VLAG Graduate Programme 2021

What is it?

The VLAG Graduate Programme involves the funding of two PhD positions and aims to stimulate talented MSc students of Wageningen University to do a PhD within one of the VLAG groups.

Applications are written and submitted by candidates who will obtain a Wageningen MSc degree between June 2020 and December 2021. The PhD candidate and his/her project must be embedded in one of the VLAG groups and thus in VLAG.

The information meeting is scheduled in May 2020 to be able to inform students in time. This makes it possible for the students to seriously consider their study planning as the Research Master Cluster course is mandatory to be able to apply for the 2021 VLAG Graduate Programme. During the Research Master Cluster course students write the PhD proposal that they have to submit to apply for the funding of the PhD project by VLAG. An ideal study planning could include an earlier start of the MSc thesis to make it possible to plan the Research Master Cluster course in the 2nd MSc year.

We ask all interested students who fulfil the criteria to apply for the programme and 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. These include:

- 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 an experienced trainer to better prepare for the job.

For more information about Graduate School VLAG, the research domain and the participating groups, please take a look at the VLAG website (www.vlaggraduateschool.nl) or Appendix 1.

Who can participate?

Participation is possible if

- You are a (former) student at WUR (graduation between June 2020 and December 2021) 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/mentor who is affiliated with VLAG (to ensure optimal coaching for your project we recommend that not more than one candidate is supervised by the same coach/mentor);
- You will participate in the course YWU-60312 Research Master Cluster: Proposal Writing (in p5 2020/2021, i.e. April-May 2021, the latest);
- 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 10 May 2021;
- You are able to start the awarded PhD project in 2021.

How to enter the VLAG Graduate Programme

If you would like to participate in the VLAG Graduate Programme, please send your application to the executive secretary of VLAG, Anouk Geelen (anouk.geelen@wur.nl) and include in your application:

- The registration form (see Appendix 2)
- A CV;
- An official list with all BSc courses you took including the grades you earned (if the grades are different from the 1-10 NL system, please supply an official explanation);
- An official list with all MSc courses you took including the grades you earned, ideally a grade for your MSc thesis is included;
- A recommendation letter from your proposed Promotor, a staff member with ius promovendi of one of the in VLAG participating chair groups;
- 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).

Deadline for application: **17 January 2021.**

Evaluation of the proposals

Only selected candidates can submit a full PhD proposal for the VLAG Graduate Programme, the deadline is **10 May 2021**.

The VLAG Board will install a committee to assess the proposals. The committee will exist of VLAG (associate) professors who are not involved in any of the submitted projects or part of the same group and represent the four VLAG Themes.

The VLAG evaluation committee will assess the submitted proposals based on:

1. Quality of the candidate (40%)
2. Quality, originality, feasibility and societal relevance of the proposal (40%)
3. The fit of the proposed research within one of the VLAG research themes (20%)

Accordingly, the committee will select a number of applicants (5-10) for an interview and to present their PhD project proposal. The exact details of the procedure will be communicated in a later stage.

The application form is based on the form that is used in the RMC course and will be made available to the selected candidates.

Time schedule 2021

- Online information session: 27 May 2020
- Application deadline: 17 January 2021
- Selection of 10-15 students: between 17 January and 1 February 2021
- Additional VLAG-specific learning activities, i.e. meeting with PhD candidates, informal meetings and additional skills training: February – April 2021
- Deadline to submit full PhD proposal for the VLAG Graduate Programme: 10 May 2021
- Result of the VLAG Graduate Programme: ~1 June 2021

Online information session

Students and staff are invited to attend an online information session on the Graduate Programme on **May 27th, 13.00-14.00**. Registration is needed, so please send an email to vlag@wur.nl with "I will join the online GP session" as subject at least 48 hours before the meeting. Technical details about the online session will be send by email at least 24 hours before the meeting.

APPENDIX 1: VLAG Research Themes and Research Groups

VLAG forms a community of research within the *Biobased, Biomolecular, Food and Nutrition Sciences*. VLAG consists of the researchers and research groups from Wageningen University (WU) and five major institutes for applied research in The Netherlands: NIZO food research, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), TNO, Wageningen Food & Biobased Research* and Wageningen Food Safety Research* (*part of Wageningen University & Research).

VLAG RESEARCH THEMES:

I - Chemistry for Life Sciences and Bio-based Economy

II - Food Science & Technology

III - Human Nutrition & Health

IV - Modelling & Design of Biological Systems

VLAG RESEARCH GROUPS:

For some of the chair groups mentioned, part of their research does not belong to VLAG but to one of the other Graduate Schools.

<u>Agrotechnology & Food Sciences</u>

Biobased Chemistry and Technology
Biochemistry
BioNanoTechnology
Bioprocess Engineering
Biophysics
Food Chemistry
Food Microbiology
Food Process Engineering
Food Quality & Design
Global Nutrition
Nutrition & Disease
Nutrition, Metabolism & Genomics
Nutritional Biology
Sensory Science & Eating Behaviour
Microbiology
Organic Chemistry
Physical Chemistry and Soft Matter
Physics and Physical Chemistry of Foods
Systems and Synthetic Biology
Toxicology

<u>Animal Sciences</u>

Host-Microbe Interactomics
Human and Animal Physiology

APPENDIX 2: Registration form VLAG Graduate Programme 2021*

To be submitted before 17 January 2021

Name	
Mentor/coach	
Chair group	
MSc programme	
Research Master Cluster course participation (start date)	
(tentative) Title of your research	
(expected) Graduation date	

** the final version of this form will become available on the VLAG website.*