

# Pegasus ◉ Guidelines for Applicants

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These guidelines are valid for both Pegasus-long fellowships and Pegasus-short fellowships. There are 6 calls in total, distributed over 3 years:

Call deadline	Category	Available fellowships
01/02/2012	long + short	30 long + 10 short
01/05/2012	short	10 short
01/02/2013	short	10 short
01/05/2013	short	10 short
01/02/2014	short	10 short
01/05/2014	short	9 short

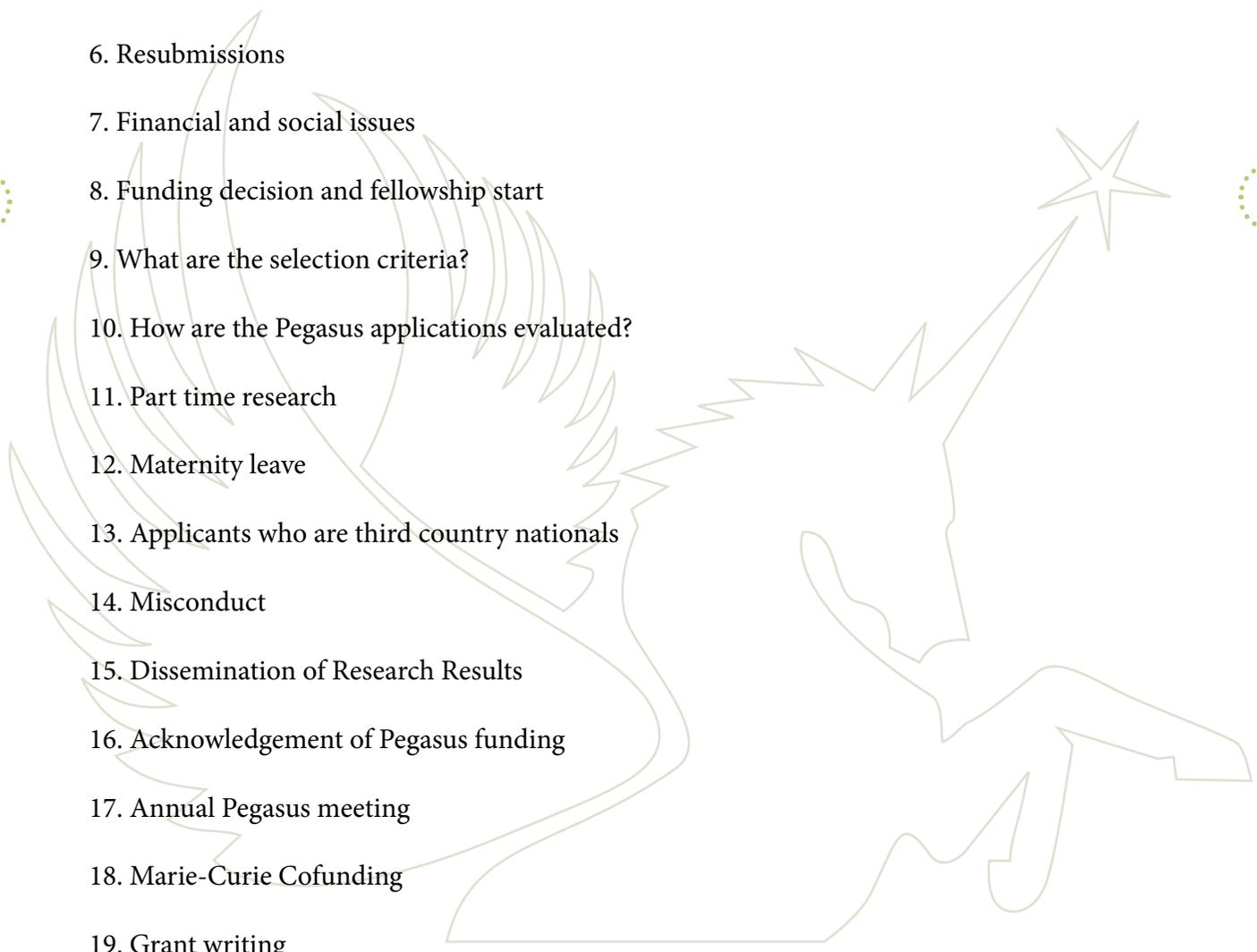
Applicants are expected to read the guidelines before submitting their proposal.

