A practical introduction for starting postdoctoral fellows

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Congrats to 269 new FWO Postdoc fellows!

• Junior postdoc fellows
  • 796 candidates  -> 180 granted (22.6%)  

• Senior postdoc fellows
  • 390 candidates  -> 89 granted (22.8%)
This presentation...

• What you should learn today...
  • How to live and work as a FWO Postdoc fellow
  • HR and research related aspects

• 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
Agenda

• The FWO, you and your fellowship
• Your fellowship and your career
• Financial aspects of your fellowship
• “Out-of-Office”: holidays, illness, suspensions, leaves, stays...
• Info and contact
• Q&A
Welcome to the FWO

• Our mission
  • Funding of *fundamental* & *strategic* research
  • Funding programmes
    • *Individual researchers* (pre-, *post-doc*, mobility)
    • *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 Key numbers

Budget 2021: **480 MEUR** (incl. EOS and Odysseus)

- ±1000 PhD (fundamental)
- ± 800 PhD (strategic basic)
- ± 900 Postdocs
- ± 1500 Projects (incl. infra)

50% PhD 50%  
40% Postdocs 60%

27,7% PhD (basic)  
30,1% PhD (strategic basic)  
22,6% Postdocs Junior  
22,8% Postdoc Senior  
20,5% Projects

79% PhD 21%  
60% Postdocs 40%
Postdoctoral fellowship: agreement and rules

• Labour contract FWO - postdoc fellow
  • Start Oct. 1 (or Nov. 1), 2021
  • Duration 3 years

• Roles
  • **FWO**: funding agency ("grant-providing body")
    • Social security managed by HR-Department FWO
  • **University**: (main) hosting organization
    • Disciplinary rules according to hosting organization
    • In consensus with supervisor
  • **Additional host organization(s)**
    • Agreement with main host organization
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
Postdoc 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.
Postdoctoral fellow: reporting

• Reporting (*invitation by FWO*)
  • Yearly progress report
  • Final report
    • *also if ending fellowship earlier*

• Updated view on output, achievements and impact
  • Attention to *various researcher profiles and research results*
    • Away from one-sided focus on ‘classical output’
    • Towards broader view on scientific accomplishments
    • *Research career*: range of scientifically relevant activities, skills, experiences and achievements
Postdoctoral fellow: dissemination

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

• All research related communication
  • Mention FWO affiliation!
Keep your publication list updated

Merge A.1.1 and A.1.2 -> A.1 ‘peer reviewed articles in journals’

• No distinction between WoS, VABB-SHW a.o.
• A2 ‘non-peer reviewed articles in journals’
• Publications previously in A.1.1 and A.1.2: merged in chronological order
  – Your responsibility - > Check carefully!

• Adding publications
  • Import XML (Flemish universities bibliography) – A1 -> C1 only
  • Other publications: add manually
  • Only if published or accepted for publication
FWO Open Access (OA) policy

- **Why?**
  - Publicly funded research should also be publicly available.

- **What?**
  - Publications resulting (partly) from FWO funding → Focus: articles;
  - also applies to already ongoing fellowships/projects/grants.

- **How?**
  - Published in an OA database ("green" OA) → Minimum requirement;
  - Full ("gold") or partly ("hybrid") OA journals → Bench fees

- **When?**
  - Green OA selected? Maximum embargo period of 12 months;
  - Right implemented in Belgian federal law (Art. XI.196, §2/1 of the Economic Law Code)

- **Further reading?**
  - Scientific integrity: [https://thinkchecksubmit.org/](https://thinkchecksubmit.org/)
Follow us on social media: @FWOVlaanderen

Spotlight on FWO-reseachers

Researcher stories

“De Podkast”

#FWOVlaanderen

Stay tuned!
Spotlight on FWO researchers

Pictures/videos with #fwovlaanderen will feature on FWO website

FWO instagram take-over
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Career & personal development

