



Dreaming of
your future
career?

Explore the diverse
work fields of Nutrition
and Health alumni

Nutrition and Health



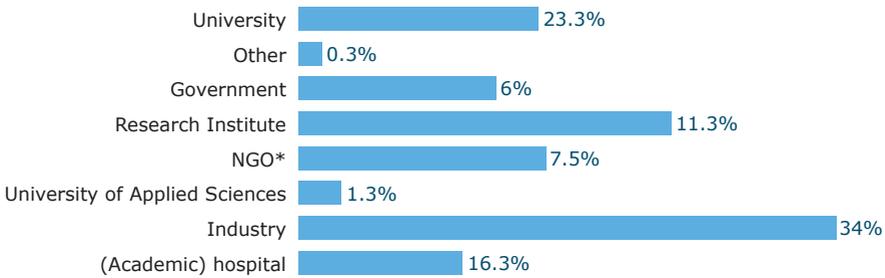
WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH

Labour market graduates

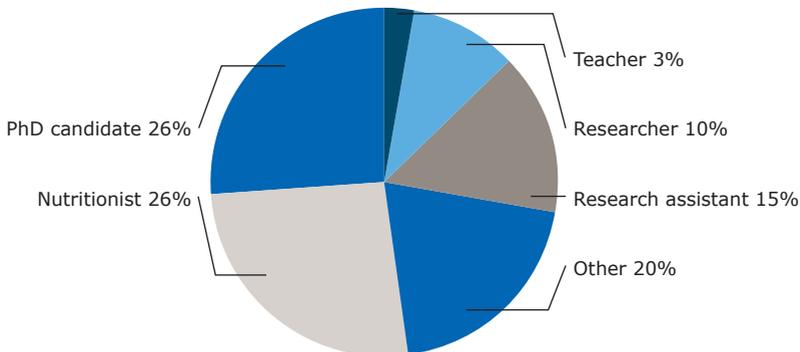
MSc Nutrition and Health

35% had a job at MSc level at the moment of graduation
48% found a job at MSc level within 1-6 months after graduation
13% found a job at MSc level within 6-12 months after graduation
4% finds/found a job at MSc level after more than 12 months

Employer (sector)



Positions



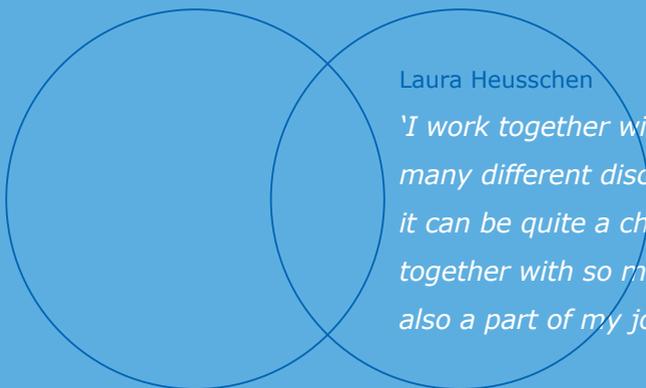
*NGO: Non Governmental Organisation, within the Netherlands and outside. This includes professional and patient associations (e.g. Netherlands Heart Foundation) as well as development organisations and international organisations (e.g. FAO, WHO).

Source: Analysis based on the LinkedIn profiles of alumni within our Alumni group on LinkedIn. Alumni graduated between 2016 and 2019 were included. This group consisted of 326 alumni.

What are your future career opportunities

By completing your master's programme you'll develop knowledge and skills to do nutrition research. Graduate students work at universities, research institutes, (academic) hospitals, governmental organisations (e.g. national public health agencies), NGO's (e.g. FAO and WHO) and in industry (e.g. Unilever, Danone and FrieslandCampina).

In this brochure Nutrition and Health alumni, who graduated between 2014 and 2019 will tell you about their job. They also give you tips on finding a job that fits you.



Laura Heusschen

'I work together with colleagues from many different disciplines. Sometimes it can be quite a challenge to work together with so many people, but it's also a part of my job that I really enjoy.'

