

Profile of the Chair Group LAW, Wageningen University & Research

The Chair Group LAW, previously the Law and Governance Group, is one of the 21 chair groups within the Social Sciences Group of Wageningen University & Research (WUR). The Group develops knowledge and expertise and teaches on regulatory issues in the international WUR domains of food, environment and business.

The LAW Group is embedded in the section 'Sustainability Governance' of the Social Sciences Group. Two other chair groups participate in this section: Public Administration and Policy as well as Environmental Policy. These three chair groups work closely together in providing bachelor and master education and in developing joint research initiatives.

The core scientific staff of the LAW Group is predominantly international, and consists of 3 associate professors, 1 assistant professor and 2 lecturers, all trained lawyers. Currently, 3 PhD candidates are attached to the Group with a variety of research projects in the legal domain. These projects often combine regulatory issues and empirical research on topics in the WUR domains.

The Group provides academic teaching, amongst others, in the BSc programme Business and Consumer Studies (BBC), the BSc minor programme "Freedom from Hunger", and the master programmes Food Safety (mainly the specialisation Food Law and Regulatory Affairs) and Environmental Sciences. The Group contributes to these programmes with courses on food law, environmental law, global economic trade law, intellectual property rights, production chains and human rights. For the Group it is essential to be able to offer a broad education portfolio.

The Group is attached to the graduate school Wageningen School of Social Sciences, where it regularly contributes to interdisciplinary PhD training.

The research of the LAW Group focuses on law and regulation in relation to food and environment. Within these domains, the Group studies the behaviour of states, international organisations, (food) companies and consumers from a legal perspective. The Group also focuses on regulation as activities that control, order or influence the behaviour of these actors. Hence, research of the LAW Group generally combines disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches beyond traditional law. The empirical research of the Group uses a variety of research methods, stemming from economics, psychology, sociology and history (quantitative and qualitative methods). Currently, the Group is especially known for its expertise on food law, but there is a potential to redirect the research programme to a broader niche beyond food law that may include environmental law, intellectual property law, human rights, competition law, supply chain and consumer law.

The position of the LAW Group is unique in the Netherlands. The embedding of the Group in the interdisciplinary environment of WUR's social and life sciences, potentially provides exciting opportunities for legal scholars interested in interdisciplinary research. The WUR environment provides ample opportunity for linking regulatory issues with urgent questions on food safety, global equity, and sustainability.

It is key for the Group to maintain a successful research acquisition portfolio. Expertise in law in relation to food, trade, food safety and the environment is, and will remain of utmost importance in modern (global) food production and innovation – both for public and private organisations.

To successfully extend the research programme and strengthen the Group's contribution to BSc and MSc programmes of WUR, we are looking for an internationally visible scholar. The future chair holder should be an esteemed academic lawyer with a broad and interdisciplinary interest and a proven scientific track record. The chair holder should have ample experience in scientific education, management and acquisition of research projects.

<https://www.wur.nl/en/Expertise-Services/Chair-groups/Social-Sciences/Law-and-Governance-Group.htm>

Organisation of research and teaching at Wageningen University

Wageningen University controls the strategic direction of the university's research and education programme by way of a chair plan that defines the profiles of all chair groups. The chair groups are the core units of organisation, in which all primary activities of education and research are embedded. The chair groups are teams of assistant, associate and personal professors, lecturers, PhD candidates, postdocs, led by the chair holder, and supported by technical, secretarial and administrative support staff. Chair groups differ in size, but are generally small compared to research units at other universities. Chair groups often form larger units (sections) with other chair groups. In such larger units, chair groups share support staff and collaborate in teaching and joint research activities.

On average 40% of tenured staff time is available for research, including acquisition of research funding and supervision of PhD candidates. The remaining staff time is spent on teaching (BSc and MSc level) and management tasks. Newly appointed assistant and associate professors enrol in the tenure track system, that sets clear criteria for, amongst others, research productivity and quality, and the quality of education in different career steps. Chair groups participate with their staff, postdocs and PhD candidates in one or more graduate schools.

The education programmes are organised by study programme committees under the responsibility of Education & Student Affairs. The programme committees invite the chair groups to contribute to the BSc and MSc education. Chair groups are thus not in charge of the programmes. They offer the required courses to the study programmes, often in collaboration with other chair groups.

The chair holder bears responsibility for finances, personnel and the quality of education and research within the group, in dialogue with the departmental management, the graduate schools and the study programme committees. The university maintains an output-based financing system. Chair groups receive a lump sum funding from the university, while additional funding is flexible and based on the number and size of BSc and MSc courses they teach in the education programmes, on the number of PhD graduations and on externally or internally funded research and education projects.

Hence, chair groups have an interest in enhancing their participation in the BSc and MSc education programmes and in successful completion of PhD projects. For a chair group's financial stability, it is furthermore important to manage a portfolio of research acquisition from a variety of external sources, such as the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, European Union, nongovernmental organisations, governments and business.