

MSc Applied Communication Science

Alumnus Susanna Tol. Wetlands can be found all over the world, from the polar regions to the tropics. These ecosystems are among the most threatened of our planet and are also deteriorating rapidly. Susanna Tol did her internship at Wetlands International and after finishing her degree stayed on to work there. By combining her knowledge of communication and environmental issues, she develops strategies for the organisation's communication and policy activities. Currently she is involved with issues related to creating awareness about the need to protect and restore wetlands to mitigate climate change.



Programme summary

In this programme, students learn to analyse, design and manage the role of communication in social change within several domains in the life sciences, such as nature, environment, water, nutrition and health, biotechnology and food production. Our students are trained to adopt an integrative approach that involves social science and technical innovations, fulfilling an intermediary role to enhance multi-disciplinarity and interactive cooperation. Communication is a basic element of change. Complex processes of change involve different perspectives and perceptions of the various people involved. Societal processes, like climate change, poverty, disease or ecological degradation require appropriate solutions that integrate insights from all kinds of disciplines and stakeholders. Opportunities for enhancing mutual understanding and collaboration between science disciplines and society are explored. Special attention is paid to everyday life situations and how people actively deal with common issues related to the domains of the life sciences.

There are no pre-defined specialisations in the programme. Students compile their own thesis tracks by choosing, besides the compulsory communication science courses, a combination of closely linked courses, including a minor in a life sciences domain. An internship introduces students to professional practice. The major thesis allows them to become experts in a specific area within communication that is closely linked to their personal interests and future career.

Other interesting programmes

MSc International Development Studies, MSc Development and Rural Innovation, Health and Society (specialisation of MSc Management, Economics and Consumer Studies).



Thesis tracks

COMMUNICATION IN RELATION TO:

- NATURE CONSERVATION

The communication courses in this thesis track focus, for instance, on interactive processes and policies that are combined with a minor in Forest and Nature Conservation. An example of a thesis written by a student in this field is 'Communication in nature conservation: the relationships between social dynamics, environmental policy and management in the Nestos Delta, Greece'.

- NUTRITION AND HEALTH

Optional communication courses focus, for instance, on health promotion and behavioural change, while minor courses provide in-depth knowledge on nutrition behaviour, epidemiology and public health. An example of a thesis is: 'Future: Peer health education and the Internet. Is health education with and for adolescents via the Internet effective?'

- ANIMAL PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Optional courses focus on subjects such as organisational communication and environmental communication. Minor courses provide a background in animal production systems. An example of a thesis in this field is 'Management of trade in parrots from West & Central Africa'.

Other possibilities for linking Communication Science with a life science domain are: Ecology and Environment; Forestry and Rural Development; Land Use Planning; Organic Agriculture; Product Design and Quality Management; Food Technology; Water Management.

Admission Requirements

For general admission requirements, see page 40. More information about specific admission requirements can be found on the website.

Your future career

Graduates are specialised in building bridges between various stakeholders, such as governments and citizens or laymen and experts. They work for communication consultancy organisations, government departments, hospitals, development agencies, commercial organisations and media and knowledge institutes. Career prospects are: communication consultant (advising organisations on how to improve their communication processes); policymaker (formulating policy in cooperation with groups in society); process facilitator (managing conflict, negotiation and change); communication manager (organising internal and external communication processes of an organisation); project manager (managing the communication and collaboration between parties throughout the entire project lifespan); journalist (making scientific knowledge accessible to a broader public); communication researcher (making a systematic analysis of a communication issue).