

**Department of Physics and Astronomy**  
**Faculty of Science, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam**

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## Introduction

As per December 2024, the Physics and Astronomy department is moving to the new VU Onderzoeksgebouw (VUO, previously known as SWT).

The move is expected to take several weeks, including the dismantling and packing of equipment in the current labs and instrumentation and then setting it back and making sure it is functional and operative in the new VUO labs. Some delays in experimental research work are thus unavoidable.

In this document the MT of the department presents a proposal for a policy concerning possible extensions of PhD contracts to compensate for delays associated to the move from W&N to VUO.

## Background

The department has been asked by the Faculty Board to cover all moving-related expenses out of its regular first money stream (1MS) budget, including personnel extensions associated to delays incurred by the moving.

All moving-related expenses should be booked in a **specific budget code**, to keep track of them. Once the moving is complete, it will be discussed to which extent Beta (and hence N&S) is compensated by the CvB for these moving-related expenses, and which part of the costs is covered by FCO.

For 2025, the department has booked **350 kEUR** to cover moving-related expenses, both personnel extensions and for equipment/instrumentation. This corresponds, for an average employer costs of a 4th year PhD of 6 kEUR per month, to around **60 PhD/months**, or what is equivalent, around **20 three-months extensions of PhD contracts**.

Extensions from 2MS/3MS projects are always possible, provided the grant provider agrees, and they remain at the discretion of the grant holder. This policy considers only extensions from the 1MS covered by the department.

We strive to provide, in a fair manner, the **same level of support to all experimental PIs moving from W&N to VUO**, while at the same time complying with our financial obligations. This policy hence does not apply to the ARNCL and Nikhef groups, neither to the Zuidas-based Theory groups.

## The proposal

- Extensions may only be granted to PhDs whose contract started **before 01/04/2025** (taken to be  $t=0$  of the move). PhD candidates starting on 01/04/2025, or later, are not eligible.
- The maximum duration of a contract extension of a PhD, due to moving-related expenses **and paid for by the department (and not by external grants)**, is **3 months**.
- In the current round, extensions can only be requested for PhD candidates whose **contract expires in 2025**.
- **Requests can be made at any moment in 2025. The MT will regularly review the requests made and provide feedback.**
- For each PhD whose contract extension is requested, the PI should submit to the MT via Jordi a brief **justification of the incurred delay in research activities and an explanation of how this extension is necessary to ensure submission of the PhD manuscript** before the end of the (extended) contract.
- The MT will review these applications and in case green light is given, the PI can extend the contract of the PhD using 1MS funding associated with the move.
- For PhDs whose contract expires in 2026 and beyond (and with start date before 01/01/2025) we **plan to provide the same type of extensions**, subject to funding availability. Final confirmation can only take place once our budget for 2026 (and beyond) is approved by the Faculty Board. **Do keep track of all delays in the months before/during/after the move, so that the requests can be made in case funds are available after 2025.**
- Due to limitations in our budget, no extensions to postdocs can be offered at this point. Nevertheless, PIs are asked to document delays due to the move affecting postdocs and the applied mitigation measures (e.g. extensions from other sources) since we may get some (partial) compensation for these costs at a later stage.