



*Excellence in research and postgraduate education*

VLAG Graduate School

FLASH

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## VLAG on tour: also in times of COVID



First and before most, I hope that you are all doing well, and can make most out of the situation that we are all in. Doing a challenging project is in general not simple, and doing that in current times surely adds to this. Still, I see many people doing well, being very productive, and being able to rethink their work in terms of what is possible. I truly feel that the current restrictions can bring the best in us to the surface, and thus show our resilience that is an integral part of the jobs that we do.

The title of this contribution to FLASH may sound a bit strange given the times we live in. However, VLAG has started the annual visits to the research groups; the visits to the PhDs, chair holders and other staff, and is thus on (virtual) tour. We have visited the first groups of PhDs and are currently planning the other dates, and look forward to 'seeing' you all. It is a bit of a tradition that a broad cross-section of the group is present during these meetings so that you can share your experiences. It is important for us to hear your stories, and discuss with you how things are going, and also offer a listening ear where needed. Because of the special circumstances, we will ask the groups to bring points forward that are currently most relevant to the meeting, and will not work with a set agenda.

Being on tour, and staying on track also reflects the preparations for the external peer review that is lined up for October. This year, the review is all about getting feedback on the strategies of the four VLAG themes. So it is less on all kinds of countable things (h-index etc.), but more about the vision that the themes have on future developments in the respective fields they operate in. The themes have all put a writing team forward. Two themes put tenure trackers in the lead to accumulate stories present within the themes, and come up with overall story-lines that are resilient. The first drafts are now ready to receive feedback from our international advisory board members, who have been asked to supply the writing teams with comments as one would get from critical friends.

It is needless to say that I appreciate the great amount of work that the writing teams are putting into making the documents. It is really a challenge, and at the same time a wonderful opportunity to get to know 'the stories' present in other groups that they otherwise may not have been aware of. In that sense, this entire process is a real catalyst for exchange of ideas, and hopefully also for future joint projects that will strengthen the themes and VLAG as a whole.

Within VLAG office, we have been busy organizing many things as usual. Besides that, we have updated the training and supervision plan that will be shared soon, organized an additional course on on-line presentations (which was very popular), made a start with the monitoring program that I talked about in the previous FLASH, and been in the middle of a discussion on teaching load that is still

very much on-going. I feel that this is a very important topic, and it is good that now many are actively participating in the discussion.

Before I wrap up, I would like to say some words about the arrival of many new tenure trackers during the last year. I feel that we can give these people and everyone involved in VLAG a real boost by making good use of all the knowledge and ideas that they have. I have recently held a virtual get together with those TT-ers appointed within the 'sector plans', and found this very inspiring. There were ideas for general courses (e.g. how to make really good graphics), more topic specific work groups (e.g., bio-nano physics) and so on. If you have any suggestions, please always know where to find us. It is incredibly important to keep evolving as a VLAG community, and we may help through financial support by the fellowship program that you can use to invite high-level speakers.

Kind regards, also on behalf of the entire VLAG team, and please stay safe and healthy!

Prof Karin Schroën, Scientific Director VLAG

*Do you want to read the other 'Word from our scientific director' contributions, check our [website](#)*

## From the VLAG Office

### Call for proposals for the 2021 round of the Wageningen Graduate Schools Sandwich PhD programme

The aim of the Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS) Sandwich PhD Programme is capacity building: a way for the university to reach out to like-minded scientific institutes to build international scientific networks, to facilitate exchange and to reinforce the knowledge basis of these institutes.

The WGS Sandwich PhD programme is currently calling for proposals for its 2021 round with deadline **18 May**. For more information and application visit the [website](#).

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### Call for INREF (Interdisciplinary Research and Education Fund) seed money projects 2021

Seed money projects are maximized at €25,000 and support the preparation and development of full proposals. There will be no call for full proposals within INREF for this phase (IV), but proposals can be developed for other funds like calls from the European Commission Horizon Europe or NWO calls. The deadline is **1 July**. A maximum 6 pre-proposals will be selected. (Call details were sent by email to VLAG supervisors on 9 April) .

More information on the objectives of INREF and expected outputs of the INREF programme can be found at the [INREF webpages](#). For questions, please contact [Jelle Maas](#)

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### PhD/Postdoc fellowships for secondments at international institutes/universities

VLAG provides grants which allow VLAG PhD candidates and Postdocs to visit a top research institute/university abroad. The next deadline for the PhD/Postdoc fellowships for activities starting in 2021 is **1 May**. Please take a look at our website ([VLAG Calls - Vlag Graduate School](#)) for all requirements and the application form.

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**Preannouncements calls and grants:** (more information will be sent to all supervisors as soon as it becomes available)

**VLAG Graduate Programme 2022** - Applications are written by candidates who will obtain a Wageningen MSc degree between June 2021 and December 2022. Students and staff are invited to attend an online information session on the Graduate Programme on **27 May**, 14.30-15.30.