Jeroen Loots | graduated in 2017

DUTCH KIDNEY FOUNDATION – PROGRAM OFFICER PREVENTION

It is my goal to prevent the occurrence of kidney damage for as many people as possible during this temporary job. For example by reducing salt intake and early detection of kidney damage. Via media campaigns, we aim to increase awareness about the risks of consuming too much salt. I am responsible for the content of these campaigns: are the facts and figures correct? Which products containing a lot of salt are commonly consumed in the Netherlands? Furthermore, we are testing a research kit to measure protein levels in urine in collaboration with the University Medical Center in Groningen. Having (traces of) protein in your urine can indicate kidney damage. With this test kit kidney damage can be detected and treated in an early phase. I joined this research on behalf of the Dutch Kidney Foundation. I got this job via a network of academic nutritionists, but it is also important to pay attention to published job offers online (such as Indeed, Nationale Vacaturebank and Academic Transfer); spread your horses is my advice.

Marjolein de Jong | graduated in 2017

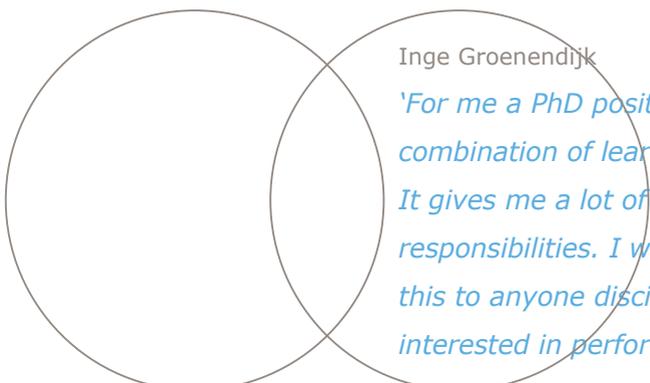
NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT (RIVM) – JUNIOR RESEARCHER NUTRITION AND HEALTH

The department Nutrition and Health of the RIVM researches the dietary intake in the Netherlands, as well as the nutritional status of the Dutch public, and the composition and sustainability of products. Next to this we advise the ministry of Public Health, Wellbeing and Sports. I started this job in 2018 and I am involved in research that focuses on vitamins and minerals, such as the impact of a vitamin A deficiency on health and the iodine status in pregnant women. I help setting up researches: I perform literature research, data collection via surveys, data analysis and write the final product. This product is often an advice in the form of a letter, report, scientific article or factsheet. Next to this, I also perform other tasks. For example, I look up the legislation and help judge whether or not companies are allowed to add vitamins and minerals to their products. I like to have a job focused on research, but enjoy the fact that my work benefits the Dutch public even more. Our work really results in action! During my studies I would never have imagined that I would like this type of job. I was not fond of statistics, but now I look forward to the data analysis of a project. I thought I wanted to work 'with people', so with patients or research subjects, but I do not miss it in this job. I love to work on my research and have nice colleagues around me that give me the working 'with people' feeling.

Inge Groenendijk | graduated in 2018

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY AND RESEARCH – PHD CANDIDATE

A PhD candidate performs research on a specific topic for four years which results in publishing a dissertation. My project is about the importance of a high protein intake for the bone health of older adults. During my master thesis I designed an intervention study, where subjects are given different treatments after which you compare the effects of the treatments. Later I followed the course Research Master Cluster, which taught me what a PhD position entails and how to write a research proposal. Both events showed me that doing a PhD could be a good opportunity for me. You can become an expert on a specific topic and you design parts of the research plan yourself. However, doing a PhD is more than just performing research, collecting data, analyzing and writing. You are the manager of your own project, contribute to education, network and present at (international) congresses. In addition, personal development is part of the program and you can follow various courses. For me it is the ideal combination of learning and working. It gives me a lot of freedom and responsibilities. I would recommend doing a PhD to anyone who is disciplined, curious and interested in performing research!



Inge Groenendijk

'For me a PhD position is the ideal combination of learning and working. It gives me a lot of freedom and responsibilities. I would recommend this to anyone disciplined, curious and interested in performing research!'

