



## Inhoudsopgave

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## Connecting with PhD candidates and groups!

On Monday 7 June, I received my first Covid-19 vaccination, and I hope that given the speed with which this happens currently, you will also be able to line up soon. Although I thought that this would not make a big difference, and I don't behave that much different, it was one of these tell-tale signs that we are gearing up for a new 'normal', and that is really nice since that will allow us to connect much more directly with our PhD candidates and groups than we are currently allowed to do.



At the moment, we visit the research groups participating in VLAG. Obviously, that needs to happen through a screen. Still, I enjoy these visits, since they allow me to listen to the stories of the VLAG community: the exciting new things that they have lined up (and there are a lot of new initiatives!), how they dealt with going completely digital in communication, and often limited lab access, and the changes in teaching that needed to be carried through. This also holds for the VLAG courses that are currently re-created into digital, or blended forms. It is really amazing if you think about what has been accomplished by all of you, and we at VLAG are extremely thankful that we are allowed to work for such a dedicated community of scientists. Somehow, the entire Covid situation has also brought a lot of good things to us, and I am sure that it will change the way we work forever. Although the current way of working would not be my preferred one, the fact that video calls are now part of everyone's repertoire will save me a lot of travel time.

As always there is quite a bit of news to share. First of all, we have completed a number of programs to promote talents. We have just wrapped up the graduate program, and I know that we have made two MSc students very happy with a grant that allows them to work on their own PhD project. I was

also part of the selection committee for the sandwich PhD program, and that allowed us to select six PhD candidates that will join Wageningen University to work on projects that will strengthen the bonds between their home institutes and us. Furthermore, the first PhD candidates that will work within the projects granted in the last open round, that was geared toward innovation created by our tenure trackers, have also been appointed. Besides, we have granted fellowships for visits to high-end international labs, and we hope that they can be carried out in the very near future.

What I would also like to address is that within the VLAG board we are discussing the teaching load of PhD candidates. We got representatives of the chair holders to talk to representatives from our PhD council, and that led to a good discussion within which the various aspects related to teaching were discussed openly, and more mutual understanding was created. The topic will remain high on the agenda of VLAG, and a dedicated work group will take the lead in this.

A quite different topic is the EngD program, or the Engineering Doctorate, which is new to Wageningen, but has been in place in the other technical universities in the Netherlands for quite a while. The program is meant for those interested to develop themselves further toward a 'technical designer'. They need to make high-level, creative, and innovative designs for complex design questions with a multi- / interdisciplinary character and that are geared toward enhancement of sustainable living. For this, the candidates take one year of high level courses, and spend one year on the design under supervision of an industrial, and an academic supervisor. The program will start early next year with a pilot with a limited number of candidates.

There is always a lot happening within VLAG, and it is a pleasure to share this with you. Please stay safe and healthy, and enjoy the sun!

Kind regards, also on behalf of the entire VLAG team,  
Prof Karin Schroën, Scientific Director VLAG

## From the VLAG Office

**NEW!** Are you looking for information on your PhD programme? Upon request, **the webpage with information regarding the PhD** was renewed. This [link](#) leads you to the landing page where you can find all WUR procedures and regulations for the PhD, information on funding and financial support, the PhD timeline with actions to take at the start, during and in the final phase of your PhD, and much more useful links. Have a look and let us know what you think!



The Executive Board WUR has appointed Ciarán Forde as the **new Professor and Chair-holder of the Sensory Science and Eating Behavior** group at Wageningen University & Research, one of the five Chair groups in the Division of Human Nutrition and Health. Dr Forde is currently a Senior Principal Investigator at the Clinical Nutrition Research Centre at the National University of Singapore, as part of the A\*Star Singapore Institute for Food and Biotechnology Innovation. He has pioneered research on child and adult eating behaviours and food intake, and developed a highly productive research group that has progressed the field of Sensory-Nutritional Science.

