

KU LEUVEN AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

In 2020, KU Leuven and the University of Melbourne (UoM) established the [KU Leuven-Melbourne joint PhD program](#), providing opportunities for international research collaboration. The first cohort consists of 12 supervisory teams supporting 24 candidates completing joint PhD projects in a wide range of research areas. Candidates benefit from their international supervisory teams, access to high-quality research networks and the development of a global perspective.

Candidates participating in the PhD program are enrolled at both institutions, perform their research work under joint supervision, and are judged according to the academic standards of both institutions. Upon successful completion of the program, each candidate will be eligible to receive a joint PhD with cross reference to the partner institution.

In 2021, KU Leuven and UoM are calling for proposals to establish up to 20 joint PhD projects across ten separate pairs of PIs. Each of these ten PI pairs will access funding for two joint PhD candidates.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The Supervisory team must comprise of *at least* two Principal Investigators (PIs), one from KU Leuven and one from the University of Melbourne. The PIs must have capacity to serve as primary supervisors for two jointly enrolled PhD candidates.

UoM academics

UoM PIs must be registered to supervise as per the [Supervisor Eligibility and Registration Policy](#). Primary supervisors should be employed at UoM beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2026). If their employment contract does not extend beyond the candidates' submission date, then alternative arrangements must be in place, by either having:

- a) A named co-supervisor employed at UoM beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2026); *or*
- b) A letter of support from the respective Head of Department/Head of School detailing the arrangements in place to ensure continuity of supervision.

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 with UoM are eligible to lead an application as a PI if they are a registered Principal Supervisor at UoM, and either:

- a) Their primary employer has entered into a written agreement for this call to fund the Melbourne cash component of the collaborative activity; *or*
- b) They participate at their own expense if they are otherwise unaffiliated (for example, they hold an emeritus position).

Previous UoM recipients may not currently reapply to the scheme as a PI but may participate in a project as a co-investigator.

KU Leuven academics

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.

Supplementary notes for all applicants

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**.

FUNDING, DURATION AND RESIDENCE

Up to a total of 10 supervisory team applications will be funded, with each application supporting 2 joint PhD candidates. Joint PhD projects should be designed to be completed in 4 years of candidature.

Under 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 for each candidate.

The individual PhD candidate shall reside in the research team of the funding institution at the time funding is provided 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 at each institution will correspond to the periods of appointment at that institution.

Below is a suggested PhD project timeline. The timeline is flexible depending on the needs of the project, but all candidates participating in the program must spend at least 12 months at each University during their candidature.

UoM Home Institution

12 months Melbourne
 12-18 months KU Leuven (MAX 24 months)
 12-18 months Melbourne

KU Leuven Home Institution

12 months KU Leuven
 12-18 months Melbourne (MAX 24 months)
 12-18 months KU Leuven

Summary of funding for each project:

| University of Melbourne | KU Leuven |
|--|--|
| Tax-free scholarship (stipend) via a Graduate Research Scholarship | Tax-free scholarship (social security and partial health insurance included) |
| Tuition-fee waiver | Tuition fee waiver |

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| Support to each Melbourne PI for relevant activities: \$10,000 AUD lump sum. Relevant activities may include PI travel, workshop costs, graduate recruitment and virtual collaborations. | Bench-fee for each KU Leuven PI for relevant activities: € 3720/year |
| Insurance: Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) Single Membership for international students who require a student visa to study in Australia Travel insurance while on Study Away | Insurance: Third Party Liability Insurance Occupational Accidents Insurance Travel Insurance while on secondment Extra health insurance to be paid privately. |
| 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. | Relocation allowance to come to KU Leuven: to be drawn from Bench-fee |

PROJECT STRUCTURE AND PROPOSALS

Before preparing a proposal, please note the following about the structure of the program's joint PhD projects:

- Up to 10 proposals, each including projects for two PhD candidates, will be supported. The proposals must be led by at least one PI/Primary Supervisor from each institution.
- Each pair of PIs should submit one proposal outlining two PhD projects. The projects can be on a similar research topic or theme, but the candidates cannot rely on each other's results or completed thesis work to progress in their candidature.
- Joint PhD projects should be designed to be completed in a maximum of 4 years candidature.
- If selected, joint PhD projects will be advertised online from the end of December 2021 onwards.
- Joint PhD candidates should commence their candidature by October 2022, although deviating from this timeline is possible with commencement dates up to March 2023.

