

RULES AND REGULATIONS

RESEARCH FELLOW FELLOWSHIP (ASP – ASPIRANT-E)

ADOPTED BY
THE F.R.S.-FNRS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
CHAPTER I: SCOPE – NATURE OF THE FELLOWSHIP	3
CHAPTER II: APPLICATION	3
CHAPTER III: ALLOCATION AND DURATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP	6
CHAPTER IV: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP HOLDERS	7
CHAPTER V: INTERRUPTIONS.....	9
CHAPTER VI: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS	10
CHAPTER VII: FINAL PROVISIONS	10
APPENDIX 1	11

CHAPTER I: SCOPE – NATURE OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Article 1

The rules and regulations hereinafter are only applicable to holders of a Research Fellow (ASP – Aspirant e) fellowship of the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS (F.R.S.-FNRS).

The granting of a Research Fellow fellowship is intended for the completion of the Ph.D. within 4 years. People with disabilities are allowed to complete their Ph.D. working part time over up to six years, if it has been agreed upon with the promoter.

ASP applications must be submitted under Grants and Fellowships Call of the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS (F.R.S.-FNRS).

Article 2

Holders of a Research Fellow (ASP) fellowship shall pursue their studies leading to a Ph.D. in a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium under the supervision of a promoter and a postdoctoral co-promoter (if any) from one of the institutions listed in Appendix 1.

The promoter must meet the following conditions altogether:

- Be permanently appointed¹ to an academic or scientific position or on probation in that university.
- This appointment must have a final and conclusive assent from the competent body to legitimize this appointment in accordance with the Law or the university regulations by the time of the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) at the latest.
- This academic or scientific position must be effective by the time of the starting date of the fellowship, i.e., by 1st October of the year of the Grants and Fellowships Call concerned at the latest.

If the promoter of an ASP applicant who is appointed permanently accesses the legal age of retirement / becomes professor emeritus after the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) and before the end of the funding scheme in case of granting, the submission of the application shall be subject to prior approval by the Head of institution where the research will be carried out.

The promoter permanently appointed who will access the legal age of retirement / become professor emeritus by the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) is not eligible.

The researcher-promoter of a Ulysse Incentive Grant for Mobility in Scientific Research (MISU) who genuinely carries out the fellowship by the time of the starting date of the fellowship, i.e., by 1st October of the year of the Grants and Fellowships Call concerned at the latest, may be promoter of an ASP applicant.

CHAPTER II: APPLICATION

Article 3

The Research Fellow fellowship is open to holders of:

¹ Research logicians of rank A, as defined by the Royal Decree of 31st October 1953 fixing 'le statut des agrégés, des répétiteurs et des membres du personnel scientifique des universités de l'État', are not eligible as promoters of doctoral fellowships.

- 1° A master degree for a value of at least 120 credits awarded by a Higher Education Institution within the French-speaking Community of Belgium.
- 2° A master degree for a value of at least 120 credits awarded by a Higher Education Institution within the Dutch-speaking Community of Belgium, German-speaking Community of Belgium or from the Royal Military Academy.
- 3° A master degree for a value of at least 120 credits awarded by a Higher Education Institution in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia or Lithuania².
- 4° Any degree as referred to in Article 115 of the Decree of 7th November 2013 of the French-speaking Community of Belgium that defines the landscape of Higher Education and the academic studies organisation.

Applicants who hold a degree as referred to in paragraph 1, 1°, 2° and 3°, are required to provide a certificate of achievement or a copy of the diploma. The document must be enclosed in the application file at the latest by the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors).

Applicants who hold a degree as referred to in paragraph 1, 4° are required to provide a registration document or a certificate that enables the admission to doctoral programmes issued by the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium where the studies will be carried out along with a certificate of achievement or a copy of all degrees. Both documents must be enclosed in the application file at the latest by the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors).

Article 4

Students who are completing the last year of the studies leading to the master degree, referred to in Article 3, paragraph 1, 1°, 2° and 3° of this Rules and Regulations may also submit their application. A certificate of registration to the final year of master degree must be attached to the application at the latest by the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors).

Article 5

Applicants to a Research Fellow fellowship must have obtained an academic degree for maximum 3 years (for no more than the duration of the specialisation for doctors and veterinarian applicants who have been undertaking a medical or veterinary specialty training³). This term shall expire at the latest on the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) to validate applications.

