

Charter Reorganizations & Workspace reductions

It seems a never-ending process: the reorganization and restructuring of the distribution of the space in our university's buildings. Since these reorganizations are mainly driven by cutting costs, it is not surprising that the average workspace of an employee —and PhD candidates are no exception— is reduced. Although this process seems necessary to lower the financial load for our university, reductions in workspaces of employees are bound by legal limits.

The minimum requirements for a workspace are specified in the 'arbeidsomstandighedenbesluit' and can be found via www.arboportaal.nl, an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment (unfortunately the website is only available in Dutch). In general, your employer should provide a healthy, clean, and pleasant environment to work in. To end debates on what a 'healthy, clean, and pleasant environment' is, minimum requirements in terms of space are specified.

The norms for an office-workspace are:

- A workspace of 4 m² per employee
- Space for a monitor: 1 m² for a flat screen, 2 m² for a CRT-monitor
- Surface for reading and writing: 1 m²
- Space for technical drawings/sketches/drafts: 1 m²
- Freestanding cabinet (with or without drawers): 1 m²

To calculate the minimum dimensions of your workspace, just add the applicable workspace per employee, per monitor, per cabinet, etc. If the workspace suffers from poor conditions such as noise, hot or cold airflows from heating, air-conditioning, or vents, the rooms should be more spacious than the minimum norms.

Although employees may share facilities such as cabinets and space for technical drawings, a general rule of thumb is to have at least 7 m² per employee in a room. If you feel that your workspace does not meet the criteria above, you can turn to the 'ARBO'-employee within your faculty. His or her contact details should be on your faculty's website, otherwise the PhD coordinator of your faculty, your advisor, or a member of your PhD council can direct you to him or her.

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Please note: the specifications above are translated from www.arboportaal.nl, the exact rules and regulations are specified in chapter 3 of the 'arbeidsomstandighedenbesluit'. Although PrOUt did everything to avoid confusion while translating this text, the original Dutch text is always decisive.

