

“Orientation on International Scientific Careers”  
University of Groningen Life sciences student association Idun

It has been already the second time that the course “Orientation on International Scientific Careers” is organized for students in life sciences. The course OISC is organized by GLV Idun, the student association of life sciences, in cooperation with the RuG. This year 13 highly motivated students have been selected to take part in the course. February the 15<sup>th</sup> was the kick-off.

The course ‘Orientation on International Scientific Careers’ is a 5 ECT masters course that aims to promote interaction between university and science industry. In practice this will be achieved by having foreign companies providing a interdisciplinary group of students with a case of scientific research. This research will then be conducted at the university, by a group of students, under the supervision of professors. After three to four months of research at the university, the students travel abroad to the companies to present their work and have it commented by the company employees. The visit to the company also includes a tour around the company facilities and a presentation on the overview of the company’s activities. This course gives students the opportunity to experience how scientific research is conducted in non-university organizations. Since many students end up working in non-university organizations this course enables orientation on future careers outside the university.

The first day of the course started with the professors presenting to the students the different case studies and also giving some background information on the company or organization providing the case. There are cases on seed enrichment, soil remediation, bio fuels and management of biodiversity collections. After a short introduction on the five cases, it was time for the roundtable. A roundtable is sort of a speed dating concept in which students are divided into small groups to come into contact with scientist working at companies. Each group has 20 minutes to ask questions to the scientist concerning there work, explaining for instance the differences to working at the university but also explaining how they ended up at their current job. After 20 minutes the groups are shuffled, till each group has met with every scientist. This roundtable is concluded by a plenary discussion among students and scientists.

After an interesting first day the students go home wondering which case they will be researching, at the end of the week they will be notified which case has been assigned to them.