

Funding of activities aimed at junior researchers within the framework of the Doctoral Schools

2024

The Flemish government subsidizes the five Flemish universities to provide support and guidance of junior researchers. Specifically, the universities are asked to organize activities with respect to (1) training (discipline-specific, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary), (2) career development, and (3) strengthening the international orientation of junior researchers. 35% of the budget needs to be spent in collaboration with at least two other Flemish universities. **In order to allow input from the various faculties, a call for funding applications for activities aimed at junior researchers is distributed at least once per year. The current call concerns the year 2024.**

The term 'activities' refers to workshops/courses (by internal and/or external teachers), symposiums, seminars, etc. There needs to be **active involvement of junior researchers**. Both local initiatives and initiatives in collaboration with other universities are eligible, but initiatives in **collaboration** with at least two other Flemish universities are relatively more likely to be funded. PhD students and postdocs may also apply for funding, on the condition that the application is supported by a professor.

The board of each of the three doctoral schools monitors the course offer for their own researchers. The university-wide doctoral school council¹ takes the final decision with respect to the allocation of the budget.

1a. What are the prerequisites for local initiatives?

- The activity needs to take place between 01/07/2024 and 31/12/2024.
- The primary target group of the activity (and thus the majority of participants) needs to consist of PhD students and/or postdoctoral researchers, and the activity needs to be disseminated as widely as possible.
- The activity needs to fit within at least one of the categories mentioned on p. 3.

1b. What are the prerequisites for inter-university initiatives?

- The activity needs to take place between 01/07/2024 and 31/12/2024.
- The primary target group of the activity (and thus the majority of participants) needs to consist of PhD students and/or postdoctoral researchers, and the activity needs to be disseminated as widely as possible.
- The activity needs to fit within at least one of the categories mentioned on p. 3.
- In addition to Hasselt University, at least two other Flemish universities need to be involved in the organisation of the activity.

There are two possible ways for setting up an inter-university collaboration:

1. to join an existing initiative that was initiated by another university,
2. to set up an initiative and to ask colleagues at other universities to support/co-organize the activity.

2. What is the available budget?

The total available budget for applications from the three doctoral schools is 20.000 euros. Applications up to 5.000 euros are customary.

Applying for funding through this call implies that there was no funding requested through the VLIR call for societies. The latter call issues, through the doctoral schools of the Flemish universities, grants for scientific societies or centres of expertise that organize training activities aimed at PhD students and postdocs.

¹ Members of the doctoral school council are: the two vice-rectors, the deans of all faculties, the directors and staffmembers of the doctoral schools, a representative of the PhD students and a representative of the postdocs.

3. Which costs can and cannot be reimbursed?

The doctoral school budget does not allow for overhead expenses. Only money that was actually spent can be reimbursed. An invoice or receipt is required for each expense. The grant can not be combined with other doctoral school financing, nor can be transferred to other initiatives or to the next calendar year. The guidelines regarding the **costs that may be reimbursed** are listed below:

- Travel/accommodation expenses
 - accommodation expenses for guest speakers may not exceed 250 euro/night and should cover max. the duration of the initiative + one night.
 - UHasselt has resolutely opted for a sustainable travel policy. Travelers should always give the preference to a means of transport that is as sustainable as possible (for more information see [Sustainable travel policy UHasselt](#)). Air travel is only allowed in economy class (or equivalent).
- Fees for guest speakers
 - The fee should fit the nature and the duration of the activities, with a maximum of 250 euro per speaker.
 - The definition of a 'guest speaker' is that he/she is not affiliated with a Flemish University. Speakers of Flemish Universities will not receive a speaker's fee.
- Catering (coffee breaks, standard sandwich lunch)
 - For costs related to catering, a maximum amount of 40 euro per participant per day is allowed, which can be used for lunch (standard sandwich lunch) and (max 2) coffee breaks (no diners or receptions)
- Costs related to renting or reserving an auditorium and/or audiovisual infrastructure during the initiative
 - Normally, the costs for renting a classroom or auditorium are not reimbursed, unless one can motivate why it is difficult to organize the initiative in one of the freely available locations (at the university). The maximum amount for reimbursement is 500 euro per half day / 1000 euro per day.
- Costs directly related to the organisation of the event, like:
 - Printing and promotion materials: these costs should be minimized. A minimal amount of the grant can be reimbursed; it will be evaluated ad hoc.

