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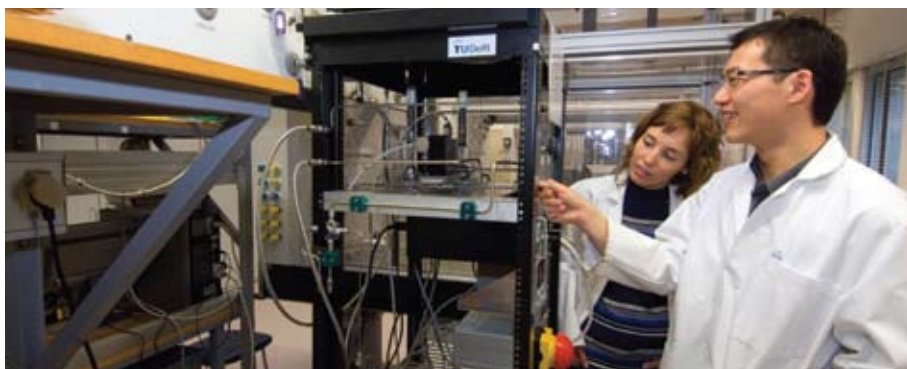
PhD in Catalysis Engineering, Delft University of Technology

Following research opportunities brought me to such a nice working environment. I decided to start a brand-new life in Holland one year ago by just following my intuition and endless curiosity. I would like to say that Holland is a country full of friendly people who are always willing to help you whenever you need it.

The excellent organization and collaboration in the CE group means I am working with lots of experts and assistance, which allows me to focus on fighting for my PhD degree. The general concept for PhD work in our group is for everyone to become an independent researcher. In addition to working hard, I am expected to pay more attention to my time after work, meaning I have to get sufficient rest and holidays. I was very impressed about how the Dutch work so efficiently. They find an excellent balance between work and rest. Because of this, I have been able to travel around Europe and experience a different lifestyle during my one-year stay.

Meeting various people from different countries is the best part of my Dutch life. I have been surrounded by a bunch of Spanish and Portuguese friends. I feel like we belong to the same community, probably because we all work in a foreign country. I feel there is always an invisible power that connects us and helps us support each other to pursue our dreams.

Despite facing the occasional problems in life or study, I still believe that he who dares, wins. Being open-minded offers me more opportunity to “get into” this country. I don’t like thinking about how much I would have lost if I had hesitated to make the decision to come to the Netherlands.



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PhD in short

- Studying for a PhD degree is the next phase after completion of the master’s degree.
- It represents the first step on your way to a research career.
- On average, PhD study takes four years in which you write a dissertation based on a research question.
- In Holland, PhD degrees are only awarded by research universities.
- Some of the PhD courses are offered at graduate schools, that can be a cooperative partnership between several universities.

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The high quality of PhD research and dissertations published has earned Holland a place in the very top ranks. In fact, Holland is continental Europe's leader in international scientific research, and it ranks second in the world in terms of number of publications per researcher.

Research landscape

The Dutch research landscape is a complex system with many actors, funding mechanisms and interrelations. Research conducted in Holland ranges from fundamental research to applied research, and investigates a wide array of topics. The Minister for Education, Culture and Science is responsible for the coordination of Dutch research policy. The Minister for Economic Affairs is responsible for coordinating Dutch technology policy.

In Holland research is carried out both in the private sector, by companies, and in the public sector, by research universities and research institutes, such as:

- The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO),
- The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW),
- The Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO).

Research universities, research institutes and industry are increasingly more involved in collaborative research and innovation.

Companies and the government are the most important financial backers of scientific research in Holland. Other sponsors include medical funds, foreign companies and the European Commission. Total funding in Holland comes to 8.1 billion Euros.

www.eracareers.nl

Doctorate

In Holland, the doctorate degree (PhD) is only offered at research universities. However, since other research institutes generally work in close collaboration with these universities, students enrolled at such institutes may also be awarded the doctorate title. The major requirement for obtaining a doctorate is the completion of a dissertation that is based on original research and is publicly defended. Researching and writing a dissertation requires about four years in Holland, rather than the three years that are standard in many other countries.

