2020/2021 CALL FOR JOINT PHD PROJECTS

KU LEUVEN AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

The University of Melbourne (UoM) and KU Leuven seek to support research collaboration and the development of globally-engaged researchers by establishing an international team of project supervisors for jointly awarded PhDs. The international team of principal investigators (PIs) will apply for a research project on which to train young researchers who will gain international research experience. PhD candidates engaged in the project will be enrolled at both institutions. The research work will be performed under joint supervision and will be judged according to academic standards of both institutions. At the end of the program, each PhD candidate will be eligible to receive a PhD, recognized by two testamurs, one from UoM and one from KU Leuven, stating the joint nature of the award and name of the partner institution.

In 2020, UoM and KU Leuven are calling for project proposals to establish up to 10 joint graduate research projects across five separate pairs of PIs. Each of these five PI pairs will access funding for two joint PhD candidates, including tuition fee waivers, a full living allowance, health insurance and relocation support.

SUPERVISORY TEAM ELIGIBILITY

The Supervisory team must comprise of at least two principal investigators, one at KU Leuven and one at the University of Melbourne, both with capacity to supervise jointly enrolled PhD candidates.

PIs at UoM must be registered to supervise as per the Supervisor Eligibility and Registration Policy. For more information, including forms for supervisor registration, please consult the information for supervisors section on the Graduate Research Hub. Honorary employees whose primary academic affiliation is the University of Melbourne are eligible to lead the application if:

a) they are eligible to be a primary supervisor at the University of Melbourne; AND
b) if their primary employer has entered into an agreement to fund the Melbourne cash support component of the collaborative activity; or may participate at their own expense if they are otherwise unaffiliated (for example, they hold an emeritus position).

The PIs on KU Leuven side must meet the requirements of the General regulations and conditions Internal Funds. The KU Leuven PI and main applicant will also become the ‘promoter’ of the doctorate at KU Leuven.

Additional colleagues (including other partners in Australia, Belgium or internationally) are not eligible to apply as primary supervisors, although they can participate in co-supervision of joint PhDs.

Applications that do not satisfy these criteria will not be eligible.
PROJECTS

- If selected, joint PhD projects will be advertised online from late September 2020.
- Joint PhD candidates, i.e. work on a project, will start in 2021.
- Each pair of PIs should submit two PhD projects. There should not be any interdependence between these two projects.
- Up to 10 PhD projects (across five collaborative research groups) will be supported in this first cohort of joint PhDs.

PROJECT PROPOSALS

- Must be led by at least one PI/primary supervisor from each institution.
- Joint PhD projects should be designed to be completed in 3.5 years, with possibility to extend to a maximum of 4 years for PhD submission.

Proposal includes (please consult the application form for more details):

- Names of PIs/research groups involved and any evidence of previous collaboration (if applicable).
- Attached CVs of the applicants. Links to the PIs’ websites (Important! Candidates should be able to inform themselves before applying).
- Brief description of the two PhD projects:
  - indicating which University will be the “Home Institution” for the project, i.e. normally the university where the majority of time will be spent by that candidate, and where they will begin and conclude their PhD.
  - an indicative plan for where and when the different parts of the research will take place at each institution and a description of the guidance of the students.
- A motivation letter of the PI’s about the added value of the co-operation, a formal statement that the PI’s will put everything in place for the PhD student to be able to finalise the doctoral dissertation within a maximum period of 4 years.

FUNDING, DURATION AND RESIDENCE

Up to a total of ten (10) PhD scholarships will be awarded across five separate pairs of PIs. Joint PhD projects should be designed to be completed in 3.5 years, with possibility to extend to a maximum of 4 years for PhD submission.

In this joint PhD arrangement, the Home Institution will fund 2-3 years and the Host Institution will fund 1-2 years of candidature, up to a maximum of 4 years funding in total, prior to PhD submission.

The individual Graduate researcher shall reside in the research team of the funding Institution at the time of funding by that Institution. Both Institutions will undertake, for compliance purposes (social security, tax and other legislation), the necessary efforts so that the periods of research stays at each Institution will correspond to the periods of appointment at that Institution.