Starting from the 2027 Grants and Fellowships Call, the academic degree seniority set in Article 5, paragraphe 1, will be of 4 years maximum. This term shall expire at the latest on the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) to validate applications.

The maximum period used to calculate eligibility based on the required academic seniority is extended by:

- 15 months per childbirth regardless of the number of children per delivery

² In accordance with the Brussels Treaty on the automatic recognition of higher education qualifications between the Benelux countries and the Baltic States, which came into force on 1st May 2024.

³ Applicants in this situation are required to enclose to their application file a registration document concerning the specialty in question by the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors).

- 12 months per child for whom the applicant is a parent⁴ (as a legal parent, co-parent, adoptive mother or father, adoptive co-parent, or any other form of legal parenthood established by recognition or court decision) and whom the applicant did not give birth to;
- 12 months for applicants who have taken in one or more children at the same time as foster parents⁵, designated as such by the court, by an accredited placement service of the competent community, or by a community service responsible for youth protection (youth welfare services, Special Youth Assistance Committee), in the context of a long-term placement.

These extensions are cumulative.

Article 6

No applicant may apply more than three times for the same fellowship. **Starting from the 2027 Grants and Fellowships Call**, the number of applications for the same fellowship will be limited to two attempts instead of three.

Researchers who have been granted with a Research Fellow fellowship, regardless of its duration, can no longer apply for the same fellowship.

No interruption may be possible between fellowships.

No applicant may apply for a Research Fellow fellowship if they received two successive grants from the Fund for Research Training in Industry and Agriculture (FRIA-Fonds pour la Formation à la Recherche dans l'Industrie et dans l'Agriculture).

No applicant may apply for a Research Fellow fellowship if they received two successive grants from the Fund for Research on Human Sciences (FRESH-Fonds pour la Recherche en Sciences Humaines) of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

No applicant may apply for a Research Fellow fellowship if they have been beneficiaries of F.R.S.-FNRS Grants for more than 24 months overall regardless the interruption which may have occurred between Grants.

No applicant may apply for a Research Fellow Renewal fellowship if they have not been granted with a Research Fellow fellowship.

Article 7

The Grants and Fellowships Call is opened once a year and is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website.

Only one application for a Research Fellow (ASP) fellowship can be submitted, in French or in English. It must only be submitted on [e-space](#), the online platform dedicated to the calls for proposals.

⁴ In case of multiple pregnancy, the non-birthing parent will have their eligibility extension capped at 12 months.

⁵ In the case of fostering siblings, the concerned parent will have their eligibility extension capped at 12 months.

It is recommended to applicants who wish to have their application file assessed by [Scientific Commissions](#) dedicated to SEN (Exact and Natural Sciences) and SVS (Health and Life Sciences) fields, as well as the Scientific Commission SHS-2, to submit their application in English⁶.

Applicants to a Research Fellow Renewal (ASP-REN) fellowship are given access to the electronic form by the F.R.S.-FNRS on [e-space](#).

All applications (ASP and ASP-REN) are submitted to a procedure including three successive electronic validations on the dates that will be indicated when the call is published:

- a. The validation by the applicant: it accounts as a confirmation that the applicant has submitted an application.
- b. The validation by the promoter selected pursuant to article 2: the F.R.S.-FNRS transfers the application to promoters so that they give their approval for the submitted research project and confirm the accuracy of the data mentioned in the application file. The promoter may accept or refuse the application.
- c. The validation by the research administration (or Board of Education) of the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium, to which the application file is transferred once promoters have given their consent. The academic authority may accept or refuse the application. The validation deadline set for the rectors puts a final end to the call for proposals.

Applications that have not been validated within the time-frame of the call cannot be taken into account.

No further change or modification to the proposal can be made after the validation deadline set for the applicant.

A mini-guide specifies the validation dates as well as the documents which must be included in the application.

CHAPTER III: ALLOCATION AND DURATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Article 8

The F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees shall decide on the allocation of Research Fellow fellowships.

The Research Fellow fellowship is a maximum 2-year fellowship; it may be renewed for a duration which may absolutely not exceed 2 years.

For people with disabilities, the Research Fellow fellowship is a maximum 3-year fellowship; it may be renewed for a duration which may absolutely not exceed 3 years.

Article 9

Renewal applications are assessed by the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee). Fellowship renewals are allocated by the F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees upon the positive recommendation of the Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee).

