Applying for an FWO PhD fellowship

Info session - call 2024

December 2023
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: FWO predoc webpages incl. documents & regulations

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

December 2023  Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
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

• Our mission
  • Funding of fundamental & strategic research
  • Funding programmes
    • Individual researchers (pre-, postdoc, mobility)
    • Research teams (projects - fundamental/strategic, ‘brain gain’ 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...
The FWO by numbers

Budget 2023: **406 MEUR**

Fellowships (1 Oct 23)

- **~1700** PhD fellows
- **~800** Postdocs

- **55%** PhD fellows
- **45%** Postdocs

**Call 2023**

- **27.2%** PhD fellows
- **26.0%** Postdocs

**Fundamental Research**

**Strategic Basic Research**

**Clinical Research**

**Infrastructure**

**Research projects**

**Fellowships**

**Infrastructure**
Follow us on social media: @FWOVlaanderen

Spotlight on FWO-researchers

Researcher stories  "De Podkast"  #FWOVlaanderen  Stay tuned!
Outline

1. FWO mission & key numbers
2. PhD fellowships at a glance
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5. ... further reading & contact
FWO PhD fellowship at a glance

• **Target group**
  - Early-career researchers who want to pursue a PhD by performing independent research
  - Both Fundamental Research *(FR)* and Strategic Basic research *(SB)*
  - Apply up to 2 times for PhD fellowship
  - All nationalities (EEA, nEEA)

• **4-year grants**
  - Fellowship grant: €2,420/net amount per month (minimum)
  - Bench fee: €3,720/yearly

• **Key dates call 2024**
  - Mar 1, 2024: Application deadline
  - June, 2024: Preselection
  - Aug 28 – Sep 27, 2024: Interview
  - Oct 4, 2024: Communication results
  - Nov 1, 2024: Start date fellowship
PhD fellowship philosophy

• Motivation – you want to develop...
  • ... your own research ideas into a concrete 4-year PhD project
  • ... yourself into an independent researcher

• Approach:
  • Shape your own original research project and find a supervisor (and co-supervisor) to support you in this endeavor

• Personal fellowship versus other PhD opportunities:
  • PhD position on FWO supported projects (FR, SBO, TBM)
  • PhD fellowship on applied research (VLAIO - Baekeland)
PhD fellowship: fundamental vs strategic

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

**Fundamental research**
- Curiosity driven
- Applications *may* follow
  - Societal & economic *benefits*
  - Long term

**Strategic basic research**:  
- Use inspired  
- Innovative applications  
  - Products, processes, services  
  - Long term perspective  
- Economic added value

PhD -> strategically thinking and innovation oriented scientist

PhD -> independent scientists with a critical mindset

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Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
Eligibility: master diploma

Master diploma obtained at Flemish university or equivalent

- Master diploma ‘ManaBa’ / EEA+Switzerland
  - EEA: EU + Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein
- Other countries (incl UK): NARIC attestation:
  - “level” Flemish master
- Advanced Master (‘ManaMa’) not taken into account

Extensions eligibility window (+1 Y): Regulations Art 26 maternity-, parental-, sickness leave > 3m
(+x Y): Phys./pharm.-specialist or resident veterinarian >1Y training

Mar 1, 2021

3 years

Mar 1, 2024 submission

EEA landen

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Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
Eligibility: scientific seniority

Maximum 18 months of continuous scientific activities since first master

- All scientific activities considered, both at academia and industry
  - Accounted for employment %
  - Counted as on March 1, 2024!
  - Not during additional or advanced master studies
  - Teaching, labwork, technician, manager, etc. are no scientific activities

- Proof by contracts, function description and CV
- Question?
  - Contact research coordination department at your university
  - Contact FWO by mail, including contracts, function description, CV

Example in case of fulltime continuous scientific activities

Sep 1, 2022 Mar 1, 2024 submission

18 months
Eligibility: host organisation

A promoter at one of the main host institutions

- Main host institutions:
  - VUB, KU Leuven, UGent, UHasselt, UAntwerpen
  - Evangelic Protestant Faculty Leuven
  - Faculty for Protestant Theology in Brussels