Eline van 't Hoff | graduated in 2019

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES (GGD) NOORD- EN OOST-GELDERLAND –
JUNIOR EPIDEMIOLOGIST

During my master specialisation Nutrition and Toxicology I felt that my study program was lacking the societal aspects of Nutrition and Health. Luckily I was able to switch to the specialisation Epidemiology and Public Health, one of the best decisions I have made! The corresponding courses made me feel like my education was complete. I have done an internship at the Centre of Youth and Family (CJG). There, I carried out several projects for the epidemiologists of the Public Health Services (GGD). My work was deemed positive and I could immediately fill in the vacancy for Junior Epidemiologist! In this job I support the Senior Epidemiologists in starting up and implementing their research. Among other things I develop surveys, coordinate the data collection and prepare the statistical analysis of the results. Furthermore, I work as researcher specialized in evaluating research of public health issues. At the moment I evaluate the project Love & Sens(e)uality commissioned by the Team Sexual Health of the GGD. The master Nutrition and Health opens up many opportunities and you gain a lot of knowledge. I learned a lot from working at an organisation where you can put this knowledge into practice.



Photo: Shutterstock



Heró española

Michelle Klerks | graduated in 2017

HERO GROUP SPAIN – NUTRITIONIST

In 2018, I started this job at the Hero Group in Murcia, Spain. We know the food company Hero in the Netherlands for its jams, cassis and infant formulas. We have the same products here in Spain, but focus mainly on the production of infant nutrition, like fruit and meal jars, infant cereals, et cetera. I am a nutritionist at the department Research and Nutrition and have several tasks: I keep up with the latest food trends, I contribute to research and provide scientifically based information to the departments Product Development, Marketing and Communication. I first came into contact with Hero during my graduate internship. I knew that I wanted to work in the food industry for a while and was interested in doing an internship at Hero located in the Netherlands. Indirectly I heard that there was an internship opportunity at Hero in Spain. I decided to go for it and went to Spain. After my internship I went back to Wageningen to graduate and have travelled for several months. Later on, I was informed that I could come back to Hero in Spain and I took this opportunity. I was supposed to work here for one year, but I love it so much that I am an employee for almost two years already! My level of English, the knowledge about research and statistics, but also the in-depth nutrition knowledge I acquired during my Master is of use in this job. The only thing I had to do after university was to get in-depth knowledge about infant nutrition, as this is one of the most important products of Hero.

Lilou van Lieshout | graduated in 2014

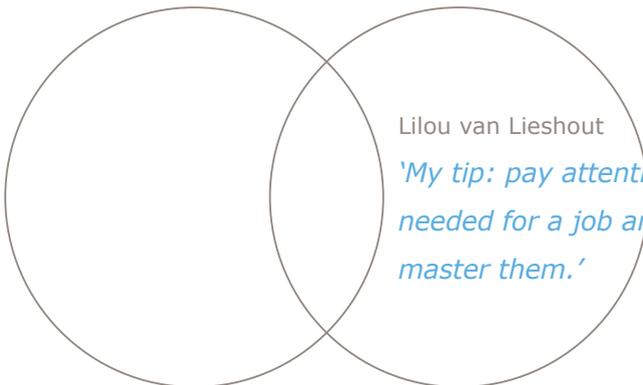
GREENDISH – PROJECT MANAGER NUTRITION RESEARCH

At Greendish I make sure that our (research) projects run smoothly, that all team members know what they are expected to do and that we have a good relationship with our clients. Practically, I organize internal and external meetings and I start up new projects with different partners. I make sure that we meet all demands whilst sticking to our budget and planning. For example, Restaurants van Morgen is a project where we advise restaurants in a Dutch region to gradually switch to a more sustainable menu. Important themes are less meat, more vegetables, less food waste and local, responsible procurement. Together we make small steps together and directly measure the impact we make. It is great to work in an environment where everyone has the same ambition: to make the food supply in the hospitality sector and public areas more sustainable and healthy. I enjoy working in a relatively small team at Greendish. It is nice to be aware of your own efforts, that way your contribution is immediately visible. I like to have several coordinating tasks next to managing a team. Organizing and managing are activities I have always been drawn to and I have improved those skills during my study. For instance, I joined committees and did a board year at the Student Sports Foundation. This has helped me to get my first job as scientific project manager at ILSI Europe in Brussels. Here, I coordinated symposia and expert panels focused on healthy nutrition and food safety. Although I obtained the knowledge during my master, I had to get accustomed to putting this into practice in the 'real world'. My tip: pay attention to the soft skills needed for a job, instead of only the topics addressed, and make sure you master them.

