



Research School for Transport,
Infrastructure and Logistics

Course Societal Relevance of your PhD Research

Date:	4 December 2023
Time:	10:00 – 15.30 h.
Location:	TU Delft
Course leaders:	Dr. Jan Anne Annema and Dr. Niels van Oort
Guest lecturer:	Drs. Nanja Piek Deputy Head Sustainable Mobility, Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management
Days:	0.5
ECTS:	0.25 (attendance only) - 1 (attendance + passing assignment)
Course fee:	Free for TRAIL/Beta/OML members, others please contact the TRAIL office
Registration:	www.rstrail.nl

Objectives

General: help PhD students to understand and describe the social (including policy) relevance of the results of their PhD thesis.

Specific:

- To gain insights into the (policy and wider societal relevant) impacts of the transport system;
- To gain insights into the determinants for the impacts of the transport system;
- To gain insights into the relevance of the PhD Students' own research for society and policy.

Purpose and homework per item in the program (see next page)

- Introduction. **Purpose** to get to know each other a little bit. Name, thesis subject, your favorite book and why this book is your favorite. **Homework**: none
- Debate about an example. **Purpose**: by starting with a discussion we want to direct the course atmosphere to a 'self' and an 'each other' learning course. We have some knowledge but we are sure that the PhD students have superior knowledge themselves which is worth sharing. **Homework**: read the document 'Meta-analysis and Price Elasticity' beforehand. Think about the answers to the questions posed on top of page 1 of the document beforehand also.
- Policy relevance of research: an overview. **Purpose**: giving PhD student some theoretical background. **Homework**: read 'traffic and transport system' beforehand. Read 'policy relevance transport' beforehand.
- Tips and tricks. Purpose: giving some tips and tricks which can be used in the exercise. **Homework**: none
- Exercise in class. **Purpose**: already practicing with the 'policy relevance' assignment.

Program (preliminary)

10:00 – 10:30	Introduction, discussing ‘the homework’ of participants	Niels van Oort and Jan Anne Annema / All participants
10:30 – 11:00	Discussion: does every thesis have to be relevant to society and policy? A first taste of societal and policy relevance: What do you like about the policy-related texts?: - What do you dislike?; - How could the conclusion section be improved to make this section more policy-relevant?	All participants, discussion
11:00 – 11:15	Break	
11:15 – 12:15	Societal and policy relevance: What is it?	Niels van Oort
12:15 – 13:00	Lunch	
13:00 – 13:40	Societal and policy relevance: the perspective of a policy-maker	Nanja Piek
13:40 – 14:15	Policy relevance of research: a brief ‘theoretical’ overview	Jan Anne Annema
14:15 – 14:30	Break	
14:30 – 14:45	Tips and tricks , inspiration to make your thesis policy-relevant	Niels and Jan Anne / Interactive
14:45 – 15:15	Exercise: brief start with the assignment	Interactive
15:15 – 15:30	Assignment, questions, and discussion	Niels and Jan Anne / Interactive

Assignment

PhD students write a section for their PhD thesis about the policy relevance of their research, or even societal relevance. If the section is at the level of what is needed for their thesis they will get the diploma. Read the sections of some other theses for inspiration (positive or ‘negative’).

Course material

Distributed during the course.

Prerequisite

No specific requirements. PhD students in their final year might benefit most from the course because they probably need to report on the societal relevance of their work in their thesis. But all PhDs are welcome. The course can even provide inspiration to recently started PhD students who write their research proposal.