- Main promoter:
  - Regulations Art.10
  - FWO invites main promoter for recommendation letter

(Optional) Co-promotor at an additional host institution:

- Additional host institutions:
  - Flemish/federal research institutes (research location)
  - Industry
  - Limited list: pick list in application form

- Co-promotor(s):
  - Minimum postdoc level
  - FWO notifies co-promotors – No recommendation letter!
Additional fellowships / bench fees

FWO fellowships
• Meise Botanic Garden – FWO fellowships (FR / SB, 1-2 fellowships)
  • Collection-based biodiversity and conservation research
• INBO – FWO fellowships (FR / SB, 1-2 fellowships)
  • Flemish research and knowledge centre for nature and its sustainable management and use
• VITO – FWO fellowships (FR / SB, 1-2 fellowships)
  • (Sustainable) energy, materials, chemistry, health and land use
• WL – FWO fellowships (FR / SB, 1-2 fellowships)
  • Investigates the impact of human activity and nature on water systems and the consequences for navigation

Principle
• Agreement on being additional host institute (before submitting application)
• “Seal-of-excellence” principle (approved by FWO but on reserve list)
• Fellowship under FWO regulations

Concurrently
• Kom op tegen kanker ➔ Best ranked candidate in Med4 panel FR

No Frank De Winne call

December 2023
Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
Other PhD programmes

• **FWO Special PhD fellowship**:  
  - 1 year fellowship to complete PhD  
  - 1 dedicated panel  
  - Candidates currently not working in research *(deadline 1 Mar 2024)*

• **European University Institute (EUI) fellowship**  
  - Social sciences & Humanities – Florence  
  - Call currently open – Deadline **31 January 2024**

• **Baekeland PhD programme**  
  - PhD project with (co-financing!) Flemish enterprise  
  - PhD programme @ Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship (VLAIO)
EUI fellowship

Obtaining your PhD in Florence?
• Have a look at [Doctoral programme of the EUI](#)
• Academic year 2024-2025: FWO will finance max. two EUI-fellowships for PhD students complying with [eligibility criteria as set out by FWO](#)

PhD in four domains (EUI departments):
• Economics
• History and Civilisation
• Law
• Political and Social Sciences

Submission at EUI:
• **Submission deadline: January 31, 2024**
• Evaluation partly by [FWO](#) (first evaluation round)
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Submission to expert panels

**Fundamental Research (FR)\**
- Panels fellowships fundamental research (FR)
  - Fellowships (PhD/postdoc) panels
  - Expert panel reform! (next slides)
  - 32 panels: 31 in 5 scientific domains + interdisciplinary panel (cross-domain)
  - Updated panel members list published **March 2024**
    - ±12 members incl. scientific chair
    - >50% members with non-Flemish affiliation

**Strategic Basic Research (SB)\**
- Panels PhD fellowships strategic basic research (SB)
  - 24 SB panels
  - Updated panel members list published **March 2024**
    - ±12 members, moderated by FWO representative
    - >50% members with non-Flemish affiliation
    - ≥ 1/3 involved in R&D business enterprise sector
Evaluation & selection process
FWO expert panels reform (FR)

