**Profile of a successful PhD student**

Research has shown[1] that certain characteristics of graduate students are important for successfully completing a PhD. A selection of these characteristics is presented below.

- <u>Practical Intelligence</u>, i.e. being efficient in your work, setting and meeting goals for yourself, willing and able to make decisions for yourself, if necessary.

- <u>Informal knowledge</u>, i.e. procedural knowledge about the field of research, which you get by talking with people at the department, at scientific meetings and conventions, etc.

- <u>Patience</u>, as thorough research and the writing of articles and chapters generally do not go very fast, and you have to be able to endure this for at least four years.

- <u>Willingness to work hard</u>, and self-discipline.

- <u>Persistence</u>, also in the face of frustration, e.g. when you can't get your first article published.

- <u>Intellectual curiosity</u>, a real interest in the field of research you are going to be involved in, and openness to new ideas.

- <u>No fear of failure</u>, as this can impede your ability to do any experiment at all, to give a presentation, or to make a final draft of a paper. Not being a perfectionist.


According to the VSNU, the Association of Dutch Universities, the job profile for a PhD student comprises, in the official University Job Classification system (UFO), the following competences (or skills)[2]:

- <u>Conceptual capacity</u>, the ability to formulate views, ideas and concepts based upon complex information, and constructing conceptual frameworks or models.

- <u>Presenting</u>, clearly presenting ideas and information, taking the target group into account.

- <u>Planning and organizing</u>, surveying your work, setting goals and priorities. Planning the activities, time and resources needed.

- <u>Monitoring</u>, checking and monitoring the progress made.

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[1] e.g., Lovitts, B.E. (2008). The transition to independent researcher: Who makes it, and who doesn't, and why. *The Journal of Higher Education, 79*, 296-325.

[2] see http://www.vsnu.nl/files/documenten/CAO/Competence%20Instrument%20Dutch%20Universities%20april%202011.pdf (English) or http://www.vsnu.nl/files/documenten/CAO/2010.12.01%20Competentie%20Instrument%20VSNU.pdf (Nederlands). The VSNU website also presents behavioural indicators of these competences, examples of questions to ask about them in interviews, and tips for their (further) development.