

A practical introduction for starting FWO PhD fellows

November 2025 – classification 1



Congrats to all new PhD fellows!

- ▶ PhD fellows fundamental research
- ▶ PhD fellows strategic basic research
- ▶ ‘VITO – FWO’ PhD fellows
- ▶ ‘Kom op tegen Kanker’ PhD fellow
- ▶ ‘Demoucelle-Parkinson’ PhD fellow
- ▶ ‘Plantentuin-Meise – FWO’ PhD fellows
- ▶ ‘INBO – FWO’ PhD fellows
- ▶ ‘Flanders Hydraulics – FWO’ PhD fellows

This presentation...



▶ **What you should learn today...**

- How to live and work as an FWO PhD fellow
- HR and research policy related aspects



▶ **This presentation**

- Serves as fellow's operating manual (key topics only)
- More details: webpages / regulations / after awarding / e-portal



▶ **DISCLAIMER**

- *Official & binding documents: regulations in Dutch*
 - × *English regulations: no legal status*

Agenda

- ▶ ***YOUR PhD FELLOWSHIP AT FWO***
- ▶ **Your bench fee**
- ▶ **Financial aspects**
- ▶ **Human resources**
- ▶ **Further reading and contact**
- ▶ **Q&A**

Your PhD fellowship at FWO



▶ **Scholarship FWO - PhD fellow**

- Goal: to obtain a PhD
- Start *Nov. 1*
- Duration 4 years



▶ **Roles**

- **FWO:** employer (funding agency)
 - × Social security managed by FWO's HR department
- **University:** (main) hosting organization
 - × Disciplinary rules according to hosting organization
 - × In consensus with your promotor
- *Additional host organization(s)*
 - × *Agreement with main host organization*

Career & personal development



Opportunities

- ▶ To **inspire** you and your promotor
- ▶ To **valorize** research expertise inside/outside academic world
- ▶ To expand and strengthen your **network**
- ▶ To develop **transferable skills**



Possibilities

- ▶ **Part of FWO PhD research in another organisation**
- ▶ Max. 20% other activities (doctoral training program, internship, educational master)
- ▶ Limited remunerated activity (volunteering, no cumulation)

- ▶ **HR strategy [research careers](#)**



Mobility: performing (part of) research elsewhere

▶ Part of PhD research in (any) organisation (Art. 4§2)

- Research institute, company, public authority, ...
- Fully remunerated by FWO
- Up to 12 months (in Belgium) or up to 6 months (abroad, FWO HR permission) per 2-year term
- Agreement host university – organisation: IP rights remain at host organisation
- Forms: “cumulatie aanvraag” / “combination request” (*e-portal*)



Transferable skills and other duties

Max. 20% (8h/week)* other duties (Art. 18)

Invited to report planned activities to FWO at start academic year

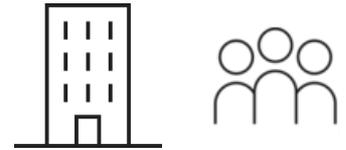
(e-portal: notification of assignments) 

- Administrative/clinical tasks
- Supervision of exercises, practical sessions, seminars
 - × Actual workload (1h = ~2h workload)
- Non-remunerated teaching assignment
- Education and training:
 - × Doctoral training program
 - × (Non-remunerated) internship
 - × Educational master

* Max. 40% (16h/week) for physician-specialist 'ASO'

Internship: part of other activities during PhD research

- ▶ **In any organization (public authority, company, ...)**
- ▶ **Not remunerated (fellowship continues)**
- ▶ **Personal development (transferable skills)**
- ▶ **Job shadowing**
- ▶ **Get acquainted with**
 - Research results exploitation, innovation, development,
 - Regulations, IPR, tendering, ...
 - Policy making
 - Project management, communication, leadership, ...