- **Panel structure** fundamental research
  - **Fellowship** panels (PhD/postdoc)
  - 32 panels: 31 in 5 scientific domains + **Specific Interdisciplinary Panel** (cross-domain)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biological Sciences</th>
<th>Medical Sciences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bio1: Molecular and Cellular Biology</td>
<td>Med1: Pharmaceutical Sciences and Medical Biochemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bio3: Biodiversity, Ecology and Evolution</td>
<td>Med3: Immunology and Microbiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bio4: Applied Biological Sciences</td>
<td>Med4: Cancer Research</td>
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<td>Med5: Neurology, Neuroscience, ENT medicine, Ophthalmology, Psychiatry</td>
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<td>Med6: Respiratory System, Cardiovascular System, Hematology, Nephrology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Med7: Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Hepatology, Metabolism and Nutrition, Reproduction, Urogenital System</td>
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<td>Med8: Health Sciences</td>
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<td>Med9: Movement &amp; Sports Sciences, Dermatology, Physiotherapy &amp; Rehabilitation Sciences, Dentistry and Maxillofacial Medicine, Orthopedics &amp; Musculoskeletal Sciences, Rheumatology</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sci2: Physical Sciences and Sports Sciences, Dermatology, Physiotherapy &amp; Rehabilitation Sciences, Dentistry and Maxillofacial Medicine, Orthopedics &amp; Musculoskeletal Sciences, Rheumatology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T1: Mathematical Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T2: Physics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T3: Condensed Matter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T4: Chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T5: Computer Science &amp; Information Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T6: Chemical and Materials Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T7: Electronics, Energy, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T8: Sciences of the Earth and Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W&amp;T9: Science, Technology and Sociotechnical Analysis of the Built Environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Humanities**
  - Cult1: Linguistics
  - Cult2: Art, Art History, Architecture, Design and Literature
  - Cult3: History and Archaeology
  - Cult4: Theology and Religious Studies
  - Cult5: Philosophy and Ethics

- **Social Sciences**
  - G&M1: Sciences of Law and Criminology
  - G&M2: Economics, Business Administration and Management
  - G&M3: Psychology, Pedagogy and Educational Sciences
  - G&M4: Media and Communication Studies, Political Science, Social Work, Social and Cultural Anthropology and Sociology

- **Interdisciplinary research**
  - **Specific Interdisciplinary Panel**
Evaluation & selection process
FWO expert panels reform (FR)

- Panels thoroughly reformed in 2022:
  - Med9 panel created
  - Thorough update of the scientific scope of ALL panels ➔ Check the scopes carefully!
  - New approach towards multi- and interdisciplinary research

- More information:
  - Digital brochure on FWO website
  - Webinar on FWO panel reform
Specific Interdisciplinary Panel

- Submitted proposals should meet the **functional definition** of interdisciplinarity:
  - There is more than one discipline involved, and these **disciplines** are sufficiently distinct.
  - The disciplines are at the **same coordinated level**; each discipline is **essential** to achieve the expected outcome.
  - The use of different, sufficiently integrated disciplines leads to **synergy**. Due to this synergy, the **state of the art is advanced** in all involved disciplines and/or in a shared area.

→ **Clearly motivate** choice for Int-Dis panel using this definition

→ **Interdisciplinarity** is assessed during the **evaluation**!
  - A **minimum score of 4 (good)** on interdisciplinarity is required to receive funding from this panel.
  - It is **not** a requirement to combine disciplines from different scientific domains (e.g. Bio & W&T)
FWO expert panels (SB)

