RULES AND REGULATIONS

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER FELLOWSHIP (CR - CHARGÉ DE RECHERCHES)

ADOPTED BY

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

ON 23RD APRIL 2024

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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 Postdoctoral Researcher (CR-Chargé de recherches) fellowship of the Fund for Scientific Research – FNRS (F.R.S.-FNRS).

CR 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 Postdoctoral Researcher (CR-Chargé de recherches) fellowship shall carry out a Postdoctoral-level research work 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 appointed\(^1\) 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 1\(^{st}\) October of the year of the Grants and Fellowships Call concerned at the latest.

If the promoter of a CR 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 1\(^{st}\) October of the year of the Grants and Fellowships Call concerned at the latest, may be promoter of a CR applicant.

CHAPTER II: APPLICATION

Article 3
Applicants to a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship must have obtained the academic degree of Doctor after the defence of a thesis and issued by an academic institution at the latest by 1\(^{st}\) May of the year during which the application is submitted.

\(^{1}\) Does not include logisticians.
A copy of the PhD diploma, or a certificate of achievement if you have not been delivered your diploma yet, must be enclosed in the application file or sent to the F.R.S.-FNRS by 1st May the year when the application is submitted at the latest.

**Article 4**

Applicants to a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship must have obtained the academic degree as referred to in Article 3 for maximum 5 years. This term shall expire at the latest on the validation deadline set 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 5**

No applicant may apply more than three times for the same fellowship. Applicants who have already benefited from a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship, regardless of the duration, may not apply either.

**Article 6**

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 Postdoctoral Researcher (CR) 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 English.

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 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 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,** 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.

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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.
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 7
The F.R.S.-FNRS Board of Trustees shall decide on the allocation of Postdoctoral Researcher fellowships.

Article 8
The allocation of a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship leads to a full-time employment contract between the F.R.S.-FNRS and the fellowship holder for a fixed term of three years.

For researchers from outside of the European Economic Area, the Postdoctoral Researcher 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 of the fellowship for up to 6 months from the date of the granting decision.

Holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship may use the 3 years of their fellowship over a period of 6 years if external funding is obtained in order to carry out postdoctoral research outside the French-speaking Community of Belgium.

CHAPTER IV: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP HOLDERS

Article 9
Any research project being funded must observe statutory provisions in force governing ethics.

Article 10
Postdoctoral Researchers 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 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 11
Postdoctoral Researchers may not change the object of their research without the F.R.S.-FNRS authorisation.

Article 12
Postdoctoral Researchers may attend classes, supervise practical sessions or perform administrative tasks; however, they cannot devote more than eight hours per week to those activities. One hour dedicated to supervising practical sessions is equivalent to two hours dedicated to performing administrative tasks or two hours dedicated to attending classes.

Within the specified time frame of eight hours, they can also perform teaching tasks, which may not exceed two hours per week (60 hours per year). In this case, the F.R.S.-FNRS allows them to accept remuneration related to their teaching position. They can bear the title related to their teaching activities.
Article 13
Except for the provisions in Article 12, holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher 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 14
In order to encourage the participation of researchers from universities of the French-speaking Community of Belgium in ERC calls, by way of derogation from Article 2, the holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship (CR - Chargé de recherches) who obtain an ERC Starting Grant (or ERC Consolidator Grant) can keep their CR fellowship until its full term and devote it either entirely or partially to their ERC project. The institution in which the research is carried out is responsible for making the necessary arrangements to ensure that the CR fellowship holder benefits from the conditions required by the ERC in terms of scientific independence, in compliance with Article 13. If such an ERC Grant is awarded, the CR fellowship holders must inform the F.R.S.-FNRS as soon as possible.

CR fellowship holders who devote their entire fellowship to an ERC project lose de facto the benefit of Article 12.

This derogation is only valid for beneficiaries of an ERC Starting Grant or ERC Consolidator Grant.

Article 15
Holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship receive an operating credit.

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 Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship are required to send to the F.R.S.-FNRS a report on the scientific activities they have carried out along the year. This report is to be uploaded on their personal e-space page. The holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship must also send a copy to the Head of the institution where they carry out their research.

Article 17
Holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship shall mention in their publications, papers and reprinted/e-print alike that they have been Postdoctoral Researchers of the F.R.S.-FNRS.

Article 18
Holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher 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 Postdoctoral Researcher 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 Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship on their personal e-space page, as soon as possible.

Article 20
Holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher 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 Postdoctoral Researcher 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 Postdoctoral Researcher carries out their research must be informed as well.

CHAPTER V: INTERRUPTIONS

Article 23
The Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship interrupted due to maternity, paternity or adoption leave can be extended for a duration equivalent to the duration of the interruption.

The Postdoctoral Researcher must request this extension at least a month before the fellowship expires. For researchers who are required to hold a single permit, this extension must be requested at least 3 months before the fellowship expires. The granting of this extension does not adversely affect the fixed-term nature of the fellowship.

Article 24
The Postdoctoral Researcher 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 Postdoctoral Researcher must request this extension at least a month before the fellowship expires. For researchers who are required to hold a single permit, this extension must be requested at least 3 months 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 Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship interrupted interrupted for one month or more due to illness shall be extended for a period equal to that of the interruption.
This extension will be granted upon receipt of a medical certificate justifying the work incapacity for a period equal to or greater than one month.

The extension of the Postdoctoral Researcher 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.

For researchers requiring a single permit, it will not be possible to grant an extension if the work incapacity is to end within the 3 months prior to the expiration of the fellowship.

Article 26
Should a single permit not be issued within the allotted time in the event of an extension of the period of employment, the said extension will not be granted. However, a new employment contract may be drawn up. It is conditioned by the obtention of a single permit, for the duration of the extension, provided that it is for a minimum of 30 days.

CHAPTER VI: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 27
Financial and social provisions are governed by specific rules and regulations.

CHAPTER VII: FINAL PROVISION

Article 28
Holders of a Postdoctoral Researcher 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

CR instrument

Grants and Fellowships Call
Institutions de rattachement co-promoteur / Attached institutions for the co-promoter
Instrument Chargé de recherches / Postdoctoral Researcher Fellowship (CR)

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