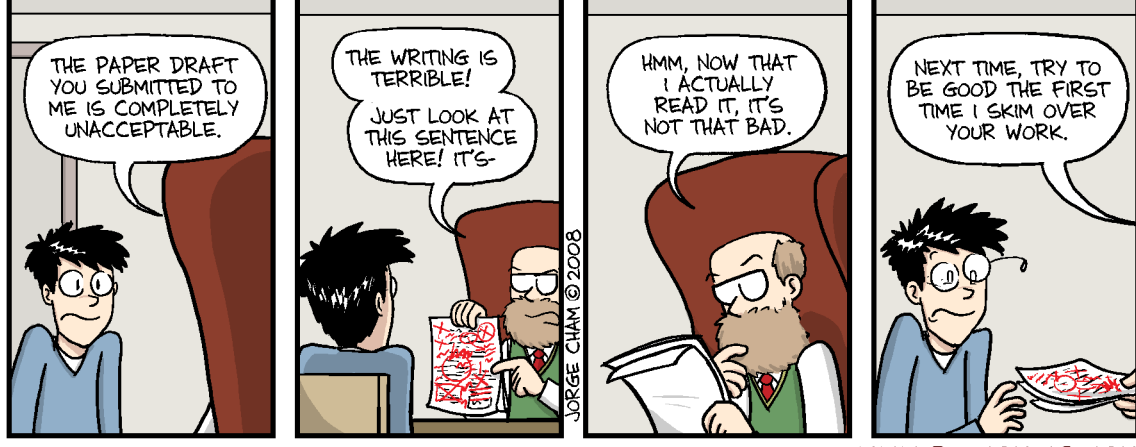




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WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Dear PhD Candidates,

A new PrOUT newsletter! We've done a lot lately, so we thought it's a good time to get you informed. For this newsletter we made a selection of relevant topics, but check out our website too for more information (www.prouit.nl). We would especially like to draw your attention to the PhD Day 2009, which will be on June 18th (reserve the afternoon in your agendas!).

News

PrOUT Seminars

On 18 February, PrOUT representatives and PhDs active in several Boards of Studies met to discuss the future development of Graduate Schools at Utrecht University. Amongst the topics we discussed were:

- The possible influence of Graduate School on research budget
- The role of Graduate Schools in the education of PhD Candidates
- The separation between graduate and undergraduate tracks and the possibility of a three-year PhD track
- The possibility of setting a maximum on the amount of teaching PhD Candidates have to do

Moreover, PrOUT invited Margreet de Lange, our contact at the University Board, to give an update on the current state of affairs concerning the development of Graduate Schools.

The arguments derived from the discussion will lead to a PrOUT position paper, advising the University Board on the future course of Graduate Schools concerning regarding PhD Candidates. This paper shall be presented on our website later on. In the mean time, PrOUT sent a letter to the University Council (U-raad) listing a number of issues that are of specific importance to PhD candidates in the new Graduate School structure. Among them are the availability of both specialized theoretical and general 'transferable skills' courses, and guidelines on teaching requirements. You can find this letter on our [website](#).



On 18 March, PrOUT organized a seminar on the Quality of PhD Supervision. Hans Sonneveld (the Netherlands PhD-centre) and Tim Mainhard (PhD on interpersonal PhD behaviour) gave short lectures, followed by a discussion exploring pitfalls and possibilities for improvement of PhD supervision quality. We plan to write a letter to the University Council communicating our conclusions. The letter and a report on the seminar will be on our website in due time.

Charter on National Research Schools

Recently, the University Board decided to stop active participation in National Research Schools. PrOUT questions the merits of this decision and wrote a charter to draw the attention to a number of valuable characteristics of national research schools that we feel should not be lost. The charter was offered to the University Board and is posted on our [website](#).

Events

PrOUT PhD Day 2009

On 18 June 2009, the PrOUT Phd Day will take place! During this day, you can enjoy workshops, lectures, information stands, drinks, food, and much more. And all this is free of charge! The PhD Day offers you the possibility to learn more about writing articles, labour conditions, printing your thesis, your career after obtaining your PhD, etc. Moreover, it is a great way to meet PhDs just like you, from other faculties as well. As a closing act, we invited cartoonist Jorge Cham to give a lecture and sign his books. Jorge Cham is famous among PhDs across the globe for his comics on the daily life of grad students. You can read more about Jorge in a recent [article](#) in Science Magazine.

This day is open for all PhD Candidates with a supervisor from Utrecht University. The event will take place at the Uithof (Ruppert building), from 12.30h until approximately 17.30h.



A lecture by Jorge Cham

Preliminary programme (free of charge):

- Lunch (from 12.30)
- Welcome by Hans Stoof, Rector Magnificus of Utrecht University
- Parallel workshop programmes & lectures (e.g. popular scientific writing, presenting,)
- An information market with stands of thesis printing companies, P&O, trade unions, confidential advisor (vertrouwenspersoon), career opportunity organizations, and much more
- Lecture by Cartoonist Jorge Cham

We shall close the day with some drinks.

More information and a detailed programme will follow soon. Check your building for the posters or surf to www.prouit.nl/activities!

Tips

Mortgage

As you may be aware, PhD students are often not allowed to take out mortgage loans. Banks usually are very reticent because of the temporary nature of PhD contracts. Utrecht University and Centraal Beheer Achmea (CBA) have recently discussed this issue, and Centraal Beheer now offers Utrecht University PhDs a mortgage loan providing them with the opportunity to buy a house. This mortgage scheme in the first instance applies to Dutch PhDs, but international PhDs from within the EU may also participate in the scheme.

Centraal Beheer will be present at the information fair at the PrOUT PhD Day (June 18th) to respond to all your questions about the PhD mortgage scheme. For more information, a letter concerning this matter is [posted](#) on our website.

HU Job Opportunities

Graduated? Now what? Have you considered working for Hogeschool Utrecht, University of Applied Sciences?

Hogeschool Utrecht, University of Applied Sciences (HU) is one of the largest universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands, with a solid reputation. HU has made huge strides in recent years, developing more Master's degree programmes and research activities. At the forefront of this expansion is a steady, strong relationship with occupational practice. 'Applicability' is a key term. The increased scope and focus has led to a growing demand for qualified graduates to work with us at HU.

Sounds like something for you? For more information please go to our [website](#) or to www.werkenbijhu.nl. Don't forget to stop by our stand on the PhD Day...

University Council Elections—Let your voice be heard!

Rebecca Nordquist

Elections for the University Council will be held this year from May 11th to 18th. The University Council is the chance for employees of the UU to have their voice heard. I'd like to specifically bring the elections to the attention of PhD students within the university. First, to make it clear that PhD students are employees and can vote in the elections and second, because PhD students are a particularly vulnerable group within the university- because of the latter, it's important that you make yourselves heard!

Why is it important for PhD students to vote?

- The University council is in direct contact with the Executive Board, and thus in a position to take concrete action in representation of vulnerable groups
- The higher the percentage of employees who cast votes in the University Council Elections, the stronger the mandate of the University Council, and the more we can do!

Ballots are cast electronically ([Vote here](#)). Click "hier", enter your SolisID, click "verkiezingsinformatie" and "stembiljet" to vote.

Help us improve!

If you have any remarks, tips or ideas concerning PrOUT, the newsletter, and/or the website, please let us know (e-mail: prouit@uu.nl)! If you are interested to join PrOUT as a representative of your faculty, please contact our [chair](#).

