fwo Opening new horizons
Applying for a FWO doctoral fellowship
Info session – call 2020

December 2019
Preface

• What you should learn today...
  • to understand the evaluation & selection process
  • to prepare an application that meets the evaluation criteria

• This presentation
  • serves as applicant’s “quick starting guide” (key topics only)
  • more details: programme webpages incl. documents & regulations

• DISCLAIMER
  • Official & binding documents: regulations in Dutch
    • English regulations: no legal status
Outline

1. FWO mission & key numbers
2. PhD fellowships at a glance
3. Evaluation & selection process
4. Preparing your application
5. ... further reading & contact
Welcome to the FWO

• Mission
  • Funding of fundamental & strategic research
  • Funding programmes
    • Individual researchers (pre-, post-doc, mobility Pegasus)
    • Research teams (projects, SBO, Odysseus, ...)
    • Research infrastructure
    • Scientific prizes

• Bottom-up in all disciplines
• Scientific excellence and interuniversity (incl research institutes) competition
• Transparent and equal opportunities

Opening new horizons...
The FWO by numbers

Budget 2020: 364 MEUR

2018
- Fellowships: 20%
- Projects: 53%
- Infrastructure: 27%

2019
- Fellowships: 20%
- Strategic basic: 56%
- Clinical: 19%
- Infrastructure: 5%

1587 PhD fellows
850 Postdocs

82% PhD fellows 18% Postdocs
63% 37% Postdocs

30,1% PhD fellows fund. (280)
37,5% PhD fellows SB (200)
24,5% Postdoc

50% PhD-fellows 50%
42% Postdocs 58%
Join the FWO-Community
HOW?

STEP 1: FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

STEP 2: USE #FWOVLANDEREN
Tag @fwoVlaanderen
Outline

1. FWO mission & key numbers
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FWO PhD fellowship at a glance

• Target group
  • young researchers to complete a PhD
  • parallel calls fundamental research (FR) / strategic basic research (SB)
  • 1 choice up to 2 times
  • All nationalities
  • Master diploma ‘ManaBa’ / EER+CH
    • Obtained ≤ 3 years ago on March 1, 2020
    • Advanced Master (‘ManaMa’) not taken into account

• 4-year grants
  • start Nov 1, 2020
  • 2 years + renewal
  • Fellowship grant ≈ €2,015.51 /month
  • Bench fee €3,720 /year
PhD fellowship: fundamental vs strategic

Both fellowships: Challenging & original research (*PhD level*)

**Fundamental research**
- “curiosity driven”
- knowledge
- Applications may follow
  - societal & economic benefits
  - Long term

**Strategic:** research with a goal
**Basic:** knowledge
- Innovative applications
  - Products, processes, services
  - Long term perspective
- **Economic** added value
  - Specific companies
  - Collective of companies / (industrial) sector
  - Socio-economic benefits In line with Flemish transition priorities *NL - EN*
Flemish Transition areas -> priorities

1. Health & Well-Being
   - ...
2. Smart Resources Management
   - ...
3. Food
   - ...
4. New energy Demand & Delivery
   - ...
5. Urban planning, mobility dynamics & logistics
   - sustainable smart cities
   - increased spatial efficiency through smart densification
   - synchromodality
   - spatially resilient systems
   - green mobility and logistics
   - intelligent transport systems
   - behaviour and lifestyle
   - big data.
6. Digital society
   - ...

Example of Economic & societal added value (‘future’ economic activities)
FWO Postdoctoral fellowship at a glance

- Key dates

Call open
Dec 9 2019

Submission
Mar 2, 2020

Decision Board
Oct 2020

Start fellowship
Nov 1, 2020
Eligibility window: master diploma

- **Mar 1, 2017**
- **Mar 2, 2020 submission**
- **3 years**
- **Nov 1, 2020 start**

Extensions eligibility window (+1Y): regulations Art 7 maternity-, parental-, sickness leave > 3m
- phys./pharm.-specialist or res. veterinarian >1Y training

Eligibility window: scientific seniority

- **Sep 1, 2018**
- **Mar 2, 2020 submission**
- **18 months**

* Limit dates in case of fulltime continuous research
Eligibility window: scientific seniority

• Scientific experience / seniority
  • ≤ 18 months since master
    – Not accounted for during advanced Master studies
    – Accounted for employment %
    – Counted as on March 1, 2020!