Romy Jacobs | graduated in 2019

OLFASENSE B.V. – CONSULTANT PRODUCT AND MATERIAL TESTING

After completing my master during which I specialized in Sensory Science, I started working as a consultant “product and material testing” at Olfasense B.V. in Amsterdam. Companies come to us when they experience a unpleasant odour emitted from their product or, for example, if they want to make a verified claim that their product reduces unwanted odours. We help them by performing odour tests in our laboratory or we provide odour training on location, so that they can perform the odour tests themselves. We have clients in the food sector, but also in the plastic industry and cosmetics industry. In addition, we regularly attend fairs throughout Europe and we visit our colleagues in our laboratory in Kiel (Germany). In this varied job I come into contact with people from many different sectors. At university I enjoyed comparing products and the corresponding analyses. That is why I anticipated that I, like many of my fellow students, would find a job at the Research & Development department of a food company. However, as a sensory researcher you can also be very valuable in other sectors, because the type of research you are performing follows the same principles.



'My tip: pay attention to the soft skills needed for a job and make sure you master them.'



Photo: Shutterstock

Nathalie Wilmsen | graduated in 2019

VOEDING LEEFT – RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

I performed my graduate internship at the foundation Voeding Leeft, in the program for MS patients. Even before university, I believed in the power of nutrition (and lifestyle) as treatment for chronic diseases. The power of food is still often underestimated and I am passionate to present lifestyle as a medicine. I found my dream job early on: I wanted to become a doctor, not in medicine but in lifestyle. Someone who prescribes vegetables instead of pills. What I am doing now aligns with this vision, because I was lucky enough to be able to stay at Voeding Leeft after the internship. Voeding Leeft develops and deploys lifestyle intervention programs for people suffering from chronic diseases, such as diabetes type 2, rheumatism, MS and Inflammable Bowel Diseases (IBD). I help develop new programs, write research proposals and grant applications. I perform literature research on the role of nutrition in certain diseases, but do practical work during information days as well. Besides gaining knowledge about the human body and the role of nutrition at university, I also learned to be critical and to develop my own opinion. My tip is to always follow your passion and do not let others tell you something is impossible.



Nathalie Wilmsen

'Even before university, I believed in the power of nutrition (and lifestyle) as treatment for chronic diseases. I am passionate to present lifestyle as a medicine.'

Linda Kraan | graduated in 2018

COMPASS GROUP – IMPLEMENTATION COACH AND NUTRITIONIST

After graduation at Wageningen University, I started working at Compass Group. I began as an implementation coach and I have been focusing more on my role as nutritionist in the last few months. As implementation coach I help company restaurants to improve, for example by optimizing their food offer. Such a project can be requested by the client of the location or the district manager, who is responsible for this location on behalf of Compass Group. As nutritionist I work on a project basis and my work depends on the questions I receive. At university, and especially during my internship at the Dutch Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO), I discovered that doing research and looking for detailed answers did not appeal to me. I felt the urge to do something 'hands-on' and I wanted to work with people. Nonetheless the 'Why?' does add value to my work and it has motivated me. Every day I profit from the critical thinking and analytic skills I gained during my Master. What I enjoy in this job is the diversity, every day is different. The locations I work at vary from factories at a remote industrial estate to chic office premises at the Zuidas (Amsterdam). The assignments and questions I work on are equally distinct. I work independently, but can share my thoughts and experiences with a great team. Even though I have taken risks with applying for this job, I dare you to apply for a job that seems outside your comfort zone or that may not fit you perfectly. All in all, my ambition has always been to create a healthier world. Whether you do that by performing groundbreaking research or by motivating people to make healthier choices day after day, every contribution counts!



Linda Kraan

'My ambition has always been to create a healthier world. Whether you do that by performing groundbreaking research or by motivating people to make healthier choices day after day, every contribution counts!'

