

THE PROPOSITION

PhD candidates explain the most thought-provoking proposition in their thesis. This time it's Anna Gamza, who received her PhD in Quantitative Veterinary Epidemiology on 3 April. She used models and experiments to investigate the transmission of pathogens between broilers.



'Scientists should have managers like athletes or artists do'

'On the one hand, we expect scientists to be extremely specialized in their field, but at the same time they have a lot of extra things to arrange and do in connection with their research. You have to network, get grants, plot your measurements, make presentations.... Top athletes and actors, for example, have a manager who makes sure they can focus entirely on their performance. All other things are taken care of for them. I myself find networking quite difficult; it takes up a lot of head space and causes stress.

In science, not only is a lot of research time wasted on these sorts of things, but good people drop out because of the stress. You already have so little time to do your PhD research.

In the Netherlands, though, it's very

nice that working as a PhD student is seen as a real job; and you are considered an employee and not a student. In Poland, where I come from, you get an allowance that you can't call a salary; there, as a PhD student, you need a part-time job or a grant as supplementary income. This is also the case in the UK, where I am currently working as a postdoc in Edinburgh.

It does make a difference if doctoral researchers are seen as employees, but I think the scientific system would become even more efficient if you could leave all the things that are peripheral to your research to someone who specializes in them. Then everyone does what they do best.' RL