



# News Special

1 July 2011

---

In this *WIAS News Special* we would like to share with you a number of interesting developments within WIAS during the past 6 months:

- Re-accreditation of WIAS by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)
- Application for Graduate Programme of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)
- Results WIAS PhD candidate supervision survey
- Talents and Topics: Round 3
- Announcements from the Education Committee
- Courses and seminars

We look forward to another exciting 6 months in 2011, and we hope that you have a great summer holidays!

## Re-accreditation WIAS by the KNAW

Once every six years, all graduate school of Wageningen University must apply for (re-)accreditation by the KNAW. Through this procedure, graduate schools obtain an independent quality stamp. WIAS applied for re-accreditation in December 2010 by submitting an application describing the research and education programme of the graduate school. This application was evaluated by the Research School Accreditation Committee (ECOS) of the KNAW and in June 2011 we received a letter congratulating us on our re-accreditation for the coming 6 years. The committee said: "the training and supervision programme and the organisation of the graduate school are excellent".

## WIAS application for NWO Graduate Programme

In February 2011, WIAS applied for the NWO Graduate Programme. This programme is closely related to our own Research Master and aims to provide funding for excellent PhD project proposals written by MSc students. The comments of the external referees in response to our proposal were very positive. In total, 49 graduate schools submitted a proposal, which made the competition heavy between schools. Unfortunately, our proposal was not selected. At the moment we are gathering information about why our proposal was not selected, and we plan to resubmit at the beginning of next year.

## Results WIAS PhD candidate supervision survey

In October 2010 a supervision survey was held among all PhD candidates. This survey contained several background questions about the PhD candidate and their supervisors, a short answer section about organisation and quality of supervision, and a long answer section about highly valued aspects and bottlenecks in supervision. There were 69 respondents, which corresponds to approximately 50% of the total WIAS PhD population. From this survey it appears that 90% of the PhD candidates are overall satisfied with their supervision. Several bottlenecks that were mentioned are availability of supervisors for meetings and questions, preparation of supervisors at meetings, and enthusiasm and commitment to the PhD project. An important conclusion from this survey is that supervision must be tailor-made, based on the needs of the individual PhD candidate. Furthermore, it is important that a mismatch does not occur between the expectations of the supervisor and the expectations of the PhD candidate with respect to supervision. Recommendations resulting from this survey are currently being discussed with the WIAS Board, Education Committee and WAPS-council.

## Talents and Topics: Round 3

The third round of the Talents and Topics programme was recently completed by 8 enthusiastic researchers. There were 7 participants from every corner of the Animal Science Group, including 1 from

IMARES, 2 from Wageningen Livestock Research, 1 from CVI and 3 from the Department of Animal Sciences, including two PhD candidates in their fourth year. The 8<sup>th</sup> participant of Round 3 was from Utrecht University. Three elements of the programme were especially well evaluated: the workshop series by Philip van der Wulp, writing winning grant proposals by Johan van Arendonk and Mike Grossman, and the writing week on the island of Texel. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, all of the participants presented their project plans at the Council of Professors meeting. A number of department heads from DLO were also invited for the presentations. Coming fall WIAS will announce its plan for Talents and Topics in 2012.

### **Announcements from the Education Committee**

As of January 2011, PhD candidates are only allowed to put credits for PhD discussion groups on their TSP if these groups fulfill a number of criteria. The maximum number of ECTS that can be included is 1.5 ECTS.

A format for application of WIAS-funds for WIAS PhD courses has been developed. It is compulsory to use this format when requesting funds (see <http://www.wias.nl/newsformlinks.php#forms> )

The WIAS-EC urges PhD-students to hand in their final TSP (signed by all who are requested to do so) at least 15 weeks before the public defence date. This is as stated in the PhD timetable: <http://www.wageningenuniversity.nl/UK/informationfor/PhD+programmes/Timetable/>. It frequently occurs that TSP's are handed in far too late for approval, which may have consequences for both the PhD student (no certificate) and the chair group (15 ke penalty on the PhD compensation).

### **Courses and seminars**

WIAS courses: [www.wias.wur.nl](http://www.wias.wur.nl).

For professional skills courses, check out:

<http://www.wageningenuniversity.nl/UK/informationfor/PhD+programmes/general+courses>

*If you have any questions about this WIAS News Special please contact Patricia Huijbers (executive secretary) at [patricia.huijbers@wur.nl](mailto:patricia.huijbers@wur.nl).*