Marion Janse | graduated in 2016

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DUTCH EMBASSY IN BURUNDI –
YOUNG EXPERT FOOD SECURITY

After my bachelor, I decided to continue with the master Nutrition and Health because of the international character of Wageningen and the opportunities to go abroad – something I really like. I became especially interested in malnutrition in developing countries and for my master thesis I had the opportunity to go to Rwanda. For five months I studied the underlying causes of malnutrition in children under five years old. Afterwards, I did an internship at an international think-tank on malnutrition based in Switzerland. Now I work as Young Expert at the Dutch Embassy in Burundi, where I am part of the Food & Nutrition Security team. I got this amazing opportunity through the Young Expert Program, which allows young professionals to work abroad for a Dutch organization engaged in water and food security. Although I specialised in malnutrition during my master, I am focusing on more topics than just nutrition. Food security is a very interesting and diverse field to work in. The embassy works for example on projects to increase agricultural production and improve access to inputs for farmers such as seeds and fertilizer. Other projects concern access to finance, youth and women empowerment, value chain development, and entrepreneurship. As Young Expert I manage and monitor projects, for which I go on field visits now and then. Besides, I discuss how coordination of different projects and activities can be improved and better aligned with one another together with partners such as UNICEF. My master helped me discover where my passion lies. My tip to future students is to do things you are passionate about, and take every opportunity to go abroad to meet new people and cultures. Gain new life skills in a different environment!

Daan Boersma | graduated in 2018

SELF-EMPLOYED, WORKS ALSO FOR HERACLES ALMELO –
PERFORMANCE NUTRITIONIST

At Heracles I manage everything around food and nutrition. I guide players, give presentations and design educational material like posters and information displays to raise player's awareness of healthy nutrition. The offer of food, sport nutrition and supplements has to be adapted to the team. For example, the meal eaten before a game is different from a meal after the training. We have displays at the 'sport meal' (the meal before a game) to indicate the nutritional value of a product. There are color codes for carbohydrates, protein, fats and vegetables, to show players what they can take and what to avoid. In general, we want them to restore their energy supply at the sport meal with carbohydrates, and to stay away from a lot of fats and protein. I discuss the menu every week with the kitchen staff to make sure it is adjusted to the trainings- and game schedule. I like to contribute to the team's performance and to the development of individual players. For example, a few weeks ago a team member proudly announced that he had his best sprint ever. He thought it was because of his diet, which he had changed after we had talked a week earlier. Next to Heracles, I work for Virtuooos. I help this supplement company improve their products, mainly focused on ingredients, dosage and timing, based on literature. During my master I was not sure what kind of job I wanted. Although I did my thesis about immunometabolism, I performed my internship at the soccer club AZ. I ended up at Heracles by emailing them, but since then I have established a network via which I got the assignment at Virtuooos. I continue to read the literature, to make sure my advice stays up-to-date and scientifically sound. I have learned to distinguish between fake news and real news. This is a very valuable skill to which my master contributed.



Daan Boersma

'An extensive network can help you later on. You will meet many people, but do not be afraid to start a conversation with strangers: you never know where it will lead you.'

Photo: Daan Boersma

Dimitra Mastorakou | graduated in 2017

UNILEVER – ASSISTANT MANAGER CONSUMER TECHNICAL INSIGHTS

When I was an intern in the Sensory & Behaviour group of Danone Nutricia, I already got accepted for a sensory technologist position in PepsiCo UK. Here I focused on sensory science, where it is all about perceiving a product's properties with your senses. At PepsiCo I was leading the trained sensory panelists who tested various products, such as juices, cruesli and crisps. Besides, I guided the Research & Development (R&D) department on product development and optimization. The master has given me a solid methodological and statistical background, as well as scientific skills. The latter proved to be very useful when I presented my research at an European Sensory Conference. After two years, I switched to Unilever, Wageningen, as a Consumer Scientist. Now I work on global projects on dressings products (e.g. Hellmann's), providing strategic product insights to R&D and Marketing. Every day, I try to let the voice of the consumer be heard. Having studied in the international environment of Wageningen, I am fully equipped to interact with people from all over the world. Even though I came from a nutritional background, I decided to switch my specialization into Sensory Science with the help of my study advisor. Don't be afraid to explore new areas to find your passion!

