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## Word from our Scientific Director: VLAG candidates 'ON TRACK'

Last month I announced that we would organize an 'on track' event for our PhD candidate cohort that is pretty much halfway their projects. This event is a new addition to the lineup of introductory 'coffee and cookies' meeting, the training and supervision plan, the research proposal, the monitoring meeting at around 9 months, and the PhD week that are all directed toward keeping in touch with our PhD candidates, and keeping them informed.

We are often requested for a follow-up, so the 'on track' event can be seen as such. Since this was the first time we organized this present for our PhD candidates (appropriately on December 6th) although it was also a bit of an exploration for us to see what would fit the occasion (we are awaiting the outcome of the evaluation). [Continue reading online](#)

## From the VLAG Office

### VLAG Research Fellowships Call

To support the quality of scientific research VLAG office provides fellowships for:

- PhD candidates and Postdocs for international secondments
- Assistant Professors for international visits

The next deadline for the [international visits/secondments](#) starting in 2023 is **1 May 2023**.

Within the last VLAG Research Fellowships call we were able to grant fellowships to seven PhD candidates, one postdoc and one Assistant Professor.

VLAG Call for grants for the Visiting Guest Researchers and PhD Excursions is always open.

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## Winner VLAG Logo Contest

We were pleased to receive quite a few good ideas and nice designs from within the VLAG community for our VLAG Logo contest, which we sent out in September of this Year. Apparently next to scientific excellence we also have a lot of design talent 'on board'.

In the meantime we (Karin, Anouk, Vesna, Jochem, Yvonne, Annemieke, Suzanne and Cornelia) have selected the winning design from the many contributions/designs/ideas we received and we are pleased to announce that the winner of the New VLAG Logo design is **Senna Janssen**, PhD Candidate from Physical Chemistry and Soft Matter. Once again; congratulations Senna!

We keep the new VLAG logo a secret for a little bit longer more news on that in the new year 😊

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## Additional PhD Defence slots June 2023

Due to the very high demand for PhD defences in June 2023, additional timeslots will be made available. These slots will be opened on January 2, at the same time as the opening of the July slots.

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## Message from the AFSG Managing Board – Agreement with PhD candidate without employment

As of **1 January 2023**, it will be mandatory to sign an agreement with a PhD candidate without an employment contract and upload it in Hora Finita to ensure acceptance of e.g. obligations in the context of the WU PhD program, the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and to arrange (other) legal issues. Upon request of the Dean of Research, template contracts have been drawn up by the legal departments of WUR for scholarship PhD candidates, externally funded / external PhD candidates, and for situations in which a company sponsors a substantial part of the (salary) costs of the PhD. The template contracts are available via the legal department of AFSG.

Required steps:

- Contact [AFSG Contractmanagement](#) to start up the contract procedure.
- Inform [AFSG aquisitiecontrol](#) on the funding of the project.
- Once the contract is finalised, the final version needs to be uploaded in Hora Finita by the promotor.



Daan Swarts (Biochemistry) has been appointed EMBO Young Investigator, which means that he is now part of a group of promising young scientists within molecular biology. Daan will receive financial support, resources and other forms of support for the next four years so that he will be able to establish himself as a leader in the field. His group conducts research into the immune system of bacteria. Congratulations with this achievement!

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## Extra impulse for research and cooperating on preventive health

Five research projects - 28 researchers of the alliance between Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research, Utrecht University and Utrecht University Medical Center (EWUU) will receive 200 thousand euros to accelerate research and cooperation in the field of preventive health. The research is aimed at preventing disease and optimizing quality of life. The collaboration between the four different institutions will bring together the knowledge of different research areas to provide effective preventive measures. Congratulations Lydia Afman, Dieuwertje Kok, Nicole de Wit, Ben Witteman, Marlou Lasschuijt, Elske Brouwer-Brolsma and Maartje Poelman.



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## Donny Merckx receives the C.J. Gorter NMR-DG Award

Donny Merckx, former PhD candidate of Food Chemistry and Biophysics, has been awarded the C.J. Gorter NMR-DG Award for his thesis, entitled 'Mechanism-based markers for early assessment of lipid oxidation in mayonnaise by magnetic resonance spectroscopy', which he defended in 2021.