Application forms are available online through [the FWO e-portal](#).

All relevant information about the Pegasus programme can be found on the [FWO website](#).

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# 1. What is Pegasus?

Pegasus is a research funding scheme of the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO), destined for experienced researchers (at postdoctoral level) in all scientific areas.

The programme goals are:

- To attract excellent postdoctoral researchers to Flanders in order to contribute to the advancement of Flemish science
- To provide the selected fellows with optimal conditions to further develop their research career in Flanders
- To raise the standards of the existing “Visiting Postdoctoral Fellowship” Scheme of FWO to the level of that of the regular postdocs, especially with respect to recruitment and selection procedures
- To serve as a pilot initiative in bringing FWO procedures and regulations in line with the European “Charter and Code”, and to raise awareness about researchers’ rights and obligations in general

Two options are possible within the programme:

- **Pegasus-long:** Postdoctoral fellowships of **3 years**, renewable once in open competition with the regular FWO postdoctoral fellows. 30 Pegasus-long fellowships are available, to be granted in a single call (expected launch in November 2011).
- **Pegasus-short:** Postdoctoral fellowships of **1 year**, non renewable (although candidates can apply afterwards in the open competition for a regular postdoctoral fellowship), and available under the form of an employment contract (standard option) or a stipend (exceptional cases).

## 2. Who can apply?

### Nationality

The Pegasus programme is open to all nationalities.

### PhD degree

On the start date of the fellowship, the candidate must have obtained a PhD or a degree, in any scientific area, that is legally recognized as equivalent either in application of the guidelines of the European Union, or by virtue of a bilateral agreement with the European Union, in compliance with the provisions of the Decree concerning universities in the Flemish Community of 12 June 1991, Art. 60 (Belgian Law Gazette, 4/7/1991).

The PhD must have been obtained by June 1 prior to the start of the fellowship (for those fellowships starting on October 1), or by November 1 prior to the start of the fellowship (for the short fellowships starting on January 1 of the next year). This means that candidates may apply prior to the actual defence of the PhD thesis.

## Seniority

Applicants for a Pegasus-long fellowship can only apply within 6 years after obtaining their PhD.

Applicants for a Pegasus-short fellowship can only apply within 10 years after obtaining their PhD.

In both cases, the number of years is calculated at the planned starting date of the fellowship, and the time limit is extended by one year per pregnancy or parental leave, counted at the time of application. However, the rule does not apply to candidates who have not yet reached the age of 36 at the beginning of the fellowships.

The Board can only make exceptions to this limit in cases where, for social and medical reasons, either there has been an interruption in previous career stages, or there has been a reduced capacity to work.

Candidates cannot apply for a (incoming) fellowship of which they have previously, if only partially, been the beneficiary. Pegasus fellowships thereby count as regular postdoctoral fellowships (Pegasus-long) or as Visiting Postdoctoral Fellowships (Pegasus-short); any researcher who has held one of these fellowships may not apply for the corresponding Pegasus fellowship.

## Incoming Mobility

Pegasus aims at incoming mobility and/or reintegration. Therefore, candidates should not have carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Belgium for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the start of the fellowship.

## Host institution

It is the responsibility of the applicants to identify a suitable host institution in Flanders, and a suitable research unit where they can carry out their research. In order to be eligible, applicants need the formal consent of the chosen host institution.

The eligible host institutions are the Universities of the Flemish Community:

- ◉ [Katholieke Universiteit Leuven \(K.U.Leuven\)](#)
- ◉ [Ghent University \(UGent\)](#)
- ◉ [University of Antwerp \(UA\)](#)
- ◉ [Vrije Universiteit Brussel \(VUB\)](#)
- ◉ [Hasselt University \(UHasselt\)](#)
- ◉ [Katholieke Universiteit Brussel \(KUBrussel\)](#)

The research may also be carried out in close collaboration with Flemish or Federal research institutions, but always under the supervision of the Flemish University.

When accepting an applicant for a Pegasus fellowship, the Host Institution will be asked to agree with the following declaration. The universities will be invited to deliver this declaration directly by FWO after the submission of the application.

