

FSR Incoming Post-doc Fellowships

GUIDE FOR APPLICANT 2020

This “Guide” is intended as a support document to help applicants correctly fill in the “Application form 2020” and submit a complete proposal.

It is necessary **to read carefully the entire document** before submitting a research project.

VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- The form must be **typed** and sent as **one single PDF file** by email;

-The application form will be submitted to the following e-mail address: crec-adre@uclouvain.be for **October 1st, 2019 at 2 pm** (Brussels time) at the latest.

- The file has to be written **in English** in order to facilitate the evaluation by international experts. Exceptions are possible according to the research topic but must be duly justified (written request addressed to the President of the UCLouvain Research Council prior to the application submission).

Files that are incomplete, submitted after deadline or those not meeting eligibility criteria will be considered ineligible.

Program Manager:

UCLouvain Research Administration

Sara.wilmet@uclouvain.be

Tel: +32 10 47 38 36

1. Aim of the action

The program, which is targeted at incoming researchers, aims at reinforcing the international dimension of the host institution by supporting highly-qualified post-docs from abroad. The ultimate ambition is to build scientific and technological (S&T) collaborations and long-lasting networks between the respective research fields.

The fellowships are assigned to researchers with a PhD degree, proving their expertise and research capacity by a personal scientific record.

2. Eligible scientists

Applicants to a FSR Incoming post-doc Fellowship must:

- Hold a **doctoral degree** (PhD), obtained after defense of a thesis, issued by an academic institution no later than May 1st, 2020;
- Hold the academic degree referred to hereabove for a maximum of **5 years**, which period shall expire no later than February 5th, 2020.

The maximum period laid down in the above paragraph shall be increased by one year per childbirth and / or adoption following the award of the PhD academic degree.

- Be **in mobility condition**, i.e. not having resided nor carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Belgium for more than **24 months** in the 3 years immediately prior to the starting date of the project¹.

All nationalities are eligible.

3. Duration of the stay

The stay should cover 12 up to 24 months. The project will start maximum 12 months after the call deadline.

4. Research fields and potential host units

The exchange must take place in the frame of the ongoing research activities taking place in a research unit of Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Brussels, Tournai, Mons, Charleroi and Namur): www.uclouvain.be;

The program is based on a bottom-up approach as all research fields are eligible (Sciences and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Health Sciences).

5. Submission of applications

The application will be submitted in electronic copy **by the applicant/researcher** who will have been in contact with a promoter in the host institution. The list of all research entities and promoters is available on UCLouvain's website (see point 4).

¹ At the starting date of the project (maximum 12 months after the call deadline), if the researcher is already beneficiary of a fellowship in the host institution for 12 months or more, the duration of the FSR fellowship will be adapted in such a way to respect the rule of max. 36 months under fellowship.

The application form will be introduced to the following e-mail address: crec-adre@uclouvain.be for **October 1st, 2019 at 2 pm** (Brussels time) at the latest.

The “Application form 2020” will have to be accompanied by:

- A curriculum vitae (Europass template);
- A list of scientific publications of the applicant;
- A description of the research project to be performed during the stay;
- A recommendation letter by an academic member of the home institution of the candidate describing the added value of the stay;
- A recommendation letter by an internationally recognized scientific personality;
- A recommendation letter by the host institution supervisor.

Very important information:

- The file (application form and annexes) **will be sent in one PDF format**. For confidentiality reasons, the letter of recommendation of the home/host institution can be directly sent to the UCLouvain Research Administration (crec-adre@uclouvain.be) by specifying the name of the applicant/researcher in the object of the email.

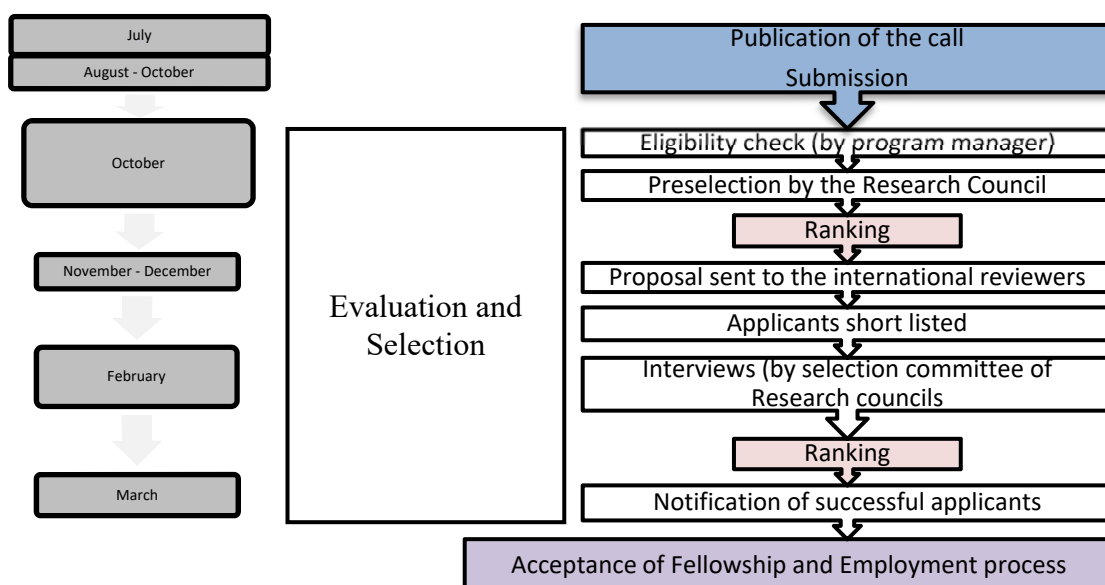
- The file **will be written in English** in order to facilitate the evaluation by international experts. Exceptions are possible according to the research topic but must be duly justified (written request addressed to the President of the UCLouvain Research Council prior to the application submission).

