Åbo Akademi

Professorsinstallation

Professorial inauguration

Annika Meinander
Tan Phat Huynh
Michael Cochez

20 november 2026 kl. 14
Solennitetssalen, Akademihuset
Rothoviusgatan 1, Åbo



Offentliga föreläsningar ordnas med anledning av att följande professorer tillträtt sina ämbeten:
Public lectures will be held on the occasion of the inauguration of the following professors:

professor i biokemi Annika Meinander
professor i materialkemi Tan Phat Huynh
professor, PS Fellow i maskininlärning och artificiell intelligens Michael Cochez

Vetenskapens gynnare, idkare och vänner, inbjudes till föreläsningarna den 20 november 2026.
Scholars, benefactors and friends of science are invited to the lectures on 20 November 2026.

Med vördsam hälsning,
With respectful greetings,
Rektor för Åbo Akademi
Rector of Åbo Akademi University

Program

Installander och Akademistaten tågar in i procession

Axel von Kothen: *Vår Höfding*
Akademiska Orkestern | Dirigent Sauli Huhtala

Introduktion av professor Annika Meinander
Fakultetsdekan Reko Leino, Fakulteten för naturvetenskap och teknik (FNT)

• ”Från fara till försvar – molekylära signaler i immunförsvaret”

Professor i biokemi Annika Meinander

Sauli Huhtala: *Musik från Östersjöns stränder nr. 5 (folkvisor ur Otto Anderssons samlingar)*
Akademiska Orkestern | Dirigent Sauli Huhtala

Introduktion av professor Tan Phat Huynh
Fakultetsdekan Reko Leino, Fakulteten för naturvetenskap och teknik (FNT)

• ”Spatiotemporal Chemistry”

Professor i materialkemi Tan Phat Huynh

Jean Sibelius: *Nattmusik op.51*
Akademiska Orkestern | Dirigent Sauli Huhtala

Introduktion av professor Michael Cochez
Fakultetsdekan Reko Leino, Fakulteten för naturvetenskap och teknik (FNT)

• ”Machines that guess, machines that know ...”

Professor, PS Fellow i maskininlärning och artificiell intelligens Michael Cochez

Joseph Haydn: *March for the Royal Society of Musicians*
Akademiska Orkestern | Dirigent Sauli Huhtala

Installander och Akademistaten tågar ut i procession



Installationsskrift för professor Annika Meinander

Jag är uppvuxen i Borgå i en familj där utbildning och kultur värderades högt. Med diplomingenjörsföräldrar, vars syskon och vänner till stor del också var teknologer var naturvetenskaper och akademiska studier ett naturligt val för framtiden. Intresset för biovetenskaperna väcktes i högstadiet när vi började läsa fysiologi. Hur kroppen och dess organ fungerar fascinerade mig, samtidigt som jag tyckte om problemlösningen inom matematik, fysik och kemi.

Efter studentexamen 1995 började jag studera biokemi vid Åbo Akademi. Jag var en flitig student, men studietiden kom att handla om mycket mer än kurser och studiepoäng. Jag engagerade mig i ämnesföreningen och nationen och var ett år styrelseordförande för Åbo Akademis Studentkår. Genom studentpolitiken och som studentrepresentant i Åbo Akademis styrelse fick jag tidigt inblick i akademiskt beslutsfattande och universitetet som institution. När det blev dags för pro gradu-arbetet välkomnades jag till professor Lea Sistonens laboratorium vid Åbo Bioteknikcentrum, dagens Turku Bioscience Centre. Det var en internationell forskningsmiljö med högt tempo och stora ambitioner, och jag blev snabbt fascinerad av forskarlivet. Mitt graduarbete om fosforylering av värmeshockfaktorer blev min första bekantskap med posttranslationella proteinmodifieringar – ett tema som sedan dess följt mig genom forskarkarriären.

Mitt doktorandprojekt förde mig bara ett laboratorium vidare i korridoren på femte våningen i BioCity. Under handledning av professor John Eriksson började jag studera hur cellstress påverkar signalering som reglerar celldöd, och även Lea Sistonen fortsatte som mentor. Miljön gav oss unga forskare stor frihet att pröva idéer och hypoteser och en inspirerande känsla av att nästan vad som helst var möjligt. Under dessa år byggde jag också upp de vetenskapliga nätverk som fortfarande är viktiga för min forskning.