**Call for proposals Graduate Schools Green Top Sectors TKI 2021** - The aim of this programme is to facilitate innovative and high-quality scientific research within the research field of the top sector Agri&Food by engaging young talented researchers (i.e. MSc students) at the start of their career.

**WGS Postdoc Talent Programme (*tentative*)** - We are waiting for the final decision, details and a time line. As it has been a challenge for the VLAG community to successfully apply for this grant, we now

pre-announce to give you the opportunity to already consider talented researchers from abroad who would be willing to come to Wageningen for at least two years.

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### Room available for Online PhD defence

Since 12 April, PhD candidates can use room Atlas1 for their online PhD defence. This room has a Videoconferencing set and is available for the PhD candidate and paranymphs.

Please contact the [Atlas reception](#) to book the room for your defence. The reception can also help you to get support for using the VC-set.

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### Online course: Writing a Vidi proposal (23 May and 3 June)

Researchers who want to write a vidi proposal this year that they want to carry out at Wageningen University can register for an online course given by Yellow Research. The 3 webinars are on **28 May** from 10.00 to 12.00 and on **3 June** from 10.00 to 12.00 and from 13.00 to 15.00 pm. You can register by sending an e-mail to [Henrieke de Ruiter](mailto:Henrieke.de.Ruiter@wur.nl)

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### The VLAG Online Lecture Series - 2021

In this lecture series VLAG scientists share their research endeavours with the whole VLAG community (PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers and staff) to dive into subjects not closely related to one's own field of research, to broaden the scientific horizons.

Lectures planned;

**20 May** : Prof. John van Duynhoven 'Driving development of sustainable foods with advanced measurements'

**10 June**: Dr Jochem Louisse 'Towards regulatory acceptance of novel approach methods (NAMs) for a next-generation animal-free risk assessment of chemicals'

**17 June**: Dr Lydia Afman ' Precision nutrition'

Click [here](#) for registration

## From the VLAG PhD council



**VLAG PhD COUNCIL**

### Online Lunch Colloquium

On **7 May** (12.00 - 13.00), the VLAG PhD council is organizing an online lunch colloquium entitled: 'The impact of Social Media on Science' with invited speakers Dr Vittorio Saggiomo (BioNanoTechnology) and Dr Guido Camps (Human Nutrition and Health).

They have a lot of experience with social media and will reflect on their experiences and more. You can [register](#) before **5 May**.

## VLAG courses

### VLAG courses open for registration

[2<sup>nd</sup> edition Postgraduate Online course "Healthy Food Design"](#) (**NEW DATES**: 7 – 10 June)

[Chemometrics \(Multivariate statistics\)](#) (14 – 16 June)

[Online Summer Course Glycosciences](#) (10, 11, 17, 18 June)

[3<sup>rd</sup> Online Master class Healthy and sustainable diets: synergies and trade-offs](#) (5 - 7 July)

[11<sup>th</sup> edition of Reaction kinetics in food science](#) (12 – 17 July)

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

### Other planned VLAG courses 2021 – registration will open soon

Rheology (13-21 September)

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

Ecophysiology of food-associated microorganisms and roles in health and disease (29 November - 1 December)  
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](#)*

## Wageningen Graduate Schools (WGS) courses

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

### Highlighted courses

[Effective and efficient communication in academia and beyond](#) (10, 11 and 27 May)

Do you find it difficult getting your message across? Do you not always get the response you had expected? Do you find it difficult to deal with misunderstanding and moreover conflict? Interestingly enough the manner in which people react to what others have to say depends on the way in which the message is brought across and how receptive people are to receive this communication. In other words it depends on the behaviour and communication style we express when communicating. Apart from our personality, these are determined by the context we operate, our culture and background. Getting insight into these aspects, and knowing when to communicate in which manner, help us to communicate in an effective manner and prevent miscommunication.

[The Choice: Un-box your PhD process & take charge of your performance](#) (2 and 16 September, 14 October)

an experiential personal leadership course that provides you with tools and insights to become more in charge of your own performance as you proceed with your PhD process.

[Workshop: Working on your PhD research in times of crisis](#) (21, 28 May and 8 June 2021)

In this short, interactive and peer-driven training, we will jointly discuss experiences, identify new or amplified challenges as well as means and methods to tackle these to finally translate this in a (SMART) plan of action to get you (back) on track.

## External calls and grants

### Schmidt Science Fellows 2022 - Call for Nominations

WUR can nominate three candidates who have completed, or expect to complete, all of the requirements for the conferral of their PhD in the natural sciences, computing, engineering or mathematics between 01 June 2021 and 30 July 2022. For more information see [Schmidt Science Fellows](#) and contact [Anouk Geelen](#) if you consider to apply.

## Other courses and events

**WHAT CAN YOU DO IN ONE WEEK?**

**Life Sciences Data Integration Challenge**  
21 - 25 JUNE 2021

**ARE YOU READY?**

Data science is revolutionising our understanding of biology. You will have an opportunity to increase your network and collaborate with other students and researchers interested in biotechnology and systems health!