PhD fellowship: agreement and regulations

- ▶ **General regulations / specific regulations / bench fee regulations**

- *Dutch version is binding*

- ▶ **Ethical questionnaire (General regulations Art. 4)**

- You were sent an ethics questionnaire

- Human and/or animal test subjects

- [Ethical clearance](#) by research ethics committee (@host institution)

- ▶ **Data Management Plan (DMP)**

- Submit DMP online within 6M after official (not actual) start date

- Find [more info](#) + check with host institution

Research Integrity

▶ As part of FWO policy:

- Clause in call text, application and agreement on commitment to RI
- Profiles for (co)promoters and researchers
- Adaptations in general regulations and regulations PhD and postdoc fellowships on procedure and sanctions in case of RI violation

- Read the [detailed information](#) and the RI Clause

Every applicant and beneficiary is expected to know the rules and what to comply with.

PhD fellow: reporting



▶ **Reporting** (*invitation by FWO/in your e-portal*)

- Interim report (with recommendation promotor)
 - × Invitation after 1.5 years
- Final report
 - × *Also if ending fellowship earlier*

▶ **Updated view on output, achievements and impact (2nd axis)**

- Attention to **various researcher profiles and research results**
 - × Away from one-sided focus on classical output
 - × Towards broader view on scientific accomplishments
 - × Research career: range of scientifically relevant activities, skills, experiences and achievements
- [Research Foundation - Flanders - Reporting \(fwo.be\)](https://www.fwo.be/en/research-foundation-flanders-reporting)

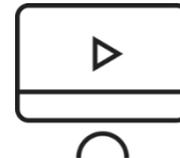
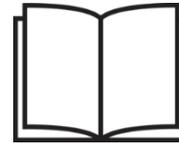
PhD fellow: dissemination

▶ All publications and reprints of PhD fellows

- Acknowledge FWO fellowship
- Mention your project number (12xxx26N)
- References in repositories host university – FWO-labeled

▶ All research related communication

- Mention FWO affiliation!



Make sure your research results are registered in FRIS

- ▶ **FRIS-portal (Flanders Research Information Space)**

- Information about research financed with public Flemish funds

- ▶ **How?**

- Enter information in the information system/repository of your host institution

- ▶ **What?**

- Link publications to your project number (12xxx26N)

- Link datasets to the relevant publications (or your project number)

- Provide metadata associated with your publications and datasets

- ▶ **Further info**

- [FWO webpage about research results](#)

Registering to FRIS via host organization

▶ **KU Leuven**

- [How to link your publication to your FWO-project in LIRIAS](#)
- [How to add a dataset in LIRIAS](#)

▶ **Universiteit Antwerpen**

- [Details on how to link research output to projects in IRUA and Antigoon](#)

▶ **Universiteit Gent**

- [Details on how to complete your personal profile in GISMO](#)
- [Details on how to complete project forms in GISMO](#)
- [Details on how to link publications and datasets to projects in Biblio](#)

▶ **Universiteit Hasselt**

- [UHasselt intranet](#)

▶ **VUB**

- Practical implementation: communication by VUB

FWO Open Access (OA) policy



▶ Why?

→ Publicly funded research should also be publicly available.



▶ What?

→ Publications resulting (partly) from FWO funding → focus: articles;
→ also applies to already ongoing fellowships/projects/grants.



▶ How?

→ Published in an OA database (*green* OA) → minimum requirement;
→ full (*gold*) or partly (*hybrid*) OA journals → bench fees.



▶ When?

→ Green OA selected? Maximum embargo period of 12 months;
→ Right implemented in Belgian federal law ([Art. XI.196, §2/1 of the Economic Law Code](#)).



▶ Further reading?

