fwo
Opening new horizons
A practical introduction for starting FWO PhD Fellows

November 2020

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Stephan Duray, head HR department
Congrats to 495 new PhD fellows!

• ‘aspirant’ fundamental research
  • 915 candidates -> 295 granted (32.0%)
    • 1 Kom op tegen Kanker
    • 1 ‘INBO- FWO’
    • 1 ‘Plantentuin Meise – FWO’

• ‘aspirant’ strategic basic research
  • 586 candidates -> 200 granted (34.1%)

Keep the 80% succes rate (PhD after 4-5 years)!
Agenda

• FWO: mission and key facts
• Agreement, regulations and finance
• Career: mobility & transferable skills
• “Out-of-Office”: holidays / illness / leaves
• Info and contact
• Q&A
Preface

- What you should learn today...
  - *How to live and work as a FWO PhD fellow (“aspirant”)*

- This presentation
  - serves as fellow’s “operating manual” (key topics only)
  - more details: webpages / regulations / FAQ / e-portal

**DISCLAIMER**

- *Official & binding documents: regulations in Dutch*
  - *English regulations: no legal status*
Covid-19

Crisis impacts your research and your career...

• restricted access to research facilities
• taking care of children during lockdown
• increased commitment to teaching or healthcare, ...
• standstill international mobility
• ...

Check FWO measures (reporting, use bench fee, ...)

maatregelen-coronavirus
measures-coronavirus
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Welcome to the FWO

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

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

*Opening new horizons...*
FWO: HR excellence in research

• Label awarded in december 2010
• Implementation of Charter & Code
• Focus on transparent recruitment procedures and family/gender friendly measures
• Check FWO HR strategy
The FWO by numbers

Budget 2020: **364 MEUR**

Yearly average 2016-2019

- **Research projects**: 64%
- **Fellowships**: 27%
- **Infrastructure**: 9%

Yearly average 2016-2019

- **Fundamental Research**: 67%
- **Strategic Basic Research**: 10%
- **Clinical Research**: 18%
- **Infrastructure**: 5%

**fellowships**

- **1587 PhD fellows**
- **850 Postdocs**

- 50% PhD-fellows
- 40% Postdocs
- 50% PhD SB (200)
- 60% PhD fund. (295)

**Call 2020**

- 26,1% PostDoc fellows
- 32,0% PhD fund. (295)
- 34,1% PhD SB (200)

- 82% PhD fellows
- 64% Postdocs

- 26,1% PostDoc fellows
- 32,0% PhD fund. (295)
- 34,1% PhD SB (200)
FWO: Communication
Join the FWO-Community
The FWO community: social media

Join us NOW!

HOW?

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

STEP 2: USE #FWOVLAANDEREN
Tag @fwoVlaanderen
The FWO community: social media

Why?

We want to put your research in the spotlight

Join our community
The FWO community: FWO website

Pictures and videos with #fwovlaanderen will feature on our website

Your picture here? Tag us with #fwovlaanderen

Deal jullie foto's of filmpjes met #fwovlaanderen en tag @fwovlaanderen

Instagram takeover by @janaelbrandt: Finally a day out of the home office...

... Evelina Livou started recently as @FWOVlaanderen...

@sanctor is currently presenting our recent work on 'User-driven...'

I participated at this year's @EuroScience as a panelist in the open forum...

Kennis maken met mijn onderzoek over niet-coderende stukjes DNA...

We wrap up the presentation of our new @FWOVlaanderen fellow...

Very exited to share our @nature paper! Huge thanks to my great tea...
The FWO community: Instagram takeovers
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PhD fellowship: agreement and rules

- Agreement FWO - PhD fellow
  - Nov. 1, 2020 – Oct. 31, 2022
  - Renewal Nov 1, 2022 – Oct. 31, 2024 (application spring 2022)

- Roles
  - FWO: funding agency (“grant-providing body”)
    - Social security managed by HR-Department FWO
  - University: (main) hosting organisation
    - Disciplinary rules according to hosting university
    - In consensus with promotor
  - Co-hosting organisation(s)
    - Agreement with university
    - If abroad, FWO approval needed
PhD fellowship: agreement and rules

- General rules / specific rules / bench fee regulations
  - (NL/EN) – Dutch version is binding