Hosted by the Laboratory of Systems & Synthetic Biology, Wageningen UR  
WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Register before May 21. More info can be found here: <https://ssms.eu/73c0560a431e7306>

### Life Sciences Data Integration Challenge (21-25 June)

The event is organized by the Laboratory of Systems & Synthetic Biology (SSB).

Over the 5-day challenge, participants will be introduced to, and have the opportunity to work on, diverse data problems in bioinformatics, biotechnology, and systems biology.

Topics will range from applications in fields of algal & plant biotechnology to systems health.

The fee for this challenge is €50 to participants.

Please note that in this inaugural event, we are limiting participation to 30 people.

Click [here](#) for registration.

### Transformative Dialogues @WUR | Empowering Collective Influence (29 April)

What does it mean to empower transformative change? Why does it matter? How can it be done? In an inspiring setting with people from across WUR, we will go into dialogue on these questions to explore innovative ideas, methods and real tangible examples on how to empower transformative change from the bottom-up - engaging with future visions, emotions and more. Click [here](#) for registration.

### Call for abstracts Bioinformatics & Systems Biology (BioSB) Conference 2021

The BioSB 2021 (15 – 16 June) conference discusses the latest developments in bioinformatics, systems and computational biology and interrelated disciplines, and their wide-ranging applications in life sciences & health, agriculture, food & nutrition.

You can submit an abstract, according the [submission procedure](#) for a presentation at the BioSB 2021 conference. The main programme of the conference will feature several parallel sessions that will be set up via abstract selection. Submission deadlines:

- Oral & highlight presentations: **3 May**
- Notification date: **17 May**
- Posters & demos: **23 May**

### Webinar series Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowships

The Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF) provide funding for individual researchers, allowing them to diversify and broaden their scientific knowledge and skills. They are international fellowships, meaning you must move (or have moved) to a different country. The 2021 PF call has a deadline on 15 September. The Dutch National Contact Point for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) will explain the possibilities and participation modalities of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships during a webinar series existing of three modules. You will be able to ask questions to the advisors of these programmes and receive tips and tricks for writing a successful proposal.

- Module 1: eligibility rules and PF options (20 May)
- Module 2: writing the Excellence section of your proposal (27 May)
- Module 3: writing the Impact/Implementation section of your proposal (3 June)

This webinar series is for researchers planning to apply for the PF 2021 call with a host organisation in the Netherlands. You can register [here](#).

**Massive Open Online Course “Open Science: Sharing Your Research with the World”** (starts 19 May)

This introductory course is aimed at professionals interested to learn about the principles of Open Science. This MOOC covers an introduction to Open Science and the FAIR principles, open research data, open access publishing, making research software FAIR and how to increase research(ers) visibility and impact. The course takes 4 weeks (about 4 hours per week). It is open to anyone and is completely free. Click [here](#) for more information and registration.

*Event in Dutch only:*

**Online carrièremiddag voor jonge voedingswetenschappers** (27 May)

Voor jonge voedingswetenschappers die interesse hebben in de carrièrepaden die mede-NAV'ers hebben doorlopen. Sprekers vanuit onder andere de academie, voedingsmiddelenbedrijven en overheidsinstanties vertellen over hun carrière pad en wat hun baan als voedingswetenschapper zo leuk maakt. Aanmelden per [email](#).

**Insight Out event for women in exact, technical and natural sciences** (7, 14, 21 and 28 June)

Insight Out – Inspiring women in STEM is a career event for women in exact, technical and natural sciences, this 3<sup>rd</sup> edition will take place online.

The theme of this year is ‘Learning from and inspiring each other’. The programme offers inspiring stories and workshops on how to create impact, choose your challenges, enhance your visibility and build a professional network. Participation is free of charge, the language of the conference will be English. Click [here](#) for programme information, workshops and registration.

**BioBusiness Summer School** (28 June - 2 July)

Are you a PhD, postdoc or a Master student and are you interested to pursue your career in one of the many Life Sciences companies in the Benelux? Do you want to know more about your career opportunities and learn about key business topics? BioBusiness Summer School is a 5-days course, focussing on key knowledge of main business topics in Life Sciences and allowing you to connect with professionals from the field and expand your network with like-minded peers. Get in touch with leading organisations from the Benelux such as Janssen Pharmaceutica, EY, Avantium, Thuja Capital, myTomorrows, Scenic Biotech and many more!

Click [here](#) for more information & registration.

**12<sup>th</sup> NIZO Dairy Conference: Innovations in Dairy Ingredients** (5 - 7 October)

This conference will combine the most recent scientific developments in dairy ingredients. It will provide a unique opportunity for experts from academia, the dairy industry and the wider food industry to interact and apply their knowledge and latest research findings to the design and manufacture of new and improved foods and dairy ingredients. Abstracts can be [submitted](#) by **16 April**.