

PhD completion times Survey (brief) results

2024-09-24

Last OSC numbers (December 2022)

Incomplete numbers at time of data collection

Starting Year	Male	Female	Total (M+F)	Completed Y4	Completed Y5	Starting Year	Completed Y6	Completed Y7	Not yet finished	Discontinued
2015	9	5	14	7,1%	28,6%	2015	50,0%	7,1%	0,0%	7,1%
2016	22	8	30	10,0%	36,7%	2016	33,3%	3,3%	10,0%	6,7%
2017	17	7	24	4,2%	33,3%	2017	16,7%	0,0%	45,8%	0,0%
2018	12	7	19	5,3%	21,2%	2018	-	0,0%	68,4%	5,3%
2019	13	7	20	0,0%	0,0%	2019	-	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%
Total	73	34	07	5,6%	25,2%	Total	19,6%	1,9%	43,9%	3,7%

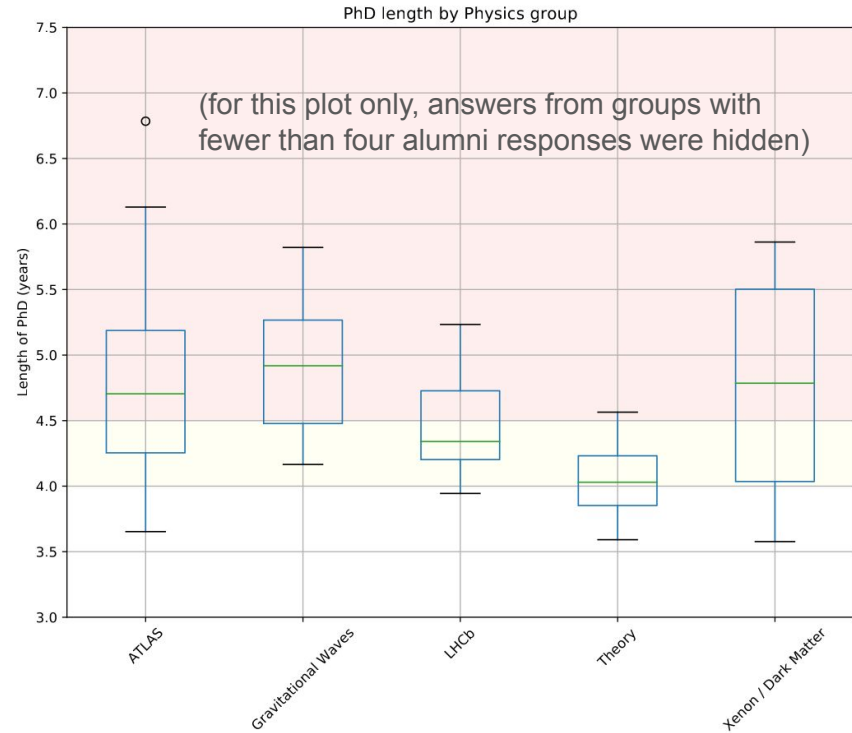
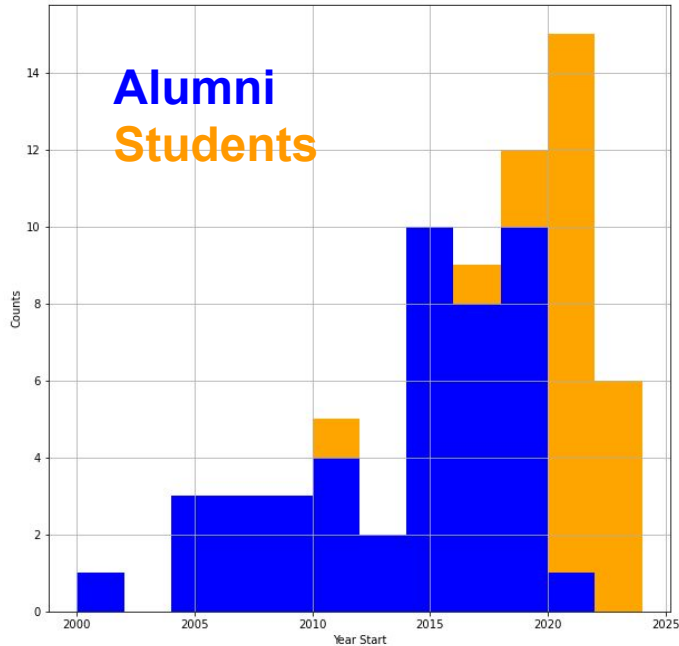
PhDs contract last **4 years**, and extensions only last **3 months** nominally.
> 50% finish in **over 5 years**, and some take considerably **longer than 5 years**.