<https://www.fwo.be/en/about-fwo/research-policy/open-access/>

FWO General Regulations, Art. 2 §2: <https://www.fwo.be/en/support-programmes/regulations/general-regulations/>

Scientific integrity: <https://thinkchecksubmit.org/>

@fwovlaanderen

Social media and online



FWO research in the spotlight

[Kennismakers Magazine](#)



[New scientific insights](#)



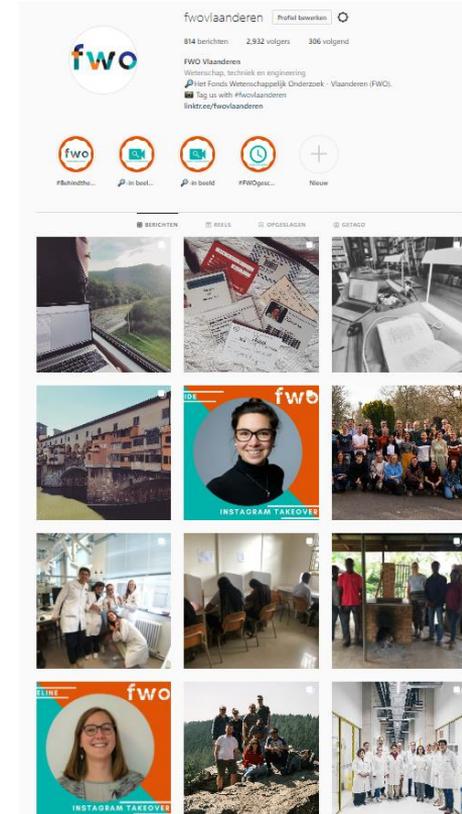
[Stay tuned!](#)



Your research in the spotlight on Instagram

Would you like to show your research on Instagram? We give researchers the chance to do a takeover.

Interested?
Send an email to communicatie@fwo.be





Our scicomm events

Science festival Brussels

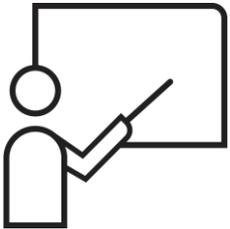
Every last Sunday of November, FWO organizes the Brussels science festival in Muntpunt together with the other Brussels knowledge institutions

Grey Cells

During the scientific lecture and debate series 'Grey Cells' scientists discuss with each other and the public under the guidance of an Eos science journalist.

Our scicomm training

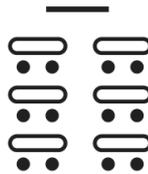
Scicomm masterclass



Focus day scicomm



Workshops in cooperation with Scicomm Academy



Webinars ‘how to deal with press?’ (in cooperation with Expertendatabank)



Agenda

- ▶ **Your PhD fellowship at FWO**
- ▶ ***YOUR BENCH FEE***
- ▶ **Financial aspects**
- ▶ **Human resources**
- ▶ **Further reading and contact**
- ▶ **Q&A**

Bench fee



▶ Why:

- To be independent and flexible in your research
- All info (*regulations*)

▶ PhD fellowship: € 3,720 per year

- Responsibility of PhD fellow and promotor
- May be cumulated with other working allowances
- Credit balances may be used the next year

▶ Paid quarterly to university (credit line @university)

- Based on expenditure declarations
- Managed by financial antenna at your university

▶ During suspension (pregnancy leave, parental leave,...)

- Bench fee remains available, but no expenditures can be accounted for
- Administrative extension: no extra bench fee



Bench fee (regulations)

Bench fee eligible costs (research related):

- **Items of lasting value** (equipment, computer, books, ...)
- **Consumables** (reagents, test animals & plants, chemicals, ...)
- **Operating expenditure** (copies, searches, data traffic, ...)
- **Remuneration** of persons not subject to social security system who participate in the awarded research
- **Travel** (excl. commuting) and accommodation costs in Belgium and abroad (no fixed accommodation allowance) – CO₂-contribution
- **Study stays** and participations to conferences abroad (if in line with awarded research)
- **Publication costs** (as 1st author – or co-author + cost-sharing)
- Access to and **dissemination of research results**.