### Click Chemistry Team wins Royal Society of Chemistry's New Horizon

Han Zuilhof and group members from the Laboratory of Organic Chemistry have been named as winners of the Royal Society of Chemistry's Robert Robinson Award in Synthetic Organic Chemistry, the new Organic Division's Horizon Prize. Zuilhof and co-workers are part of a multinational collaboration of scientists that collectively received this award, with a/o contributions from Scripps Research Institute in San Diego, US, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in Long Island, US, Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou, China and Wageningen University & Research in the Netherlands.

**VLAG Graduate Programme 2022** - Applications are written by candidates who will obtain a Wageningen MSc degree between June 2021 and December 2022. If you know an excellent MSc

student who e.g. is planning to do an MSc thesis with you, it might be interesting to discuss this opportunity to write a PhD proposal, and possibly get it granted. An early start of their thesis might be helpful in making it possible to fit the Research Master Cluster course in their study programme. The latter is mandatory to be able to take part in the [VLAG Graduate Programme](#).

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### Graduate School Green Top Sectors TKI 2021

In addition to the already planned or running graduate programme calls from the graduate schools VLAG, WIAS, PE&RC and EPS, the TKIs Agri & Food (A&F) and Tuinbouw & Uitgangsmaterialen (T&U) will fund 4 PhD proposals. Per top sector, there is budget to fund 2 PhD proposals.

PhD proposals, written by MSc students, can be submitted by a consortium, consisting of at least one research group together with at least one private partner. The proposed PhD candidate will defend the proposal during the interview and it is his/her performance which will be taken into account in the assessment.

Deadline for application: **15 September**

Applicants should send their [application](#) to [Ingrid Vlegghels](#).

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### Call for proposals WU-CAAS PhD Programme 2021

Call for collaborative PhD projects for The Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) and Wageningen University Joint PhD Programme with deadline 25 August 2021. The programme involves a 4-year sandwich PhD where the PhD candidates perform the major part of their research at CAAS and spend at least 18 months in Wageningen. [The programme](#) allows a maximum of 20 PhD projects to start each year.

## From the VLAG PhD council

We would like to draw your attention on the last chance to join Dutch language courses this summer. Registration is possible for all VLAG PhD candidates. You can register directly via the [registration form](#). For the time being, all courses are held online after office hours.

If you are uncertain about the suitable course level for you or if you have questions about the course content you can contact the teacher directly. For general questions you can contact [the VLAG PhD council](#).



**VLAG PhD COUNCIL**

## VLAG courses

### Highlighted event:

[Ecophysiology of food-associated micro-organisms: Roles in health and disease](#) (29 November – 1 December)

This advanced course aims to develop expertise in (functional) genomics, ecology and physiology of food-associated micro-organisms, in particular with respect to their impact on health and disease focusing on the microbiology of food fermentation processes addressing the newest scientific insights of complex microbial communities, modelling techniques and novel product functionalities, and on stress-adaptive responses, population diversity and virulence of foodborne pathogens.

### VLAG courses open for registration

[Rheology: the do's and don'ts](#) (13-21 September)

[Modelling of habitual dietary intake - using SPADE](#) (11 – 12 October)

[Big data analysis in the life sciences](#) (25 – 27 October)

[Sensory Perception and Food Preference](#) (7 – 10 December)

*Tip! For an overview of all courses regularly organised by VLAG take a look in past courses and contact the [VLAG office](#) for the new planning.*

## Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS) courses

For a complete overview of all competence, skills and career development training activities, please click [here](#).

### Highlighted course

#### [Entrepreneurship in and outside Science](#)

Entrepreneurship is a key element to drive innovation. Next to demonstrating scientific excellence, young academics with an entrepreneurial attitude can often contribute directly to more societal relevance and economic impact based on their research. In this way it can be seen as an addition to your personal career development in academia. But also for those who do not want to stay in academia, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial skills can support in acquiring new positions or even setting up one's own business.