- Only **complete applications will be eligible**.

All applicants will receive an email notification soon after the call deadline.

6. Evaluation and selection

The evaluation of all proposals will be operated in **4 steps** according to the following organigram and evaluation criteria:



1. Administrative eligibility check

Within 3 weeks after the call deadline, the eligibility check of all **complete applications** will be carried out by the coordinating Program Manager.

! The incomplete applications (cf. point 11) will be rejected at this stage !

For applications with missing/lacking information on mobility background, etc., the candidates will be requested to send additional information within five working days. The eligibility of the candidates in terms of transnational mobility will also be checked at this stage.

2. Preselection by the Research Council

Four weeks after the call deadline, a first ‘internal’ evaluation will be conducted by the Research Council according to the same evaluation criteria as those used during the second “external” evaluation (cf. point 6.3.).

Regarding the ‘internal’ evaluation, the Research Council selects proposals (at least three times the number of available grants) for a second step of “external” evaluation.

The selection by the members of the Research Council will be operated following the evaluation criteria listed below:

Selection criteria	Weighting
Quality of the candidate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientific merits of the candidates (curriculum vitae, publications, recommendation letters, practical/management experience, transnational mobility, intersectoral mobility, etc.) Importantly, a <i>career break</i> (pregnancy, serious illness, other to be duly justified), will be taken into account 	40%
Quality of the research and training project <p>Research project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Originality and innovation of the project, and relationship to the ‘state of the art’ of research in the field Research/technological quality, including any interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary aspects of the proposal Feasibility of the project in the proposed time Method Link and relevance with the ongoing activities of the host unit <p>Training project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition of new knowledge and potential career development Relevance to the expertise of the candidate 	40%
Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added value of the stay both for the candidate and the host unit (support to promising young research teams and reinforcement of excellence poles by giving the opportunity to welcome high level post-doctoral researchers) Career perspectives of the candidates after their stay in Belgium (possibility of returning to the country of origin and/or career perspectives inside the host institution) Potential transfer of know-how and prospects for further cooperation 	20%
Total	100%

3. Evaluation by international peer reviewers

Each application admitted to the second step of evaluation will be reviewed by minimum two international peer reviewers who will be identified by the applicant/researcher together with his/her promoter in the host institution (Point 23 of the Application Form). Obviously, reviewers should not be connected to the applicants in any way. The Program manager will then ask each external expert to evaluate the project based on the above-mentioned criteria.

Experts are requested to examine all aspects that must be taken into consideration for each criterion and give a score from 0 to 10, half points are allowed. Scores must reflect the following:

Score	Definition	
0	Unsatisfactory	The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information
1 -2	Very poor	The criterion is addressed in a cursory and unsatisfactory manner
3-4	Poor	There are serious inherent weaknesses in relation to the criterion in question
5-6	Fair	While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting
7-8	Good	The proposal addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible
9-10	Excellent	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question

The international peer reviewers will be contacted by e-mail and asked to give their written opinion on one proposal and to send it directly to the Program manager. Written evaluation guidelines will be provided to participating experts. Each international expert will be asked to fill in a confidential evaluation form taken into account the evaluation criteria and sub-criteria listed above as well as a global appreciation and suggestions.

The evaluations by the international peer reviewers will complement the evaluations made by the Research Council before the last step of the evaluation.

4. Interviews by selection committee of the Research Council

The interviews will be the last selection round, which will take place immediately after the stepper-review evaluation (February). Skype or video interviews will be conducted by the Selection Committees.

The list of finally ranked proposals will be gathered in three different categories:

A: Priority list	excellent quality proposals, retained for funding
B: Reserve list	excellent or very good quality proposals which cannot be funded due to budget limitation
C: Rejection list	other proposals which do not meet the selection criteria

At the issue of the complete evaluation phase (+/- five months after the call deadline), the final results will be communicated by letter to each remaining applicant, directly and via the host university. An evaluation summary report (ESR) will be sent to the candidates, providing the various reasons for acceptance or rejection as well as the strong and weak points of the proposal. The selected applicants will have to start their research stay not later than 12 months after the call closing date.

The applications put on the reserve list will be awarded a fellowship in case of withdrawal of one or more selected applicants. This list will be kept open until the end of September 2020.