- **Panel structure** strategic basic research
  - **24 panels in 5 scientific domains**
  - **No Frank De Winne panel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Panel Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SBBio1</td>
<td>Molecular &amp; cellular biology of the Eukaryotes (except plants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBBio4A</td>
<td>Applied biological sciences A - Environmental technologies, geology, ecotoxicology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBBio4B</td>
<td>Applied biological science B - Food technology and industrial biotechnology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBBio4C</td>
<td>Applied biological sciences C – Plant and crop sciences and technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBGM</td>
<td>Social sciences and humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBMed1A</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBMed1B</td>
<td>Medical biochemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBMed2</td>
<td>Genetics and functional genome research; bio-informatics science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBMed3</td>
<td>Human immunology and Infectious diseases</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBMed4</td>
<td>Cancer research</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBMed5</td>
<td>Organs and organ systems: neurology, psychiatry, rheumatology, orthopedics, physiotherapy, dentistry, maxillofacial, ENT medicine and dermatology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBMed6-7</td>
<td>Organs and organ systems: cardiovascular system, respiratory system, nephrology, urogenital system, hematology, gastroenterology, hepatology, endocrinology, metabolism and reproduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBMed8</td>
<td>Health sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBMed9</td>
<td>Veterinary and animal production</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBWT4A</td>
<td>Chemistry A: Organic synthesis, medicinal chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBWT4B</td>
<td>Chemistry B: Material/polymer chemistry - analytical and inorganic chemistry</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBWT5A</td>
<td>Data science</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBWT5B</td>
<td>Informatics and data communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBWT6A</td>
<td>Chemical engineering and catalysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBWT6B</td>
<td>Material sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBWT7A</td>
<td>Mechanical engineering A: mechatronics, product design &amp; development, manufacturing engineering, industrial engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBWT7B</td>
<td>Mechanical engineering B: energy generation, conversion and storage, fluid mechanics, biomechanical engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBWT7C</td>
<td>Electronics and telecommunications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBWT9</td>
<td>Construction and architecture, spatial planning</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Choose panel that best fits your application!

• Your responsibility to choose (& check!)
• **Motivate** choice (based on contribution to state of the art)
• **Out-of-scope** = application rejected
Process: single submission 2-phase evaluation & selection

**Phase 1**
- Remote assessment: 3 panel members
- (online) panel meeting consensus scoring & ranking
- Rejected proposals
- Retained for phase 2 interviews
- Feedback by panel

**Phase 2**
- Panel meeting: interviews consensus scoring & ranking
- Selected candidates
- Rejected proposals
- Feedback by panel

**Process:** single submission 2-phase evaluation & selection
Evaluation by expert panels

Evaluation of your proposal:

• **Consensus** panel decisions (scoring & ranking) in both phases (preselection / interviews)
• **Roles** (per application):
  • 3 panel members as *internal evaluators (report) of your proposal* in phase 1
  • Internal reviewers take the lead in interview
    – but all panel members involved in Q&A
  • 1 of the internal evaluators compiles feedback to the applicant

• Attention to **various researcher profiles and research results**
  • Away from one-sided focus on classical output (*i.e. publications*)
  • Towards broader view on scientific accomplishments (*cfr. international frameworks DORA, CoARA*)
  • **Research career**: range of scientifically relevant activities, skills, experiences and achievements
  • Adapted application form and evaluation criteria

• Assessment takes into account what might be expected from a last year master student vs. a candidate with scientific seniority

2nd axis

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Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
Selected to phase 2: interviews

- **Invitations** and instructions **June 13 (SB) and June 27 (FO) 2024** (end preselection)
- **Interviews 28 Aug - 27 Sep 2024**
- **@FWO in Brussels**
- **Interview format: pitch + Q&A**
  - Interview instructions and guidelines will be made available
  - Opportunity to mention realizations since submission date
- **Evaluation criteria different from preselection (criterion candidate)**
  - Score grid interview
  - Focus on assessing the required competences as a PhD researcher
  - Not the performance but contents of what you say…
Evaluation criteria “candidate” & “project”

Phase 1 preselection

Study results (academic education)
- Evidence of standing out (based on study results, positioning in study group and other evidence)

Motivation & relevant competences
- Motivation / research interests
- Activities, skills, experiences
- Scientific background / competences

Potential competence as independent researcher
- Knowledge about own research field
- Insight in project approach and positioning
- Reasoning skills and critical scientific mindset
- Motivation

Phase 1 + 2

Scientific quality, relevance and challenge, originality
- Originality / contribution to state of the art
- Scientific risks and challenges

Quality research approach, feasibility
- Methodology
- Feasibility, risk mitigation

Phase 2 interviews

Weighted total score (both phases)

50% 50%

<table>
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<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Fair/Reasonable</td>
<td>Good/Very good</td>
<td>Excellent/Outstanding</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation criteria Specific Interdisciplinary Panel