Bench fee (regulations)

The bench fee is NOT intended for:

- ▶ *Registration on the university roll or as a regular student in Belgium or abroad*
- ▶ *Fellow's or promotor's personal expenditure, incl. accommodation and commuter traffic*
- ▶ *Central management costs and/or general operating costs by the research group/department or university*
- ▶ *Expenditure already covered by other financing sources*
- ▶ *Costs of other scholarship students, PhD students, postdoctoral fellows or staff members*
- ▶ *Costs for the organisation of a workshop or conference*



Travel: how to finance

▶ Use bench fee:

→ Conferences and short stays (<4 weeks) (within Europe)

▶ Apply for an FWO travel grant. Apply **3 months** before departure:

→ Conferences and short stays abroad (**outside EER+CH+UK!**)

→ Long stays (in/outside Europe) (5 weeks to 12 months)

→ <https://www.fwo.be/en/support-programmes/international-mobility/>

▶ Research Foundation - Flanders - Sustainable travel policy (fwo.be)

→ CO₂ contribution is eligible cost

Agenda

- ▶ **Your PhD fellowship at FWO**
- ▶ **Your bench fee**
- ▶ ***FINANCIAL ASPECTS***
- ▶ **Human resources**
- ▶ **Further reading and contact**
- ▶ **Q&A**

PhD fellowship: financial aspects



→ Scholarship (net salary):

- × € 2,600.00
 - Depends on scientific seniority (based on information in application) and family situation
 - Comparable to salary of doctor-assistant at Flemish university
- × Exemption from taxes
 - Be careful with stays abroad and additional remunerated activities
 - You are at the expense ('ten laste') of the parents (if same address), or, of the partner when married or legally cohabiting
- × Full social security:
 - E.g. pension and healthcare
 - Obligatory to join a health insurance fund (Ziekenfonds)
 - No child allowance anymore for the parents

PhD fellowship: financial aspects



- Year-end bonus
 - × Paid in December
 - × Based on the salary of the current year and on the working period during the first nine months of that same year
- Holiday allowance
 - × Paid in May
 - × Based on your salary of May of the current year and *the working period during the previous year*



- Connectivity fee
 - × € 20/month -> working from home
- Child allowance
 - × Notify birth to FWO
 - × Join a child allowance fund -> family and maternity benefits

PhD fellowship: financial aspects

▶ Pass for public transport

- Commuting (in Belgium only)
- Only costs from and to Belgian border (foreign residence)
- Send copy/proof to FWO
- Online form: e-portal → 'Mydocuments'
- More information [working as](#) pages



▶ Bicycle allowance

- € 0.35 / km
- Apply each year at FWO e-portal (mydownloads)
- (coming soon) Online form: e-portal → 'Mydocuments'



▶ Bench fee

- € 3,720
- Research expenses only

▶ FWO travel grants:

- Conferences and long stays related to your research



PhD fellowship: restriction on remunerated activities

- A scholarship (tax-free) does not allow accumulation of revenues
 - × Main focus is to obtain a PhD degree
- Remunerated activities not related and subordinate to PhD research (Art. 19)
 - Needs to be approved by your promotor (host institution) and FWO
 - Cannot take place during office hours
 - Should be respecting tax regulations
 - More information on working as pages and document on e-portal (combination request)



Teleworking

- ▶ **PhD fellows follow the main rules of the university**
- ▶ **Teleworking from abroad is not allowed:**
 - Prevent international payroll problems



Travel insurance

▶ The FWO vouches for

- Insurance for occupational accidents abroad
- Travel insurance (AIG) :
 - × During professional trips abroad
 - private trip to same destination is covered 5 days prior and 5 days after the officially registered period,
 - Co-traveling partner / children insured as well
 - Exclusively private trips are not insured
 - × Detailed information on conditions and coverage:
 - Contact FWO HR services – hr@fwo.be

Agenda

- ▶ **Your PhD fellowship at FWO**
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- ▶ ***HUMAN RESOURCES***
- ▶ **Further reading and contact**
- ▶ **Q&A**

