

## PhD Vlog Week 1: Katherine MacKenzie

TIME	SPEAKER	AUDIO
00:00:00		[TITLE BOARD]
00:00:04	Katherine	Hi, everyone. I'm Katherine. I'm a PhD student from the Erasmus University Medical Center in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. Welcome to week one of my Vlog. I'm going to be Vlogging for jobs.ac.uk as I said in my introduction. Today, I'll talk about how I got the position here, what it was like moving to the Netherlands and the different things you have to do.
00:00:30		And the PhD system here, a little bit of the comparison between here and the UK. So I'm a medical PhD student, a biomedical PhD student, and that's similar to the biochemistry PhD student that Vlogged earlier for jobs.ac.uk, [s.l. Samira 00:00:48]. My days are really similar to hers in the lab; planning experiments, cell culture, etc., so, yes, hopefully, I'll be able to give you some more practical advice on an international PhD.
00:01:00		I just don't want to repeat something already. So hopefully they won't overlap too much and you'll be able to learn something new from mine. So how did I get here? Well, I was doing my Masters in Nottingham in the UK and I decided about halfway through that I really wanted to do a PhD and continue doing research. So I was applying to a million different PhDs that I found interesting in their own right.
00:01:30		But one of them that I really wanted was in UCL in London. So I applied for this and I talked to the supervisor as a kind of pre-interview step and it was all really great and I went for this interview in UCL, and I thought it went really well. There were three people on the interview panel; there was the supervisor there and the core supervisor there, that both work in UCL, and then there was a third person who was a professor from Rotterdam and they're a collaborating lab.
00:02:00		And so I gave this presentation, went really well, and about a week later I got a phone call

		saying that I wasn't successful, but saying that the professor from Rotterdam had an opening in his lab and if I got in touch and spoke to him, maybe I could apply for that instead. So I got in touch with my now current supervisor and he told me that he'd like me to come over to Rotterdam, meet the group and give a presentation to them. So I was flown over to Rotterdam,
00:02:30		I looked around, got shown around the lab and it was all really nice. I gave a couple of presentations to the group here, and about a week later after that - this is all like in the space of three weeks - I got a call saying that I got the position here. So, straight away I got super excited and I started looking into what it was going to be like moving over here. So I hadn't been to Rotterdam before I visited that time and I couldn't afford at that point
00:03:00		to fly over again just to find flats and stuff like that, so I started looking online for different accommodation options and I found out through the different government websites that you need to register in a municipality like as soon as you get here. So I found an apartment. I found a couple of different ones but I found one that I quite liked and I had a Skype interview or Skype kind of viewing of the flat. The connection on the internet was really bad
00:03:30		and really I could have ended coming to a, well, crap flat, but I didn't, I ended up in a really nice flat with two really nice girls. The flatmates that I have are really... It's so great. I was really lucky with everything. So I found this apartment and had the address for the municipality, and after four days of being here, you have to register. So, passport, birth certificate,
00:04:00		like everything to the city hall and you have to go through this big application process. And you get a citizenship number so then you can open a bank account and all these kind of things. Luckily, it all got sorted pretty quickly. The rent's really reasonable and, yes, it was quite an easy move in the end. It wasn't as

		challenging as I thought it might be. So I'm going to tell you some of the differences between the UK PhD system and the Netherlands PhD system.
00:04:30		So, in the UK, you've got your three-year PhD generally; sometimes four if you do some kind of trials of different labs first. But generally, it's a three-year PhD system. You don't have that much publication pressure for a PhD, which is interesting because here you have to have a certain number of publications before you're allowed to have your thesis defence. So we have a four-year PhD system over here and you do teaching and
00:05:00		learning throughout and you get a certain number of ECTS points for whatever you do, similar to the UK. But here it's seen as more of a career. So we're called researchers in training rather than PhD students. We are expected to have a certain number of publications before we finish, so it can be a little bit of a high-pressure situation, but I think every PhD is a high pressure in the end.
00:05:30		And the systems all over Europe differ slightly but they all are the same kind of calibre of PhD at the end of it and you're expected to have learnt how to research on your own in a scientific PhD. That's all I'll tell you for now and I'll go into some more stuff throughout the next couple of weeks. Next week, I'm going to try and take you on a tour of the hospital, show you around the lab a little and take you around Rotterdam and tell you a little bit more about the
00:06:00		social life of a PhD student when we actually get a chance for a social life. And how to make some friends in an international situation, which is actually harder than you'd think. So until then, have a good week and, yes, it was nice to do this. Bye.

**END OF TRANSCRIPT**