⁶ Should the application file be submitted in French, the F.R.S.-FNRS may require the applicant to provide a translation in English for the purpose of conducting the [ex-ante evaluation](#).

The Supervisory Panel (Thesis Advisory Committee) must complete a document which shall be attached to the electronic form for a Renewal application. This document must be duly completed and signed and sent to the research unit (or Board of Education) of the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium in order to be signed by the academic authorities. The latter must send the document by 31st May of the year of the Grants and Fellowships Call concerned at the latest.

When the university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium takes the ultimate decision for the applicant not to further continue doctoral studies and when the Rector notifies the F.R.S.-FNRS in writing, the Research Fellow fellowship will expire at the end of the ongoing fellowship.

Article 10

Doctors who are granted a Research Fellow fellowship shall decide to suspend their complementary Master degree/medical specialisation during the whole duration of the fellowship.

CHAPTER IV: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP HOLDERS

Article 11

Any research project being funded must observe statutory provisions in force governing ethics.

Article 12

Research Fellows are subordinated to the F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees, which acts through its President and General Secretary of the F.R.S.-FNRS. They pledge to respect the rules and regulations in force within the Fund.

They must respect the discipline enforced by the academic authority of the institution where they work and observe its rules and regulations. As Research Fellows of the F.R.S.-FNRS, they are also required to adhere to the regulation on the property, protection and promotion of the results from the research carried out within the institution.

Article 13

Research Fellows shall not take on any teaching position.

They must obtain a doctoral training certificate or get exempted from it in accordance with the Decree of 7th November 2013 and the specific provisions enacted in the doctoral regulations in force within the hosting institution.

Administrative work or tasks relating to didactic supervision within the host institution may be assigned to Research Fellows up to eight hours per week on annual average.

Since the Research Fellow fellowship aims at carrying out an original dissertation to obtain the title of Doctor, Research Fellows shall not take any other exams than qualifying exams as part of their doctoral training and/or any additional training accredited by the relevant academic authority in their hosting institution.

Article 14

Holders of a Research Fellow fellowship may not be part of the scientific or academic staff of a university or an academic institution, and may not receive any remuneration or salary.

However, the F.R.S.-FNRS may upon request authorise them to receive full or part of the allowances that they may be entitled to have to study abroad.

Holders of a Research Fellow fellowship cannot carry out any professional activity nor receive any remuneration.

Article 15

Holders of a Research Fellow fellowship receive an operating credit, which is under the responsibility of their promoter.

That credit can only be allocated if the holder genuinely carries out the fellowship.

Article 16

At the end of each academic year, holders of a Research Fellow fellowship are required to send to the F.R.S.-FNRS a report on the scientific activities they have carried out along the year, first year of Ph.D. excepted. The activities report for the first year of Ph.D. shall be included in the fellowship renewal application. This report is to be uploaded on their personal [e-space](#) page. The holders of a Research Fellow fellowship must also send a copy to the Head of the institution where they carry out their research.

Article 17

Holders of a Research Fellow fellowship shall mention in their publications, papers and reprinted/e-print alike that they have been Research Fellows of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

Article 18

Holders of a Research Fellow fellowship who wish to study or pursue their research abroad must give prior notice to the F.R.S.-FNRS on their personal [e-space](#) page at least 15 days before the actual date of departure.

For any stay, a prior agreement of the promoter must be sent to the F.R.S.-FNRS and uploaded on e-space.

In case of a long-term stay (90 days and more), an agreement of the Head of the institution where the Research Fellow carries out their research must also be submitted to the F.R.S.-FNRS on e-space by the institution.

Article 19

Any change regarding the civil status, the family responsibility, the domicile or residence must be reported by the holder of a Research Fellow fellowship on their personal [e-space](#) page, as soon as possible.

Article 20

Holders of a Research Fellow fellowship shall inform the F.R.S.-FNRS of any temporary interruption or suspension of work as soon as they can and for any reason whatsoever.

Article 21

In case of illness or personal accident, a medical certificate attesting the starting date and the duration or extension of a period of professional incapacity must be submitted to the F.R.S.-FNRS within 48 hours following the beginning of the incapacity period. The promoter shall send a copy of the medical certificate to the relevant department of the institution where the Research Fellow carries out their research.

