

BRIDGING PROGRAMME

2023



Bridging Programme 2023

The VU International Office offers an intensive three-week Bridging Programme (BP) aimed to better prepare incoming PhD students for their PhD trajectories. The programme consists of 4 modules (see list below) delivered by lecturers from the Faculty of Humanities, VU Library, and the Centre for International Cooperation (CIS). The programme is scheduled for January-February 2023. It will be held in person and accommodate a limited number of students. Students from different VU faculties will be enlisted based on “first applied, first served” principle.

When: 16 January - 3 February 2023

Where: Face-to-Face at VU campus

Who: new/incoming PhD students

Credits: 6 ECs (certificate issued after the programme)

Fee: Euro 750 (payment instructions will be sent by email to students selected)

Registration: <https://forms.gle/F5yajR2sSx6VUZUdA> by Tuesday 13 December

Modules

Orientation session: Welcome, BP learning environment, meeting BP alumni

M1: Open Science and Research Data Management, Literature management

M2: Academic Competencies

M3: Academic English Writing

M4: Soft Skills

Coordination: Sabina Di Prima (sabina.diprima@vu.nl) and Regina van de Wall (r.c.g.vande.wall@student.vu.nl)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			12 10:30-12:30 Orientation session	
16 9:00-9:30 Introduction 9:30-12:30 M1 - Data Management & Literature Management 13:30-15:30 M2 - Academic Competencies	17 9:30-12:30 M2 - Academic Competencies 13:30-15:30 M3 - Academic English	18 9:30-11:30 M4 - Soft Skills	19 9:30-12:30 M2 - Academic Competencies	20 9:30-12:30 M3 - Academic English
23 9:30-11:30 M4 - Soft Skills	24 9:30-11:30 M2 - Academic Competencies 13:30-15:30 M3 - Academic English	25 9:30-12:00 M4 - Soft Skills	26 9:30-12:30 M2 - Academic Competencies 13:30-15:30 M4 - Soft Skills	27 9:30-12:30 M3 - Academic English 13:30-16:30 M4 - Soft Skills (One-on-one coaching)
30 9:30-12:30 M2 - Academic Competencies 13:30-16:30 M4 - Soft Skills (Mock presentations)	31 9:30-12:30 M2 - Academic Competencies 13:30-16:30 M4 - Soft Skills (Mock presentations)	1 9:30-11:30 M3 - Academic English	2 9:30-12:30 M2 - Academic Competencies (Presentations)	3 9:30-12:30 M2 - Academic Competencies (Presentations) 12:30-15:30 Closing + lunch (potluck)

Module 1: Open Science and Research Data Management, Literature management

Lecturers: Lena Karvovskaya, Tycho Hofstra and Rick Vermunt (VU Library)

Date	Topics
16 January 2023 09.30-12.30	<p>Research Data Management Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informal introduction, getting to know each other• Open Science• Reproducible Lego Workshop• How VU Library can help you with Research Data Management<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Tycho Hofstra, RDM expert○ Lena Karvovskaya, Community Manager RDM <p>Literature Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a personal bibliographic reference database using EndNote• Advantages of reference software<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Can contain 100.000 references per data library○ Create a personal library up to 100.000 records○ Uniformity○ Easy to learn/ use○ Importing references from sources with a click○ Managing large sets of references○ Connecting full text and managing PDFs○ Safely removing duplicates through settings○ Setting style in your paper with a click○ Reducing chance of making mistakes○ Adjusting specific styles to personal preference• How to get EndNote• Other reference software packages

Module 2: Academic Competencies

Lecturers: Dr Denyse Snelder, Dr Henk van den Heuvel and Sabina Di Prima (Centre for International Cooperation - CIS)