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1/ Candidate

2/ Project

3/ Interdisciplinarity
- More than one discipline involved and these disciplines are sufficiently distinct
- Disciplines at similar coordinated level and each discipline is essential to achieve expected outcome
- Advance state-of-the-art in all involved disciplines and/or in a shared area

Total score:
- 50%
- 30%
- 20%
Evaluation criteria: “candidate” “project” ”application potential”

Phase 1 preselection

Study results (academic education)
- Evidence of standing out (based on study results, positioning in study group and other evidence)

Motivation & relevant competences
- Motivation / research interest
- Activities, skills, experiences
- Scientific background / competences

Phase 2 interviews

Potential competence as independent researcher
- Knowledge about own research field
- Insight in project approach and positioning
- Reasoning skills and critical scientific mindset
- Motivation

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

Phase 1 + 2

Scientific quality, relevance and challenge, originality
- Originality / contribution to state of the art
- Scientific risks and challenges

Quality research approach, feasibility
- Methodology
- Feasibility, risk mitigation

Weighted total score (both phases)

50% 30% 20%
Uniform evaluation: scoring descriptors

Check score grids preselection / interview used by panels!

PHD FELLOWSHIP SCORING DESCRIPTORS CRITERION "CANDIDATE" (PRESELECTION)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Passable</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. a. Study results (academic education)

In the "Study results" section in the application, candidates can refer to evidence of having distinguished themselves during their studies. One can refer to study results (grades, ranking, percentiles, upward trends during course of education, particular situations that can have positively/ negatively influenced the study trajectory, also to results of additional studies/diplomas. Bachelor or master degree results (specific courses successfully attended, other specific exams). Depending on whether the master studies are already concluded, the narrative should be supplemented with master or bachelor percentiles (referring to their secondary study group), provided by the candidates. Students from non-french universities should provide either a percentile score if available, or at least their rank within their study group (if available). In addition, detailed course scores should be added. Bachelor percentiles in particular should, if possible, be complemented by intermediate master study results. These quantitative indications should be used to complement the assessment based on the study narrative.

No scoring possibility

The academic trajectory and study results do not stand out (grade at the head of the pack within study group, but below average in the applicant population).

Rather good academic trajectory and study results situated well above average and at the top of the study group, as evidenced by the study narrative and by specific grades, percentiles, or ranking.

Excellent/very good academic trajectory and study results situated in the (f) top of the study group, as evidenced by the study narrative and by specific grades, percentiles, or ranking.

Top student with an excellent/ outstanding academic trajectory and study results, as evidenced by the study narrative and by specific grades, percentiles or ranking.

1. b. Motivation and substantiation of relevant competences of the candidate

Does the application ("motivation statement") reveal a proper motivation and research interests? Assess the candidate’s (present as well as developing) scientific background and competences (including e.g. experimental skills, presentation or writing skills, commitment/persistence, etc.) in relation to the proposed project and to the requirements for a PhD researcher in general. Assess further evidence in terms of a range of (past as well as planned) scientific activities, experiences and (where applicable) achievements that may be relevant for this application. These may relate to the academic education or extracurricular activities, (ongoing or finished) thesis (master or advanced master), or (PhD) research already started. Assess — past or planned — activities and experiences such as (e.g.) dedicated courses, internships, presentations, collaborations, international contacts, mobility, (intermediate) scientific results, publications, software, data, prototypes and any other meaningful scientific output and achievements may also be taken into account, as well as scientific recognition (e.g. thesis awards).

The assessment should take into account what might be expected from a last year master student vs. from a candidate with some scientific seniority.

No scoring possibility

- Expertise and skills apparently not in line with what should be expected from a PhD student. Some crucial competences are missing and likely not to be acquired.

One or more of the following items apply:

- The application reveals a fair/reasonable motivation regarding development towards a researcher. Lack of convincing evidence of (past and planned) activities and experiences.
- Scientific background and competences to carry out PhD research may be less present, and how they will be acquired is less well substantiated.