*In completing this application, the Applicant and the Host Institution (HI) confirm that to the best of their knowledge and belief, the information in this application is complete and correct.*

*Both the applicant and the HI will inform FWO immediately if the intended project cannot be carried out as foreseen or if a major change occurs that may hinder the planned implementation of the project.*

*The applicant and the HI declare that they have read and agree with the Pegasus regulations that form an integral part of the application documents published on the FWO website and that form the legal basis of the future Pegasus contract. Furthermore, they take note that the FWO is committed to the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for their Recruitment.*

*The HI declares to host the applicant and provide him/her with the working conditions and office space, access to laboratories, libraries, and other premises necessary to carry out his/her research project successfully.*

*The applicant and the HI agree that the data required for the research grant application and follow-up are electronically stored and used by the FWO. The FWO will use the data provided by the applicant and the HI according to the legal requirements of data protection in Belgium, including the use of the anonymized data for statistical purposes and reports.*

*The applicant and the HI agree that the FWO will forward the full application form including their personal data to the members of the FWO expert panels and to experts involved in the evaluation of their proposal in Flanders and abroad (EU and outside EU). The panel members and experts must declare in advance that they will treat data confidentially and that they will not forward the data or the knowledge gained to anyone nor use it for their own purpose.*

*Furthermore, the applicant and the HI agree that the following information may be included in lists published by the FWO: Full name of the beneficiary; nationality; email address; name, birth date, host institution, degrees obtained; name of scientific contact and research group/department, title of research project; abstract; field of research and key words; start date and end date of the fellowship.*

### 3. How to apply for Pegasus funding?

- The application form will be accessible online through the FWO e-portal;
- The application and all the accompanying documents can only be submitted in English;
- The application has to be accompanied by the approval of the host institution and a letter of recommendation by the supervisor (and co-supervisor(s), if applicable). Each letter of recommendation should attempt to give an impartial assessment of the qualities of the applicant, related to the selection criteria for the FWO fellowship. **The host institution and supervisor(s) will be invited to deliver these documents directly by FWO after the submission of the application;**

- All documents of the application file are to be written in English;
- The contact person for questions or remarks concerning this programme is dr. Olivier Boehme (olivier.boehme@fwo.be).

## 4. Deadlines

### Pegasus-long

For the long fellowships, there will only be a single call, to be launched in November 2011 (call deadline February 1, 2012). The funding decision for these fellowships is expected by the end of June 2012. Start of the fellowships is on October 1, 2012.

### Pegasus-short

For the short fellowships, there are 6 calls, distributed over 3 years.

See also the timetable on the cover page of this guide.

For the calls closing in February, the awarded fellowships will start on **October 1 of the same year**. For the calls closing in May, the awarded fellowships will start on **January 1 of the next year**.

## 5. Submission

- If applications are sent in too late or incomplete, they will not be eligible;
- Applications for the short Pegasus fellowships handed in after the deadline can be submitted under the next call if the applicant wishes so;
- Prior approval of the application by the host institution is always required. ***It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the chosen institution prior to the submission in order to get its approval for the proposal.***

## 6. Resubmissions

- The applicant for a short postdoctoral fellowship whose proposal is not accepted for funding is allowed to resubmit once more in a later call. An application for a Pegasus-long fellowship is considered as equivalent to one for the regular FWO Postdoctoral Fellowship programme, for which a limit of 1 resubmission also holds;
- In a second application the applicant is expected to address specifically the critical comments on his first submission;
- This could take the form of the initial submission with the amendments, additions or argumentation, as a response to the comments, in a clearly marked way.

# 7. Financial and social issues

## Employment conditions

The research fellows are employed by the FWO, but work at a university or research performing institution. The host institution has to guarantee that it will provide the applicant with appropriate working conditions (e.g. office/lab space, access to appropriate equipment and material, etc.).

The FWO limits the time its fellows can spend on tasks other than their research, and thus contributes to an optimal working environment. At the beginning of every academic year, fellows have to list their assignments other than research.

Finally, fellows can resort to their personal account manager at the FWO in case of problems related to working conditions. This is an indirect control mechanism to check working conditions at the host institution and research unit.

## Social Security

Fellows of the FWO receive a salary with full social security coverage, comprising health and accident insurance and the accumulation of pension rights. The salary of the fellows takes into account the seniority of the researcher, as evidenced by certificates of former employers. The employment conditions are aligned with the European Charter and Code.