Module 2	
Description	This module is suitable for PhDs from different disciplines who like to improve their competences in developing and writing a research proposal. Although disciplines vary in research content, their broad approach in terms of operational steps in the research process is similar, addressing questions such as what to research (decide) and why (justify) and how to do the research (design and plan). This module will concentrate on the following steps in research proposal development: generating innovative research ideas, reviewing the literature, formulating a research problem that is clearly linked to the research questions or objectives, developing a conceptual framework that captures the information needed to answer the research questions, and conceptualizing a research design that covers research methodologies for each of your research questions.
Teaching methodology	The approach that we will follow is to start with reflecting and elaborating on candidates' research ideas and preliminary research proposals. Then, through the series of sessions the PhD candidates will get a deeper understanding of the relevance of their topic, its integration within broader streams of literature and scientific debates providing the contours of a conceptual framework and identify appropriate methodology(ies) to tackle the addressed topic.
Intended learning outcomes	After completion of this module: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You will have developed a more critical view on how to compose, write and present a research proposal• You will have acquired insight into the structure, components and main topics of a research proposal• You will be able to understand and explain the differences between research aims, questions, objectives, and hypotheses, and between different research designs• You will understand the importance of a literature review, know how to start one and where to look for literature sources• You will be able to differentiate between a theoretical and a conceptual framework• You will be able to present an "elevator pitch" describing your research ideas
Assessment	All assignments contribute to the final elevator pitch presentation for this module. Assignments are commented on but not graded. However, the timely submission of assignments and giving the elevator pitch presentation are mandatory to obtain the ECT credits for this course.
Book for this module	Kumar R. 2019. <i>Research methodology: a step-by-step guide for beginners</i> . 5th ed. SAGE Publications Ltd, London. The 3rd edition of 2011 is available online, see: http://www.sociology.kpi.ua/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/Ranjit_Kumar-Research_Methodology_A_Step-by-Step_G.pdf

Tip	<p>Creswell J W (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches. 5th edition. London: Saga publications Inc</p> <p>Piet Verschuren & Hans Doorewaard. 2010 Designing a Research Project</p> <p>Lantsoght E. 2016. <i>Top PhD advice from start to defense and beyond: focus on the Netherlands with universal tips & tricks.</i> Edited by Francien Horrevorts, Academic Transfer & bookboon.com; see: https://bookboon.com/en/top-phd-advice-from-start-to-defense-and-beyond-ebook</p>
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Date	Topic
16 January 2023	Designing and developing a (preliminary) research proposal
13.30-15.30	2.0 Introduction to module 2
17 January 2023	2.1 Introduction to research 2.2 Formulation of a research problem
9.30-12.30	<u>Preparing for Assignment 1</u>
19 January 2023	
9.30-11.30	2.3 Literature review
11.45-12.30	2.4 Research justification
	<u>Preparing for Assignment 2</u>
24 January 2023	Feedback on assignment 1 2.5 Theory of Knowledge 2.6 Conceptual and theoretical frameworks
9.30-11.30	<u>Preparing for Assignment 3</u>
26 January 2023	Feedback on assignment 2 (justification) 2.7 Validity and reliability of research 2.8 Research design and methodology
9.30-12.30	<u>Preparing for Research methodology table / flow chart and Assignment 4</u>
30 January 2023	2.9 Interactive session with:
9.30-12.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on assignment 3 (conceptual framework) • Questions, answers, and feedback on other components

31 January 2023 9.30-12.30	One-to-one sessions (on demand)
2 February 2023 9.30-12.30	Elevator pitch presentations on research proposal <i>(Student presentations)</i> Assessment by panel of experts
3 February 2023 9.30-12.30	Elevator pitch presentations on research proposal <i>(Student presentations)</i> Assessment by panel of experts

M2 – Assignment topic	Submiss. date	Description
<p>Assignment 1</p> <p>Research questions and objectives</p>	<p>19 Jan 2023</p>	<p>Kindly submit the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A working title for your research proposal 2. A short description of your research topic or problem that you like to address (max. 4-5 lines) 3. Your main research question and specific objectives, taking note of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The verbs used (e.g., are these strong or weak verbs) • The wording (be clearly and unambiguously in words and ideas) • Main versus sub- / specific question (e.g., check number of aspects covered per sub-objective) • Check whether the specific objectives jointly cover all relevant aspects of the research problem (referred to in your main objective or research question) that you plan (and will be able) to study (as far as you can judge at this time of course)
<p>Assignment 2</p> <p>Justification</p>	<p>22 Jan 2023</p>	<p>Write a paragraph (or review and adjust the concerned paragraph in your proposal) on the background and justification of your research, based on a review of the literature. Given the short time available, just limit your description to 2-3 pages and we further do not expect a complete review based on an exhausting list of references but a total of 5 - 10 articles and / or chapters of books will be sufficient.</p> <p>Important is that you structure your paragraph addressing the following points:</p> <p><i>Introduction to topic</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the situation of your topic (introduce topic)? • Statement of problem • What is the problem you like to study? what is the key issue? • What is the size of the problem? Is there evidence of the problem? (show data from literature that indicate the size of the problem) <p><i>Justification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is it important to address this problem? (Set out the reasons for undertaking this particular study) • Why do you think your research problem or question is worth investigating, why is it important for the academic field (scientific relevance, indicate knowledge gap)? • Why would your research create valuable and useful knowledge? • What is the societal relevance? Any ethical aspects?

