Annual review 2021-2022*
Graduate School of Life Sciences

Our mission is to improve life, by providing an inspiring and innovative academic environment that enables our graduates to thrive in the dynamics of life sciences and society.

Organised by
Faculty of Science
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
Faculty of Medicine (UMC Utrecht)

Affiliated partners
Hubrecht Institute
Princess Máxima Center

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* for master academic year 2021-2022, for PhD calendar year 2022
16 MSc Programmes
15 PhD Programmes

1.725 active MSc students
2.040 active PhD candidates

Master’s Programmes number of active students

- Biology of Disease: 108
- Biofabrication: 20
- Bioinformatics & biocomplexity: 59
- Bio Inspired Innovation: 78
- Cancer, Stem cells & Developmental Biology: 118
- Drug Innovation: 142
- Environmental Biology: 157
- Epidemiology (postgraduate): 236
- Infection & Immunity: 83
- Medical Imaging: 47
- Molecular & Cellular Life Sciences: 197
- Neuroscience & Cognition: 144
- One Health: 38
- Regenerative Medicine: 74
- Sciences and Business Management: 169
- Toxicology & Environmental Health: 55

PhD Programmes number of active candidates

- Biomembranes: 44
- Cancer, Stem Cells & Developmental Biology: 231
- Cardiovascular Research: 99
- Clinical & Experimental Neuroscience: 192
- Clinical & Translational Oncology: 160
- Computational Life Sciences: 30
- Drug Innovation: 163
- Environmental Biology: 93
- Epidemiology: 141
- Infection & Immunity: 217
- Life Sciences Education Research: 33
- Medical Imaging: 135
- Molecular Life Sciences: 45
- Regenerative Medicine: 98
- Toxicology & Environmental Health: 50
- Not in a programme: 309
Highlights Master

Admissions

- Continuous high interest of students in Life Sciences programmes; higher numbers of visitors to (online) open days and increased numbers of applications, also internationally.
- Optimization of an assessment matrix for a fair, transparent and evidence-based selection process.

Curriculum content

- Masters Toxicology and Environmental Health and One health were merged into a new master’s programme Health and Environment.
- Successful start of two new profiles of 33 EC each: Life Sciences and Society and Translational Life Sciences.
- New academic skills courses: Logical argumentation in science: publishing, proposals and pitching and Introduction in designing and teaching in higher education.
- New courses to reduce the use of lab animals in electives: Better science with less animals and Replacing animal testing challenge.

Educational and policy procedures

- Projects on improvement of quality assurance; new quality assurance plan, optimized evaluation system and new tool for project approval.
- The newly designed online step by step guide helps GSLS teachers design new master courses and fulfill quality control standards.

Community and communication

- New online Student and teacher guides with a great look and feel fitting the GSLS community.
- Radio life sciences: a podcast series for community building with a special series on student wellbeing.
- Live exhibition of the ‘I art my science’ event for all students, PhD candidates and staff of GSLS.

Master in numbers

- 2,247 Applications
- 597 Starters
- 30% Internationals
- 190 Programme courses
- 27 GSLS elective courses
- 8 Profiles within programmes
- Up to 96 EC individual research
- 429 (40 cum laude) MSc Degrees
Highlights PhD

Courses
- The second and third module (year 2) of the course on Responsible Conduct of Research was launched.
- The PhD Course Centre offers a new, second course on supervision of master students ('starter kit').
- The support for PhD supervisors was extended with a comprehensive toolkit.
- Eight new Bioinformatics courses were launched in the second half of 2022.

Events
- The PhD Council organised the annual PhD Day on June 22nd, which was attended by 189 PhD candidates. This year’s theme was Communication in science: what is your story?
- On October 7th the PhD Council elected Marcel van der Heyden (UMC Utrecht) as PI of the year 2022 and Jeanine Roodhart (UMC Utrecht) as daily supervisor of the year 2022.
- After two years of cancellation the GSLS-initiated pitch competition Breaking Science was organised again in spring, with 36 participants. Parnassos proved to be the ideal venue for this event.

Social safety
- The Hubrecht Institute organised a pilot of proactive conversations between the PhD confidential advisor and all PhD candidates, which was highly appreciated by PhD candidates.

Quality Assurance
- The GSLS published the first comprehensive guide for PhD candidates and PhD supervisors.
- During the audit of the Science 4 Life research programme in November 2022 PhD education was evaluated. ‘In general, the committee is impressed by the new PhD guide and the other measures that were recently installed to safeguard high-quality training of PhD candidates at the GSLS.’