

The VLAG Graduate Programme

A genuine opportunity for talented MSc students to work on their **own** ideas!

8 January 2020, Karin Schroën



Take the candidates on a journey defined by themselves

- Familiar with scientific research (MSc thesis)
- Pursue a career in science
- Realistic scientific idea ➔ Grant proposal
- Completely new dimension!



How to keep highly gifted students motivated?

- Extra activities (organised by the VLAG team)

Within Research Master Cluster:

- Write a proposal of ~ 10 pages in 2 months
- Interactive program (self organisation & responsibility)
- Skills (personality test, presenting, pitching, peer review, feedback, writing, argumentation, rebuttals etc.)
- Background (science, publications, golden egg check)
- Work together with a personal coach on research topic

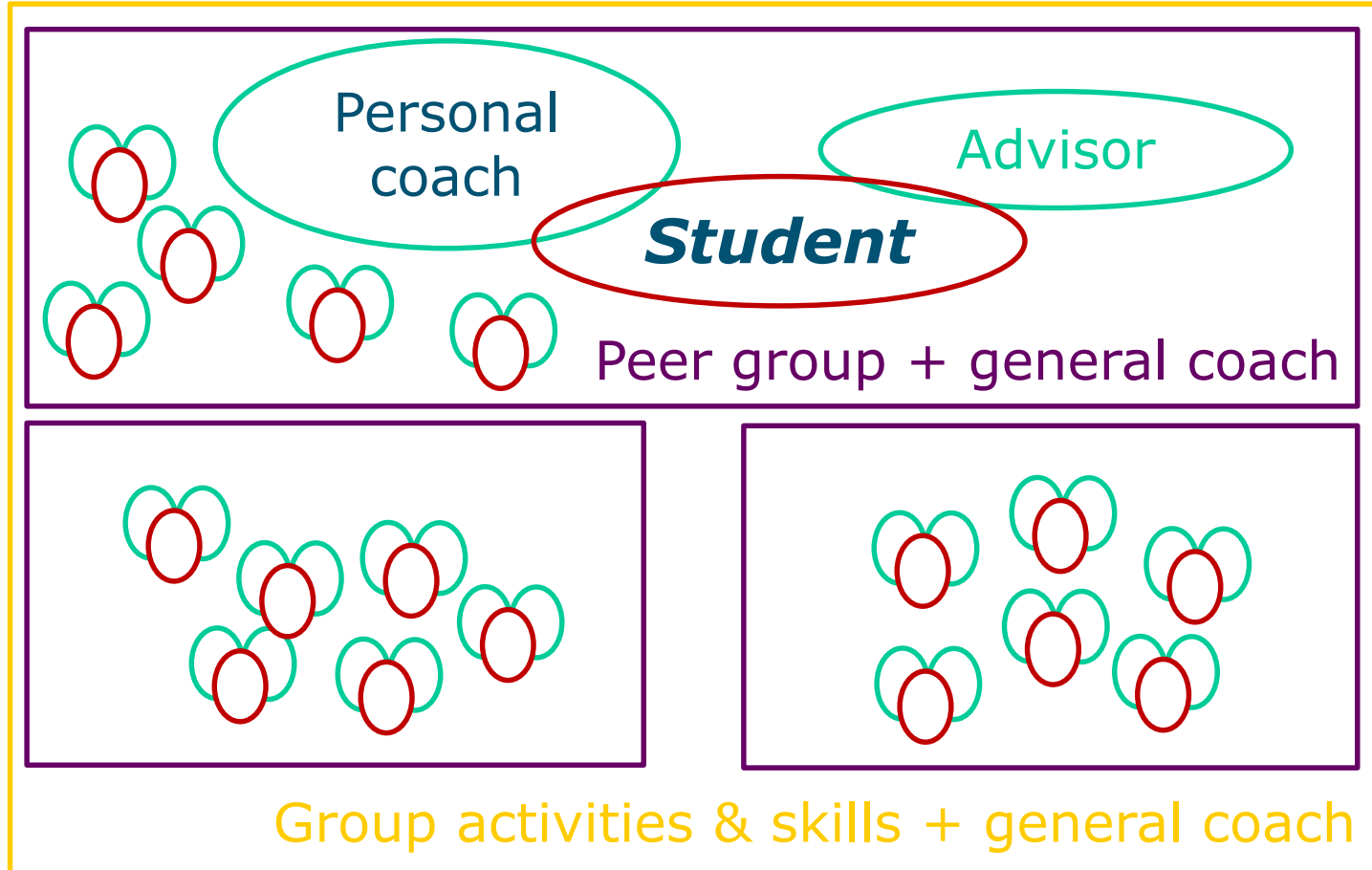
Schedule & assessment in RMC / graduate program

Tentative

- After 1 week: pre proposal < 1 page
- After 4 weeks: core of proposal 4-5 pages
- After 7 weeks: full proposal 11 pages
- Later: defence of proposals



Student organisation



Needed to make this a success

- An expert
- Skills in writing and defending a scientific research proposal
- Background information on how science works
- *Motivation!*
- *Structure!*



What worked excellently

- The group was great
- Clever and dedicated candidates
- Learned a lot from each other; amazing!
- Very professional
- Genuinely interested in each other's topics
- Feedback was honest and on the level
- The team really wanted to help each other
- Even just before the final decision was made!