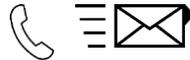


Out-of-office: holidays and leaves

- ▶ **# vacation days** ~ regulations of the host university
- ▶ **Take holidays in consultation with head of department or your promotor**
 - *Host organisation booking system (if applicable)*
- ▶ **Inform FWO once a year**
 - Online form: e-portal → 'My documents'
 - To cope with social security regulations
- ▶ **Thematic leaves**
 - Maternity leave
 - Parental leave / medical assistance / palliative leave -> [RVA](#) (National Employment Service)
 - Time credit -> [RVA](#)
 - Paternity leave



Out-of-office: Illness



▶ **You must join a health insurance fund (Ziekenfonds)!**

▶ **Hospitalization insurance possible via university**

▶ **Every absence due to illness**

- Notify FWO before 10am
- Substantiate (medical certificate) (hr@fwo.be)
- Medical certificate not needed 3 times 1st day of sickness / year

▶ **More than 30 calendar days**

- Inform your health insurance fund (<day 28)
- You receive forms that will be (partially) completed by the FWO
- As of the 31st calendar day:
 - × Suspension of FWO scholarship
 - × Replacement income from your health insurance fund
- Inform FWO when you resume work
- Contact: hr@fwo.be

▶ **[Working as an FWO fellow](#) pages**

Out-of-office: work accident



▶ Inform FWO immediately

→ Forms available on the [Working as... pages](#)

- × Accident at work report
- × Medical certificate



→ Insurance via FWO

▶ A work accident is:

- an accident during the execution of one's normal duties
- an accident on the way to and from work

▶ Contact: hr@fwo.be personeelszaken@fwo.be

▶ [Working as... pages](#)

Out-of-office: suspension/extension fellowship

- ▶ **Suspension in case of long-term illness, pregnancy/breastfeeding leave, parental leave, palliative & medical assistance leave**

- Replacement income from RVA or health insurance



- ▶ **Extension of the fellowship:**

- Duration of suspension (≥ 14 days)

- Suspension of ≥ 3 months (fulltime & continuous): 1 year extension (once)
(≥ 3 months: period with replacement income, hence ≥ 4 months illness)

- Time credit and voluntary part-time employment: no extension!

- ▶ **Bench fee remains available, but no expenditures can be accounted for**

- ▶ **More info: [Working as...](#) pages**



Out-of-office: research related stays

→ Notify FWO of **every stay at least 1 month prior to departure**

- × In Belgium or abroad
- × Conference, research stay, field work, ...



- × *Online form: e-portal FWO “melding verblijf” / “report of stay”*
- × Always in consultation with your promotor

→ Stay ≥ 3 months



- × *melding verblijf” / “report of stay” + “Cumulatie aanvraag / Combination request”*
- × Permission promotor
- × Permission rector (via research coordination office @host-org)

Psychosocial well-being

→ [Working as... pages](#)

► In case of conflicts

- Talk to your promotor!
- Talk to the ombuds or confidential advisor (vertrouwenspersoon) of your host institution
- External Flemish contact point for transgressive behavior:
<https://www.vlaanderen.be/vlaams-meldpunt-grensoverschrijdend-gedrag>
- If things get out of hand: FWO can mediate
 - × (contact welzijn@fwo.be)
- **Don't wait until it is too late!**



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More info: Working as an FWO fellow

The screenshot shows the FWO website's navigation menu. The menu items are: Support programmes, Evaluation process, Results & outreach, After awarding, and About FWO. The 'After awarding' item is circled in red. Below the navigation menu, there is a section titled 'After awarding' with a description: 'What happens when the FWO has approved your fellowship or research project? Here we will take you step by step through the different stages and present all essential practical and administrative information.' Below this description is a link: 'All about after awarding →'. To the right of the description is a dropdown menu with three options: 'I have a fellowship', 'I have a project', and 'I have a travel grant'. The 'I have a fellowship' option is circled in red. Below the dropdown menu is a link: 'Wat na toekenning →'. Below the navigation menu, there is a horizontal bar with a blue and teal gradient. Below the horizontal bar, there are two buttons: 'I have a PhD fellowship' and 'I have a postdoctoral fellowship'. The 'I have a PhD fellowship' button is circled in red.

fwo Vlaanderen

Support programmes Evaluation process Results & outreach After awarding About FWO

Login E-loket

After awarding

What happens when the FWO has approved your fellowship or research project? Here we will take you step by step through the different stages and present all essential practical and administrative information.

