

**Incoming Post-doc Fellowships  
co-funded by the Marie Curie Actions**



## **GUIDE FOR APPLICANT 2015**

This “Guide” is intended as a support document to help applicants correctly fill in the “Application form 2015” and submit a complete proposal.

It is necessary to read carefully the entire document before submitting a research project. Only complete proposals will be reviewed.

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## 1. Aim of the action

The programme, which is targeted at incoming researchers, aims at reinforcing the international dimension of the three partner institutions<sup>1</sup> 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 (or equivalent), proving their expertise and research capacity by a personal scientific record.

This programme is co-financed by the European Commission (Marie Curie actions).

## 2. Eligible scientists

“MOVE-IN Louvain” Incoming post-doc Fellowships are addressed to:

- **Experienced researchers**<sup>2</sup> holding a doctoral degree (PhD) or having at least 4 years of full-time equivalent research experience<sup>3</sup>;
- Researchers with a **maximum of 6 years** of post-doc experience<sup>4</sup>;
- Researchers **in mobility condition**: who have not resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Belgium for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the reference date<sup>5</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 exchanges must take place in the frame of the ongoing research activities taking place in a research unit of one of the three host institutions, namely:

- Université catholique de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Brussels, Tournai, Mons and Charleroi) : [www.uclouvain.be](http://www.uclouvain.be);
- Université de Namur (Namur) : [www.unamur.be](http://www.unamur.be);
- Université Saint-Louis (Brussels) : [www.usaintlouis.be](http://www.usaintlouis.be)

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

<sup>1</sup> Université catholique de Louvain (UCL), Université Saint-Louis (USL) and Université de Namur (UNamur).

<sup>2</sup> Experienced researchers are defined as researchers having at least 4 years research experience (full-time equivalent) since gaining a university diploma giving them access to doctoral studies (the degree must entitle the holder to embark on doctoral studies, without having to acquire any further qualifications), in the country in which the degree/diploma was obtained, or researchers already in possession of a doctoral degree, independently of the time taken to acquire it.

<sup>3</sup> Reference date is the call deadline.

<sup>4</sup> This rule is based on a Regulation on doc and postdoc fellowships granted at the UCL. Reference date being the call deadline.

<sup>5</sup> Reference date is the call deadline. At the starting date of the project (maximum 12 months after the call deadline), if the researcher is already beneficiary of a fellowship in one of the three host institutions for 12 months or more, the duration of the “MOVE-IN Louvain” fellowship will be adapted in such a way to respect the rule of max. 36 months under fellowship.

## 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 one of the three host institutions. The list of all research entities and promoters is available on their website (see point 4).

The application form will be introduced to the **UCL Research Administration** (coordinator of the project) to the following e-mail address: [crec-adre@uclouvain.be](mailto:crec-adre@uclouvain.be).

The “Application form 2015” 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 (UCL, UNamur or USL).

The file (application form and annexes) will be sent in **one PDF format** and will be written in English in order to facilitate the evaluation by international experts. Only **complete** applications will be eligible.

## 6. Evaluation and selection

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

Date	Action
1 <sup>st</sup> of October 2014	Publication of the call
1 <sup>st</sup> of January 2015	<b>Deadline of the call</b>
January 2015	Administrative eligibility check (step 1) Evaluation by the Research Councils (step 2)
February - March 2015	Evaluation by international peer reviewers (step 3)
April 2015	Selection committee (step 4)
May 2015	<b>Communication of the results</b>
June 2015 until 31 <sup>st</sup> of December 2015	Launching of the research projects

### 1. Administrative eligibility check

Within 4 weeks after the call deadline, the eligibility check of all **complete applications** will be carried out by the coordinating Programme 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 before the evaluation by Research Council of the three partners. The eligibility of the candidates in terms of transnational mobility will also be checked at this stage.

### 2. Evaluation by the Research Councils

Four weeks after the call deadline, a first ‘internal’ evaluation will be conducted in the context of joined sessions of the Research Councils of the three partners according to the same evaluation criteria as those used during the second “external” evaluation (cf. point 6.3.).