Costs which cannot be reimbursed are:

- Money meant for research itself
- Costs related to research infrastructure
- Scholarships, grants, wages of researchers
- Diners
- Receptions
- Elaborate lunches
- Social activities
- Gifts and gift vouchers

According to the rule, budgetary items which are not included in the initial application will not be reimbursed. In case that – at the moment of reimbursement of the expenses – invoices/costs will be provided for which no budget had been requested upfront, the reimbursement will be evaluated ad hoc for those specific items. The evaluation of the reimbursement will depend on the remaining awarded budget as well if the costs incurred can be justified (= if it fits within the list of 'costs that may be reimbursed').

4. Which information should be included in the application?

- Local or inter-university initiative?
- Faculty of the applicant(s)
- The category or categories covering the activity (see p. 3)
- Target group
- Description/program of the activity (in Dutch and English)
- The competences participants will actively develop during the activity. Please mention only the most essential ones (max 6), based on the doctoral schools' [competency overview](#).
- Maximum number of participants
- For inter-university initiatives: the other Flemish universities involved (at least two), with a specific contact person for each institution
- Total budget needed and total budget requested. If other sources of funding (for example at another

Flemish institution, FWO, ...) are being used, this should be explicitly mentioned. An estimate with explanation of all costs needs to be included.

- Applications submitted by PhD students/postdocs need to mention the supporting professor. This professor needs to be put in cc with the application.

5. When and where to submit the application?

- Please send the application form by email to doctoralschools@uhasselt.be.
- **Application deadline: 31/05/2024**

6. Which information needs to be delivered after the activity has taken place (in case of allocation)?

- Final, full programme of the activity
- Number of participants, split up – per institution – into the categories 'PhD students', 'postdocs', 'professors', 'other' and per institution
- Evaluation results*
- Detailed overview of the costs

It is preferable to send in this information within a month after the activity has taken place. The final date of submission is 31/12/2024.

* The doctoral schools can provide administrative support for this (if requested in time).

Categories imposed by the Flemish government:

1. Training of junior researchers:

- a. Offering a range of training courses for doctoral researchers that cover interdisciplinary broadening and deepening as well as the development of cross-curricular and cross-disciplinary skills or generic, transferable skills, such as entrepreneurship, with particular attention to data skills and research data management, with a view to, for instance, open science
- b. Organisation of training courses or seminars for postdoctoral researchers
- c. Training relating to communication on research activities and results, with particular attention to the objectives of the science communication policy
- d. Training relating to valorisation of research activities, with particular attention to valorisation in social sciences and humanities
- e. Training relating to pedagogical and didactic competences
- f. Training relating to gender and diversity dimensions in scientific research
- g. Training relating to scientific integrity
- h. Training of trainers or supervisors
- i. Training which can contribute to improving the well-being of junior researchers

2. Career development and the promotion of career prospects of junior researchers:

- a. Increasing the employability of doctorate holders
- b. Supporting and stimulating the intersectoral mobility of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers: information provision, mobility of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers towards a non-academic environment
- c. Raising the awareness of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers about conscious career choices
- d. Raising the awareness about the employability of doctorate holders on the labour market
- e. Intersectoral collaboration
- f. Career guidance of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers with particular attention to a non-academic career
- g. Individual coaching of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers
- h. Professionalization of those responsible for the administrative and content-related aspects of the institutional framework for guiding and supporting doctoral and postdoctoral researchers

3. Strengthening the international orientation in the careers of young researchers:

- a. Supporting and stimulating the international mobility of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers: information provision, organisation and expansion of international doctoral programmes and mobility of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers
- b. Organising the international recruitment of doctoral and postdoctoral researchers
- c. Organising contacts with relevant international partners
- d. Organising or offering training sessions in collaboration with international partners

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