Suggested project timing (flexible according to project needs, but each of the paired candidates must spend at least 12 months at each university during their candidature):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UoM Home Institution</th>
<th>KU Leuven Home Institution</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 months Melbourne</td>
<td>12 months KU Leuven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18 months KU Leuven (MAX 24 months)</td>
<td>12-18 months Melbourne (MAX 24 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University of Melbourne</strong></td>
<td><strong>KU Leuven</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tax-free scholarship (stipend): Graduate Research Scholarship</td>
<td>Tax-free scholarship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuition-fee waiver</td>
<td>Tuition fee waiver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support to each Melbourne PI for relevant activities: $10,000 AUD lump sum</td>
<td>Bench-fee for each KU Leuven PI for relevant activities: € 3720/year</td>
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<td>Insurances: Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) Single Membership for international students who require a student visa to study in Australia</td>
<td>Insurances: Third Party Liability Insurance, Occupational Accidents Insurance, Travel Insurance whilst on secondment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel insurance while on Study Away</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relocation allowance to come to Melbourne: $2000 for students moving from States or Territories other than Victoria or $3000 for students moving from outside Australia.</td>
<td>Relocation allowance to come to KU Leuven: to be drawn from Bench-fee</td>
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</tbody>
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**SUBMISSION PROCEDURE**

The submission deadline is 8 September 2020 at 5 pm (Brussels time/GMT+2).

A single, jointly prepared proposal must be submitted in English using the template application form. In the application form the number of pages, language, attachments, etc. will be specified for each question. All applications need to be uploaded by the KU Leuven PI through the online KU Loket application system.

*Note:* All Melbourne applicants must ensure Head of Department approval is attached.

**Key Dates**

- Call for joint PhD projects opens: 7 July 2020
- Call for joint PhD projects closes: 8 September 2020 at 5 pm (Brussels time/GMT+2)
- Informal outcome notification: Late September 2020
- Ratified outcome notification: Late October 2020
- Projects advertised/joint PhD candidate recruitment: September 2020 – June 2021
- Joint PhD candidates commence: 1 January – 31 December 2021

*PIs must successfully recruit two candidates by August 31st, 2021. If the PIs do not meet this deadline, the scholarship and mobility funding will be recalled for use in a future call.*

**SELECTION**

The groups will be ranked in order of meeting the selection criteria, and the five top-ranking research groups (and ten PhD projects) will be selected.

The following selection criteria apply:

- The scientific merit of the project: High qualitative level is an absolute requirement.
- The quality and extent of the planned collaboration between the UoM and KU Leuven PIs, clearly evidenced in the supervision plans. PIs must be able to demonstrate existing research relationships or an added value of new collaboration and must provide evidence as part of the
application.

- How the projects combine mutual areas of interest and strength at UoM and KU Leuven.
- The added value of the collaboration and how the projects articulate the need for, and benefit of, spending a minimum of 12 months at UoM and KU Leuven.
- The capacity for future collaboration/funding: What is the extent to which future collaborations are possible as a result of the proposed exchange activities? What is the ability of the proposal to leverage future external funding?
- The capability of the project to seed the development of a larger network of researchers across the universities within this research area.
- The balance of gender and career stages of involved investigators (as primary- or co-supervisors).

**FEEDBACK**

KU Leuven’s Research Coordination Office (DOC) is prepared to communicate submission outcomes subject to ratification by the Executive Board and the Academic Council. PIs may request feedback after the official decision has been communicated.

**REPORTING**

If the Graduate Researcher has not completed their doctoral defense within four years of commencement, the Graduate Researcher’s KU Leuven supervisor must submit a plan to KU Leuven outlining how they intend to support the doctorate’s prompt completion. Where the doctoral defense is completed within four years, it will be sufficient to submit the confirmation of the defense to KU Leuven’s DOC with a reference to the defense date. KU Leuven’s current reporting guidelines can be found at: https://www.kuleuven.be/english/research/associatienet/doc/if/IF-information-for-promoters

*Note:* All candidates in the program must submit their thesis for examination within four years of commencement.

**DEADLINE**

8 September 2020 at 5 pm (Brussels time/GMT+2).

**CONTACT**

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