

Vacancy for a highly motivated PhD Researcher: “Exploring novel approaches to gas chromatography for pharmaceutical analysis”

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Company: KU Leuven

Location: Leuven

Category: computer-and-mathematical

The candidate ideally has a Master in Chemistry or Engineering, Pharmacy, Bio-informatics or Bio-engineering, with a strong interest in analytical chemistry and chemometrics. A good knowledge of and hands-on experience with gas chromatography (GC) and preferably mass spectrometry (MS) are an absolute must. The candidate is familiar with the management, analysis and interpretation of data and has intermediate programming skills (e.g., Python, R or Matlab) for managing, analyzing and interpreting data, as well as for writing their own code to solve existing data-related problems. Candidates must be proficient in oral and written English, must have excellent communication skills, multi-tasking skills, and be team-oriented, proactive and results driven. The position can start as soon as the candidate is available. Interested candidates should send their CV and a motivation letter using the KU Leuven online application tool.

The project aims at investigating novel approaches and methodologies to gas chromatography (GC) for pharmaceutical analysis. These include the investigation and implementation of alternative detection techniques for GC, such as vacuum ultraviolet (VUV) spectroscopy for residual solvent and water analysis, as well as the use of mass spectrometry with a high efficiency source (HES) and cryogenic trapping system (CTS) for trace-level analysis in drug candidates (e.g., genotoxic impurities, nitrosamine precursors). An equally important project target is the development of a computer organized screening and method optimization system for GC, to automate the task of method development for pharmaceutical samples. The goal of this tool is to streamline the decision-making process

in method development, and as such reduce the amount of trial-and-error and time required to secure robust and reliable GC methods for commercial release. This implies the redefinition and automation of a number of key decisions (e.g., selection of scouting runs) and algorithms (e.g., peak detection and peak tracking algorithms) throughout the method optimization process.

For a collaborative project between Janssen Pharmaceutica and the University of Leuven (KU Leuven), focusing on the investigation of novel approaches to gas chromatography for pharmaceutical analysis, the department of Analytical Development - Small Molecule Method Development (AD-SMMD) of Janssen Pharmaceutica and the division of Pharmaceutical Analysis of the Department of Pharmaceutical and Pharmacological Sciences of KU Leuven are looking for a highly motivated PhD candidate. AD-SMMD is a diverse and enthusiastic team of scientists that support the development, validation and transfer of analytical methods used for Small Molecule drug characterization and this throughout its entire lifecycle, from early development to full product commercialization. At the same time, the AD-SMMD group operates as Center of Excellence for chromatographic, physicochemical as well as in-process control testing and oversees the implementation of innovative analytical technology platforms for New Molecular Entities. Within Pharmaceutical Analysis, the research group of PhD promoter Prof. Deirdre Cabooter is working on the fundamental investigation of mass transfer phenomena in chromatography, the implementation of multidimensional liquid chromatography (LC) techniques in combination with mass spectrometry (MS) for applications from different fields of research and the development of automatable method development strategies for complex samples. We offer a PhD position in a stimulating environment, wherein you will work in an internationally reputed pharmaceutical company with a strong focus on R&D, in a well-equipped, experienced and internationally oriented research unit. Your main workplace will be at the Janssen site in Beerse, Belgium. Frequent meetings and discussions (both online and live) will be organized with the academic promoter in Leuven, who will supervise this project from an academic point of view.

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