

RULES AND REGULATIONS

RESEARCH FELLOW FELLOWSHIP (ASP - ASPIRANT)

ADOPTED BY

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

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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) fellowship of the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS (F.R.S.-FNRS).

The granting of Research Fellow fellowships is intended for the completion of the Ph.D. within 4 years.

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 shall meet the following conditions altogether:

- To be permanently appointed 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 fixed 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 the 1st of October at the latest, the year of the Grants and Fellowships Call concerned.

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

The promoter permanently appointed who will access pension / become professor emeritus by the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) is not eligible.

CHAPTER II: CANDIDACY

Article 3

The Research Fellow fellowship is open to holders of:

- 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, German-speaking Community or from the Royal Military Academy.
- 3° 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° and 2°, 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 fixed for the academic authorities (rectors).

Applicants who hold a degree as referred to in paragraph 1, 3° are required to provide a registration document or a certificate that enables the admission to doctoral programmes issued by the university within the French-speaking Community of Belgium where the studies will be carried out and a certificate of achievement or a copy of the diploma in question. Both documents must be enclosed in the application file at the latest by the validation deadline fixed 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° and 2° of this Rules and Regulations may also submit their application in accordance with Article 6, paragraph 2, 1°, of the Decree of 17th July 2013 concerning the funding of research by the National Fund for Scientific Research. A certificate of registration to the final year of Master degree must be attached to the application at the latest by the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors).

Article 5

Applicants to a Research Fellow fellowship must have obtained an academic degree or diploma 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 training¹). This term shall expire at the latest on the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) to validate applications.

The maximum duration set in paragraph 1 is extended for one additional year per childbirth and/or adoption occurring after obtaining the academic degree or diploma considered when deciding to grant the fellowship.

Article 6

No applicant may apply more than three times for a Research Fellow fellowship.

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

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.

¹ 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).

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.

Applicants to a Research Fellow (ASP) fellowship are able to submit their application either in French or in English and online only through SEMAPHORE, the management platform of the calls for proposals, available at the following address: <https://applications.frs-fnrs.be>.

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) domains, as well as the Scientific Commission SHS-2, to submit their application in English².

The F.R.S.-FNRS will give applicants to a Research Fellow Renewal (ASP-REN) fellowship access to the electronic form on the [SEMAPHORE](#) application.

All applications (ASP and ASP-REN) are submitted to a procedure including three successive electronic validations on the dates which will be indicated when the call for proposals is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website:

- a. The validation by the applicant: it accounts as a confirmation that the application file is complete.
- b. The validation by the promoter selected pursuant to article 2: the F.R.S.-FNRS transfers the application file to promoters so that they give their approval for the submitted research project and confirm the accuracy of data provided by the applicant. The promoter may accept or refuse the application.
- c. The validation by the research unit (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 fixed 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.

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

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

² 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](#).

Article 9

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

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 to the F.R.S.-FNRS by 31st May of the year the application is submitted.

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 Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS, which acts through its President and General Secretary. 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 submitted on [SEMAPHORE](#). They must also send a copy of their report to the Head of the institution where they conduct 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 at least 15 days before the actual date of departure.

For any stay, a prior written agreement of the promoter must be sent to the F.R.S.-FNRS.

In case of a long-term stay (90 days or more), a prior written agreement of the Head of the institution where the Research Fellow carries out her/his research must also be sent to the F.R.S.-FNRS.

Article 19

Any change regarding the civil status, the family responsibility, the domicile or residence must be reported online as soon as possible on E-Space, the personal data acquisition system, available at the following address <https://e-space.frs-fnrs.be/>.

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 her/his 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 her/his research must be informed as well.

CHAPTER V: INTERRUPTIONS

Article 23

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

The extension request must be reported at least one 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 for a period of one month or more due to illness shall be extended over a period equal to the period of interruption.

Extension will be granted upon receipt of a medical certificate justifying the work incapacity for a period of one month or more.

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 25

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

CHAPTER VII: FINAL PROVISION

Article 26

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.

APPENDIX 1

Relevant institutions for the co-promoter

ASP instrument

Grants and Fellowships Call

Institutions de rattachement co-promoteur / Attached institutions for the co-promoter
Instrument Aspirant / Research Fellow Fellowship
 (ASP)

<p>Co-promoteur 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 (UCL) Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) Université de Liège (ULiège) Université de Mons (UMons) Université de Namur (UNamur) Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles (USL-B)</p>
<p>Co-promoteur (de régime linguistique francophone) attaché à l'une des institutions / French speaking co-promoter attached to one of these institutions</p>	<p>➤ Ecole royale militaire (E.R.M.)</p> <p>➤ Etablissements scientifiques fédéraux State Scientific Institutions</p> <p>Archives de l'Etat (AE) Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique (B.R.B.) 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.) 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) ➤ Institut de Recherches Microbiologiques Jean-Marie Wiame (I.R.M.W.) ➤ Jardin Botanique Meise (J.B.M. – Jardin Botanique National de Belgique) ➤ Musée royal de Mariemont ➤ Sciensano</p>