• Any kind of ‘scientific activity’ (not just PhD research)
• All university/university college appointments
  – Excl. ATP, practice/teaching assistant...
• Business enterprise R&D experience
• -> prove by contracts, documents, statements
Eligible host organisations

- Main host organisation
  - 5 Flemish universities
  - Evangelic Protestant Faculty Leuven / Faculty for Protestant Theology in Brussels (not SB)
  - + Flemish/federal research institutes (research location)
  - max. 12* or 6* months per 2-years term @organisation (company, gov’t, …) (!!PR)
    *12 months in Belgian organisation, max. 6 months in organisation abroad

- Main promotor: Regulations Art.10 - -> FWO invites main promotor for recommendation letter
- co-promotors (@main host + Flemish/federal)
- Co-promotor: postdoc level
Additional fellowships

- “Meise Botanic Garden – FWO” fellowships
- “INBO – FWO” fellowships

- 1 – 2 fellowship (FR and/or SB) (< - reserve list) funded by MBG/INBO
- Agreement on being additional host institute (before submitting)
- FWO contract + collaboration agreement main – addit. host institute
Other PhD programmes

- **Special PhD fellowship**: procedure and timeline as before / 1 dedicated panel
  - 1 year fellowship to complete PhD
  - Candidates not working in research

- **European University Institute (EUI) fellowship**
  - Social sciences – Florence
  - Deadline 31 January 2020

- **Baekeland** PhD programme
  - PhD project with (co-financing!) Flemish company
  - PhD programme @ Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (VLAIO)

- **Clinical PhD fellowship**: no new calls -> PhD fellowship

- **ICM**: Interuniversity College Management Sciences: no new calls
  - PhD fellowships FR (G&M2 panel) or SB (SBGM panel)
Interested to obtain your PhD in Firenze?

PhD in four domains:

• Economy
• History and civilisation
• Law
• Political and social science

Deadline: 31 January 2020
Submission of application at EUI
Evaluation partly by FWO

http://www.eui.eu/ServicesAndAdmin/AcademicService/DoctoralProgramme/Index.aspx
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Single submission 2-step evaluation & selection process

**Step 1**
Remote assessment:
- 3 panel members
- (online) panel meeting consensus scoring & ranking

Rejected proposals
Retained for step 2 interviews

**Step 2**
Panel meeting: interviews consensus scoring & ranking

Rejected proposals
Selected candidates

Oct 2020  Info session PhD fellowships 2020
Submission to expert panels

**FR**
- Panel structure fundamental research (FR)
  - ‘Fellowships’ (PhD/postdoc) panels AND ‘fund. project’ panels
  - 2x31 panels: 30 in 5 scientific domains + interdisciplinary panel (cross-domain)
  - Updated panel members published Jan 2020
    - 12 members incl. scientific chair
    - >50% members with non-Flemish affiliation

**SB**
- Panel structure PhD fellowships strategic basic research (SB)
  - 24 panels
  - Updated panel members published Mar 2020
    - 12 members, moderated by FWO representative
    - >50% members with non-Flemish affiliation
    - ≥ 1/3 involved in R&D business enterprise sector
Submission to expert panels

• Choose panel that best fits your application!
  • Check panel scopes FR or SB
  • Interdisciplinary panel (not SB). Follow acceptance criteria decision tree
  • SB: scope on research methodology (not application field)
  • SB: if in doubt, contact SB@fwo.be (primary/secondary choice) < 20 Feb 20
  • Former ICM FWO fellowship (management sciences) - --> GM2 (or SBGM)