Sarah Bond | graduated in 2018

LIVE EAT LEARN BLOG – FOOD AND NUTRITION BLOGGER

As a food blogger, my job primarily involves recipe development, food photography, and writing. As the website has grown, managing a team, social media management, and brand relations have also become important parts of my work. I began my blog before I started my master in Sensory Science at Wageningen, and it was a side hobby while I was in school. After graduating, I realized that the skills and knowledge I gained in my master could be applied to my work on the blog. My master gave me a deeper knowledge of sensorial aspects of food and how to communicate and market food. I also improved my critical thinking and time management skills which have been invaluable as a self-employed blogger. While it is hard work with more going on below the surface than you might expect, I have the freedom every day to explore new foods, play in the kitchen, and share my blogs with the world (while traveling anywhere in the world). My dream job!

Eva Jermendi | graduated in 2015

WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY – PHD CANDIDATE LABORATORY OF FOOD CHEMISTRY

At university I was always much into research, as I wanted to know the “Why?” behind everything. This is the reason I chose Molecular Nutrition and Toxicology as my Master specialization. I would suggest students to pick courses that trigger their interests and stay curious! I have started my PhD in 2016, and since then I am investigating the immunomodulatory effects of pectins. Pectin is a dietary fiber, present in virtually all plants where it contributes to the cell wall structure. I chemically tailor pectins and together with my project partner test their effects on the immune system. Besides, we examine how pectins affect microbiota composition and the beneficial short-chain fatty acid production along the intestinal tract. I am feeling very fortunate that I can work on this topic as it really combines my interests in dietary fibers, health and microbiota. As a PhD candidate, I also take part in teaching practical courses and supervising BSc and MSc students during their thesis. Thus, next to the research skills I can develop didactic skills and maintain my level of critical thinking.

Lian Smeets | graduated in 2018

RESEARCHER AND CONSULTANT TO MUNICIPALITIES– TRIMBOS INSTITUTE

During my master I followed courses on behaviour change, health communication and prevention. I am fascinated by behaviour and how we can influence behaviour to direct people towards a healthier lifestyle. I am happy that I got the chance to start as a researcher and consultant to municipalities after my internship at the Trimbos Institute. Trimbos is a knowledge institution engaged in improving mental health and preventing the use of substances like alcohol, drugs and tobacco. I use the knowledge acquired during my master to translate scientific insights into best practices. My job is to support municipalities in preventing the use of substances among the youth. My largest project entails a pilot implementing the Islandic prevention model in six Dutch municipalities. In Iceland they managed to reduce the use of substances in adolescents by keeping statistics, working together with the community, providing valuable leisure activities for adolescents and educating parents. My tasks within this project are very diverse. I am responsible for the qualitative evaluation of the pilot and I interview municipalities, high schools and national organisations about the Islandic model. In addition, I communicate about the model via blogs, websites, news articles, newsletters and inspiration meetings. My job is to connect science, policy and practice; a job where I learn a lot.



Lian Smeets

'My job is to connect science, politics and practice; a job where I learn a lot.'



Photo: Lian Smeets

Floor den Ouden | graduated in 2018

KTBA COMPLIANCE GROUP – LABELLING CONSULTANT

For this job at KTBA I work on location at food manufacturers and give advice about labeling and related legal affairs. During my master Nutrition and Health I noticed that I knew little about an important player in this field: the food manufacturers. That is why I joined KTBA. As a consultant I visit many clients, which gives me a lot of opportunities to learn about this business. I helped for example a baker with labelling his products for big supermarkets and visit companies to see what they can improve in terms of labelling. This way I can peak behind the curtains of an industry that affects all of us. My visits are valued by clients, because I help them with urgent and big problems. This, in combination with the variety of products I work with, makes my job super challenging. At the end of the day, seeing your designed labels in the shops is something I am proud of. Ultimately, I want to work on making our society healthier day after day. However, I know that it is essential to educate yourself about the food industry in order to be able to reach that goal.