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

Possibilities
• Part of FWO PostDoc research in other organisation
• 8h ‘other duties’
• Part-time remunerated activity at higher education institute
• Cumulation up to +20%
• HR strategy research careers
Mobility: performing (part of) research elsewhere

• part of postdoc research in (any) organisation (Art. 19§2)
  • Research institute, enterprise, public authority, ...
  • Fully remunerated by FWO
  • Up to 12 months (if abroad: fulltime and FWO HR permission)
  • Agreement host university – organisation: IP rights remain at host organisation
  • Forms: “cumulatie aanvraag”/”combination request” (eloket)

• Suspension FWO postdoc fellowship (Art 23)
  • Full-time remunerated assignment in (any) other organisation(s)
  • Abroad or in Belgium
  • Only if ≥80% FWO fellowship appointment
  • 6m – 2y over jr+sr fellowship, possible from start FWO fellowship
  • Extension fellowship (-> suspension request form: e-portal)
Cumulation & career build-up

• Part-time remunerated activity at higher education institute
  • Art.12§2
  • *E.g. part-time professor*
  • FWO fellowship reduced proportionally
  • In Belgium only ( <-> international pay-rolls and Belgian Social Security )
  • *(eloket download: “notification of assignments”)*

• Cumulation: allowed up to +20%
  • Art.16§4
  • *E.g. start up a spin-off company*
  • No scientific or teaching assignments
  • Postdoc assignment must be carried out *fulltime* (declaration)
  • Apply with recommendation from rector, following host institute regulations
  • *Forms: “cumulatie aanvraag”/”combination request”* (eloket)
Transferable skills and other duties

Max. 8h/week ‘other duties’ (Art. 12§1)

Invited to report planned activities to FWO at start academic year (eloket download: “notification of assignments”)

- Administrative/clinical tasks
- Supervision of exercises, practical sessions, seminars
  - (1h = 2h workload)
- Non-remunerated teaching assignment
  - ≤2 hours/week/year (junior postdoc)
  - ≤3 hours/week/year (senior postdoc)
- Part-time fellowship -> 8h x%
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Postdoctoral fellowship: financial aspects

- **Wages:** level doctor-assistant at a Flemish university (€ 4,301.88 – 6,706.20 gross)
  - scientific seniority (based on proof of employment)
  - family situation accounted for
- **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
- **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
Postdoctoral fellowship: financial aspects

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 FWO

• Bicycle allowance
  • 0.24 € / km
  • Online application forms on the FWO e-loket/portal (/downloads)
Bench fee

- For your independence & flexibility
- More info ([regulations](#))

- postdoc fellows: €4,000 – €10,000 per year
  - Responsibility of postdoctoral fellow
  - 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

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)
- access to and **dissemination of research results**.
- Training activities “**transferable skills**” (communication, valorization, leadership, career planning, ...), if not compromising approved research activities
- Covid-19: homeworking expenses (based on host inst.internal rules)
Bench fee

The bench fee is NOT intended for:

- registration on the university roll or as a regular student in Belgium or abroad;
- 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 organisation of a workshop or conference
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)
Travel insurance

• 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
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Out-of-office: holidays and leaves

• # 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
• Thematic leaves
  • Maternity leave
  • Parental leave / medical assistance / palliative leave -> RVA (National Employment Service)
  • Time credit> RVA
  • Paternity leave
Out-of-office: Illness

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

• Every absence due to illness
  • Notify FWO before 10am
  • Substantiate (medical certificate) ([hr@fwo.be](mailto:hr@fwo.be))

• 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](mailto:hr@fwo.be)

• FAQ
Out-of-office: work accident

- inform FWO immediately
- **Forms** available on the FWO website (*FAQ pages*)
  - Accident at work report
  - Medical certificate
- 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](mailto:hr@fwo.be)  [personeelszaken@fwo.be](mailto:personeelszaken@fwo.be)
- [FAQ](#)
Out-of-office: suspension/extension fellowship

