



UCLouvain



An Academic Career in Belgium (April 2022)

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The 'Belgian' academia

- Belgian higher education is managed by two main language communities
- There are in fact two job markets : the Dutch-speaking one and the French-speaking one
- Relatively scarce job markets, makes it easy to map
 - Dutch-speaking Universities : KULeuven (Leuven), UA (Antwerp), UGent (Gent), VUB (Brussels)
 - French-speaking Universities : 3 major/complete Universities: UCLouvain (Louvain-La-Neuve), ULiège (Liège) and ULB (Brussels) and 3 smaller Universities: UNamur (Namur), Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles and UMons
 - Other institutions : The College of Europe (Brugges), ICHEC (Brussels), Solvay Business School (Brussels)

The 'Belgian' academia : Academic positions

- Three steps in the career (e.g. UCLouvain) : Assistant Professor (tenure after 4 years), Associate Professor (+8 years), Full Professor (+12 years)
 - Teaching load (e.g. UCLouvain) : 90h/year for the first 4 years (before tenure – 3 courses) then maximum 150h/year (5 courses)
 - Typical requirements : Strong research track ; **Teaching experience** ; Skills to attract fundings ; Impact ; Networks
- ⇒ Very rare to have all this without any previous postdoctoral experience
- Vacancies can be at any time (decided by each institution). There is however a common/classical calendar

ACADEMIC RECRUITMENT | CALENDAR 2021-2022

Early October	Academic vacancies posted online
Monday 15 November at 12.00 am (Brussels time) <i>1st selection by the selection committees</i>	<p>Deadline for applications (NB: the recommendation letters can be sent until Friday November 26th at 11.59 am)</p> <p>Each selection committee establishes a pre-selection (short-lists), then interviews the shortlisted candidates (lesson, seminar) and then finalizes its report including a ranking of the "best candidates for the position"</p>
March & April 2022	<p>Interview of candidates by the Rectoral Council – The candidates ranked 1st by the selection committee will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- invited by the Human Resource Administration for an online test & an interview concerning their profile & motivation;- asked to take an oral test to determine their level in French or English;- interviewed by the Rectoral Council in the presence of the dean and institute head.
UCLouvain's Board of Director of April, May & June	Decisions of nominations

The 'Belgian' academia : Research Associate (Permanent research position)

- This position **exists only in the French-speaking Universities**
- No teaching load but it is common to teach around 30h/year but you are appointed as a Professor (e.g. UCLouvain).
- Conditions:
 - *Applicants to a Research Associate fellowship must have obtained their academic degree for maximum 10 years, extended for one additional year per childbirth and/or adoption.*
 - *Call is opened once a year and is published on the F.R.S.-FNRS website (around December) / Submission deadline in 2022: Thursday 20th January*
 - *Applicants may not apply more than three times*
 - *Applications can be submitted in French or in English*
 - 3 steps in the career : Research Associate; Senior Research Associate (+8 years); Research Director (+12 years).
- Very attractive positions and therefore very competitive as well.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE	<p>Quality of the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ number and quality of the publications (journals, citations, etc.) ➤ opinion of worldwide renowned referees (creativity, international influence, ability to develop a team, independency, etc.) ➤ project funding and grants obtained ➤ awards 	40%
	<p>Quality of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ feasibility ➤ methodology ➤ originality ➤ potential impact 	25%
	Research environment	10%
	<p>Potential / International recognition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ long stays abroad⁷ ➤ invitations to international conferences ➤ active collaborations, participation in networks 	25%

Chercheurs qualifiés

Chercheurs qualifiés : désignations en 2020					
	# demandes	# octrois	% de réussite	# femmes	# hommes
Sciences exactes et naturelles	56	6	11%	0	6
Sciences humaines et sociales	46	5	11%	1	4
Sciences de la vie et de la santé	24	4	17%	4	0
Foresight	3	0	0%	0	0
Total	129	15	12%	5	10

The 'Belgian' academia : postdoctoral positions

- Postdoctoral positions are attractive in Belgium
- 3-years fellowships to realize **your own research**
- In Flanders, the FWO proposes two types of fellowships :
 - Junior postdoctoral fellowship : *if your PhD was obtained not longer than 3 years before October, 1 of the year in which the fellowship would start, or will be obtained at Jun 1 of that year at the latest.*
 - Senior postdoctoral fellowship : *if your PhD degree, with as reference point the date mentioned on the PhD degree, was awarded minimum three years and maximum six years before the first of October of the year in which the fellowship commences.*
 - Call : September/October (beginning of the fellowship next October)
 - Submission deadline: December 1, 2021
 - Applicants may not apply more than three times