Efter disputationen flyttade jag med finansiering från Finlands Akademi till professor Pascal Meiers laboratorium vid Institute of Cancer Research i London. Där blev ubikvitinering central i min forskning. Ubikvitinering var vid den tiden främst känd som en signal för proteinnedbrytning, men vår forskning visade att den också kan modifiera signaleringsproteiners aktivitet och därigenom reglera celldöd och inflammation. Som modell använde vi bananflugan Drosophila melanogaster, som gav oss möjlighet att genetiskt modifiera signaleringsprotein och undersöka deras funktion i levande organismer. Två år senare ringde John Eriksson. Åbo Akademis nya internationella magisterprogram i biomedicinsk visualisering behövde med kort varsel en ansvarig akademilektor. Mina projekt i London närmade sig sitt slut och möjligheten förde mig tillbaka till Åbo hösten 2010. De följande åren kombinerade jag undervisning, familjeliv och arbetet med att skapa en egen forskargrupp. Hösten 2013 kunde jag rekrytera mina första doktorander och när jag 2014 blev akademiforskare vid Finlands Akademi började jag på allvar bygga upp mitt självständiga forskningsprogram.

I dag studerar min grupp hur proteinmodifieringar reglerar cellsignalering, framför allt hur ubikvitinering styr aktiveringen av inflammatoriskt genuttryck. Vi är särskilt intresserade av tarminflammation och använder fortfarande bananflugan som en viktig modell. Den låter oss kombinera genetik och biokemi och studera molekylära mekanismer där de faktiskt äger rum – i celler och vävnader i en levande organism. Hösten 2025 hade jag glädjen att utnämnas till professor i biokemi vid Åbo Akademi. Professuren ger mig möjlighet att fortsätta utveckla forskningen i den miljö där mycket av min vetenskapliga resa började. BioCity Turku, det nationella flaggskeppet InFLAMES och mina internationella nätverk ger en forskningsmiljö där idéer, kunskap och verktyg delas generöst. Nyfikenheten på hur kroppen fungerar, som väcktes redan i högstadiet, finns fortfarande kvar. Frågorna har bara flyttat längre in i cellen – till de molekylära processer där många av livets grundläggande beslut fattas.

Personalia

Född den 1 juni 1976 i Esbo, Finland

Familj: Gift med Richard Holmberg, mamma till Axel (2011) och Julia (2012)

ORCID-ID: 0000-0002-3878-2293

Examina och docenttitel

Docent i molekylärgenetik, Åbo Akademi 2017

Filosofie doktor i biokemi, Åbo Akademi 2007

Filosofie magister i biokemi, Åbo Akademi 2001

Anställningar (urval)

Professor i biokemi, Åbo Akademi 2026-

Äldre universitetslektor i cellbiologi, Åbo Akademi 2019–2025

Finlands Akademi-forskare, Åbo Akademi 2014–2019

Universitetsforskare, Åbo Akademi 2013–2014

Akademilektor i cellbiologi, Åbo Akademi 2010–2012

Postdoktoral forskare, Institute of Cancer Research, London 2008–2010

Doktorsassistent, Åbo Akademi 2007–2008

Doktorand, Turku Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, Åbo Universitet 2004–2007

Forskningsfinansiering (urval)

Transmission of inflammatory signals by linear Ub chains, Sigrid Jusélius Stiftelse 2024–2027, 195 K€

Ubikvitinförmedlad reglering av stressförorsakade inflammationsreaktioner i tarmen, Svenska Kulturfonden 2025–2027, 94 K€

Met1-ubikvitinering i inflammationsförorsakad cancer, Medicinska understödsföreningen Liv och Hälsa rf 2022–2026, 80 K€

Omdirigering av ubikvitinsignalering vid kronisk inflammation, Finlands Akademi-projekt 2019–2023, 500 K€

Detektion av Met1-ubikvitinering i inflammationsförorsakad cancer, Svenska Kulturfonden 2021–2024, 95 K€

Reglering av NF-kappaB signalering med hjälp av ubikvitinering, Finlands Akademi 2014–2019, 903 K€

Regulation of NF-κB signalling by ubiquitylation, Sigrid Jusélius Stiftelse 2013–2020, 191 K€

Större forskningssamarbeten:

InFLAMES flaggskepp, Åbo Universitet och Åbo Akademi 2020–2028

ImmuDocs doktorandpilot 2025–2028

ÅAU Center of Excellence on Cellular Mechanostasis (CellMech) 2019–2023

Sakkunniguppdrag (urval)

Opponent för fyra doktorsavhandlingar för Helsingfors Universitet, Lunds Universitet, Köpenhamns Universitet och Karolinska Institutet