<p>Assignment 3</p> <p>Conceptual framework</p>	<p>26 Jan 2023</p>	<p>Make a visual representation of a conceptual framework (if possible, based on an existing theoretical framework) that relates to your research problem. Think about aspects selected from existing theories that may become the basis of your research or inquiry.</p> <p>Steps for developing conceptual framework:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select literature (use search machine like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://scholar.google.com/; • http://www.plosone.org/; • http://www.bioone.org/; • http://iopscience.iop.org/1468-6996/; • http://www.sciencedirect.com/; • http://www.doaj.org/; • http://www.getcited.org/ 2. Review the literature (limit the number of sources to about 10 key articles): identify themes (based on theories, and issues) that are of relevance to your research which in turn can serve as a basis for developing a conceptual (or theoretical) framework. 3. Insert the findings from the literature materials you have reviewed into these themes. 4. Select the most important aspects from these themes that relate to your specific research problem (the information you have gathered relate to thematic areas and associated issues in which your research is embedded, however, not all may be of direct or specific relevance to your research problem; hence, select those that are of direct relevance). 5. Identify relationships between themes, examine the type of relationship among themes, e.g., positive / negative influence, functional relationship, and identify a hierarchical structure (if any). 6. Make visual representations of this information and write a short paragraph explaining the visual.
<p>Assignment 4</p> <p>Elevator pitch Presentation preliminary proposal</p>	<p>2 or 3 Feb 2023 - presentation days</p>	<p>Prepare a 5 -minute presentation on your research proposal based on the 3 assignments and other relevant information provided in class (e.g., methods table, work plan). We suggest to use Powerpoint software.</p> <p>Include not more than 10 slides (max. 90 words per slide):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover page (title of presentation, name, affiliation, date)-> 1 slide • What is your research about? What is the problem to be investigated? -> 1 or 2 slides • Why did you decide to do this research? What is your motivation and why is the topic important? Give evidence of the importance of this research e.g., through statements in literature or articles? -> 1 or 2 slides • How are you going to do your research? (methodology) -> 1 or 2 slides • What are the expected results of your research? 1 slide • What are the expected implications, impacts / solutions and for whom? 1 or 2 slides • List of references (at least 5)

Module 3: Academic Writing in English

Lecturer: Dr Ursula Caci (Faculty of Humanities, Academic Language Programme)

Module 3	
Website for this module	https://www2.fgw.vu.nl/www/els-online/
Learning objectives	After successfully completing this course you will be able to write a well-structured and coherent academic English text about the topic of your research, following the stylistic conventions of your discipline. Your writing will be relatively free of serious lexical and grammatical error which would have an adverse effect on the readability of the text. You will also have insight into your own strengths and weaknesses in grammatical terms, and how to go about resolving the weaknesses.
Course structure	The course consists of 5 sessions spread over three weeks. Each participant will receive feedback on his/her research justification (first 1000 words of M2 assignment 2 due on 22 Jan 2023) and use the feedback to revise the relevant text during the course.
Participation	Attendance and active participation are required.
Assessment	The final assessment consists of the reworked research proposal. The participant's revision of the text should show that they are applying the tips they received during the course.

Date	Topic
<p>17 January 2023 13.30-15.30</p>	<p>Introduction to the course. What experience do you have of writing in English? What do you hope to learn? What are your own strengths and weaknesses? Introduction to the feedback website.</p> <p>Readability and style. Readers of academic texts will have certain expectations about the writing style, though these may differ in different academic disciplines or types of texts. In this session we discuss academic English style and usage issues. We will look at some common mistakes writers make.</p>
<p>20 January 2023 9.30-12.30</p>	<p>We will continue the overview of common mistakes and how to avoid them.</p> <p>Readability and coherence. The overall aim in writing is to communicate something to a reader. But what makes a text comprehensible and readable? In this session, we will look at how to create coherence through correct use of transition words, reference, and syntax.</p>
<p>24 January 2023 13.30-15.30</p>	<p>We will continue with the topic of coherence.</p> <p>In the second part we will address the topic of readability and punctuation. Punctuation is a vital aspect of written communication. In this session we will take a closer look at the role of commas, colons, semicolons, hyphens, and brackets.</p>
<p>27 January 2023 9.30-12.30</p>	<p>Readability and consistency. You can help readers to understand your text by being consistent in your use of terminology and verb tenses. In this session we will deal with tenses and other aspects of the verb phrase.</p> <p>In this session, you also have the opportunity to ask me questions about the feedback I gave you on the first 1000 words of your research proposal and on the use of ESL- online.</p>
<p>1 February 2023 9.30-11.30</p>	<p>Information ordering. You can improve the reading flow of your text by creating sentences that provide information in an accessible order. In this session you will learn about a sentence's theme and focus.</p> <p>Revision. I will give you a checklist of things to look out for when writing and, above all, when revising your writing. This also serves as a course review. You will then apply these tips to revise the proposal you submitted. You will share your texts in small groups and help each other to revise. I will be on hand to answer questions and give advice.</p>