To see talents grow
and shine is a
privilege!

*I hope to also see you
do that*

Thank you!



VLAG Graduate Programme 2020

Information meeting 8 January 2020

Karin Schroën, Anouk Geelen



VLAG Graduate Programme 2020

- Funding of two PhD positions
- Stimulate talented MSc students of WU to do a PhD within one of the VLAG groups
- Interested students who fulfil the criteria have to apply for the programme
- We will select 10-15 students who will take part and can submit their PhD proposal
- Next to the regular Research Master Cluster, the students are expected to take part in some additional VLAG-specific learning activities

VLAG-specific learning activities

- A meeting with one or more PhD candidates to ask questions about being/becoming a PhD
- Informal meetings with the other selected candidates and VLAG staff to exchange ideas about the research, being a PhD, and preparing for the call, and the presentation
- Additional personal skills training offered by VLAG and given by experienced trainers to better prepare for the job

Graduate School VLAG

- VLAG's mission: to develop the careers of young researchers and to promote research collaboration in Biobased, Biomolecular, Food and Nutrition Sciences
- Research Theme's and participating groups
 - Chemistry for Life Sciences and Bio-based Economy (BCT, BIC, BIP, BNT, ORC and PCC)
 - Food Science & Technology (FCH, FHM, FPE, FPH and FQD)
 - Human Nutrition & Health (GN, HAP, NBH, ND, NMG and SSEB)
 - Modelling & Design of Biological Systems (BPE, HMI, MIB, SSB and TOX)
- For more information: www.vlaggraduateschool.nl

You can participate if...

- You are a (former) student at WUR (graduation between June 2019 and December 2020) from one of the eligible MSc programmes (MBF, MBS, MBT, MFQ, MFS, MFT, MML, MNH)
- You are highly motivated to start a scientific career
- You belong to the best students of your cohort based on your (BSc and MSc) grades
- You have the support of a coach who is affiliated with VLAG
- You will submit an original research proposal for a PhD project, written by you on a topic of your choice, which fits the VLAG research domain, before 9 May 2020
- You are able to start the awarded PhD project in 2020

From 2021 onwards

Only students who have participated in the course *YWU-60312 Research Master Cluster: Proposal Writing* (before YEI 60312) will be eligible to submit a proposal to apply for the PhD position(s) available from the VLAG Graduate Programme

Apply to participate in the programme

- A CV with BSc and MSc grades;
- A recommendation letter from a university staff member of one of the in VLAG participating chair groups including the (tentative) topic/title of your research;
- A letter with your motivation;
- A statement about the date of your past, current or future participation in the Research Master Cluster course (YWU 60312) if applicable.

Deadline for application: **1 February 2020**

Evaluation of the proposals I

- Only selected candidates can submit a full PhD proposal for the VLAG Graduate Program, the deadline is **9 May 2020**
- A committee existing of VLAG (associate) professors, who are not involved in any of the submitted projects or part of the same group, will assess the proposals
- Evaluation criteria
 - Quality of the candidate (40%)
 - Quality, originality, feasibility and societal relevance of the proposal (40%)
 - Fit of the proposed research within one of the VLAG research themes (20%)

Evaluation of the proposals II

- The committee will select a number of applicants (5-10) for an interview and to present their PhD project proposal
- The application form is the same form that is used in the RMC course, i.e. Application Form – NWO Open Competition Domain Science – KLEIN-1

All information and the form can be found on the VLAG website www.vlaggraduateschool.nl > Research > VLAG calls

Time schedule 2020

- Information meeting: January 8th, 13.30-14.30
- Application deadline: 1 February
- Selection of 10-15 students: between 1 February and 15 February
- Additional VLAG-specific learning activities: February – April
- Deadline to submit full PhD proposal: 9 May
- Result of the VLAG Graduate Program: ~1 June

Q&A

- What costs are funded?
 - The Graduate Programme provides the salary costs for the appointment of a PhD
- Is there any limit on how many students can apply per supporting VLAG chair group or per supporting VLAG supervisor?
 - The students have to apply to participate in the Programme. If they are selected they can plan to do their research at the group of their choice, so no limitation there. As it takes time to be the coach of such a student, we do not expect a staff member to be coaching more than one student, but we do not explicitly limit this either.

Questions

www.vlaggraduateschool.nl > Research > VLAG calls

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