

RULES AND REGULATIONS

**OPEN-ENDED FELLOWSHIPS: RESEARCH ASSOCIATE
(CQ - CHERCHEUR QUALIFIÉ), SENIOR RESEARCH
ASSOCIATE (MR - MAÎTRE DE RECHERCHES),
RESEARCH DIRECTOR (DR - DIRECTEUR DE
RECHERCHES)**

**ADOPTED BY
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE F.R.S.-FNRS
ON 7TH DECEMBER 2021**

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CHAPTER I: SCOPE AND SCIENTIFIC CAREER

Article 1

The rules and regulations hereinafter are only applicable to holders of Research Associate (CQ - Chercheur qualifié), Senior Research Associate (MR - Maître de recherches) and Research Director (DR - Directeur de recherches) fellowships of the Fund for Scientific Research - FNRS (F.R.S.-FNRS) within a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium.

Article 2

The open-ended fellowship includes three positions:

- The Research Associate fellowship (CQ);
- The Senior Research Associate fellowship (MR);
- The Research Director fellowship (DR).

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

Article 3

No applicants may apply for a fellowship if they already have benefited from it.

Article 4

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

Concerning the nominations for a Research Associate fellowship, the Board of Trustees of the F.R.S.-FNRS shall consider the availabilities of permanent positions assigned to the universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium listed in Appendix 1.

CHAPTER II: APPLICATION

II- A: RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

Article 5

Applicants to a Research Associate fellowship must have obtained the academic degree of Doctor after the defence of a thesis and issued by an academic institution.

A copy of the PhD diploma must be enclosed in the application file or sent to the F.R.S.-FNRS by the time of the validation deadline set for the academic authorities (rectors) at the latest.

Article 6

Applicants to a Research Associate fellowship must have obtained the academic degree as referred to in article 5 for maximum 10 years. This term shall expire at the latest on the validation deadline fixed for the academic authorities (rectors) to validate applications.

The maximum period of time set in paragraph 1 is extended for one additional year per childbirth and/or adoption.

Article 7

The promoter of an applicant to a Research Associate fellowship must meet the following conditions altogether:

- Be permanently appointed¹ to an academic or scientific position or on probation in a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium listed in Appendix 1.
- 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.

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.

Article 8

Applicants to a Research Associate fellowship may not apply more than three times.

Article 9

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

The application for a Research Associate (CQ) 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.

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 English².

All applications 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 application file is complete.
- b. The validation by the promoter selected pursuant to article 7: 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 the data provided by the applicant. 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, the Authority 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.

¹ Does not include logisticians.

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](#).

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.

II- B: PROMOTION

Article 10

Holders of a F.R.S.-FNRS Research Associate fellowship may seek promotion to the title of Senior Research Associate as from the beginning of the 8th academic year following their appointment, provided that they have been carrying out a fundamental research activity for those years.

The promotion to the title of Senior Research Associate may not be sought more than three times over a period of nine years.

Article 11

Senior Research Associates who genuinely carry out the fellowship may seek promotion to the title of Research Director as from the beginning of the 4th year of the Senior Research Associate fellowship.

The promotion to the title of Research Director may not be sought more than three times over a period of nine years.

Article 12

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

The application for a Senior Research Associate (MR) or Research Director (DR) fellowships 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.

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 English³.

All applications (MR and DR) are submitted to a procedure including two 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 application file is complete.
- b. The validation by the research administration (or Board of Education) of a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium, to which the application file is transferred following the validation by the applicant. 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.

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

³ *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](#).*

CHAPTER III: NATURE AND ALLOCATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Article 13

The allocation of a Research Associate fellowship leads to an open-ended contract between the F.R.S.-FNRS and the fellowship holder.

Article 14

As from their appointment, the Research Associate is independent from the promoter who carried their application. They may carry their research, use their funding and submit applications on their own.

The Research Associate and Senior Research Associate are not required to have a promoter for their promotion applications.

CHAPTER IV: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP HOLDERS

Article 15

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

Article 16

Holders of an open-ended fellowship 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 researchers 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 17

Holders of an open-ended fellowship must conduct their research projects in a university of the French-speaking Community of Belgium.

Holders of an open-ended fellowship may request authorisation to conduct their research in another institution which would not be provided by paragraph 1.

The request is admissible only upon authorisation of the academic authorities of the institution where they work and the academic authorities of the institution where they wish to conduct their research.

Article 18

Holders of an open-ended fellowship may seek authorisation from the F.R.S.-FNRS to change the object of their research.

Article 19

Holders of an open-ended fellowship may substitute teaching tasks for their administrative or supervising practical session tasks. However, the time devoted to those tasks cannot exceed three hours per week (90 hours per year) for holders of a Research Associate fellowship and more than four hours per week (120 hours per year) for holders of Senior Research Associate or Research Director fellowships.

