrition research, it really does add value. It proves that you’ve achieved something in your specialist area.” Since Roger took up the job of PhD Student coordinator, his involvement in NUTRIM has increased considerably. Tineke: “I think that first and foremost you belong to your department where you work each day, and that belongs to the School. You’re in a family in your department, and that department belongs to the NUTRIM family.” Roger: “That’s a good comparison. I think NUTRIM is a great family to belong to.” Tineke: “And some people always have closer ties to their family than others.”