Upon specific request of the researcher, a 1-year 'stipend fellowship' (without income tax but with full social security coverage) can also be granted, provided that the legal conditions are met. The latter option is particularly useful for researchers holding an academic position abroad and wanting to spend 1 year in Flanders for research, without having to resign from their position at the home institution. Formal approval of both host and home institution will be needed in this case.

The FWO will offer expertise to cope with various questions asked by (resident and international) researchers pertaining to social security regulations. Full support is given to fellowship holders, in order for them to focus maximally on their research. That includes the handling by FWO of problems concerning international researchers coming to Flanders, which is especially relevant for this programme (e.g. scientific visa, transfer of social security, etc.).

## Bench Fee and Grants

Every fellow receives a bench fee of 4.000 €/year. This can be used for the purchase of research equipment, research travels and other issues related to the fellowship. Medium size and large infrastructure, however, are to be provided for by the host institution.

Fellows have the opportunity to compete for an additional research grant up to 40,000 euro (covering research equipment and consumables), to the extent that they meet the criteria and regulations for FWO Research Grants.

## 8. Funding decision and fellowship start

The evaluation of the proposals by the expert panels will be concluded at the latest **24 weeks** after the deadline for submissions. Applicants will be informed about the funding decision no later than 8 weeks after the closure of the scientific evaluation.

On request, the applicant will be offered feedback, also if the funding decision is negative. This request should be submitted within 3 months of the notification.

Fellowships have to be started 8 weeks after the notification of the funding decision.

## 9. What are the selection criteria?

Fellows will be selected on the basis of:

- **Their own quality**
  - *research capability and potential such as:*
    - publications in peer review journals as well as other elements of the candidate's CV
    - patents, teaching, advanced courses, etc., taking into account the level of experience
  - *research skills and methodology*
  - *scientific independence (independent thinking, management experience and leadership qualities)*
  - *scientific background of the candidate*
  - *mobility of the applicant (previous transnational and/or intersectoral mobility experience)*
- **The scientific quality of their project**
  - *originality and innovative nature of the project (progress beyond the state of the art)*
  - *feasibility of the project*
  - *focus of the project*
  - *relevance of the project*
  - *coherence of the project*
- **The context of employment (especially relevant for incoming fellowships):**
  - *quality of the research environment of the host group (researchers, infrastructure, etc.)*
  - *quality of the supervision and training support of the host group*
  - *potential to acquire new scientific (disciplinary and interdisciplinary) and non-scientific skills ("soft skills", e.g. project management, IPR, grant writing, communication, ethics, etc.)*

In no case is the strictly scientific performance of the candidate the only criterion. The panel aims at a 'holistic' evaluation of each application, paying attention to non-scientific aspects such as career breaks (e.g. change of career or family reasons), employment in other contexts (intersectoral mobility) and other fruitful experiences of the candidate.

# 10. How are the Pegasus applications evaluated?

The evaluation procedure is carried out in several steps, described hereafter:

## *a. Formal eligibility check*

The administrative control is carried out taking into account the criteria mentioned above (“who can apply”)

## *b. Peer Review stage I: external referees*

“When applying, the applicant is asked to send in a list with the names of ten experts in the research field of the application, who might act as referee.

Not eligible as referee are:

- members of the Board of Directors of the FWO;
- members of an FWO Expert panel;
- persons appointed to a Belgian university, research institute or any other organization; or, in the case of calls for proposals in the framework of bilateral agreements, persons appointed to similar institutions or organisations in the country where the foreign project partner is professionally active; or, in the case of applications for mobility grants, persons appointed to a similar institution or organisation in the country the applicant intends to visit;
- persons with a professional appointment to a foreign institute where the applicant(s) had been enrolled as a student or professional in the course of the past three years;
- any co-authors with the applicants of a publication that was submitted or published in the three years preceding the final submission date for the applications;

‘Co-authorship’ is to be understood as follows:

- Co-authorship of a monography of which the applicant is co-author as well;
- Co-authorship of an article or another type of contribution to a collection (book, journal issue, report, congress proceedings, ...) of which the applicant is co-author as well;

Editors are not regarded as co-authors insofar as they have not also acted as what is understood under ‘co-author’ as described above. Co-editors of the applicant are not accepted as an external referee.

- any partners of the applicant(s) in a research project that has been applied for or has been running within the three years preceding the final submission date of the applications.