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## Exhibition OPEN UP about depression.

From 28 November-28 December '22, the Municipality of Wageningen presents [the exhibition OPEN UP about depression](#); a project by the Open Mind Foundation. Together with young experts by

experience, they make mental vulnerability of young people visible and open for conversation. The multimedia outdoor exhibition can be seen on the Market in Wageningen.

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### Support for increased energy costs

When you have an independent living accommodation and your own energy contract (no service costs) you may be eligible for the energy allowance. You can request the energy allowance online or by filling in the form that is available in the municipality building (Markt 22 in Wageningen). Do you have difficulties requesting the allowance? Please contact the Startpunt (call 0317 41 01 60) or send an [e-mail](#). If you do not qualify for the energy allowance but do have payment problems, you may be eligible for special assistance. For more information about the conditions of the special assistance, consult the [website of the municipality](#)

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### Pint of Science, the international science festival, is back!

[Pint of science](#) is an international festival that mixes science with beer. Its goal is to bring researchers into local pubs to talk about their favorite topic to the general public.

But to make it happen, the organizers need volunteers that can help organize events, and speakers willing to share their science. Don't hesitate [to join!](#)

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### Looking forward to 2023! VLAG Graduate School;

Karin, Anouk, Vesna, Yvonne, Jochem, Cornelia, Suzanne and Annemieke wish you:

*Happy, relaxing, fun holidays & a happy, healthy and prosperous 2023!*

## From the VLAG PhD Advisor

How are you, with the end of the calendar year in sight? We often allow ourselves to reflect and think about our life during these weeks surrounding the change in calendar year. A year ago, I wrote about *mind maintenance*: just like the equipment you work with benefits from maintenance and calibration, your personal system benefits from sleep and relaxation. After another year full of interactions with people throughout the graduate school, I am still convinced that many of us neglect this maintenance of their most important tool: the mind. Hence, I hope that the end of December brings everyone some opportunity to calibrate their system and get a fresh start in January.

Each FLASH I am trying to include links to useful resources. WUR has a lot to offer, this time I am highlighting the online, self-paced programmes from [gezondeboel](#) (also available in English). With the link, you can log in using your WUR credentials and participate in a variety of programmes: *living in a different culture, standing up for yourself, managing money, sleeping well*, the list goes on...

Enjoy the Christmas holidays, best wishes for a blessed 2023.

Cheers, [Jochem Jonkman](#)

## From the VLAG PhD Council

Dear VLAG- PhD,

Some of you might know that we- the [VLAG PhD Council](#)- exist and some of you might not. Unlike Santa Claus we are very real and made it our plan for next year to reach out to you more, so we can add gifts under your "PhD trajectory Christmas tree". Currently, we are busy working on flyers with questions and tips to and for you. Did you know for example that you can ask your chair group holder for a [Dutch language course](#)? For this and more, just keep an eye out in your research building for the flyers because we are keen to know how your PhD and everything around it is going in your chair group. Additionally to our flyers, we are busy organising lunch lectures and plenty more activities but these gifts will remain wrapped in sparkle paper until the beginning of next year :)

In a long story short: We wish you relaxing holidays, a good start into the new year and a smooth PhD trajectory. You will hear from us soon again!

Kind regards,  
On behalf of the council  
[Katarina Nitsche](#)



## VLAG courses

### Courses open for registration:

[Advanced Organic Chemistry course](#), 2022/2023

[Bioinformatics with Linux and Python](#) (period between 20 February – 3 March 2023, online)

[Intestinal microbiome of humans and animals](#), 12-14 April 2023

[Healthy Food Design](#), 1-4 May 2023

### VLAG Statistics courses:

In 2023 we will organize two editions of the course Introduction to R, two editions of the course Applied Statistics and one edition of Chemometrics. [Registration is open](#) for all editions.