We are waiting for up-to-date, more precise numbers for time until thesis submission. In the meantime, we circulated a **survey** to get insights into the problem.

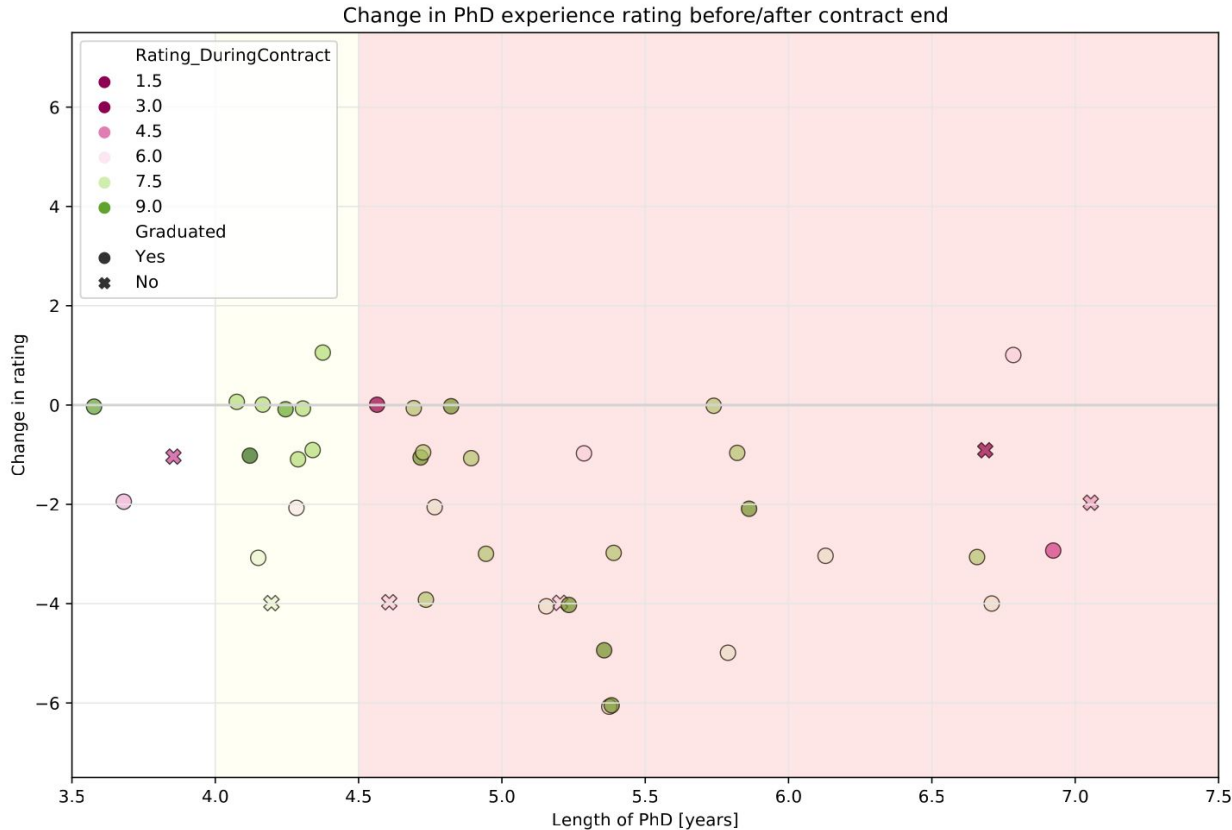
Who answered the survey? 71 responses total

Responses are split 67% alumni, 33% students.

Only the Theory group had PhD durations which matched contract + extension durations



PhD duration and effect on student experience



We show the difference in experience rating (satisfied) out of 10, between before and after the end of the contract.

We see a median drop of 3 points.

Post-contract experience

“With the end of my contract I had to tighten the belt for my routine, dig into my savings, look for a job, ask for unemployment and do related tasks to that, while working on my thesis.”

“In my experience, you are increasingly treated as a failure and a disgrace when your PhD takes longer than the duration of your contract.”

“No clear restrictions on menial tasks and teaching work, that you can use to deny cheap labour / simple work. In the end, due to a power imbalance between your supervisor, it's difficult to decline work that does not advance your research.”

We need your help!

We are looking for supervisors or universities with a reputation for keeping their students on time, in the Netherlands or abroad. If you know of any, please let us know! We would like to organize a talk or roundtable at Nikhef to find concrete solutions to this problem. Any other initiatives you know of would also be welcome!

There are many other things we want to look into, but lack the personpower. If you want to get involved, please send us an email!

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