

Double Doctorates call with the University of Oldenburg

In March 2021, the University Oldenburg and the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen adopted the Roadmap for Cooperation 2020–2030, defining the focus areas and objectives for the next ten years of collaboration.

To further strengthen this long-standing partnership, a range of innovative funding opportunities is now available. These programmes, supported by the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture and the Volkswagen Foundation *under A Programme for Excellence (Potentiale Strategisches Entfalten)*, aim to foster new joint initiatives, promote networking between the universities, and provide new thematic impetus. Designed for different target groups, the funding instruments offer multiple ways to take our collaboration to the next level.

Double Degree PhD-Programme

Supporting early career researchers is a key priority for the University of Groningen and the University of Oldenburg. We are committed to preparing young scientists for research and teaching in an international and cross-border context.

In 2026, 2027, 2028, and possibly beyond, the University of Groningen will closely collaborate with its strategic partner, the University of Oldenburg, to support joint double degree PhD programmes. The aim is to systematically expand cross-border research activities in all faculties and to culminate in joint third-party funded research projects. It is expected that the joint activities of the supervisors will extend well beyond the four-year collaboration of joint doctoral supervision.

The doctoral position will be funded for two years by the University of Oldenburg (one year by the Presidential Board, one year by the school/working group). For the two years in Groningen, applicants must secure their own funding, as there is no central funding available from Groningen.

The double degree PhD programme offered by the Universities of Oldenburg and Groningen is implemented as a sandwich model with two separate, consecutive employment contracts. There must be a joint job advertisement to ensure that there is a clear selection result.

Duration and funding

Starting in 2026, the University of Groningen will host doctoral candidates for two years of the programme, following the initial Oldenburg funding. The call will be re-advertised in 2027 and 2028 and, most likely, beyond.

Researchers at UG who intend to apply should have a clear plan for securing funding since there is no central funding at UG that covers the two-year employment period. This could be:

- Starter grant
- External funding/ grant
- Funding pieced together from different sources

Application procedure

The programme is open to researchers from all faculties.

Professors from both locations are eligible to apply, whereby the application must be submitted via the Oldenburg scientist and include the following documents:

- Completed application form, including a brief outline of the bilateral research project and a description of how it fits into the respective research profile of the Universities of Oldenburg and Groningen
- Cost commitment from the working group/school at the University of Oldenburg
- Signed letter of intent containing the funding commitment from the PI at the University of Groningen, as no central funds are available for the position on the part of the University of Groningen.

Funding applications must be submitted by 28 February 2026.

Please submit your application in electronic form via the application portal (Link follows)

In a selection meeting after the end of the application period, the selection committee, consisting of the chairwoman Prof. Dr. Katharina Al-Shamery (Vice-President for Academic Careers, Equal Opportunities and International Affairs) and other members, will decide on the funding applications received. If several applications are received, a ranking will be created.

Evaluation criteria

- Potential of the planned cooperation beyond the duration of the measure
- Feasibility of the planned project with visible results (workshops, publications, draft proposals)
- Added value for cooperation between the two universities.

Applicants will be informed of the decision as soon as possible. Once approved, the doctoral project should commence within the next six months, generally by 1 October 2026 at the latest.

For more information, please contact Susan Garthaus (s.garthaus@rug.nl) or Tim Zwaagstra (t.n.zwaagstra@rug.nl).