**The applicants are responsible for the eligibility of the proposed referees. Whenever the proposed referees do not comply with the eligibility criteria, the application will be declared ineligible.**

When listing the external referees in the online application form, the applicant will be asked whether all proposed referees meet the eligibility criteria. If one or more of them do not, the ap-

plicant has the possibility to briefly motivate why those specific experts should nevertheless act as referees. In case the applicant doubts the eligibility of one or more of the proposed referees, he or she can also contact the FWO before submitting the application by sending an e-mail to (referentencommissie@fwo.be). Both the cases that were motivated in the online application form, and the questions concerning eligibility that reached the FWO before the application was submitted will be presented to the FWO referee commission of the appropriate scientific domain, consisting of all expert panels' chairs of that domain. Five referee commissions are established, one for each domain: biological sciences, humanities, social sciences, medical sciences and science&technology; for applications submitted to the Interdisciplinary Panel the referee commissions of the respective scientific domains will be consulted. In case co-authorship is detected in publications with ten or more authors, the FWO administration will consult the referee commission as well. In all the above cases, the referee commission will decide on the alleged eligibility of the proposed referees. **When the referee commission decides negatively on the eligibility of a proposed referee in an application that has already been submitted, this application will be disqualified.** When the referee commission answers negatively to a question concerning the eligibility of a proposed referee that reached the FWO before the application was submitted, the applicant will be asked to propose a new referee that does meet the eligibility criteria.

After the administrative check, the FWO will inform the applicant about the violations that were found. In case the alleged violations result from a factual error of the FWO administration, the FWO can be notified.

For the integral regulations on internal and external peer review see: <http://www.fwo.be/Panel-reglement.aspx>

The applicants must see to it that any contact information of the reviewers is up-to-date. If this is not the case, then the FWO will take no further steps for tracking down the reviewer(s) in question.”

**There should be no communication on the proposal between the applicant and the referee during the submission and evaluation process.**

From the list provided by the applicant, FWO will invite a number of referees and see to it that at least two of them deliver a written review on the application. The applicant will not be informed about the name of the referee nor about the content of the review. The members of the expert panel, however, will know the name of the referee who wrote the review that is presented to them. All scientific experts solicited by FWO, both external referees and panel members, are bound by rules of confidentiality.

Both referees will evaluate the application and will give marks and comments on the basis of the selection criteria using the dedicated referee report form.

The referee report forms are submitted to the FWO and attached to the application.

### *c. Peer Review stage II: Panel meeting*

After the external refereeing process, the applications are submitted to the expert panels of FWO. The FWO has 29 monodisciplinary Expert Panels and 1 interdisciplinary panel, each consisting of 16 experts, of which a majority are not affiliated to a Flemish institution. The list of current members of each panel, as well as its scientific scope, is freely accessible on the FWO website. Potential conflicts of interest may be communicated to FWO, and will be taken into account in the rest of the procedure.

Each applicant is asked to choose a panel taking into account its specific scope. This choice must be motivated.

Taking into account the specific evaluation criteria for Pegasus, the Expertpanel judges the applications in the following way:

- For each proposal, there are at least two “preliminary assessors”, who are asked to read the proposal thoroughly and provide substantial comments on it. To this end, they have a dedicated template at their disposal listing all the selection criteria with space for comments. An overall score is also expected;
- The chair and vice-chair of the panel decide who will assess which application(s), taking into account the specific expertise of each Panel member, and avoiding any conflict of interest (in principle, no expert from the current or future host institution of the applicant will be designated as a preliminary assessor for this application);
- On the basis of the preliminary assessments, the panel as a whole discusses the proposal and attributes an overall score on the basis of a consensus. The preliminary assessments are thus only an input to the discussion, and by no means a final conclusion;
- Finally, the expert panel establishes a ranking of all Pegasus applications submitted to it.

These rankings of the different panels involved are endorsed on the next meeting of the Committee for International Cooperation, which then establishes an overall ranking. This ranking cannot overrule the earlier rankings established by the regular expert panels, and will contain three categories:

- **Ranked in 1st order:** to be funded with the highest priority
- **Ranked in 2nd order:** to be funded if the budget allows it (reserve list)
- **Not ranked:** not to be funded, even if budget were available

Within the first two categories, a strict ranking of the candidates is mandatory. Ex aequo ranking is not allowed.

The final funding decision is made by the Board of Trustees, and based on the advice given by the committee.