Förhandsgranskare för 11 doktorsavhandlingar för Helsingfors Universitet, Åbo Universitet och Karolinska Institutet

Granskare för tre docenturer för Tammerfors Universitet och Helsingfors Universitet

Evaluerare av finansieringsansökningar för UK Research and Innovation, French National Research Agency, Hungarian National Research Development and Innovation Office, Czech Science Foundation, Köpenhamns Universitet, Otto A. Malms Stiftelse och Instrumentariums Stiftelse

Sakkunnig vid tillsättning av tjänster (utanför Åbo Akademi): Tenure track-professor, Department of Immunology and Microbiology, Köpenhamns Universitet, Doktorandtjänster vid Turku Doctoral Program in Molecular Medicine, Åbo Universitet

FEBS Journal Editorial Advisory Board 2023–

Nationella centret för utbildningsutvärdering: Utvärderare av högre utbildningen inom det naturvetenskapliga området i Finland 2023–2025

Akademiska uppdrag och meriter (urval)

Styrelsemedlem för BioCity Turku och Turku Bioscience 2026–2028

Medlem i styrgruppen och PI i Finlands Akademi Flaggskeppet InFlames 2021–2028

COST Action CA20113/ProteoCure, Management Committee-medlem 2021–2025

BioCity Turku Research Programme in Cell Communication, director 2022–2026

Scientific Committee for the European Workshop on Cell Death 2008–

Åbo Akademis Styrelse, medlem 2001–2004, suppleant 1999–2000, 2005–2008

Fakultetsrådet för Fakulteten för naturvetenskaper och teknik, medlem 2017–2021 (suppleant 2017–2019), 2025–2028

Ämnes/ämnesklusteransvar, Cellbiologi 2019–2021, Biokemi och cellbiologi 2021–2023, 2026–2028

ÅAU Fly Unit, Nod i Biocenter Finland Non-mammalian model organisms platform, ledare 2024–

Styrgrupp för Åbo Akademis forskningsprofil Lösningar för hälsa, medlem 2020–2026

Styrgrupp för projektet för utbildning av läkare med färdigheter i svenska vid Åbo Universitet, medlem 2022–

Turku Doctoral Network in Molecular Biosciences, koordinator 2013–2018

Handledning och ledarskap (urval)

Forskningsledare för Inflammatory Signalling Group 2013–

Huvudhandledare för fyra postdoktorala forskare, en pågående och tre färdigställda

Huvudhandledare för sju doktorander, tre pågående och fyra färdigställda

Huvudhandledare för 28 magisteravhandlingar, två pågående och 26 färdigställda

Medlem i doktorandföljegrupper för nio doktorander vid Åbo Akademi, Åbo Universitet och Helsingfors Universitet, fem pågående och fyra färdigställda

Undervisning och administrativa ansvarsuppgifter (urval)

Magisterprogramansvar: Biomedicinsk visualisering 2010–2012, Cellbiologi 2019–2021, Biokemi och cellbiologi 2023–2026

Ansvarig lärare på kurser i biokemi och cellbiologi, bl.a. Genetik, Cell signaling, Magisterseminarier, Model organisms in biological research, Bioimaging and microscopy, Advanced microscopy, Människans fysiologi

Avlagda studier i universitetspedagogik, 25 sp

Pris och utmärkelser

Riddartecknet av Finlands Vita Ros' orden 2023

Handledarpris ut Harry Elvings legat 2020

Per Brahe-priset 2019

Vetenskapliga publikationer (urval)

