

**TOWARDS A JOINT IMAGING VALLEY – CALL3**

**Call by University of Liège and Maastricht University for joint PhD Theses**

**February 2020**

**Purpose of the call**

The University of Liège (ULiège) and Maastricht University (UM) collaborate closely towards a joint imaging valley.

On February 25th, 2016 in Maastricht, the authorities of the University of Liège and Maastricht University have confirmed their will to initiate a joint PhD programme.

A third call for proposals within this programme is now being launched thanks to the support of the Vice-Rector Research (ULiège), the deans and vice-deans of the faculties of medicine of ULiège and UM.

This call aims to fund two joint PhD theses, during which the candidate will work at both institutions. Each PhD candidate will be appointed at one of the two institutes, but will spend time in both institutions (ideally 50-50, provided it is relevant for the research to be carried out). This call will fund one PhD candidate appointed at ULiège and one appointed at UM.

Please note that final allocation of the grant is subject to the approval of the PhD project by the relevant doctoral authorities. Besides, the Liège PhD candidate will have to fulfil the criteria to be eligible for a PhD grant as detailed in section 2 in the Règlement des Bourses de doctorat: [https://www.enseignement.uLiège.be/upload/docs/application/pdf/2019-06/reglement\_de\_doctorat\_2019-2020.pdf](https://www.enseignement.uliege.be/upload/docs/application/pdf/2019-06/reglement_de_doctorat_2019-2020.pdf)

**Topic of the call**

The project has to highlight the use of **imaging / imaging data** as essential to carry out the research.

It could be either an **experimental project** or a project with **applied clinical research**.

The project has to relate to **unmet medical needs** in one of the following joint interest areas:

- inflammatory diseases/pulmonary diseases

- oncology,

- cardiology,

- neurosciences.

**Who can apply?**

Applications can be submitted by teams consisting of an ULiège professor and an UM professors/associate professors. Within the UM, the eligible faculty is the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life sciences. At ULiège, eligible faculties are: Faculty of Medicine,

Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Sciences and Faculty of Applied Sciences.

**What can be applied for?**

This funding programme will provide **75% of salary costs of the PhD candidate**. UM groups wishing to participate in the programme will need to cover the remaining 25% of the salary costs, irrespective of where the candidate will be placed primarily. The maximum amount that can be applied for is €165.000; the maximum grant period is four years. If the proposed research is of shorter duration, the maximum amount will be reduced accordingly.

Note that for all candidates, all non-salary costs will need to be covered by the hosting laboratories. This will be split 50-50 between ULiège and UM collaborators.

The PhD candidate will be appointed at one of the research institutions, but the research project will be executed at both institutions and the PhD candidate must register in both universities.

**Selection procedure**

Proposals will be assessed only on information provided using the application form.

Initially, eligibility of each application will be determined.

Next, applications will be reviewed by a joint inter-university jury, composed of medicine deans and vice-deans from both faculties of medicine (UM and ULiège). ULiège may refer internally to the “Sectorial Research Council – Health sciences (Conseil Sectoriel de la Recherche)” for evaluation, or a sub-group of this council.

This assessment will be based on the assessment criteria, as listed below.

In case of 2 proposals of equal quality on all evaluation criteria, the quality of the candidate, if identified, will be used by the jury to choose between those 2 proposals.

**Eligibility criteria**

In order to be eligible to enter into the competition, applications have to:

* Be submitted to i.rausin@uliege.be and to merlijn.meens@maastrichtuniversity.nl before the deadline by a UM (associate)professor and ULiège professor jointly;
* Be written in English, using the appropriate form and respecting the word limits;
* Include a completed ethical issues checklist.

Applications that do not meet these criteria, will not qualify for further consideration and will not be forwarded to the jury for assessment.

**Assessment criteria**

Applications will be assessed based on the following criteria:

**1. Scientific quality of the project** (40%)

* Address the topic of the call using imaging (data);
* Challenging scientific content, originality of the topic;
* Potential to make an important contribution to solving unmet medical need;
* Quality of the research environment, including excellence of lab (e.g. infrastructure, past performance) and collaboration with external partners (if requested);
* Feasibility, including a clear research plan and effectiveness of the proposed methodology and probability of ethical clearance.

**2. Education of PhD candidate** (20%)

* Attention to doctoral training, including a clear 4-year education plan (e.g. trainings on IP, ethics, visit to foreign lab, follow-up of students,…)1;
* Clear perspective of development of the researcher’s career during and after the thesis;
* Quality of the supervision arrangements at both ULiège and UM labs (including past performance)

**3. Tightening the bonds between ULiège and UM** (20%)

* Equal involvement of both ULiège & UM (as evidenced by specification of geographic location of the PhD candidate over time, supervision arrangements, or other evidence);
* Clear description of how the project will contribute to tightening the bonds between ULiège and UM, including a clear outlook for more sustainable collaboration between both universities.
* Fairness of intellectual property sharing.

**4. Contribution to regional development** (20%)

* The project clearly describes an adequate contribution to regional (Maastricht/Liège) development.

**Indicative timeframe**

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| --- | --- |
| Submission deadline | 30 March 2020 |
| Assessment by committee | April / May |
| Decision on awarding | Early May |
| Communication award decisions | Mid May 2020 |
| Expected start PhD projects | October 2020 |

**Contact**

For any questions concerning this call please contact:

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**The application form and the ethics checklist have to be sent to** [**i.rausin@uliege.be**](mailto:i.rausin@uliege.be) **and** [**merlijn.meens@maastrichtuniversity.nl**](mailto:merlijn.meens@maastrichtuniversity.nl) **by March 30, 2020 in one single pdf document)**

**1** Please note that ULiège requires 60 ECTS credits (publication, attendance to congress, training on writing, on improving language skills, …)