All of the following items apply:

- The application reveals a poor/strong motivation and research interests. This is evidenced by relevant (past/planned) activities and experiences (e.g. training, internships, presentations, collaborations, international contacts, mobility, etc.).
- Relevant scientific background and competences to carry out PhD research have been acquired or are being built up (including e.g. experimental skills, presentation or writing skills, commitment/persistence, etc.)
- Some first achievements (of master thesis/started PhD research, etc.) may be an asset, e.g. (intermediate) results, publications, software, data, prototypes or other output. Scientific recognition as e.g. thesis awards, etc.

Requirements as in "good", and

- the candidate has substantiated to have actively acquired all proper competences to successfully conduct PhD research. Clear plan to further enhance these capabilities. Reveal clear motivation and drive.
PhD fellowships distribution per panel

Distribution

- Available PhD fellowships (293 FO, 195 SB)
- 90% fellowships proportionally distributed to each panel (quota)
- 10% fellowships assigned after all panel selections to best remaining candidates (wildcards)
  - Best ranked candidates with score for candidate (≥4), project (≥4), interdisciplinarity (≥4), (SB) for application potential (≥2)
- Additional PhD fellowships by co-hosting organisations (Plantentuin Meise, INBO, VITO, WL)

Process

- (2 x quota) candidates invited for interview
- (quota) candidates assigned PhD fellowship directly by panel
- (10% and additional) best ranked candidates from reserve list
- Reserve list with ungranted candidates will be sent to university (BOF, ...)

December 2023

Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
Feedback to candidates

- All feedback AFTER selection decision Board (4 Oct, 2024)
  - Compiled by panel member
  - Including comments based on panel consensus decision and scores
  - Template per criterion (candidate, project, interdisciplinarity, SB: application potential)
    - Strengths
    - Weaknesses
    - Interview findings
    - Conclusions – why (not) to be funded
    - Comments and suggestions for improvement
  - No further correspondence on feedback
  - Do NOT contact panel members!

1. Out in step 1
   - Scores preselection
   - Panel comments

2. Out in step 2 or grant
   - Scores interview
   - Synthesis panel comments step 1 & 2
Timeline Call 2024 evaluation & selection

- Submission: Mar 1, 2024
- Preselection by SB: June 13, 2024
- Feedback out in preselection: Aug 28, 2024
- Interviews: Sep 27, 2024
- Decision Board: Oct 4, 2024
- Start fellowship: Nov 1, 2024

Dates interviews published early 2024
Outline

1. FWO mission & key numbers
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5. ... further reading & contact
Preparing your application – e-portal (e-loket)

Direct access: [https://fwoweb.fwo.be](https://fwoweb.fwo.be) or via [www.fwo.be](http://www.fwo.be)

Or first: register in time! -> FWO validation / 48hrs
Preparing your application – personal details
Advice on completing the form

- General:
  - National registration number
    - Also non-Belgian applicants with Belgian ID card
  - ORCID registration [https://orcid.org/](https://orcid.org/)
  - Scientific Disciplines: use level 4

- Addresses
  - *(future)* Belgian service address!
  - Legal domicile address
    - Non-Belgian domicile in EU: add TIN code (tax identification number)

- Academic degrees & positions
  - Correct, complete & up to date!

- Publications
  - Complete list as on Mar 1, 2024
  - Published or accepted for publication

December 2023
Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
Preparing your application - publication list

• Publication types
  • A1 peer reviewed articles in journals
    – No distinction between WoS, VABB-SHWAo.
  • A2 non-peer reviewed articles in journals
  • B (1 2 3) related to books
  • C (1 2 3 4) conference proceedings, PhD, patent ...