• Evaluation of your proposal:
  • Consensus panel decisions (scoring & ranking) in both steps (preselection / interviews)
  • Roles (per application):
    • 3 panel members as internal evaluators of your proposal in step 1
    • 1 of the internal evaluators compiles feedback to the applicant
Evaluation criteria: “candidate” & “project”

Step 1 preselection
- Study results
- Motivation & relevant competences

Step 2 (interviews)
- Potential as an independent researcher

Step 1 + 2
- Scientific quality, relevance and challenge, originality
- Quality research approach, feasibility

Scoring range (all criteria in step 1 and step 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 / D</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 / C</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 / B-</td>
<td>Fair/reasonable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 / B</td>
<td>Good/very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 / B+</td>
<td>Excellent/outstanding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted total score (both steps) e.g.: 5 3.5

- Study results: 60%
- Motivation & relevant competences: 40%

Dec 2019
Evaluation criteria: “candidate” “project” “application potential”

Step 1 preselection
- Study results
- Motivation & relevant competences

Step 2 (interviews)
- Potential as independent researcher
- Potential as strategically thinking & innovation-oriented researcher

Step 1 + 2
- Scientific quality, relevance and challenge, originality
- Quality research approach, feasibility
- Strategic importance research approach (relevance)
- Strategic importance for possible users (impact)

Scoring range (all criteria in step 1 and step 2)

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<td>4 / B+</td>
<td>Excellent/outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 / A-</td>
<td>&gt;10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 / A</td>
<td>&gt;5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Weighted total score (both steps) e.g.: [5, 3.5, 4]

Dec 2019
Uniform evaluation: scoring descriptors and grids

Step 1 (preselection)

- Study results
- Motivation & relevant competences

Step 2 (interviews)

- Potential as an independent researcher
- Potential as strategically thinking & innovation-oriented researcher (SB)

Full grids online

Step 1 & 2

- Scientific quality, relevance and challenge, originality
- Quality research approach, feasibility

- Strategic importance research approach (relevance)
- Strategic importance for possible users (impact)
Selection process – step 1 preselection

- Each panel: max. “Q” grants (Q=panel quota) available
  - Q: based on number of applicants and total available grants
  - Max. Qx2 candidates to pass preselection
  - (online) panel meeting starting from 3 internal reviews
  - Panel consensus score candidate & project -> weighted total score WTS -> ranking

Example (Q=4)
Selection process – step 2 interview

- New consensus scores candidate & project -> weighted total score -> ranking
- Max Q grants directly attributed:
  - best ranked weighted total score, AND also min. scores per criterium
  - min. scores: quality threshold
  - ‘Wildcard’: best remaining candidates (≈ weighted total score)

Example (Q=4)

![Diagram with data points and thresholds]
Remaining grants: ranking the wild cards

- After all panel sessions: remaining grants attributed
  - **Overall ranking of remaining valuable candidates (wild cards)**
  - Using *standardised* (*z*-scores per panel)
  - Example:
    1 panel A
    1 panel C
    2 panel A
    1 panel B
    2 panel B

- Remaining grants
- Reserve list ranking
- Meise Botanic Garden
- INBO
Feedback to candidates

All feedback AFTER selection decision Board (≥ Oct 2020)

- **Candidate** feedback

- **Project** feedback

- **Scores** (step 1 OR step 2)
  - 5,0
  - 4,5
  - 4,8 (e.g.)
  - C
  - P
  - WTS

- **Out in step 1**
  - Scores preselection
  - Synthesis preselection

- **Out in step 2**
  - Scores interview
  - Synthesis step 1 & 2

- **Grant**
  - Scores interview
  - Synthesis step 1 & 2
Timing PhD Fellowships

Submission: Mar 2, 2020

Decision Board: Oct 8, 2020

Start fellowship: Nov 1, 2020

Dates interviews published early 2020

Info session PhD fellowships 2020
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Preparing your application – e-portal

- E-portal (www.fwo.be) (**register in time!**) -> FWO Validation /48hrs

E-loket

Gebruikersnaam  Wachtwoord  Log in

Nog niet geregistreerd? Schrijf je hierin

- Edit your personal details.
- Start a new application or complete an unfinished application.
- Write a review or give a recommendation.
- Apply for expertpanel(s)
- Submit a scientific report
- Help
- Communicate conflict of interests
- Manage conflict of interests
- FWO extranet
- Preliminary reports / feedback reports

December 2019  Info session PhD fellowships FWO  33
Preparing your application – e-portal

- E-portal (www.fwo.be)

Your e-application:

- Edit your personal details.
- Start a new application or complete an unfinished application.