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

### 3. Evaluation by international peer reviewers

Each application admitted at the second step of evaluation will be reviewed by two international peer reviewers who will be identified by the coordinating Programme manager (upon the suggestion of the members of the Research Councils). Obviously, reviewers should not be connected to the applicants in any way.

The Programme manager will then ask each external expert to evaluate the project based on the below-mentioned criteria.

A few weeks after the first evaluation by the Research Councils, the international peer reviewers identified by the Programme manager will be contacted by e-mail and asked to give their written opinion on one proposal and to send it directly to the Programme 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 Research Councils (phase 1) and by the international peer-reviewers (phase 2) will be operated following the evaluation criteria listed below:

Selection criteria	Weighting	Threshold (phase 1)	Threshold (phase 2)
<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 (pregnancy, serious illness, other to be duly justified)</i>, will be taken into account</li> </ul>	40%	5/10	6/10
<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%	5/10	6/10
<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%	5/10	6/10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>15/30</b>	<b>18/30</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

#### 4. Final selection by the Research Councils

The final selection will be made by the Research Councils during a final selection meeting and on the basis of consensus. This selection relies on the first “internal” evaluation made by the Research Councils and the evaluation of the two international peer reviewers.

The proposal will be split in three 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. The best B will be kept as B+ and will be funded if budget becomes available due to withdrawal or changes in planning of those proposals from the priority list;
- C. Rejection list: other proposals, which will not be funded (below the threshold).

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 September 2015.

## 7. Budgetary aspects

Depending on the duration of the stay of the candidates retained for funding, about 53 fellowships will be granted per call. For each selected researcher, a fellowship agreement will be concluded for a period covering the duration of the research training activities (12 months and up to 24 months).

The “MOVE-IN LOUVAIN” programme offers a tax-free fellowship with full social security coverage. This “system” is the same as the one used to recruit Marie Curie fellows. In fact, it includes all the requirements and advantages of an employment contract, but it is not subject to taxation by the Belgian Ministry of Finances. This mechanism was created in 1989 to compensate for the high cost of salaries in Belgium<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Royal Decree of 07/01/1989 stating that fellowships to scientists are free of taxation when paid by the Belgian authorities or institutions such as universities

However, this advantage is not taken into account for all countries<sup>7</sup>.

Concretely, the fellowship includes:

- A net monthly allowance, taking into account the experience of the fellow (average in 2014 with 2 years of working experience: 2.311,36 EUR).
- The personal liability insurance costs;
- The contribution to the National Office of Social Security (NOSS);<sup>8</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 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 [Sara.Wilmet@uclouvain.be](mailto:Sara.Wilmet@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 "MOVE-IN Louvain" Incoming Post-doctoral Fellowship, co-funded by the Marie Curie Actions of the European Commission*.

## 10. Support to researchers

The three host institutions are members 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.

<sup>7</sup> Full social security applies to EU nationals as well as nationals from Algeria, Australia, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein, Morocco, Norway, the Philippines, San Marino, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, the United States and the independent states that used to form the former Yugoslavia. Fellows from other Countries will be subject to partial social security contributions: personal contribution will amount to only 4,7% of the fellowship, the fellow will be covered for health care, incapacity for work and child allowances, but not for unemployment and retirement.

<sup>8</sup> As foreseen by the Royal Decree of 26/03/2003 in relation to foreign workers (M.B. of 28/04/2003).

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.

Researchers are invited to contact their host institution to get support regarding all legal and administrative aspects (visa application, work permit, etc.) but also for practical issues (accommodation, child care facilities, etc.):

- UCL: [Sara.Wilmet@uclouvain.be](mailto:Sara.Wilmet@uclouvain.be)
- UNamur: [Jean-Paul.Leonis@unamur.be](mailto:Jean-Paul.Leonis@unamur.be)
- USL: [euraxess@fusl.ac.be](mailto:euraxess@fusl.ac.be)

## 11. Checklist for the eligibility of the application

This check-list is intended to help to fill out the application. Please note that a FAQ is also available on the “MOVE-IN Louvain” website.

- ☐ I am eligible to submit my application (required experience, maxi. 6 years, mobility condition)
- ☐ I have been in contact with a supervisor in one of the three host institutions 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
- ☐ 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 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2015

Good luck!