### Information session about the NWO Veni round 2022 and the WGS support courses

WGS together with Wageningen In'to Languages organise two courses for researchers interested in applying for an NWO Veni grant. The courses aim to provide talented postdocs and other promising researchers the skills and competences needed to write a high quality research (pre-)proposal to submit within the NWO Veni programme.

Researchers interested in applying for an NWO Veni grant in 2022 that will be carried out at Wageningen University can join the course [Getting on Track with Your Veni Application](#). The course gives insight into the Veni application procedure and trains applicants in the skills needed for this process.

For the domains AES, SSH and ZonMw, submitting a pre-proposal is again expected as part of the procedure. For researchers who will submit their proposal in those domains, a short course "[Preparing your Veni pre-proposal](#)" will be organised.

More information on the time schedule of the courses will become available after NWO announces the deadlines for the proposals.

An online information session on these courses and on the NWO procedure will be held on **8 July** (9:00-10:00h). During the session attendees will receive information on both the criteria and time schedule for the Veni application and the contents and registration procedure for the support courses. If you are interested in attending the information session, please send an email to [VLAG office](#). We will then invite you for the Teams meeting a few days before.

More information on the course registration procedure and course content will be provided during the information session and can be found on the [WGS course website](#). Registration will open as soon as the time schedule and programme are finalized.

If you have any questions, please contact [Anouk Geelen](#), course coordinator. Information on the WUR procedure can be found on [Personal grants - Intranet WUR](#)

## Other courses and events

### free online COMSOL Multiphysics course

On **1 July** (13.00-15.00h), COMSOL organizes a free online COMSOL Multiphysics course which provides an introduction to multiphysics modeling and analyses and will be a combination of lecture, worked examples as well as workshop problems. PhD candidates who would like to know more about the software are welcome to join! Click [here](#) for details and registration (Registration in advance is required). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact [Eveline Jacobse](#)

### ERC starting grant course

Researchers who plan to submit an ERC starting grant application this year can register for this course given by Yellow Research **16 September** (9.00 till 17.00h) Researchers who meet the ERC [starting grant submission criteria](#) can register by sending an email to [henriekederuiter@wur.nl](mailto:henriekederuiter@wur.nl) before **1**

September. Indicate in your email how you meet the submission criteria, when you obtained your PhD and in which chair group you want to do your research. Also see: [Personal grants - Intranet WUR](#)

### **Wageningen Data Competence Center**

Two fully online Data Science and AI courses are available to anyone who might be interested in the possibilities of Data Science and AI:

[Elements of AI course](#) - the course is a series of free online courses created by Reaktor and the University of Helsinki. The aim is to encourage as broad a group of people as possible to learn what AI is, what can (and can't) be done with AI, and how to start creating AI methods. The courses combine theory with practice and can be completed at your own pace. The duration of the course is max. 6 weeks.

[The National AI course](#) – the aim of the course is to prepare the Dutch society for the future with AI by getting participants acquainted with basic principles, techniques, rules and regulations of artificial intelligence. It consists of 8 modules and 36 documents to read optionally. The duration of the whole course is 4-6 hours and the participants receive a certificate upon completion of the course.

### **ReMaT - research management training - workshop**

[The ReMaT workshop](#) (21 & 22 October) is an interactive, intensive workshop providing an introduction to research management, designed for early-stage researchers, particularly PhD candidates from the 2nd year onwards. The idea of European networking is very much embedded in the concept, and we encourage participation from many different countries at the workshop.

### **New Frontiers ONLINE Symposium - Translational Glycoscience**

[This symposium](#) (18 & 19 November) gathers national and international leading scientists to provide a universal overview on current advances in the field of glycobiology. The symposium will cover various diseases including genetic disorders, cancer, neurodevelopmental disorders, infectious diseases, as well as avenues for nutrition, health and aging. The symposium is aimed at both junior researchers as well as faculty members.