Eline de Heus | graduated in 2018

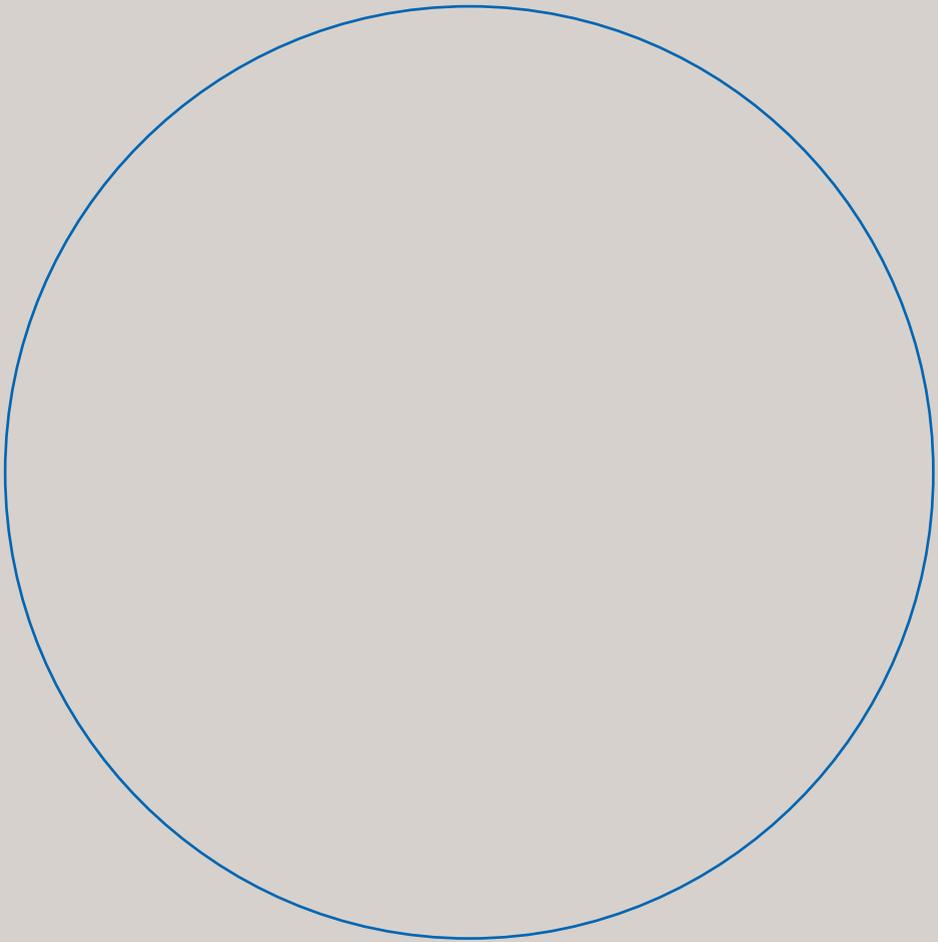
NETHERLANDS COMPREHENSIVE CANCER ORGANISATION (IKNL) – JUNIOR RESEARCHER

At the Netherlands Comprehensive Cancer Organisation (IKNL) I am doing a PhD research about rare types of cancer. What I like most is doing research in healthcare and contributing to the improvement of survival and quality of care for patients with a rare cancer. My main tasks are analyzing data, writing scientific articles, presenting results, and composing reports. It strikes me that there are big differences between rare and common cancers, like breast and colon cancer. At least one in five patients with cancer has a rare type, but not much research has been done on rare cancers and survival is lower compared to patients with a common cancer. During my Master I enjoyed conducting research into several diseases and found out that I wanted to work in research. My thesis and internship gave me the chance to gain experience in the health sector in writing scientific articles, epidemiology and quantitative data analysis.

Laura Heusschen | graduated in 2017

VITALYS OBESITY CLINIC – PHD CANDIDATE

After my internship, I was offered a PhD position at Vitalys and the department of bariatric surgery at Rijnstate hospital. My project is a collaboration with Wageningen University and we aim to have a better understanding of nutritional status after bariatric surgery. I am involved in different studies within this topic such as the implementation of an online food questionnaire, evaluation of the efficacy of specialized multivitamin supplements and research on high-risk groups such as pregnant women. Within these studies, I work together with colleagues from many different disciplines, both within and outside of Rijnstate. Sometimes it can be quite a challenge to work together with so many people, but it's also a part of my job that I really enjoy. I also like the diversity in my daily tasks. Some days I sit behind my computer all day to analyse or write, while other days I barely see my desk as I am including participants, giving presentations or attending meetings. My study provided me with a broad base of scientific knowledge and competences that I can apply in my current job. I advise current students to use their thesis and internship period to explore their interests and personal qualities. Last but not least: let others know what kind of job you are looking for. The larger your network, the more opportunities you will have to find the perfect job.



Want to know more?

Master Nutrition and Health

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