Referentgranskade vetenskapliga artiklar i tidskrifter och samlingsverk

1. Elbæk CR, Gradinaru S, Dahlström AM, Frueh A, Jahan AS, Cuenco J, Aalto AL, Rizk J, Hawley SA, Franks SNJ, Stumpe M, Kolapalli SP, Kedong Wang C, Ellison CJ, Hildebrandt X, Nielsen K, Priesmann D, Koch J, Deichmann M, Gullmets J, Verboom L, van Loo G, Peltzer N, Frankel LB, Elliott PR, Gyrd-Hansen M, Dengjel J, Ryan BJ, Hardie DG, **Meinander A**, Sakamoto K, Damgaard RB (2026) *M1-linked ubiquitination by LUBAC regulates AMPK signalling and the response to energetic stress.* Cell Death Differ. 33:1685-1705. doi: 10.1038/s41418-026-01675-z.
2. Santos Silva M, Coelho-Rato LS, Delshad N, Tarkhova T, Edman J, Paul P, **Meinander A**, Eriksson JE (2025) *Anisomelic acid promotes proteasomal degradation of HPV16 E6 via E3 ligase recruitment: A mass spectrometry-based interactome study.* J. Proteomics 322:105536. doi: 10.1016/j.jprot.2025.105536.
3. Aalto AL, Luukkonen V, **Meinander A** (2024) *Ubiquitin signalling in Drosophila innate immune responses.* FEBS J. 291:4397-4413. doi: 10.1111/febs.17028.
4. Aalto AL, Saadabadi A, Lindholm F, Kietz C, Himmelroos E, Marimuthu P, Salo-Ahen OMH, Eklund P, **Meinander A** (2023) *Stilbenoid compounds inhibit NF-kappaB-mediated inflammatory responses in the Drosophila intestine.* Front. Immunol. 14:1253805. doi: 10.3389/fimmu.2023.1253805.
5. Kietz C, **Meinander A** (2023) *Drosophila caspases as guardians of host-microbe interactions.* Cell Death Differ. 30:227-236. doi: 10.1038/s41418-022-01038-4.
6. Şen Karaman D, Kietz C, Govardhanam P, Slita A, Manea A, Pamukçu A, **Meinander A**, Rosenholm J (2022) *Core@shell structured ceria@mesoporous silica nanoantibiotics restrain bacterial growth in vitro and in vivo*. Biomater. Adv. (Mater. Sci. Eng., C) 133:112607. doi: 10.1016/j.msec.2021.112607.
7. Aalto A, Martínez-Chacón G, Kietz C, Tsuganova N, Sundén M, Broemer M, **Meinander A** (2022) *M1-ubiquitination facilitates NF-kappaB activation and survival during sterile inflammation*. FEBS J. 289: 5180-5197. doi: 10.1111/febs.16425. Highlighted by Peltzer N: Linear ubiquitin as a common regulator of cellular stress (doi: 10.1111/febs.16427).
8. Kietz C, Mohan AK, Pollari V, Tuominen I-E, Ribeiro PS, Meier P, **Meinander A** (2022) *Drice restrains Diap2-mediated inflammatory signalling and intestinal inflammation.* Cell Death Differ. 29:28-39. doi: 10.1038/s41418-021-00832-w.
9. Aalto A, Mohan AK, Schwintzer L, Kupka S, Walczak H, Broemer M, **Meinander A** (2019) *M1-linked ubiquitination by LUBEL is required for inflammatory responses to oral infection in Drosophila*. Cell Death Differ. 26: 860–876. doi: 10.1038/s41418-018-0164-x.
10. **Meinander A**, Runchel C, Tenev T, Chen L, Kim C-H, Ribeiro PS, Broemer M, Leulier F, Zvelebil M, Silverman N, Meier P (2012) *Ubiquitylation of the Initiator Caspase Dredd is Required for Innate Immune Signalling*. EMBO J. 31: 2770-2783. doi: 10.1038/emboj.2012.121. Highlighted by Falschlehner C & Boutros M: Innate immunity: regulation of caspases by IAP-dependent ubiquitylation (doi: 10.1038/emboj.2012.148)



Installation Publication for professor Tan Phat Huynh

Growing up in a business-oriented family in Ho Chi Minh city (Vietnam), I was encouraged to obtain both Bachelor and Master degrees in Engineering from local universities. Accepting doctoral position in physical chemistry (specialized in supramolecular chemistry and electroanalysis) at the Institute of Physical Chemistry of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IPC PAS) in Warsaw (Poland) in 2010 was, however, relatively uncommon even for my extended family at that time.

During the doctoral study I had the chance to visit the University of North Texas (USA) and Technion – Israel Institute of Technology at Haifa (Israel). These visits provided me with invaluable experience not only in organic synthesis and molecular simulations which were not available at IPC PAS, but also in new cultures. In June 2014 I defended my PhD. The thesis, Bis(2,2'-bithienyl)methane-derived functional monomers: from molecular recognition to sensing applications, addressed how functional monomers can be built for molecular recognition and chemical sensing.

After the defense I decided to learn something new, that is, something that required me to think outside the box. Here two postdoctoral periods, between 2014–2016 at the Technion and between 2016–2017 at Aarhus University (Denmark), provided me the opportunity to develop new sensors and materials, respectively. The collaboration with Aarhus University has continued, most recently during a three-month visit to Aarhus in 2025.