- Ethical questionnaire (General regulations Art. 4)
  - You were sent an ethical questionnaire
  - Human and/or animal test subjects
  - Ethical clearance by research ethics committee (@host institution)

- Data Management Plan (DMP)
  - Start date + 6M: submit DMP online
  - Find more info + check with host institution
Research Integrity

• As part of FWO Policy:

• Clause in call text, application and contract on commitment 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 beneficiary is expected to know the rules and what (s)he will be committed to.
PhD fellow: reporting & dissemination

• Reporting
  • Application for renewal fellowship
    • (2nd term Nov 1, 2022 – Oct 31, 2024)
    • Report 1st term activities
    • Outlook on 2nd term
  • Final report
    • (also when ending fellowship earlier)
    • Obtaining PhD matters!

• All publications and reprints of PhD fellows
  • Acknowledge FWO Fellowship
  • Mention your project number
  • References in repositories host university – FWO-labeled

• All research related communication
  • Mention FWO affiliation!
PhD fellowship: financial aspects

• Grant amount at level of assistant at Flemish university
  • € 2 075.90 (minimum net salary)
  • any (scientific) seniority
  • family situation accounted for

• Exempted from personal income tax
  • Tax declaration:
    – At the expense (‘ten laste’) of the parents
    – At the expense of the partner when married or legally cohabiting

• Full social security (e.g. pension and health care)
  • You must join a health insurance fund (Ziekenfonds)

• Child allowance
  • Notify birth to FWO
  • Join a child allowance fund -> family and maternity benefits
  • ! No child allowance for the parents of the PhD fellow!
PhD fellowship: financial aspects

• **The year-end bonus** (halfway December)
  • based on the salary (53%*) of the current year and on the working period during the first nine months of that same year

• **The holiday allowance** (May)
  • based on your salary (92%*) of May of the current year and the working period during the previous year
  *based on gross amount – incl. payroll tax

Commuting costs reimbursed by FWO ([FAQ](#))

• Public transport costs
  • in **Belgium** to go to and from work.
  • foreign residence: only costs from and to Belgian border
  • Send copy/proof to hr@fwo.be

• Bicycle allowance
  • 0.24 € / km
  • Application forms on the FWO e-loket/portal ([downloads](#))
Bench fee

- For your independence & flexibility
- More info (regulations)

- PhD fellowship: € 3,720 per year
  - Common responsibility of PhD fellow and promotor
  - May be cumulated with other working allowances
  - Credit balances may be used the next year

- Paid quarterly to university (credit line @university)
  - Based on expenditure declarations
  - Managed by financial antenna at your university

- During suspension (pregnancy leave, parental leave,...)
  - Bench fee remains available, but no expenditures can be accounted for
  - Administrative extension: no extra bench fee
Bench fee eligible costs (research related):

- **Items of lasting value** (equipment, computer, books, ...)
- **Consumables** (reagents, test animals & plants, chemicals...)
- **Operating expenditure** (copies, searches, data traffic...)
- **Remuneration** of persons not subject to social security who participate in the awarded research
- **Travel** (excl. commuting) and accommodation costs in Belgium and abroad) (no fixed accommodation allowance) / CO2-contribution
- **Study stays** and participations to conferences abroad (if in line with awarded research)
- **Publication costs** (as 1st author – or co-author+ cost-sharing)
- **Printing costs PhD thesis**
- access to and **dissemination of research results**.
Bench fee

The bench fee is NOT intended for:

• registration on the university roll or as a regular student in Belgium or abroad;

• registration as a PhD student and for the PhD programme;

• fellow's or promotor’s personal expenditure, incl. accommodation and commuter traffic;

• central management costs and/or general operating costs by the research group/dept or university;

• expenditure already covered by other financing sources;

• costs of other scholarship students, PhD students, postdoctoral fellows or staff members;

• costs for the award of the PhD (invitations public defense, hiring a room, reception, travel and accommodation of the jury, etc.);

• costs for the organisation of a workshop or conference.
Travel: basic principles

- **All** trips for research purposes:
  - Notify FWO of every stay abroad *(online form: e-loket/portal FWO “melding buitenlands verblijf” / “Report stay abroad”)*
  - Always in consultation with your supervisor
  - Permission supervisor (sometimes rector) needed