All research universities award the PhD. The degree itself is handed out by the Dutch higher education institution during a traditional, centuries-old award ceremony.

In addition to the doctorate, the three engineering universities also offer design and technological design programmes in a number of engineering fields, consisting of advanced study and a personal design assignment. Technological design programmes require two years of study to complete and graduates obtain the degree of 'Professional Doctorate in Engineering (PDEng)'.

Finding a supervisor

Once you have decided to apply for a PhD position in Holland, you will have to start looking for a PhD supervisor – i.e. a professor who will support your proposal and serve as the official supervisor for your research. The best way to find a supervisor is through international networks in your field. When looking for a supervisor, you want to find someone who is working at a Dutch institution with a leading reputation in your field. You can direct your inquiry to the central information office, which can provide information about the opportunities available at the university or institute in question. Of course, your own professors are the best people to ask for advice and may have contacts at a Dutch university already.

Quality control

The supervisor is not the only person responsible for research quality. Every university has a doctoral committee that has to approve each research proposal endorsed by a supervisor. Once the research is complete and the supervisor has judged the dissertation ready for publication and oral defence, another committee of professors is appointed to read and approve the dissertation. This is the same committee that questions the candidate at the oral defence ceremony. PhD research projects and dissertations must of course always be original work, as candidates are charged with making

an original contribution to the body of knowledge in their field. The dissertation is made public and is generally important enough to be reviewed in international journals in the field.

Requirements

PhD candidates have to meet high standards. It is important that candidates begin with a solid background in the theory and methods of their field. They must have an academic background comparable to their Dutch counterparts in the same field. You will need to have a recognized master's degree. With the possible exception of the first year, candidates will receive little or no additional formal teaching. And because candidates are required to be highly independent, they must also have a good deal of self-discipline. Satisfactory knowledge of languages is another requirement. Candidates from other countries generally choose to write their dissertations in English. This requires full mastery of English idiom and grammar. These language skills must be evident before work on the dissertation begins. Given these considerations, the individual university will determine whether to admit the candidate. PhD study is governed by PhD regulations.

Funding

Almost all PhD students enrolled in Holland are given a temporary appointment or receive a grant, though students may also complete their PhD without any such grant or appointment. In that case, the PhD student must find a supervisor who is willing to guide the doctoral research. The university may charge a tuition and/or bench fee.

Some Dutch institutions charge tuition fees for enrolment and supervision. Each institution of higher education has its own way of charging for the cost of supervision and access to laboratories and other facilities. Fees also vary from one discipline to the next, depending on whether or not expensive equipment is required.

If you need an entry visa, you are advised to contact your institution to find out what to do in your particular situation and what it will mean for obtaining an entry visa.

Temporary position with salary

Research programmes run by Dutch universities, and in many cases by two or more working closely together, may include funding for PhD projects. These projects will have an existing research proposal for which the programme's organizers want to find a suitable PhD candidate to carry out the project. Applications for such PhD positions proceed much as for any job. If the organizers are seeking candidates from other countries, the position will be advertised internationally by means of notices in scientific journals, letters to places where potential candidates are studying and on the institution's own website. Candidates are then invited to apply. Students wishing to apply should contact the institution in question directly.

www.academictransfer.org

Fellowships

International organizations like the European Commission provide fellowships. Governments and employers sometimes also offer their own fellowships for PhD study abroad. In addition, some of the host institutions in the Netherlands may also have fellowship funding available.

Your own source of funding

Your inquiry should be directed to the institution you have chosen. For more information about funding you can also visit:

www.grantfinder.nl or www.eracareers.nl

More information

If you would like to know more, your best option is to contact one of the higher education institutions directly or to visit one of the following websites:

www.vsnunl.nl

www.eracareers.nl

www.studyin.nl