# 11. Part time research

Pegasus fellowships are full-time employment contracts (or exceptionally stipends in the case of Pegasus-short). In exceptional cases, and depending on the formal agreement of the host institution, part-time fellowships may be granted for thoroughly motivated reasons.

# 12. Maternity leave

Holders of a Pegasus-long fellowship are entitled to the legal maternity leave of 15 weeks. In this case, their fellowship is also extended with 9 full months, which brings the total duration to 4 years. This extension is limited to 1 child per fellowship term.

For Pegasus-short fellowships, the fellowship is extended with 15 weeks, corresponding to the legal maternity leave.

There are also flexible regulations for parental leave.

# 13. Applicants who are third country nationals

Applicants who are third country nationals may need a visa before entering the territory of Belgium. For procedures concerning the visa application, please refer to the Belgian embassy in the country of origin.

**IMPORTANT:** The application for visa and related authorisations may take up to 4 months. In order not to lose precious time, Pegasus candidates should contact the [local EURAXESS Service Centre](#) as soon as possible after the submission of their Pegasus application. This enables them to receive the information about documents and procedures well in advance in order to submit their visa request immediately after the communication of the Pegasus funding decision.

For researchers from third countries visiting Belgium in the context of scientific research for a period longer than 3 months, the procedure to obtain a residence permit has recently been simplified. On the basis of a host agreement, a **scientific visa** may be granted, which is considered as a valid permit, thus eliminating the need for a labour card or a work permit. Acknowledged institutions (among which FWO) may conclude an agreement with a foreign researcher.

Researchers from third countries who are employed at a Flemish university or research institution with an employment contract, always pay full social security contributions, enabling them to build up pension and unemployment rights. However, for the time being, they can only enjoy these rights afterwards when moving to another EEA country (or Switzerland) or to a country which has a bi- or multilateral social security agreement with Belgium. Researchers returning to their country of origin lose these rights if the country concerned does not have such an agreement with Belgium.

## 14. Misconduct

As stated in the general regulations, FWO adheres to the Code of Scientific Integrity developed by the Belgian Science Policy Office. Researchers funded by FWO should respect the principles laid down in this code.

Moreover, FWO has signed the Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, which also contains an item on research integrity.

## 15. Dissemination of Research Results

The dissemination and transfer of knowledge is a key added-value of research. Results should be published actively in peer reviewed publications and presented in scientific conferences. The capacity to publish is an essential criterion to build up a future research career. The publication of research results should only be restricted in well justified cases by the host institutions. It is a joint responsibility of the applicants and their scientific contacts to aim for publications in top scientific journals in their field, to improve career prospects after the Pegasus grant.

The FWO has subscribed to the Berlin Declaration; this implies that all publications resulting from FWO funding must be made available in Open Access, either through publishing in OA journals (“gold OA”) or by making them available in a repository, possibly with an embargo period (“green OA”).

Furthermore, the FWO encourages applicants to make the results of their research known to a wider audience, and to valorize them where possible and relevant.

## 16. Acknowledgement of Pegasus funding

Holders of a Pegasus fellowship may carry the title “FWO Pegasus Marie Curie Fellow”. Financial support from FWO must be acknowledged in all publications and other forms of media communication.

## 17. Annual Pegasus meeting

The FWO will organise annually a meeting for all Pegasus beneficiaries and ex-grantees by way of information session, and to allow networking.

## 18. Marie-Curie Cofunding

The Pegasus programme is co-funded by the European Commission under the Marie-Curie COFUND scheme. A link to funding opportunities and calls cofunded by the Marie Curie Actions of the European Commission is available on [the EU Cordis Website](#).

## 19. Grant writing

When writing a grant application, it may appear useful to consult websites on grant writing that can be found through standard website search tools.

Applicants may also consult the research coordination department of their host institution, which may organize workshops dedicated to this topic.

## 20. Useful links

- <http://www.fwo.be>
- <http://www.euraxess.be/docs/guide.pdf>
- <http://www.xpats.com>
- <http://www.expatica.com>
- <http://belgium.angloinfo.com>
- <http://www.justlanded.com/english/Belgium>
- [http://belgium.usembassy.gov/living\\_in\\_belgium.html](http://belgium.usembassy.gov/living_in_belgium.html)
- <http://www.livinginbelgium.com>
- <http://www.euraxess.be/flanders/>