- The FWO vouches for
  - **Insurance** for occupational accidents abroad
  - **Travel insurance** (AIG):
    - During professional trips abroad
      - + private trip following the professional trip (max. 14 days)
      - Co-traveling partner/children insured as well
      - Exclusively private trips are not insured
  - Detailed information on conditions and coverage:
    - Contact FWO HR services – hr@fwo.be
Travel: how to finance

• **Use bench fee:**
  - Congresses and short stays (<4 weeks) (within Europe)

• **Apply for a FWO travel grant. Apply 3 months before departure:**
  - congresses (outside Europe)
  - long stays (in/outside Europe) (5 weeks to 12 months)


• [FAQ](#)
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Career & intersectoral mobility

Opportunities
• to inspire you and your and promotors
• to valorize research expertise in/out academic world
• to expand and strengthen your network
• to develop transferable skills

New possibilities
• Part of PhD research in other organisation
• 20% ‘other’ tasks
  • Mandatory doctoral training
  • Internships
  • Education master
• Remunerated activities outside PhD & host institute

https://www.fwo.be/nl/het-fwo/organisatie/hr-strategie/onderzoekscarri%C3%A8res/
Mobility: performing (part of) research elsewhere

• Your workplace: (co-)hosting research institute
  • *Flemish & federal research institutes* (Art. 4§1)
  • ! Working from home abroad is NOT allowed (Belgian social security/labour legislations)

• part of PhD research in (any) organisation (Art 4§2)
  • Research institute, *enterprise, public authority*, ...
  • Fully remunerated by FWO
  • Per 2Y term: up to 12 months in Belgium
    • or up to 6 months abroad (if FWO permission)
  • Agreement host university – organisation: IP rights remain at host organisation

• Forms: “cumulatie aanvraag” (eloket)
Training, transferable skills & other duties

A continuous & full-time occupation ...

- *All other activities should not hinder or delay the PhD research*
- Report planned activities to FWO at start academic year
- **Doctoral training programme is mandatory**

- **Max 20% ‘other’ activities** *(40% if student physician-specialist “ASO”) – Art.18*
  - Administrative/clinical tasks
  - Other research and scientific service tasks
  - Training and education
    - Internships
    - teacher training (education master)
    - doctoral programme + courses related to PhD research
  - Assisting training and education tasks
    - Supervision of exercises, practical sessions, seminars
    - **NO** formal teaching assignments are allowed

- Real workload to accounted for (incl. preparation and related activities)
- **FWO invite to submit “notification of assignments”** (e-loket download)
Cumulating revenues?

A continuous full-time occupation ...

• Cumulating of revenues is **not** allowed
• Why:
  • Income tax regulations
  • Nothing should hinder or delay PhD research

• **Exceptions:**
  • Allowance for a stay abroad
    • covers only *travel and lodging costs*
  • Remunerated activities not related to PhD research (Art. 19)
    • If approved by host institution (promotor!)
    • FAQ
  • Form ‘Cumulatieaanvraag’ / ‘ Combination request’ (e-portal)
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Out-of-office: holidays

• # vacation days ~ regulations of the host university.
• Take holidays in consultation with head department or your supervisor
  • Host organisation booking system
• Inform FWO once a year
  • Email to hr@fwo.be
  • Only on the 20 ‘legal’ holidays
  • To cope with social security regulations
Out-of-office: illness

• You must join a health insurance fund (Ziekenfonds)!
• Hospitalization insurance possible via university

• Every absence due to illness
  • Notify FWO + substantiate (medical certificate)

• More than 30 calendar days
  • Inform your health insurance fund (<day 28)
  • You receive forms that will be (partially) filled in by the FWO.
  • As of the 31st calendar day:
    • suspension of FWO scholarship
    • Replacement income from your health insurance fund
  • Inform FWO when you resume work

• Contact: hr@fwo.be
• FAQ
Out-of-office: work accident

- inform FWO immediately
  - Forms available on the FWO website (*FAQ pages*)
  - Insurance via FWO
- A work accident is:
  - an accident during the execution of one’s normal duties
  - an accident on the way to and from work

- Contact: hr@fwo.be
- FAQ
Out-of-office: suspension/extension fellowship

• **Suspension** in case of pregnancy, long-term illness, parental leave, palliative leave, civil service, leave medical assistance
  • Replacement income from RVA or health insurance

• **Extension** of the fellowship: duration of suspension (≥ 14 days)
  • Suspension of ≥ 3 months (fulltime & continuous): 1 year extension
    (≥ 3 months: period with replacement income, hence ≥ 4 months illness)
  • Time credit and voluntary part-time employment: no extension!