[All about after awarding →](#)

- > I have a fellowship
- > I have a project
- > I have a travel grant

[Wat na toekenning →](#)

I have a PhD fellowship

I have a postdoctoral fellowship

OP DEZE PAGINA

Information

Renewal fellowship (2nd term) - for PhD fellows started on 1 Nov 2022

Reporting interim report - for PhD fellows started on 1 Nov 2023 or later

Ex post report

Documents that have to be submitted during recruitment and commencement of employment

Suspension and extension of the fellowship

Changes to your project or supervision

Altering personal particulars

Resignation

Remuneration

Year-end bonus and holiday allowance

Absences (due to illness or an accident)

Commuter traffic in Belgium

Holidays and leaves

Research-related stays

Additional remunerated activity

Psychosocial well-being

Transparent clinical trials

Information

HR strategy of the FWO

Mobility and transferable skills

Opportunities within your fellowship, related to your later (research) career

 **Infosessions for starting PhD fellows**
1.93 MB PDF



 **FWO-logo**
2.63 MB ZIP



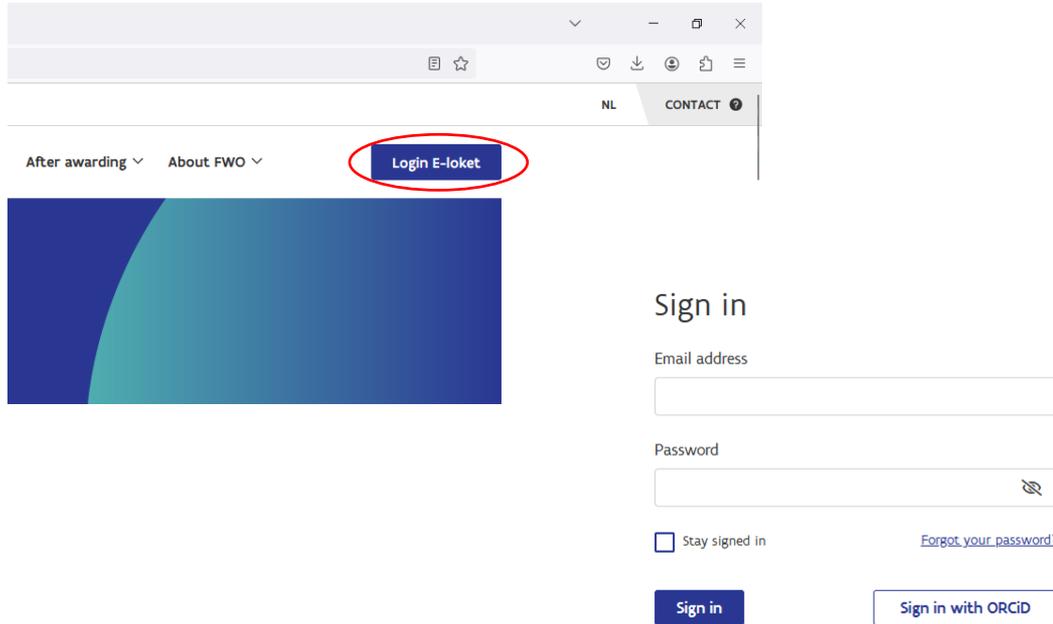
Renewal fellowship (2nd term) - for PhD fellows started on 1 Nov 2022

Your PhD fellowship can be renewed once for a period of two years (second term)

If your first term ends on 31 October 2024, you will be invited by the FWO (around 15 March 2024 to prepare and submit a renewal application via your e-portal, by mid-May 2024.

