

## FSR Incoming Post-doc Fellowships

# GUIDE FOR APPLICANT 2019

This “Guide” is intended as a support document to help applicants correctly fill in the “Application form 2019” 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 in **one single PDF file** by email;

-The application form will be submitted to the following e-mail address: [crec-adre@uclouvain.be](mailto:crec-adre@uclouvain.be) for **October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 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 UCL Research Council prior to the application submission).

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

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**Program Manager:**

UCL Research Administration

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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 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019;
- Hold the academic degree referred to here above for a maximum of **5 years**, which period shall expire no later than February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

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 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the starting date of the project<sup>1</sup>.

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 and Charleroi): [www.uclouvain.be](http://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 UCL's website (see point 4).

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<sup>1</sup> 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](mailto:crec-adre@uclouvain.be) for **October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 2 pm** (Brussels time) at the latest.

The “Application form 2019” 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.

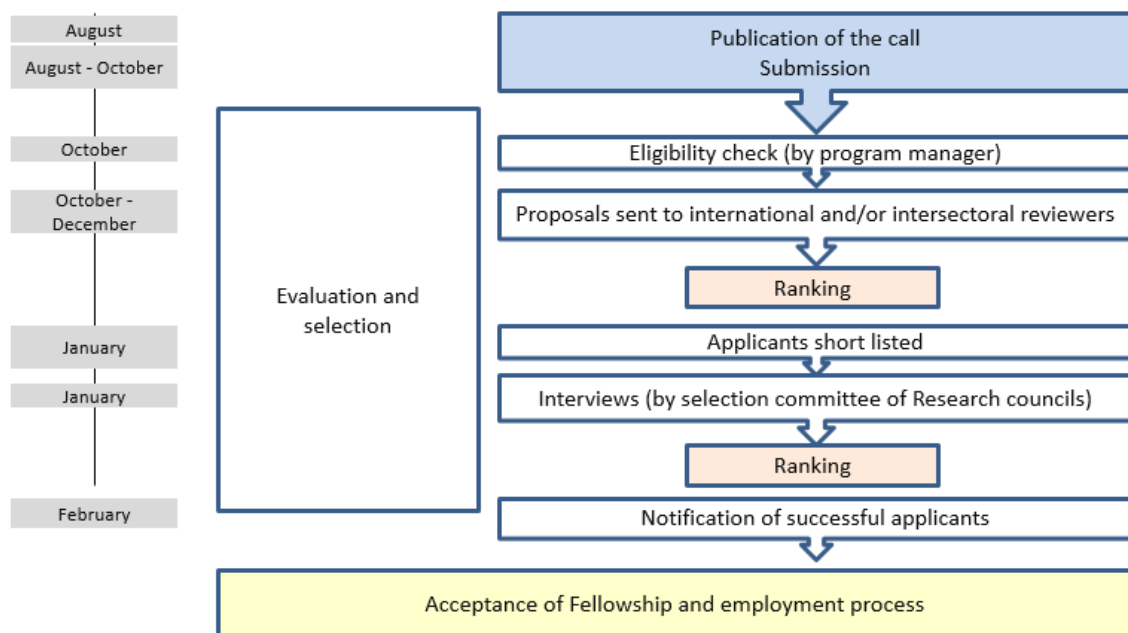
**Very important information:**

- 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 UCL Research Administration ([crec-adre@uclouvain.be](mailto: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 UCL 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 **3 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. Evaluation by international peer reviewers

Three weeks after the call deadline, each application will be reviewed by minimum two international peer reviewers who will be identified by the coordinating Program manager (upon the suggestion of the members of the Research Councils). 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 below-mentioned criteria.

The international peer reviewers identified by the Program manager 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 below as well as a global appreciation and suggestions.

The selection by the international peer-reviewers will be operated following the evaluation criteria listed below:

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

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

A ranking will be established at the end of the evaluation step by external experts. 30 applicants (3 times the number of available grants) will be shortlisted and go on to the third step of evaluation.

### 3. *Interviews by selection committee of the Research Council*

The interviews will be the last selection round, which will take place immediately after the Review & Ranking step (April). 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 (+/- four 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 June 2019.

## 7. Budgetary aspects

Ten 2-years fellowships will be funded during the 2019 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 countries<sup>2</sup>.

Concretely, the fellowship includes:

- A net monthly allowance, adapted following the experience of the fellow (average in 2018 with 2 years of working experience after the PhD: 2.491,36 EUR.
- The personal liability insurance costs;
- The contribution to the National Office of Social Security (NOSS);<sup>3</sup>
- 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 fellowship<sup>4</sup>. 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. Reports

### 8.1. Mid-term report

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

For fellowships up to 12 months only a final report is due.

### 8.2. 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 [crec-adre@uclouvain.be](mailto:crec-adre@uclouvain.be).

## 9. 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*.

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>4</sup> 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.

## 10. Support to researchers

The host institution is member of the EURAXESS network ([www.euraxess.org](http://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 UCL 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 ([mobility-adre@uclouvain.be](mailto:mobility-adre@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.).

## 11. 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
- An electronic version of the complete file was sent to [crec-adre@uclouvain.be](mailto:crec-adre@uclouvain.be) in one PDF format
- The application file is introduced by the **15<sup>th</sup> of October 2018 at 2 pm** (Brussels time)

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

Good luck!