E-loket
Gebruikersnaam Wachtwoord
Log in

Nog niet geregistreerd? Schrijf je hier in

Info session PhD fellowships 2020
Preparing your application - overview

- E-portal (www.fwo.be)

Your e-application:

FWO processing:

Admin
Positioning
Eligibility
FWO-admin
- > panel

Evaluation ‘candidate’
Evaluation ‘project’
Evaluation ‘appl potential’

E-loket
Gebruikersnaam   Wachtwoord   Log in
Nog niet geregistreerd? Schrijf je hier in
FWO processing:

Personal details: ORCID registration [https://orcid.org/](https://orcid.org/)

Studies & career: *correct & complete!*

 Discipline codes: *Use level 4*

Publications: *updated!*

Contact details: *(future) ‘Belgian service address’!*  
*Legal domicile address*
Preparing your application – various items

- **General:** free text keywords
- **Host institution(s)** incl. *(main)* promoter / co-promotor(s)
  - Main host institution + Main supervisor *(-> recommendation letter)* (+ co-supervisor(s))
  - Additional Flemish/federal institutions *(optional)* (+co-promotor(s))
  - ‘Other organisations’: only if performing part of research there
- **Peer review:** *select panel* + motivate *choice*
- **Ethics:** *EU-conform ethical questionnaire*
- **Data Management Plan**  
  - [NL](#) - [EN](#)

FWO processing:
- Admin
- Positioning
- Eligibility
Preparing your application – ‘candidate’

Motivation statement!
Career breaks
Research stays
(5 main publications)
(Other scientific output+impact)
Scientific awards

Percentiles...
Master thesis, ...
Positioning study results

Evaluation ‘candidate’ step 1

- Study results
  - Academic education record
  - Percentile scores master (or bachelor)
- Motivation & relevant competences
  - Skills & expertise (acquired / developing)
  - Substantiated motivation
Positioning study results

• Percentile score (or rank in study group)
  • Relevant master study result (global percentage)
    • In final master year: refer to bachelor diploma
    • NOT a master after master
  • Find percentile score tables Flemish university
  • Non-Flemish diploma → contact the institute

• Positioning your results: text
  • Clarify study result /percentile
  • Other evidence of distinguishing yourself during studies
  • Other studies (master after master, specific courses, …)
    • If in last master year: 1st master year results
Motivation statement

• Personal motivation
  • Why starting a research career / research interests
  • Substantiate having (or will have) proper expertise & skills

• Scientific background & competences to start PhD
  • Skills already developed or credible approach to acquire
    • Scientific expertise
    • experimental, writing, commitment/perseverance ...
    • International contacts, contacts with industry (SB)
### How to... percentiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diploma</th>
<th>Acaar</th>
<th>N stud.</th>
<th>P10</th>
<th>P20</th>
<th>P30</th>
<th>P40</th>
<th>P50</th>
<th>P60</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>59,31</td>
<td>60,49</td>
<td>61,61</td>
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<td>66,94</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>62,96</td>
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<td>62</td>
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<td>76,20</td>
<td>76,99</td>
<td>78,55</td>
<td>80,14</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Karel: MSc 2019 with 77,24% - - - > P85 (67 students) - - - > top 15% of study group

Tess: MSc 2017 with 75,40% - - - > P75 (69 students) - - - > top 25% of study group

Shari: MSc 2020
- - - BSc 2018 with 79,20% - - - > P95 (164 students) - - - > top 5% of study group