FWO e-portal

► www.fwo.be -> direct access: <https://fwoweb.fwo.be>



NL CONTACT

After awarding ▾ About FWO ▾ **Login E-loket**

Sign in

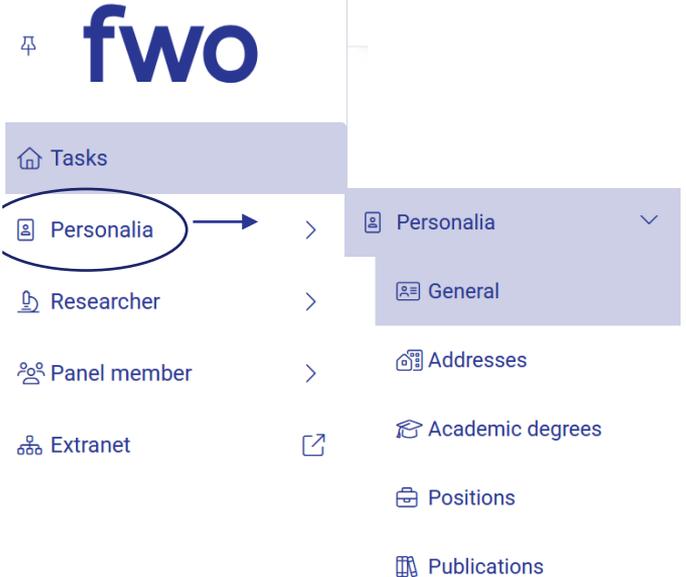
Email address

Password

Stay signed in [Forgot your password?](#)

Sign in Sign in with ORCID

Keep your data up to date



fwo

- Tasks
- Personalia** →
 - Personalia ▾
 - General
 - Addresses
 - Academic degrees
 - Positions
 - Publications
- Researcher
- Panel member
- Extranet

To notify immediately

PERSONAL INFO:

- ▶ New address, phone/email
 - ▶ Bank account number (declaration owner)
 - ▶ Marriage/cohabitation (certificate)
 - ▶ Birth of children (certificate)
- Must be uploaded to the FWO [e-portal](#) (NOT BY EMAIL)**

- ▶ Stays in Belgium and abroad
 - ▶ Always: form 'Melding verblijf' or 'Report of stay'
 - ▶ More than 3 months - form 'Cumulatie aanvraag'/'Combination request'
- Forms available on the FWO [e-portal](#)

- ▶ Pregnancy (medical certificate stating the expected date of birth)
- ▶ Suspension of the fellowship
- ▶ Each absence (illness, work accident, ...) -> medical certificate

Notify FWO/HR – see [Working as an FWO fellow](#) pages

FWO e-portal 'My Documents'

► www.fwo.be -> direct access: <https://fwoweb.fwo.be>

>>	Type ↑↓	Submission date
>	+ Add Bicycle allowance	
>	+ Add Commuter traffic	
>	+ Add Notification of holidays	

Online form:

- Notification of holidays

(coming soon) Online form:

- Bicycle allowance
- Commuter traffic

← My documents TESTERS TEST ⓘ ⚙️ ↔️

Notification of holidays Last saved: Now [Save](#)

Add: holiday

HOLIDAYS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CONSENT	<input type="checkbox"/>

Start date 📅

End date 📅

[Submit](#) [Delete](#) [Close saved changes](#)



Info and contact

- Check programme webpages and links
- Check Working as... *pages* first!
- [Contact](#) page (email and phone numbers)
 - × **Single point of contact:** your account administrator
 - Biological sciences bio@fwo.be (*expert panel bio1, bio2, ...*)
 - Humanities cult@fwo.be
 - Social sciences GM@fwo.be
 - Medical sciences med@fwo.be
 - Science and technology WT@fwo.be
 - Interdisciplinary research interdisciplinair@fwo.be
- Specific human resources and payroll matters **only**
hr@fwo.be personeelszaken@fwo.be
- Travel grants interprog@fwo.be
- **Do NOT use individual FWO nor other generic (e.g. info, post, ...) FWO email addresses!**