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

• PhD application: situation as is on submission (1 Mar 2024)
  • No updates sent to panel
  • Mention new publications during pitch/interview
Checklist before starting new application

No access to new application before these 7 items are completed:

- Gender
- Place of birth
- Nationality
- ORCID iD (Open Researcher and Contributor ID)
- Domicile address (in Belgium or abroad)
- (Future) service address

December 2023
Info session PhD fellowships call 2024

Starting a new application form

Dashboard > Personalia > Researcher

Application forms

Create application

Aanvraag aanmaken

Kies een aanvraagtype

- Fellowships
- PhD Fellowship fundamental research

Working title (optioneel)
Define a working title for your application so you can easily identify it later. This title is not a part of the application itself and can be changed later on.

× Cancel
✔ Save

December 2023
Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
Application form: general

- Title of your research proposal (NL-EN)
- Abstract (NL-EN)
- Up to 5 scientific disciplines fitting proposed research (Personal data)
- Up to 3 free-text keywords or concepts (NL-EN)

SB Position your proposal in terms of economic finality
  - Companies and sectors

SB Transition areas and their science, technology and innovation priorities
  - Socio-economic benefits In line with 2025 Flemish transition priorities NL – EN
  - Picklist Transition Areas -> Priorities
  - E.g. Health and Wellbeing -> Disorders of the brain
  - E.g. New Energy Demand and Delivery -> Technologies for energy grids

December 2023

Info session PhD fellowships call 2024
Application form: personal data

- Explain any career breaks

**STUDY RESULTS (ACADEMIC EDUCATION)**

- **Study narrative**
  Show how your academic study trajectory has formed the ideal preparation for doing a PhD, in general and specifically on the topic of the proposed project. Where appropriate, refer to your grades of relevant courses, percentiles or relative ranking or other study results. You may also highlight specific programs or courses you took. If applicable, include additional information on your personal situation where you believe this may have affected your study results and should need to be taken into consideration during the evaluation.

- **Study results positioning by percentile**

- **(Optional) Text field to provide additional information on your study results**
Application form: personal data

- **MOTIVATION AND COMPETENCES**
  - Motivation statement
  - Scientific activities, experiences and achievements
  - Earlier mobility (research stays) in another organization
  - Concrete mobility (research stays) within the FWO PhD fellowship
    - Concrete invitations can be uploaded (tab PROJECT)
  - Scientific awards
    - *E.g. best master thesis, etc.*
Academic education (study results)

• **Percentile** (or rank in study group)
  - More info on webpage NL - EN
  - e-application form + *signed (cand. + prom.) form*
  - Relevant master study result (global percentage)
    - In final master year: refer to bachelor diploma
    - NOT an advanced master (ManaMa)
  - Find percentile score tables Flemish university (*in e-portal application form*)
  - Non-Flemish diploma → contact your university

• Positioning your results: *study narrative*
  - Evidence of *distinguishing yourself / standing out* during studies
    - Master thesis, marks and grades for dedicated courses, …
  - Clarify study results / percentile
  - Other studies (advanced master (ManaMa), specific courses, …)
    - If in last master year: 1st master year results
How to... percentiles (example)

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<td>80.36</td>
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</table>

Karel: MSc 2023 with 72.08% - - - -> P60 (89 students) - - -> top 40% of study group
Tess: MSc 2022 with 74.93% - - - -> P85 (92 students) - - -> top 15% of study group
Shari: MSc 2024 - - - -> P95 (158 students) - - -> top 5% of study group

A/ Your study result ≠ percentile value -> Look for the closest percentile value that is LOWER than your result.
B/ Your study result = one or more percentile values - -> Look for the lowest percentile value that EQUALS your result. (e.g. 69.00% -> P75)

Beware of percentiles in small (<25-30) study groups!! (use aggregated academic years or other info)
Motivation and competences

- **Motivation statement**
  - Personal motivation & research interests
  - Scientific background and acquired competences to start PhD research
    - Master thesis, experience as (PhD) researcher, ...
  - Skills acquired & to be (further) developed
    - E.g., experimental skills, presentation or writing skills, commitment/perseverance