• ! Bench fee remains available, but no expenditures can be accounted for
• More info: [FAQ](#) pages
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PhD fellowships

- Documents that have to be submitted during recruitment and commencement of employment
- Suspension and extension of the fellowship
- Altering personal particulars
- Resignation
- Remuneration
- Year-end bonus and holiday allowance
- Absences (due to illness or an accident)
- Commuter traffic in Belgium
- Holidays and leaves
- Research-related stays
- Psychosocial well-being
FWO e-portal (e-loket)

- [www.fwo.be](http://www.fwo.be) -> Direct access: [https://fwoweb.fwo.be](https://fwoweb.fwo.be)
- New version e-portal

Keep your data up to date
To notify immediately (FWO HR):

**PERSONAL INFO:**
- New address, phone and bank account number
- Marriage: copy of the marriage certificate and information about husband’s/wife’s professional activity
- Legal cohabitation: declaration
- Divorce or end of legal cohabitation
- Birth children: birth certificate

Must be uploaded to the FWO e-loket/portal (NOT BY EMAIL)

- Travelling for your scientific research
- Always - form ‘Melding buitenlands verblijf’ or ‘Report of stay abroad’
- More than 3 months - form ‘Cumulatie aanvraag’/’Combination request’

Forms available on the FWO e-loket/portal

- Pregnancy (medical certificate stating the expected date of birth)
- Suspension of the fellowship
- Each absence (illness, work accident, …) -> medical certificate

Notify FWO – see FAQ pages
FWO E-loket downloads

List available documents (templates)

- Type of fellowship: PhD fellowship SB
- Title
- Discipline codes
- Report of stay
- Notification of activities
- Attest Buitenlandse diploma
- Application bicycle allowance
- Combination request

Download
Use the online form
Use the online form
Download
Download
Download

Report of a stay

DETAILS HOST INSTITUTION
- Country: Select a country
- Start date: January 2020
- End date: January 2020

NATURE OF THE STAY
- Nature of the stay: Select the nature of your stay

FWO CREDIT
- Are you making: Select an option
Info and contact

- Check programme [webpages and links](#)
- [Check FAQ first!](#)
- [Contact](#) page (email and phone numbers)
  - single point of contact: your file administrator
    - PhD fellow fundamental research
      - Biological sciences: `bio@fwo.be` (expert panel bio1, bio2, ...)
      - Humanities: `cult@fwo.be`
      - Social sciences: `GM@fwo.be`
      - Medical sciences: `med@fwo.be`
      - Science and technology: `WT@fwo.be`
      - Interdisciplinary research: `interdisciplinair@fwo.be`
    - PhD fellow strategic basic research: `SB@fwo.be`
  - specific human resources and payroll matters only
    - `hr@fwo.be`  `personeelszaken@fwo.be`
  - Travel grants
    - `interprog@fwo.be`
  - Do NOT use individual FWO neither other generic (“info”, “post”, ...) FWO mail addresses!
For the researcher

PhD fellowship fundamental research, junior and senior postdoc, junior and senior research project fundamental research

Biological Sciences
+32-2-550 15 02 - bio@fwo.be

Humanities
+32-2-550 15 84 - cult@fwo.be

Social Sciences
+32-2-550 15 62 - sci@fwo.be

Medical Sciences
+32-2-550 15 90 - med@fwo.be

Science and Technology
+32-2-550 15 88 - sci@fwo.be

Interdisciplinary research
+32-2-550 15 13 - interdisciplinair@fwo.be

PhD fellowship strategic basic research
+32-2-550 15 78 - str@fwo.be

SBO (Strategic Basic Research) projects
+32 2-550 15 91 - sbo@fwo.be

TBM (Applied Biomedical Research with a Primary Social finality)
Psychosocial wellbeing

- FAQ
- In case of conflicts
  - Talk to your supervisor!
  - Talk to the ombuds or “vertrouwenspersoon” of your host institution
  - If things get out of hand: FWO can mediate
    - (contact hr@fwo.be to get in touch with the right person)
- Don’t wait until it is too late!
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• **Q&A**
  • General interest’ questions
  • Specific ‘personal’ questions -> hr@fwo.be
  • - -> Updated FAQ
Thank you for your attention