• **Suspension** in case of pregnancy/breastfeeding leave, long-term illness, parental leave, palliative leave, 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
Out of office: research related stays

- Notify FWO of every stay
  - In Belgium or abroad
  - Conference, research stay, internship, ...
  - Always in consultation with your promotor

- Stay ≥3 months
  - Cumulatie aanvraag / Combination request
  - Permission supervisor
  - Permission rector (via research coordination office @host-org)
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Info and contact

• Check programme [webpages and links](#)
• Check FAQ first!
• Contact page (email and phone numbers)
  • **single point of contact**: your file administrator
    o Biological sciences: bio@fwo.be *(expert panel bio1, bio2, ...)*
    o Humanities: cult@fwo.be
    o Social sciences: GM@fwo.be
    o Medical sciences: med@fwo.be
    o Science and technology: WT@fwo.be
    o Interdisciplinary research: interdisciplinair@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 nor other generic (“info”, “post”, ...) FWO mail addresses!
Postdoctoral fellowships

- Documents that have to be submitted during recruitment and commencement of employment
- Suspension and extension of the fellowship
- Changing personal data
- Resignation
- Remuneration
- Year-end bonus and holiday allowance
- Absences (due to illness or an accident)
- Commuter traffic in Belgium
- Holiday and leaves
- Research-related stays
- Psychosocial well-being
To notify immediately

PERSONAL INFO:

- New address, phone/email
- Bank account number (declaration owner)
- Marriage/cohabitation (certificate)
- Birth children (certificate)

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

- Stays in Belgium and abroad
- Always: form ‘Melding verblijf’ or ‘Report of stay’
- 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/HR – see FAQ pages
**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

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Keep your data up to date
FWO E-loket downloads

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP
NOTIFICATION OF ASSIGNMENTS – 2021-2022 ACADEMIC YEAR

Surname, name, university, supervisor(s)

The host institution may entrust the holders of a postdoctoral fellowship with duties, the total workload of which shall not exceed 8 hours per week, excluding a remunerated teaching assignment. These assignments can be:

UNPAID
Total 1 x 2 x 5 (max. 40 h. per week)
1. Guidance with regard to exercises, practicals or seminars (1 hour exercises, practicals or seminars ± 2 hours workload)
2. Administrative or clerical tasks
3. Non-remunerated teaching assignment at a university at a university college as part of an academic programme:
   - Junior average of 2.5 per week - Senior average of 3.0

University/College of Higher education Courses titles

SUSPENSION REQUEST POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP
FOR A RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP OUTSIDE THE FWO
(ARTICLE 23)

COMBINATION REQUEST FOR
- INTERNSHIP
- SECONDARY ACTIVITY
- STAY ABROAD OR IN BELGIUM

1. Name
2. Institution providing the allowance
3. Describe the nature of the allowance: Grant, salary, expenses reimbursement
4. Amount of the allowance

APPLICATION BICYCLE ALLOWANCE

HOST INSTITUTION
Name host institution

BICYCLE ALLOWANCE
Total number of cycling kilometers per day there and back: 1 km

Start date: 1 January 2020
End Date: 1 January 2020

I declare on my word of honour that I use the bicycle at least 90% of the days that I effectively work to commute, or part thereof.

I declare on my word of honour that I will immediately notify any change to the HR department. Any abuse will be punished.
Psycho-social well-being

- **FAQ**
- In case of conflicts
  - Talk to your promotor!
  - Talk to the ombuds or “vertrouwenspersoon” of your host institution
  - If things get out of hand: FWO as last resort can mediate
    - (contact hr@fwo.be)
  - Don’t wait until it is too late!
Thank you for your attention
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Q&A

• ‘General interest’ questions
• Specific ‘personal’ questions -> hr@fwo.be
• - > Updated FAQ/programme webpages