In autumn 2017 I took up a tenure-track appointment as assistant professor within the "Molecular Process and Materials Technology" profiling area of the Faculty of Science and Engineering, at Åbo Akademi University. Here I lead a research group working on materials aspects in physical chemistry. My research centers around three questions: (i) how a material responds when a molecule is in contact with its surface, (ii) how to monitor and distinguish response signal of the material in a complex sample, and (iii) how generalize the collected data into knowledge and application. I have tried to take the last question to public in recent years through different communication channels. It took almost nine years of proving my high capability in research, teaching, and management until Åbo Akademi granted me the title of Professor of Materials Chemistry from March 2026.

Personalia

Born on 31st October 1984, in Ho Chi Minh city (Vietnam)

Family: Married to Agnieszka Wojnarowicz-Huynh, one child (Emma Wojnarowicz-Huynh)

ORCID: 0000-0002-7408-7669

Degrees

PhD (with distinction) in Physical Chemistry, IPC PAS, Warsaw, Poland, 2014

Employment

Professor of Materials Chemistry, Mar 2026 –

Tenure-track associate professor, Åbo Akademi University, Mar 2020–Feb 2026

Tenure-track assistant professor, Åbo Akademi University, Aug 2017–Feb 2020

Postdoctoral researcher, Aarhus University, Mar 2016–Jul 2017

Postdoctoral researcher, Technion, Sep 2014–Feb 2016

Research visit (selected)

Aarhus University (three months), 2025

University of Tartu (one month), 2019

Helmholtz Zentrum München (one month), 2018

Research funding (selected)

Finnish Centre of Excellence (CoE) project (€871 100), 2026–2033

Business Finland co-innovation project (share, together with Dr. Jan-Henrik Smått, of ~€275 000 out of ~1.6 million EUR budget of ÅAU), 2025–2027

RCF Targeted Academy Project, proof of concept (€246 000), 2025–2026

TFK programme's India (€64 000), 2024–2026

TFK programme's Ukraine (€79 590), 2023–2025

EDUFI fellowship (€13 500), 2020–2021

Academy Project funding for early-career researchers (€514 000), 2019–2023

Magnus Ehrnrooth foundation research grant (€28 000), 2019–2020

Liv och Hälsa foundation (€55 000), 2018–2021

ÅAU starting grant No. 28001763 (€40 000), 2017–2020

Carlsberg's Distinguished Postdoc Fellowship (~€150 000), 2015–2017

Supervision and leadership (selected)

Group leader at Åbo Akademi, Aug 2017 –

Completed supervision as principal supervisor: four doctoral researchers, four master students, and >10 bachelor students and interns

Teaching (selected)

~300 contact-teaching hours

Coodinator of two courses *Introduction to Materials Chemistry* (2018-2019) and *Supramolecular Chemistry* (2020-2026)

Research-based laboratory teaching published in the *Journal of Chemical Education*

Pedagogical training (selected)

Ethical considerations in supervision (3 hours), 2018

Introduktion för (ny) undervisande personal (3 hours), 2020

HP00BQ02 Didactical design in Higher Education Teaching, 2025

HP00BQ05 Curriculum Leadership in Higher Education, 2026

Scientific expert duties (selected)

Pre-examiner of two doctoral theses and two master theses.

Opponent of two master theses.

Member of more than ten doctoral committees.

Expert in recruitment for the Martí i Franquès COFUND Fellowships in 2018 and 2021, for the programme From Postdoc to PI (PD2PI), and for DocFam+.

Reviewer of one application for the Dutch Research Council.

Referee for more than 50 manuscripts.

20 invited international lectures.

Member of the organizing committee of four international conferences, and session chair for seven international conferences.

Patents and invention disclosures

5 granted patents, 5 patent applications, 2 invention disclosures.

Summary of scientific publications

67 peer-reviewed articles and 7 book chapters, including two articles in *Advanced Materials* (2016 and 2017) have been noted as highly cited in Web of Science.

Research output (selected)