### Planned courses:

Rheology, May 2023

Healthy and sustainable diets, 26-29 June 2023

Reaction kinetics in food sciences, 16-20 October 2023

Food proteins: postponed to February 2024

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

## Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS) courses

### Highlighted course:

[Making Impact: Increasing the relevance of research through science-society interaction](#), 13-14 February 2023

During this course, lecturers of the Knowledge, Technology and Innovation team will provide you with the scientific insights on how to make an impact. In addition, you can learn from them, and a panel of researchers on the different approaches they take to turn this into practical approaches.

For a complete overview of all competence, skills and career development training activities by WGS, please click [here](#). Or click [here](#) for the direct links to the webpages of the other graduate schools.

## Other courses and events

### High sensitivity how does it work? (23 January '23)

The highly sensitive person (HSP): What science says and what it means for employees and students. A lecture by Prof. Corina Greven about the latest insights and the influence of work, which will take place in Impulse from 12.30-13.30 (no registration required).

### WUR Career Day (7 February '23)

Student Career Services organizes the next [WUR Career Day](#) on Wageningen Campus. The aim of the Career Day is to provide a platform for students, PhD candidates, recent graduates and employers to meet each other. The event is an ideal opportunity for you to network and an excellent chance to meet your future employer. At this event, you can connect and meet up with over 60 organizations.

### BioSB Course; Constraint-based modelling: Introduction and advanced topics (13-17 February '23)

[This course](#) will introduce computational modeling of large (genome-scale) metabolic reaction networks through a scalable framework known as constraint-based modeling. Emphasis will be on the usage in both biotechnology and systems biomedicine.

### **Online course: Introduction to Open Science – Concepts, benefits, and practices** (20-24 February '23).

A key goal of science is to help society solve today's wicked challenges. This requires reliable, trustworthy, and high-quality research. Open Science (OS) strongly contributes to achieving these requirements since it aims to make research more verifiable, transparent, and reusable. However, OS is currently not the norm in academia due to cultural and technical obstacles. [This course](#) aims to overcome these obstacles through a conceptual and a practical overview of OS principles.

### **BioSB Course; Knowledge graph in the life sciences** (13-17 March '23)

The term "FAIR Linked Data" refers to a set of best practices for publishing, interlinking and managing structured data on the Web. The first part of [the course](#) introduces the knowledge, theory, and skills needed to work with Linked Data and then focuses on research and industrial data applications and needs that are increasingly in demand.

### **10<sup>th</sup> International Granulation Conference** (21-23 June '23)

The 10<sup>th</sup> [International Granulation Conference](#) will be the place to showcase the latest in agglomeration, granulation and particle technology.

### **BioSB Course; Algorithms for Biomolecular Networks (Advanced)** (26-30 June '23)

In [this course](#), we will first give a brief overview of molecular biology, the advent of high-throughput measurement techniques and large databases containing biological knowledge, and the importance of networks to model all this.

## Calls and grants

### **L'Oréal-Unesco for 2023 Women in Science Fellowships**

The [call for applications](#) for the 2023 L'Oréal-Unesco for Women in Science (FWiS) fellowships opens on 16 January '23. In line with the international FWiS-programme, the call for applications for the Dutch fellowships is this year extended to include women researchers from both the Life Sciences and the STEM disciplines. Two fellowships, grants of €30.000 each, will be awarded with the intention to advance the academic career of women researchers three to six years after they have finished a PhD.

### **Neys-van Hoogstraten FUND – Funding available for socioeconomic research on food security in Asia**

MSc students, PhD candidates or postdocs can now apply for funding for socioeconomic research on food security in Asia through the newly established [Neys-van Hoogstraten Fund](#), a fund under the umbrella of the University Fund Wageningen. The focus of the research must be on food security of households or nutritional security of vulnerable groups in the one or more of the countries in Southeast and South Asia that the fund supports.

### **Call AI for preventive health and a circular society**

[This call](#), deadline 15 February '23, is organised by the following three working groups of the Alliance TU/e – WUR – UU – UMC Utrecht: institute 4 Preventive Health, Circular Society and Artificial Intelligence for Health, to stimulate ideas for research projects from within the Alliance TU/e, WUR, UU and UMCU that will contribute to the innovative development and application of trustworthy AI. Proposals should focus on the innovative use of AI-methods and tap into at least one of the themes/research lines of the institute 4 Preventive Health or Circular Society.