7. Budgetary aspects

Ten 2-years fellowships will be funded during the 2020 call. For each selected researcher, a fellowship agreement will be concluded.

The “FSR Incoming Postdoctoral Fellowship” program offers a tax-free fellowship with full social security coverage. This “system” is the same as the one used to recruit Marie Curie fellows.

However, this coverage is not taken into account for all countries².

Concretely, the fellowship includes:

- A net monthly allowance, adapted following the experience of the fellow (average in 2019 with 2 years of working experience after the PhD: 2.572,44 EUR.
- The personal liability insurance costs;
- The contribution to the National Office of Social Security (NOSS);³
- A bench fee of EUR/year 5,000 for laboratory-based research or EUR/year 2,500 for non-laboratory based research;
- Travel allowance: this amount contributes to cover the expenses of the researcher caused by the mobility necessary to take up the fellowship⁴. It will be paid one time as a lump-sum per year and will be calculated taken into account of the country of origin of the candidate (depending on the country, it could range from 250 EUR/year to 2.000 EUR/year).

8. Optional secondments

During the implementation of the research project the researcher may be seconded outside his/her host organisation to an organisation in a Member State or Associated Countries. Secondments of the researcher to partner organisations are encouraged, but they should be relevant, feasible, and beneficial for the researcher and in line with the project objectives. The secondment phase can be a single period or can be divided into shorter mobility periods.

The maximum duration of secondments is defined according to the total duration of the fellowship:

Duration of the fellowship	Maximum duration of secondment
≤ 18 months	3 months
> 18 months	6 months

Optional secondment(s) should be motivated under point 21 of the Application Form.

² Full social security applies to EU nationals as well as nationals from Algeria, Australia, Bosnia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iceland, India, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, Quebec, Republic of Kosovo, Republic of Macedonia, San Marino, Serbia, South Korea, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey and Uruguay. Fellows from other countries will be subject to partial social security contributions: personal contribution will amount to only 4,7% of the tax-free salary, the fellow will be covered for health care, incapacity for work and child allowances, but not for unemployment and retirement.

³ As foreseen by the Royal Decree of 26/03/2003 in relation to foreign workers (M.B. of 28/04/2003).

⁴ The travel allowance does not refer to research mobility and thus, is not intended to cover the travel costs for the attendance of the selected candidates at international conferences and meetings.

9. Reports

9.1. Mid-term report

At mid-term, the fellowship holder, in consultation with the supervisor, will submit to the UCLouvain Research Administration a short progress report (maximum 3 pages) on his/her research activities, potential difficulties and perspectives.

For fellowships of 12 months only a final report is due.

9.2. Final report

At the end of the stay a more detailed report, however not exceeding 5 pages, will be submitted. Guidelines for reporting will be communicated in due time to all grantees.

The main purpose of the report is to assess whether the objectives of the post-doctoral stay have been met. In that respect it is not purely a scientific report. A list of publications, missions and contributions to scientific meetings has to be attached to the report.

These documents have to be sent electronically to the following email addresses: alizee.scolas@uclouvain.be; sara.wilmet@uclouvain.be (ADRE UCLouvain).

10. Publications

Every publication released or event held in connection with the research stay should clearly refer to the author as a *beneficiary of a FSR Incoming Post-doctoral Fellowship*.

11. Support to researchers

The host institution is member of the EURAXESS network (www.euraxess.org) covering more than 260 centres located in 40 European countries. This is an initiative of the European Commission aiming at supporting researcher mobility and career development while enhancing scientific collaboration between Europe and the world.

If you are a mobile researcher, EURAXESS “Services” can assist you and your family in every step of your move, starting in your home country and continuing until you have settled in a new one. This free personalised service is here to remove red tape and make your life easier. You will receive comprehensive, up-to-date information, as well as customised assistance on all matters relating to your professional and daily life.

A mobility team within the university helps researchers from abroad who would like to pursue their research at UCLouvain or researchers who want to pursue their research in another institution abroad. The team is composed of two “researcher’s mobility” advisors: Sara Wilmet and Elisabeth Colon.

Researchers are invited to contact the “researcher’s mobility” advisors (welcome-researcher@uclouvain.be) to get support regarding all legal and administrative aspects (visa application, work permit, etc.) but also for practical issues (accommodation, child care facilities, etc.).

12. Checklist for the eligibility of the application

This check-list is intended to help to fill out the application.

I am eligible to submit my application (required experience, max. 5 years, mobility condition)

- I have been in contact with a supervisor in the host institution who is willing to support my application
- I am planning to stay 12 up to 24 months
- My application form is complete (Application form + requested annexes) and written in English (or I have received a written agreement from the President of the Research Council)
- My application is in accordance with the required evaluation criteria
- My application file contains the required signatures
- I will apply to the F.R.S.-FNRS Grants and Fellowships Call 2020
- An electronic version of the complete file was sent to crec-adre@uclouvain.be in one PDF format
- The application file is introduced by the **1st of October 2019 at 2 pm** (Brussels time)

! Very important information: only complete proposals will be reviewed !

Good luck!