1. Zhang, Y., Liu, J., Wang, Y., Zhang, X., Cao, B., Liu, Y., Ding, X., Gong, X., He, S., Wang, Z., Aziz, L., Wang, T., Xuan, F., Li, W., Tang, J., Zheng, Y., **Huynh, T.-P.**, Shi, G., Haick, H., & Zhang, M. (2026). *Transport-defined encoding enables drift-resilient chemical sensing with homogeneous sensor arrays*. Nat. Sens. (accepted).
2. Vahdatiyekta, P., Kraufvelin, N., Legrand, L., Brunet, P., Ares, E., del Valle, M., & **Huynh, T.-.P**. (2026). *Conjugated-Polymer-Based Electronic Tongue for Breast Cancer Discrimination: from Artificial to Clinical Urine Samples*. Anal. Chem., 98, 4222-4231.
3. Banerji, S., Hõrak, H., Torop, J., & **Huynh, T.-P**. (2024). *Unravelling the secrets of plants: Emerging wearable sensors for plant signals and physiology*. Adv. Sens. Res., 2300023.
4. **Huynh, T.-P**., Chen, Y., Bach-Gansmo, F. L., Dehli, J., Ibsen, V. N., Foss, M., Tvilum, A. S., Zelikin, A. N., & Birkedal, H. (2023). *Efficient wet adhesion through mussel-inspired proto-coacervates*. Adv. Mater. Interfaces, 2201491.
5. Le, T. A., Zouheir, M., Nikiforow, K., Khatib, M., Zohar, O., Haick, H., **Huynh, T.-P**. (2022). *Synthesis, characterization, and humidity responsiveness of guar gum xanthate and its nanocomposite with copper sulfide covellite*. Int. J. Biol. Macromol., 206, 105-114.
6. Le, T.-A., Guo, Y., Zhou, J.-N., Yan, J., Zhang, H., & **Huynh, T.-P.** (2022). *Synthesis, characterization and biocompatibility of guar gum-benzoic acid.* Int. J. Biol. Macromol., 194, 110–116.
7. Fogde, A., Qudsia, S., Le, T.-A., Sandberg, T., & **Huynh, T.-P**. (2021). *(Calcium-phosphate)/carrageenan gardens grown from the gel/liquid interface.* ChemSystemsChem, 3, e2000064.
8. **Huynh, T.-P**. (2021). *Organic design of biomorphic superstructures.* ChemSystemsChem, 3, e2000031.
9. Fogde, A., Kurtén, B., Sandberg, T., & **Huynh, T.-P.** (2020). *Colorimetric hydrogel from natural indicators: A tool for electrochemistry education.* J. Chem. Edu., 3702–3706.
10. **Huynh, T.-P**., Pedersen, C., Wittig, N.K., & Birkedal, H., (2018). *Precipitation of Inorganic Phases through a Photoinduced pH Jump: From Vaterite Spheroids and Shells to ZnO Flakes and Hexagonal Plates.* Cryst. Growth Des., 18, 1951-1955.



Installation Publication for professor Michael Cochez

I was born in 1988 and spent my youth in Antwerp, Belgium, where my family runs a bakery. Throughout my school years I helped with production and sales. Computers had caught my attention early on. My sixth-grade teacher, Lode Van Puyvelde, let me program instead of working through endless repetitions of the same sums, and at the Pius X Institute in Antwerp, where I followed the science and mathematics track, the ICT coordinator, Marc Verdonckt, let me use the computers during breaks and holidays.

Holiday jobs at the IT department of the Plantijn Hogeschool in Antwerp, where Bruno Tourwé gave me my first chance to work in the field, helped my decision to study computer science. They also gave me the savings that made an Erasmus exchange possible. I studied information technology at the University of Antwerp for two years, and in 2008, I arrived in Jyväskylä for my exchange year. That year changed my life profoundly.

I met my future wife, Petra Arminen, and attended inspiring courses on artificial intelligence by Professor Vagan Terziyan. Later, when we decided to stay in Jyväskylä, he helped me obtain a place as a master's student at the university. I also joined his Industrial Ontologies Group, working on the UBIWARE semantic agent platform and later in the national SHOK research programs together with companies such as Steeri, Nokia and Tieto. After my master's degree in 2012, I continued as a doctoral researcher under the supervision of Vagan Terziyan and Ferrante Neri. My dissertation, defended in 2016, dealt with various AI topics, such as knowledge evolution, ontology learning and matching, and scalable clustering. During these years I also taught courses on cloud computing, big data and agent technologies, and served on the faculty council.

A research visit to Professor Stefan Decker at the Insight Centre in Galway in 2015 led to my next step. In 2016 I joined his group at the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Information Technology (FIT) in Aachen, Germany. There I worked on linked data and data pipelines and began to combine knowledge graphs with supervised machine learning, for example by learning vector representations of large knowledge graphs.

In 2019 I joined the Learning and Reasoning group at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam as an assistant professor. There my research took the shape I now call knowledge-infused machine learning: combining the structure of knowledge graphs with the flexibility of statistical learning to build systems that can reason even when information is missing. With my students and colleagues, I worked on answering complex logical queries over incomplete knowledge graphs. Since 2020 I have been the academic lab manager of the Discovery Lab, a joint lab with Elsevier and the University of Amsterdam, and thanks to financial support from Accenture LLP we have applied our methods in biomedicine together with Amsterdam University Medical Center. We also received funding for the Graph-Massivizer Horizon Europe project, which enabled us to work on scaling our methods to much larger graphs. Teaching remained central: I coordinated and designed courses on deep learning, machine learning with graphs and intelligent systems, and our deep learning lectures on YouTube reached a broad audience online.