- **Scientific activities, experiences and achievements**
  - First steps as (potential) scientist (past/planned)
    - Master thesis, experience as (PhD) researcher, ... -> describe goal, activities, (intermediate) results, ...
  - (If applicable) publications/other output (data, software, prototypes, ...), awards, ...
  - Past/planned experiences (e.g. training, internships, presentations, collaborations, mobility, ...)
  - **SB:** network, internships/research stays in industrial R&D, (development of) entrepreneurial and innovation skills, ...
Application form: host institution - promoter

Main Flemish host institution
- Main promoter
- Optional co-promotor(s)

Additional host institution: Flemish or Federal scientific institutions
- = collaboration/research location
- Pick list
- Co-promotor(s)

Other organization(s) / co-promotor(s)

Do not add recommendation letters!
- FWO will invite main promotor only to provide recommendation
- Co-promotors will be notified by FWO
Application form: project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project description – WORD template ≤10 pages (SB: 12 pages)

• Improvements w.r.t. 1st application
• Rationale and positioning w.r.t. the state-of-the-art
• Scientific research objectives
• Research methodology and work plan
• SB: strategic dimension and application potential

OTHER FUNDING
PROJECT POSITIONING AND EMBEDDING
SCIENCE COMMUNICATION
Application form: project (cont’d)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

OTHER FUNDING

• Proposal content submitted before AND funded or funding decision still pending?

Potential overlap, complementarity, added value, ...

Update FWO on pending evaluations!

• Be open and transparent!

PROJECT POSITIONING AND EMBEDDING

- Fit into the research activities of the host institution(s)
  - Position your previous/current research

- Position the project in a national and international context

- Gender and diversity issues

- Work with societal actors

RRI: responsible research and innovation

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

- Communication of results to a non-expert audience
INTERNAL PEER REVIEW

Motivate your choice of expert panel

5 scientific fields -> Thematic Panel -> In line with scope (updated 2022!)

Specific Interdisciplinary Panel -> In line with functional definition

Select the appropriate panel

(FR) Based on contribution to state of the art

(SB) Based on contribution to state of the art (not per se field of application)

Motivate your choice of expert panel

• Avoid out of scope (= project score 0)
• Double check before submitting expert panel (submit = submit)
Application form: ethics / DMP / Consent

- Research Foundation - Flanders - Research ethics (fwo.be)
- fwo-manual-ethics-checklist.pdf
- ! Non-human primates -> ethical approval at least 1 month before panels (< Aug 2024)
- Research Foundation - Flanders - Data Management Plan (fwo.be)

DECLARATION BY THE APPLICANT
- General (including GDPR)
  Declaration that all personal data info is accurate and up-to-date
- Research Integrity
  Read the detailed information and the RI clause
  Every applicant and beneficiary is expected to know the rules and what they will be committed to

I agree
Dear researcher,

With this message we confirm that your application [ApplicationType] (file number [ApplicationNumber]) has been submitted. Your application will be submitted for evaluation to the members of the FWO Expert Panel [code panel – Engels omschrijvende panel].

If you were mistaken about your panel choice, you must let us know in a motivated letter no later than seven working days after the official submission date via [mailto:لف]elah_your_mail.

Kind regards,
The FWO administration

• Automatic confirmation
• ApplicationNumber
• Panel code

Eligibility check: Q&A with FWO
Outline

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

- Programme webpages
  - Fundamental Research  [NL - EN](#)
  - Strategic Basic Research  [NL - EN](#)
- Including
  - Regulations (legal version: Dutch)
    - General / PhD programme / bench fee / peer review
  - Supporting documents
    - Presentation info session PhD Fellowships / screenshots e-application
    - Information on percentiles
    - Scoring grids (preselection – interview)
    - Guidelines interview
- Help! Who to contact
  - Additional info & specific questions
    - Contacts at your university
    - FWO account administrators per scientific domain (or SB)
  - FWOhelpdesk@fwo.be
    - (e-portal/IT problems only)
Thank you for your attention