- - - highest Pxx < own study result

if Pxx = your study result -> Pxx
If more Pxx = your study result -> lowest Pxx (e.g. P80, P85 and your study result = 75,00% -> P80

Beware of percentiles in small study groups!! (use aggregated acad. years or other info)
Preparing your application – ‘project’

- **Project** description – *WORD template ≤10* pages
  - Improvements wrt 1st application
  - Rationale and positioning w.r.t. the state-of-the-art
  - Scientific research objective(s)
  - Research methodology and work plan
  - **SB**: strategic dimension and application potential
  - references
- Submitted to other funding? *Be transparant!*
- Positioning (research group)

---

**Evaluation ‘project’**

- Scientific quality, relevance and challenge, originality
  ! International state-of-the-art
- Quality of the research methodology and feasibility
  ! Risk mitigation
Preparing your application – appl. potential

Project description

WORD template – (SB: 12 p)

• ...
• **SB:** Strategic dimension and application potential

Evaluation ‘application potential’

Strategic importance research approach (relevance)
Strategic importance for possible users (impact)

• Specific companies -AND/OR-
• Collective of companies / (industrial) sector -AND/OR-
• in line with [Flanders 2025 transition priorities](#)
Submitting your application

State of application
In preparation

Submit application

Overview of your applications
Download application pdf
Download personal info pdf
Help

≤ March 2 2020 – 5:00 pm CET

Submitted

- automatic confirmation follows
- registration number sent
- eligibility check: Q&A with FWO admin

- Not submitted = no application
Invited? Preparing the interview

• Course of the interview
  • ‘Elevator pitch’: 5 min.
  • Interactive discussion (Q&A): 10-15 min.
  • Evaluation by panel 10-15 min.

• Your pitch
  • Add value! <-> summarise project proposal
  • Highlight aspects that appeal
  • Try to stand out! ‘Uniqueness’ & capability
  • Additional achievements (since submitting application)

• Discussion
  • Specific & generic questions
  • Questions along scoring descriptors
  • Encouraging vs. confrontational debate
Invited? Preparing the interview

• Prepare and practice!
  • Be the devil’s advocate!
  • Let colleagues & supervisor(s) put you through the grill...
  • Training sessions -> research co-ordination office @ your university

• Practical:
  • Powerpoint (free template) to send to FWO (>1week before interview)
  • Physical presence recommended
    – ‘remote’ interview: to be motivated
‘Performing’ the interview

- Meet the criteria:
  
  **Potential competence as independent researcher**
  - Knowledge in own research field
  - Reasoning skills and critical scientific mindset
  - Insight in project approach and positioning
  - Motivation

  **Potential as strategically thinking & innovation-oriented researcher**
  - Insight in strategic importance & positioning project
  - Notions of economic landscape (IPR, players, innovations)

- Evaluation criterium ‘candidate’ step 2

- Evaluation criterium ‘project’

- Evaluation criterium ‘application potential’

Dec 2019

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Further reading & contact

• Programme webpages FR NL - EN / SB NL - EN
  • Regulations (legal version: Dutch)
    - General / PhD programme / bench fee / peer review
• Transition measures (if you applied earlier for PhD fellowship)
• Supporting documents
  – This presentation / Screenshots e-application
  – Percentiles info
  – Scoring grids
  – Guidelines interview

• Contact
  • Additional info & specific questions
  • FWOhelpdesk@fwo.be (e-portal/IT problems)
Finally: Research Integrity!

• As part of FWO Policy:
  • Clause in call text, application and contract on committment to RI
  • Profiles for (co)promoters and researchers
  • Adaptations in General Regulation and Regulation pre- and postdoc fellowships on procedure and sanctions in case of RI violation

• ! Read the detailed information and the RI Clause

*Every applicant and beneficiant is expected to know the rules and what (s)he will be committed to.*
Good luck!
More information about the FWO

www.fwo.be
Information about FWO’s operation, regulations, scientific prizes and appeals...
All publications are free to download

www.geschiedenisfwo.be
Module about FWO’s history

Join us
Thank you for your attention