In October 2025 I was appointed Professor, PS Fellow in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence Engineering, at Åbo Akademi University and Principal Investigator at the ELLIS Institute Finland. My new group has made a good start with the Horizon Europe project CEREBRA-AI, in which we will investigate continual, explainable and embodied general-purpose artificial intelligence. Our team of postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students is already at work, with several members still based in Amsterdam.

My guiding idea is that AI should augment human capability rather than compete with it. Instead of letting systems learn everything from vast numbers of examples, I want to give them our structured understanding of how the world works, which makes them more efficient, more reliable and easier to explain. Turku offers an excellent environment for this, with strong partners such as Turku BioImaging and the TurkuNLP group, and the ELLIS network connects our students and researchers directly to the European AI community. I look forward to continuing to build the research group at Åbo Akademi University and to training the next generation of researchers in this field.

Personalia

Born on January 22, 1988, in Mortsel, Belgium

Family: Married to Petra Arminen, children Emilia and Jasper

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5726-4638

Degrees

Doctor of Philosophy, Mathematical Information Technology, University of Jyväskylä, 2016

Master of Science, Mathematical Information Technology, University of Jyväskylä, 2012

Bachelor of Information Technology, University of Antwerp, Belgium, 2009

Employment

Professor, PS Fellow in Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence Engineering, Åbo Akademi University, 2025 –

Principal Investigator, ELLIS Institute Finland, 2025 –

Assistant Professor, Learning and Reasoning group, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 2019 –

Founder, Graphino (training and consultancy in graph technology), the Netherlands, 2023–2025

Postdoctoral researcher, Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Information Technology (FIT), Aachen, Germany, 2016–2019

Postdoctoral researcher (on partial leave), University of Jyväskylä, Finland, 2016–2020

Doctoral researcher, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, 2012–2016

Research assistant, UBIWARE project and Cloud Software program, University of Jyväskylä, Finland, 2009–2012

Research visits: Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria, 2018; Insight Centre for Data Analytics, Galway, Ireland, 2015

External funding as Principal Investigator or core applicant

Horizon Europe, CEREBRA-AI: A unified framework for continual, explainable and embodied General-Purpose Artificial Intelligence, total 15 M EUR, own share 570k EUR, 2025.

Accenture LLP, research gift to the Learning and Reasoning group, complex query answering over medical knowledge graphs, 180k USD, 2023.

Dutch Research Council (NWO) Open Access, automating the publication of CEUR-WS.org workshop proceedings, 50k EUR (co-applicant with Ilaria Tiddi), 2023.

Horizon Europe, Graph-Massivizer: Massive graph processing for a sustainable economy, society and environment, total 5 M EUR, own share 660k EUR, 2022-2025.

Horizon 2020, DEMETER: Digitising and transforming European industry and services, total 15 M EUR, own share 250k EUR, 2019-2023.

Amazon, computing resource grants for teaching, 15.8k USD in total, 2013-2015.

Personal grants and travel funding from the Nokia Foundation, Erasmus, the University of Jyväskylä, ACM SIGMOD and NVIDIA

Participation in other projects

Fraunhofer FIT, Knowledge Pipelines, 2016–2019

TEKES (Finland), research cases in the Cloud Software and Need4Speed SHOK programs, 2010–2015.

Expert assessments

External examiner or evaluator for 10 doctoral dissertations: Paderborn University, 2023; Trinity College Dublin, University of Zurich, University of Stuttgart, EPFL and University of Bristol, 2025; University of Amsterdam (3), 2025–2026; Delft University of Technology, 2026

Member of hiring committees for four assistant professor positions

Reviewer of funding proposals for the German Research Foundation (DFG), 2020, and the Dutch Research Council (NWO): Talent Programme 2022, Veni 2023 and Open Science Fund 2023, Latvian Council of Science 2026

Editorial Board member, Transactions on Graph Data and Knowledge (TGDK), 2023–; Semantic Web Journal, 2026–; technical editor of CEUR-WS.org workshop proceedings, 2019–

Senior program committee member for ISWC (2021–2026), ESWC (best senior PC member award 2023), The Web Conference and ECAI; area chair for the Learning on Graphs conference (2022–2026); program committee member for ICLR, ICML and NeurIPS, also in senior roles