Article 22

In case of work accident, the administrative staff of the F.R.S.-FNRS must be informed within 24 hours, by phone if necessary. The declaration of accident as well as the medical certificate reporting the accident

must be sent to the Fund. The health department of the institution where the Research Fellow carries out their research must be informed as well.

CHAPTER V: INTERRUPTIONS

Article 23

The Research Fellow fellowship interrupted due to maternity, paternity or adoption leave can be extended for a duration equivalent to the duration of the interruption.

The Research Fellow must request this extension at least a month before the fellowship expires. This extension agreement does not adversely affect the fixed-term nature of the fellowship.

Article 24

The Research Fellow fellowship interrupted due to a prophylactic antenatal leave, prophylactic breastfeeding leave and breastfeeding leave for personal convenience can be extended for a duration equivalent to the duration of the interruption.

The Research Fellow must request this extension at least a month before the fellowship expires. This extension agreement does not adversely affect the fixed-term nature of the fellowship.

This extension will be granted upon reception of a medical certificate.

Prophylactic breastfeeding leave or breastfeeding leave for personal convenience cannot exceed 5 months from the day of the birth.

Article 25

The Research Fellow fellowship interrupted due to parental leave can be extended for a duration equivalent to the duration of the interruption.

A parental leave request must contain a letter from the promoter defining the modalities of the leave (form and period...).

The Research Fellow must request this extension at least a month before the fellowship expires. This extension agreement does not adversely affect the fixed-term nature of the fellowship.

Article 26

For recipients who obtained their fellowship before 2026, the Research Fellow fellowship interrupted for 30 days or more due to illness shall be extended for a period equal to that of the interruption.

For recipients who obtained their fellowship from 2026 on, the Research Fellow fellowship interrupted for 30 days or more due to illness shall be extended for a period equal to that of the interruption. The 30 first days of the interruption, which are paid by the F.R.S.-FNRS, are not included in the extension of the fellowship.

This extension will be granted upon receipt of a medical certificate justifying the work incapacity for a period greater than 30 days.

The extension of the Research Fellow fellowship will be effective when the researcher returns to work, by signing a formal contract amendment stating the new ending date of the fellowship. The researcher will be required to send it to the F.R.S.-FNRS for approval.

CHAPTER VI: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 27

Financial and social provisions are governed by specific rules and regulations.

CHAPTER VII: FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 28

Holders of a Research Fellow fellowship may terminate their fellowship agreement at any time. They shall give a written notice of their decision to the F.R.S.-FNRS, their promoter and the Head of the institution where they have carried out their research programme.

Article 29

Only holders of a Research Fellow fellowship whose disability has been recognized by the General Management for People with disabilities ("Direction Générale Personnes handicapées"), at the Social Security service, part of the Federal Public Service, can request the adjustments allowed by article 1.

APPENDIX 1

Relevant institutions for the co-promoter

ASP instrument

Grants and Fellowships Call

Institutions de rattachement co-promoteur·rice / Attached institutions for the co-promoter

Instrument Aspirant·e / Research Fellow Fellowship

(ASP)

<p>Co-promoteur·rice d'une université CFB / Co-promoter of a CFB university</p>	<p>➤ Universités de la Communauté française de Belgique (CFB) Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)</p> <p>Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain) Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) Université de Liège (ULiège) Université de Mons (UMons) Université de Namur (UNamur)</p>
<p>Co-promoteur·rice (de régime linguistique francophone) attaché·e à l'une de ces institutions / French speaking co-promoter attached to one of these institutions</p>	<p>➤ École royale militaire (E.R.M.)</p> <p>➤ Établissements scientifiques fédéraux State Scientific Institutions</p> <p>Archives de l'État (AE) Institut d'Aéronomie spatiale de Belgique (I.A.S.) Institut royal météorologique de Belgique (I.R.M.) Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique (I.R.P.A.) Institut royal des Sciences naturelles de Belgique (I.R.S.N.B.) KBR (Bibliothèque royale de Belgique) Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale (M.R.A.C.) Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (M.R.A.H.) Musées royaux des Beaux-arts de Belgique (M.R.B.A.B.) Observatoire royal de Belgique (O.R.B.)</p> <p>➤ Centre d'Étude de l'énergie Nucléaire (SCK-CEN) ➤ Centre wallon de Recherches agronomiques (CRA-W) ➤ LABIRIS ➤ Agence Jardin botanique de Meise ➤ Musée royal de Mariemont ➤ Sciensano</p>