The application form requests:

- The details of the PIs/research groups involved, including CVs and links to each PIs website.
- An abstract for both PhD projects, which will be used for recruitment if the proposals are successful.
- An overview of the PhD projects, providing:
 - Descriptions and workplans for both projects.
 - A supervision plan, highlighting why the project requires time to be spent at the partner institution and benefits of doing so.
 - A GANTT chart showing the division of time to be spent by each candidate at both institutions.
 - A formal statement that the PIs will make sufficient preparations for the PhD candidate to be able to finalise the doctoral dissertation within a maximum period of 4 years.

- For proposals involving a PI from UoM's Faculty of Arts: You must also provide a statement addressing how the candidate/s will meet the Faculty's PhD coursework requirements in your application. Please refer to the [Faculty's guidelines](#) for additional information. It is recommended to contact the Associate Dean (Graduate Research) for any further guidance.
- A summary of the collaboration value and potential impact, noting:
 - The extent of the planned collaboration between the PIs beyond joint supervision.
 - How the proposal could lead to the development of a larger network of researchers across both institutions.
 - A plan for leveraging future external funding, if applicable.
 - The balance of gender and career stages of involved investigators.
- Completion of an ethics and privacy checklist.
- All UoM applicants must attach also endorsement from the respective Head of School/Department and Associate Dean (Graduate Research).

It is recommended that applications are written in lay terms for reviewers to better understand the project's potential impact and its anticipated outcomes.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The proposals will be ranked in order of meeting the below selection criteria, and up to ten of the top-ranking research groups (equal to 20 PhD projects) will be selected.

The following selection criteria apply:

- **Project design and rationale** – What is the scientific merit of the joint PhD project? Does it involve a high level of qualitative research? How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of, the joint PhD project? What are the anticipated benefits of involving joint PhD researchers in the collaboration? What is the benefit of the candidate spending a minimum of 12 months at each institution?
- **Collaborator complementarity** – What is the added value of a new collaboration or building on an existing research relationship? How does the collaboration combine mutual areas of interest and strength? What is the quality and extent of the planned collaboration?
- **Quality of supervision** – How will the PIs work together effectively in jointly supervising their shared PhD candidates? What are the beneficial learning outcomes and experiences for the joint PhD candidates? Have the PIs accounted for any challenges that may arise when supervising a joint PhD candidate?
- **Potential impact** – What is the level of originality and innovation in the research proposal? To what extent does the research proposal plan to address significant challenges and what is the anticipated benefit to local or international communities?
- **Capacity for expanded collaboration** – What is the extent of the planned collaboration between the PIs beyond joint supervision? How well does the proposal plan to leverage external funding? To what extent are future collaborations made possible as a result of the proposed activities? How could this project seed the development of a larger network of researchers?

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Adherence to respective equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies are a core feature of this program to ensure that all participants can do their best work, thrive and succeed. Applicant teams should consider how they can take meaningful steps in their future collaborations to foster an environment that values, supports and respects a diverse range of views, knowledge and experiences.

Applicants should consider EDI as it applies to gender, indigenous peoples, disabilities, career stages and sectors.

REPORTING AND OTHER CONDITIONS

KU Leuven

If the Graduate Researchers have 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 (Research Coordination Office) 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.

UoM

UoM recipients will be required to provide regular updates on project progress during the candidature of their joint PhD candidates. These updates will be requested quarterly by the IRTG Academic Lead. Recipients who fail to participate in regular reporting mechanisms for this IRTG may be found ineligible for participation in future Researcher Development Schemes.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

The submission deadline is **21 October 2021 at 5PM** (Brussels time/GM+2).

A single, jointly prepared proposal must be submitted in English using the template application form. The application form specifies the length of response and required attachments for each question. All applications need to be uploaded by the KU Leuven PI through [the online KU Loket application system](#).

Note: All UoM applicants must ensure Head of School/Department and Associate Dean (Graduate Research) approval is attached.

Key Dates

- Call for joint PhD projects opens: 14 July 2021
- Call for joint PhD projects closes: 21 October 2021
- Outcome notification and projects advertised for recruitment: December 2021
- Joint PhD candidates commence: October 2022 – March 2023

PIs must successfully recruit two candidates by 31 October 2022. If the PIs do not meet this deadline, the scholarship and mobility funding will be recalled for use in a future call.

CONTACT DETAILS

UoM contact details:

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Research, Innovation & Commercialisation (RIC)

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