Co-organizer of the workshop series on Deep Learning for Knowledge Graphs at ESWC, ISWC and KDD, 2018-2024, and the ELLIS workshop on Representation Learning and Generative Models for Structured Data, 2025

Supervision and leadership

Co-supervisor of 3 graduated doctoral students: RWTH Aachen University, 2022 Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2024 and 2025. Supervisor of 2 postdoctoral researchers and 4 current doctoral students at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and 3 postdoctoral researchers and 1 doctoral student in my group at Åbo Akademi University and ELLIS Institute Finland

Supervisor or examiner of more than 30 MSc and 30 BSc theses

Academic lab manager of the Discovery Lab (Elsevier, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and University of Amsterdam), 2020–2026

Member of the MSc AI curriculum development committee, 2024–2025, and the MSc AI admission committee, 2023-2026, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Member of the Faculty Council, Faculty of Information Technology, University of Jyväskylä, 2014–2017

Positions of trust

Vice chair and treasurer, Benelux Association for Artificial Intelligence (BNVKI), 2025–2026; board member responsible for student affairs, 2023–2024

Member of the ELLIS Society, 2022–

Representative of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in the Data Science Platform Netherlands, 2023–2025

Vice chair, COST Action on Knowledge Graphs in the Era of Large Language Models (KGELL), 2025–

Teaching (selection)

Deep Learning, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2020–2025 (MSc); open lecture material with nearly 6,000 subscribers on YouTube

Project Intelligent Systems, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, course coordinator 2020–2025 (BSc)

Machine Learning with Graphs, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, designed with Peter Bloem, 2022–2025 (MSc)

Seminars and practical course on knowledge graphs, RWTH Aachen University, 2017–2019 (BSc)

Service-oriented architectures and cloud computing, big data engineering, and agent technologies, University of Jyväskylä, 2012–2017 (MSc)

Pedagogical training: University Teaching Qualification (BKO), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2022; Teaching Academic Content through English, University of Jyväskylä, 2013; Supervising PhD candidates, 2024

Awards and honors

Spotlight paper recognition, International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR), 2021

Best senior program committee member award, ESWC, 2023

Invited participant in four Dagstuhl seminars, 2018 and 2025

Research output (selected)

More than 50 peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers and book chapters, and 15 peer-reviewed workshop papers. Most work is published open access together with source code and data.

Articles

1. A. Hogan, E. Blomqvist, **M. Cochez**, C. d'Amato, G. de Melo, C. Gutierrez, S. Kirrane, J. E. Labra Gayo, R. Navigli, S. Neumaier, et al., *Knowledge graphs*, ACM Computing Surveys 54 (4), 2021.
2. H. Ren, M. Galkin, Z. Zhu, J. Leskovec and **M. Cochez**, Neural graph reasoning: *A survey on complex logical query answering*, Transactions on Machine Learning Research, 2024.
3. E. Arakelyan, D. Daza, P. Minervini and **M. Cochez**, *Complex query answering with neural link predictors*, International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR), 2021. Spotlight paper.
4. D. Alivanistos, M. Berrendorf, **M. Cochez** and M. Galkin, *Query embedding on hyper-relational knowledge graphs*, International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR), 2022.
5. B. Xiong, **M. Cochez**, M. Nayyeri and S. Staab, *Hyperbolic embedding inference for structured multi-label prediction*, Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems (NeurIPS) 35, 2022.
6. D. Daza, D. Alivanistos, P. Mitra, T. Pijnenburg, **M. Cochez** and P. Groth, BioBLP: *A modular framework for learning on multimodal biomedical knowledge graphs*, Journal of Biomedical Semantics 14 (1), 20, 2023.
7. D. Daza, **M. Cochez** and P. Groth, *Inductive entity representations from text via link prediction*, Proceedings of the Web Conference, 798-808, 2021.
8. S. Vakulenko, M. de Rijke, **M. Cochez**, V. Savenkov and A. Polleres, *Measuring semantic coherence of a conversation*, International Semantic Web Conference (ISWC), 2018.
9. **M. Cochez**, P. Ristoski, S. P. Ponzetto and H. Paulheim, *Global RDF vector space embeddings*, International Semantic Web Conference (ISWC), 2017.
10. **M. Cochez** and H. Mou, *Twister tries: Approximate hierarchical agglomerative clustering for average distance in linear time,* Proceedings of the ACM SIGMOD International Conference on Management of Data, 2015.

More information: https://www.cochez.nl



abo.fi