

## GENERAL

*Given the COVID-19 crisis, the FWO has decided to set up the PhD fellowship candidates interviews by means of an online format. The interview will consist of a 1 minute presentation, followed by an interactive discussion (10 minutes) with the panel members.*

The interviews are organized between September 1 and October 1, 2020. Candidates having passed the preselection receive a personal invitation by July 2 2020. The dates per panel can be found [here](#) (fundamental research) and [here](#) (strategic basic research). Your interview takes place at the date and time mentioned in the invitation mail.

The **expert panel** typically consists of 12 members. More information can be found in the FWO [peer review regulations](#). The names of the panel members are presented [here](#) (fundamental research).and [here](#).

The **research coordination office** at your host organization can help you in preparing your interview, dedicated training sessions may be offered. Contact them timely!

## INTERVIEW FORMAT

The pitch and interview language is **English!**

The interview consists of 3 parts:

- a) 1 minute presentation by the candidate ('*elevator pitch*')
- b) About 10 minutes interactive discussion with the expert panel
- c) Evaluation and scoring by the panel (without the candidate)

## PREPARATION OF THE INTERVIEW

### 1/ Administrative steps before the interview

*Mention your application file number and your panel in all communication with the FWO.*

- Timely confirm your participation to the interview by replying to the invitation mail. Confirm your email address and phone number!
- If you decide to withdraw from the interview, please notify the FWO immediately!
- Send a recto-verso scan of your identity card or passport to [\[domain\]@fwo.be](mailto:[domain]@fwo.be)
- If you want to illustrate your elevator pitch by a (1) slide, send it as a PDF to [\[domain\]@fwo.be](mailto:[domain]@fwo.be)<sup>1</sup>. Do not send extra slides for 'in case'.
- Update your FWO e-portal personal details before the interview
  - Make sure your contact details are up to date
  - If you are a Belgian citizen you are required to fill out your identification number of the National register (on the back of Belgian ID) and your (Belgian) bank account number in your [FWO e-portal](#) (personal details section). Please do so before the interview.
  - If you currently have a non-Belgian domicile address in the EU, then you must add your Tax Identification Number (TIN) in the FWO e-portal. This is a personal number that is provided by the EU country of residence. A [link](#) with more information per EU country is available in the FWO e-portal.

### 2/ Technical preparation of the interview

A few days (not earlier than one week) before the interview, you will receive an email from FWO with detailed instructions on how to register to the videoconference tool.

The panel's interview schedule may be somewhat advanced or delayed. Be ready from at least 10' before meeting time. If delays would be more than 15' passed the appointment time, and also if the schedule is running more than 10' ahead, FWO will notify you by mail or phone.

Some final recommendations for a technically smooth interview:

- A **wired internet** connection may be more stable than Wi-Fi.
- In order to avoid acoustic feedback, you are advised to use a **headset** with microphone.
- **Test** microphone and camera before the interview.
- Have the interview in a quiet environment, provide a neutral background.
- During the interview do NOT mute your microphone, do NOT turn off your camera.
- During your pitch, FWO will share your slide (pdf) with the meeting participants. During the Q&A session, no extra slides can be shown.
- According to FWO's privacy policy, recording the interview is not allowed.

### 3/ Your defense

#### Elevator pitch

The interview starts with a **max. 1 minute** presentation ("elevator pitch"). Can you tell the panel members, within the space of an elevator ride, what your research is about, why it is relevant and why you are the right person to do it?

Reflect on whether merely summarizing your written application would do the job. You may rather narrow down one or two key aspects of your research and of your viability as a PhD researcher, highlight these aspects that would appeal the expert panel. Try to stand out!

*You may – embedded in the pitch or perhaps later in answering the questions- take the opportunity to mention additional achievements and/or new insights into your project, obtained since submitting your application.*

You may use a presentation (pdf file – only 1 slide) during your pitch, to be sent to [\[domain\]@fwo.be](mailto:[domain]@fwo.be)<sup>1</sup> at least one week before the interview. No specific presentation template is foreseen. One slide only, supporting your pitch, e.g. as a graphical abstract. During your pitch, the FWO will display and share the slide with you and the panel members.

You, as well as the panel members, will be able to see the shared slide as well as the 'mosaic' screen showing the other meeting participants, as two separate windows.

#### Interactive discussion

The presentation is followed by a discussion with the panel members (about 10 minutes), who will seek to assess your (potential) competence and the scientific value of your project. Questions asked may be specific as well as rather generic.

Get acquainted to the scoring descriptors as will be used by the evaluators. There is a **scoring grid** for [PhD fellowship fundamental research](#), and one for [PhD fellowship strategic basic research](#)

The experts may put you through the grill, so do not get discouraged as you are challenged with difficult or unexpected questions. Be prepared to a rather pleasant and encouraging debate as well as to a (gently) provoking scenario.

**After the interview**

After you have left the digital meeting room, the interview is followed by a discussion between the experts, who will assign consensual scores to the evaluation criteria 'Candidate' and 'Project' (for SB candidates, also 'Application potential').

All candidates will be informed as soon as a decision is made by the board of trustees (October 8, 2020). The results will also be published on the FWO website and time of publication is announced through social media.

All candidates will receive more specific feedback on the decision shortly after that date.

**GOOD LUCK!**

*By taking part in this second round of the selections, candidates agree with the procedures as set out by FWO concerning the organisation of the interviews.*

*FWO takes all the necessary precautions to make sure the interviews will happen as planned and cannot be held responsible for any technical difficulties that may occur beyond her control and therefore a technical difficulty cannot be a reason to call into question the decision of FWO concerning your application.*

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[domain@fwo.be](mailto:domain@fwo.be): [domain] = bio / cult / GM / med / WT / interdisciplinair / SB: see the invitation mail [L](#)