In this case, the F.R.S.-FNRS may allow them to accept remuneration for teaching providing that the amount of that remuneration and the remuneration received from the Fund does not exceed the salary of a university lecturer and, in case of a Research Director, the salary of a professor. They can bear the title related to their teaching activities.

If the Head of the institution where they conduct their research allows it, they can supervise doctoral theses.

With the Rector and the Fund's approval, they may accept remunerated teaching duties performed outside the French-speaking Community of Belgium or expert work closely related to their scientific work and, should the workload not exceed half a day per week.

Article 20

Except for the provisions in article 19, holders of an open-ended 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 for research stays abroad.

Article 21

Holders of a Research Associate fellowship receive an operating credit during the first three years of their fellowship.

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

Article 22

At the end of each academic year, holders of an open-ended fellowship are required to send to the F.R.S.-FNRS a report on the scientific activities they have carried out along the year. Every five years, this annual report shall be replaced by a five-year report. This report is to be uploaded on their personal [e-space](#) page. Holders of an open-ended fellowship must also send a copy of those reports to the Head of the institution where they conduct their research.

The document relating to the evaluation procedure is available on the website https://www.frs-fnrs.be/docs/Reglement-et-documents/FRS-FNRS_Procedure_evaluation_quinquennale_CQ_MR_DR.pdf.

Article 23

Fellowship holders shall mention in their publications, papers and reprinted/e-print alike that they have been Research Associate, Senior Research Associate or Research Director of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

Article 24

With the approval of the Head of the institution where they conduct their research, holders of an open-ended fellowship may request a one-year leave or their working time to be reduced to 75% or 50% for one year, with their salary reduced accordingly. They must also justify their request.

The authorisation to take such a leave or to benefit from such a reduction of work with reduction of salary can only be renewable once.

Periods of unpaid leave or reduction of work with reduction of salary can be taken under the conditions mentioned above providing that the overall period (leave and/or reduction) does not exceed a duration of two years calculated upon the career.

If the unpaid leave is requested in order to exercise a political mandate following national, regional or European elections, or in case of full involvement in a minister (cabinet ministériel), its duration can exceptionally be extended to the duration of this political mandate.

In this case, the researcher must provide the F.R.S.-FNRS with proof of the existence of this mandate.

Overall periods of leave for political reasons may not exceed the duration of a political mandate for the entire career and must be limited, in any event, to 6 years in total.

Article 25

Holders of an open-ended fellowship are allowed to charge a maximum of 50% of their working time on projects coming under one of the following categories:

- a) any program depending on the European Union (mainly, the European Union framework programmes for research and innovation);
- b) any program supporting participation to project of the European framework program;
- c) on favourable opinion of F.R.S.-FNRS beforehand, another European or international program. In this case, the fellowship holder will have to submit a specific motivated request to F.R.S.-FNRS via their university's administration;

and provided university made sure of the eligibility of staff costs of fellowship holder by the involved funder.

The 50% charging limit affects all of a fellowship holder's projects, including ERC projects (although the fellowship holder is allowed to dedicate more than 50% of their time).

In accordance with an agreement signed between the F.R.S.-FNRS and the universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium, each university shall commit to transferring annually to the F.R.S.-FNRS the list of its researchers whose salaries are declared in programs mentioned at paragraph 1, as well as the amounts justified.

Those amounts refunded by the funder will then be available to researchers through the activation of a credit line opened by the university to cover science-related expenses.

The researchers involved are invited to contact the research department of the university where they perform their research.

Article 26

Holders of an open-ended 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.

In case of a long-term stay (90 days and more), an agreement of the Head of the institution where the holder of an open-ended fellowship must also be submitted to the F.R.S.-FNRS on e-space by the institution.

Article 27

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

Article 28

Holders of an open-ended 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 29

In case of illness or personal accident, a medical certificate attesting the starting date and the duration or extension of a period of incapacity for work must be submitted to the F.R.S.-FNRS within 48 hours following the beginning of the period; a copy must be sent to the relevant department of the institution where the fellowship holder carries out their research.

Article 30

In case of work accident, the F.R.S.-FNRS staff department must be informed within 24 hours, by phone if necessary. The declaration of accident as well as the medical certificate establishing the accident must be sent to the Fund. The health department of the institution where the fellowship holder carries out their research must be informed as well.

CHAPTER V: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 31

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

CHAPTER VI: FINAL PROVISION

Article 32

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

APPENDIX 1

Attached institutions

Instruments CQ/MR/DR

Grants and Fellowships Call

Instruments CQ/MR/DR

➤ **Universités de la Communauté française de Belgique (CFB)**
Universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium (CFB)

Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain)

Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)

Université de Liège (ULiège)

Université de Mons (UMons)

Université de Namur (UNamur)

Université Saint-Louis - Bruxelles (USL-B)