Module 4: Soft Skills

Lecturers: Wendelien Tuijp and Sabina Di Prima (Centre for International Cooperation – CIS)

Module 4 Soft Skills	
Description	<p>This module is suitable for PhDs from different disciplines who seek to explore and enhance their soft skill abilities. The main focus is on communicating and presenting research to varied audiences and promoting research for maximum outreach. The aim is to develop the basic communication and presentation skills necessary for a successful PhD trajectory, taking into account the need for context and situation-based adaptations.</p> <p>The soft skill training will help you consolidate your research project ideas and prepare you for academic discussions with peers but also with other relevant actors. It will also facilitate your introduction to the department and faculty as you will be able to clearly and easily explain your research topic. Additionally, throughout this module you will appreciate the importance of inter-cultural communication and peer-to-peer learning.</p>
Teaching methodology	<p>An interactive and experiential learning approach is used. You will develop your presentation skills and mindset by acting, reflecting, exploring, experimenting and receiving/giving feedback. For the best effect, active participation is required.</p>
Course structure	<p>This module consists of four sessions spread over two weeks. It also includes the possibility for one-to-one coaching sessions on-demand. The module will end with a round of mock presentations (5 min pitches) which will prepare you for the final presentations for Module 2. Throughout the sessions, you will build up the blocks of your presentation pitch and practice both in smaller groups and in plenary sessions.</p>
Learning objectives	<p>After successfully completing this module, you will be able to present and discuss your PhD research in a clear and concise manner to both an academic audience as well as a general public. You will also have insight into your own strengths and weaknesses in communication/presenting skills, and how you can make use of your strengths during a presentation.</p>
Assignments	<p>The soft skill-sharpening will occur through a progression of interlinked assignments which stimulate you to activate and build on the experience and insights acquired in each session. The assignments will help you to develop specific aspects of communication and presentation skills.</p>
Formative assessment	<p>The mock presentations at the end of the module will be assessed by your peers as well as the lecturers. You should be able to provide a clear and convincing presentation of your PhD research topic.</p>
Materials for this module	<p>Study materials (including handouts and links to videos) will be provided by the lecturers on CANVAS prior to each session.</p>

Date	Topic
<p>18 January 2023</p> <p>9.30-11.30</p>	<p>Session 1: Introduction to the soft skills module and getting to know each other. We will highlight the key principles of presenting and communicating with an audience and discuss how to structure your presentation.</p> <p>Assignment 1: In preparation for next session: work on your pitch (building block 1)</p>
<p>23 January 2023</p> <p>9:30-11.30</p>	<p>Session 2: We will introduce a set of guidelines for advanced presentation skills, paying attention on how to make your presentation interesting for the audience. We will continue with tips on how to give and receive feedback. In the second part of the session you will present Assignment 1 in a smaller group. You will also practice giving and receiving feedback from your peers.</p> <p>Assignment 2: In preparation for next session: work on your pitch (building block 2)</p>
<p>25 January 2023</p> <p>9:30-12.00</p>	<p>Session 3: During this session we will delve into non-verbal communication, the voice as a toolbox and interacting with your audience. We will continue with examples from real life situations and learn from the experience of a PhD candidate who successfully defended his thesis in 2021. In the second part of the session you will present Assignment 2 in a smaller group. You will also practice giving and receiving feedback from your peers.</p> <p>Assignment 3: In preparation for next session: work on your pitch (building block 3)</p>
<p>26 January 2023</p> <p>13.30 – 15.30</p>	<p>Session 4: In this session we will address communication in the Dutch academic environment and expectation management. We will highlight different cultural perspectives and implications for communication, for example with your supervisor. In the second part of the session you will present Assignment 3 in a smaller group. You will also practice giving and receiving feedback from your peers.</p> <p>Assignment 4: In preparation for next session: work on your full mock presentation (5 min pitch)</p>
<p>27 January 2023</p> <p>13.30 – 16.30</p>	<p>One-on-one coaching</p>
<p>30 January 2023</p> <p>13.30 – 16.30</p>	<p>Mock Presentations (5 min pitches)</p>
<p>31 January 2023</p> <p>13.30 – 16.30</p>	<p>Mock Presentations (5 min pitches)</p>