The 'Belgian' academia : postdoctoral positions

- In the French-speaking part, the FNRS offers 3 years postdoctoral fellowships :
 - Conditions : *Applicants to a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship must have obtained the academic degree of Doctor at the latest by 1st May of the year during which the application is submitted. Applicants to a Postdoctoral Researcher fellowship must have obtained the academic degree for maximum 5 years. The maximum period of time set in paragraph 1 is extended for one additional year per childbirth and/or adoption.*
 - Call : December (beginning of the fellowship next October)
 - Submission deadline in 2022: Thursday 20th January
 - Applicants may not apply more than three times

The 'Belgian' academia : postdoctoral positions

- You are applying in a specific institution with a promoter
- The requirements are only about research

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER	Quality of the applicant: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ number and quality of the publications (journals, citations, etc.)➤ promoter's opinion (creativity, intellectual abilities, independency, etc.)➤ awards	40%
	Quality of the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ feasibility➤ methodology➤ originality➤ potential impact	40%
	Research environment	20%

But the promoter's opinion and the choice of institution matter ...

Post-doctorants

Nouvelles désignations de postdoctorants en 2020					
	# demandes	# octrois	% de réussite	# femmes	# hommes
Postdoctorants					
Chargés de recherches	474	107	23%	43	64
Collaborateurs scientifiques	NA	13	NA	9	4
Postdoctorants TLV	20	6	30%	NA	NA
Spécialistes postdoctorants (SPD)	12	4	33%	3	1
Total	506	130	NA	55	69

The 'Belgian' academia : postdoctoral positions

- Many other fellowships exist ...

- Marie Curie
- University's fellowships
- Regional level fellowships (e.g. WBI)

⇒ Get in touch with a potential promotor !

- Fellowship (e.g. UCLouvain): from +/- 2.600 € (PhD + 0) to +/- 2.750 € (PhD + 5 years) – net + public transport costs reimbursed.
- No teaching duties but opportunities of teaching exist.



Where to find positions ?

- Universities' websites
- Jobs & Funding | EURAXESS (europa.eu)
- FWO and FNRS websites for respectively postdoctoral grants and postdoctoral grants and permanent positions
 - FWO : <https://www.fwo.be/en/>
 - FNRS : <https://www.frs-fnrs.be/en>
- 2 Professional associations :
 - NL: Belgian Vereniging voor Politieke Wetenschappen
<https://www.politicologie.be/en/welkom/>
 - FR: Association belge francophone de science politique
<https://www.absp.be/>

The 'Belgian' academia: practicalities

- Generally, well functioning; dynamic, intellectually rich and open environment; less hierarchical than in some other EU countries ; good research funding
- ... But mass education and diversity remain important issues.
- Belgium is a small country ... which means that what ever University you are hired by, you have the possibility to live in Brussels (Leuven: 30 minutes; Louvain-La-Neuve, 40 minutes ; Antwerp 40 minutes; Namur and Liège 1h) even if of course other cities are nice to live in as well 😊
- Language : two to three years to learn French (UCLouvain)
- Salary : net is net (withholding tax) ; depends on the Region, your seniority, your status ... but begins at +/- 3.000€ (e.g. UCLouvain)

The 'Belgian' academia: points of attention for your application

- *For postdoctoral positions* : you need a promotor/supervisor for your grant application. Don't wait the call to be out to reach out to potential colleagues who could support your application.
- *For academic positions* : experience in teaching is an important criteria, in some institutions as important as research. Have some ...
- *For permanent research positions (FNRS)* : the final call is in the hands of the University board of the institution with which you have applied – you need to be ranked but then ... it is a 'political' or 'strategic' decision. You need support in the institution and/or very strong arguments in your favor (e.g. ERC Stg)
- *For any position*: Belgian is a small market, almost everyone knows each other. Very important as an external to be curious about the institution you are applying to, to discover Belgian scholars' work etc.

**Let's answer your
questions !**