

RULES AND REGULATIONS

OPEN-ENDED FELLOWSHIPS: RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

(CQ – CHERCHEUR EUSE QUALIFIÉ E), SENIOR

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE (MR - MAÎTRE DE

RECHERCHES), RESEARCH DIRECTOR (DR –

DIRECTEUR RICE DE RECHERCHES)

ADOPTED BY

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

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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·euse qualifié·e), Senior Research Associate (MR - Maître de recherches) and Research Director (DR – Directeur·rice 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 F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees shall decide on the allocation of the fellowships.

Concerning the nominations for a Research Associate fellowship, the F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees 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 (CQ)

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 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

- 12 months per child for whom the applicant is a parent¹ (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 parents², 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 7

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

- Be permanently appointed³ 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.

Only one 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 English⁴.

¹ In case of multiple pregnancy, the non-birthing parent will have their eligibility extension capped at 12 months.

² In the case of fostering siblings, the concerned parent will have their eligibility extension capped at 12 months.

³ Does not include logisticians.

⁴ 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](#).

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 applicant has submitted an application.
- b. The validation by the promoter selected pursuant to article 7: 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.

II- B: PROMOTION (MR AND DR)

Article 10

Holders of a 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.

At the date of validation of their application on [e-space](#), an applicant seeking promotion to the title of Research Director must have successfully completed the supervision of at least one doctoral thesis that has been publicly defended.

Article 12

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 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 English⁵.

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 applicant has submitted an application.
- 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.

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: NATURE AND ALLOCATION OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Article 13

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

For researchers from outside of the European Economic Area, the permanent fellowship can only be awarded if the F.R.S.-FNRS obtains a single permit for the researcher (unless they have been granted an exemption).

In the event of an administrative delay in the single permit application, it will be possible to postpone the start date of the fellowship for up to 6 months from the date of the granting decision.

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.

⁵ 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 16

Holders of an open-ended fellowship are subordinated to the F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees, 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 four hours per week (120 hours per year) for holders of Senior Research Associate or Research Director fellowships. In this case, they may be authorised by the F.R.S.-FNRS to accept remuneration for this teaching and bear the title attached to their teaching duties.

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

With the agreement of the Rector and the Fund, they may accept teaching duties outside the French-speaking Community of Belgium or paid expert work closely related to their scientific work, provided that the workload does 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 authorises them to receive all or part of any allowances granted to them to study abroad or for their contribution in obtaining funding for high-level research activities under a European (e.g. ERC) or international programme.

Article 21

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

After these 3 years, holders of a Research Associate, Senior Research Associate and Research Director fellowship will receive an operating credit of € 3.000-, automatically renewed every 3 years.

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_Procédure_évaluation_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 (unpaid 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 renewed 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 carry out scientific research outside the researcher's university (in a research centre or in another university), the period of unpaid leave may be extended to a maximum of 6 years over the entire career. This scientific research activity must fall within the scope of the present regulations and comply with them.

If the unpaid leave is requested in order to exercise a political mandate following local, national, regional or European elections, or in case of full involvement in a ministerial cabinet (cabinet ministériel), the duration of the leave can exceptionally be extended to the duration of this political mandate, without however exceeding a maximum duration of 6 years over the entire career.

In this case, the researcher must provide the F.R.S.-FNRS with proof of the existence of this scientific research activity or political mandate.

It should be noted that, over an entire career, periods of suspension or reduction of benefits may never exceed a maximum of 2 years, or 6 years, in the case of suspension for scientific research or political mandate.

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 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.

Article 31

Holders of an open-ended fellowship shall inform the F.R.S.-FNRS of any temporary interruption of work for a prophylactic antenatal leave, prophylactic breastfeeding leave and breastfeeding leave for personal convenience. They must provide a medical certificate justifying this interruption.

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

CHAPTER V: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 32

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

CHAPTER VI: FINAL PROVISION

Article 33

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)