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# WORKING AS A PROFESSOR AT KU LEUVEN



## A HIGHLY RANKED UNIVERSITY

**#1** declared 'most innovative university of Europe' by Reuters 4 years in a row

**#45** in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking (2020)

**#84** in the QS World University Rankings (2021)

## KU LEUVEN IN NUMBERS



FOUNDED IN  
**1425**



**15**  
FACULTIES

## A RESEARCH-DRIVEN UNIVERSITY

**#1** in the European Commission's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme (HEI only)

**#5** in the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme (HEI only)

**#17** in the ERC grants programme (HEI only)



**60,057**  
STUDENTS

**1,997**  
PROFESSORS

**9,724**  
RESEARCH AND  
TEACHING STAFF

## KU LEUVEN CAMPUSES

**14** CAMPUSES  
IN **10** CITIES  
ACROSS BELGIUM



**23%**

INTERNATIONAL STAFF  
(14 % PROFESSORS)

**135**

SPIN-OFF COMPANIES



## WHY WORK AT KU LEUVEN?

At KU Leuven, we stimulate and support academics to innovate, push their boundaries and contribute to the advancement of society – in brief, to fulfil their professional ambitions.

We are aware that **a university only flourishes thanks to the work of its people.**

We invest in **nurturing all employees' talents**, we foster **collaboration and collegiality**, and **stimulate academic leadership at all levels** of the university to determine and realise the university's goals.

# ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

## A comprehensive university

We offer programmes in 15 faculties and perform research in a wide range of disciplines, from humanities and social sciences, to biomedical sciences, to science, engineering and technology. All of these disciplines are ranked in the top 100 of their field (THE World University Rankings by subject), with half of them in the top 50 worldwide.

## An international community

KU Leuven is home to a vibrant community of international students and staff members from various backgrounds, cultures and nationalities. Together, they represent over 150 countries. The university also works with a select number of top-level partner institutions worldwide, and stimulates purposeful international mobility and intensive research cooperation. Internationalisation is a key policy area for the university's board.

## A first class research environment

KU Leuven ranks highly in various global listings, has a strong reputation in all academic fields, and has been praised for several years now as Europe's most innovative university. We provide financial support for both fundamental and applied research projects. Our well-developed Research Coordination Office assists on an individual basis developing your research strategy, securing external research funding and managing your research projects.

[www.kuleuven.be/research](http://www.kuleuven.be/research)

## Fostering interdisciplinary dialogue

We actively facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration throughout the university to generate robust academic solutions to major societal challenges. Interdisciplinary research is embedded in the core mission of the 'Leuven Institutes'. We offer specific funding schemes and interdisciplinary staff and PhD appointments.

For 30 years now, KU Leuven has been home to an impressive collection of bananas that already contains over 1,500 samples and is the biggest in its kind.





Health House is a unique experience center where you can experience the future of health and care.

## Modern teaching

We work hard to provide innovative, future-oriented and high quality education. KU Leuven values teaching as a means to pass on knowledge and research results to students, and provides modern educational technologies and professionalisation support.

[www.kuleuven.be/education](http://www.kuleuven.be/education)

## Creating societal impact

Strong research contributes to societal development. Improving the general quality of life has always been one of KU Leuven's core values. We contribute to advancing the impact of research through our technology transfer office LRD (KU Leuven Research & Development). LRD employs research experts, lawyers, intellectual property specialists and financial managers who together offer customised support to facilitate collaborations with the industry, patenting, licensing and creating spin-off companies.

[www.lrd.kuleuven.be](http://www.lrd.kuleuven.be)

## State-of-the art core facilities

Through KU Leuven's core facilities you have access to state-of-the-art technologies and infrastructure. These facilities also form networks of research groups, in which interdisciplinary research is stimulated. The collaborations with University Hospitals Leuven enable researchers to contribute to translational and clinical research.

# ACADEMIC CAREERS

KU Leuven has four professorial ranks: assistant professor, associate professor, professor and full professor. Together, they form the 'senior academic staff' (ZAP).

## Tailored support for junior & senior profiles

Junior profiles usually start in an assistant professor tenure track position. Our tenure track is a non-competitive five-year programme in which assistant professors are individually coached to acquire the qualifications of an associate professor. The various mutual commitments between the assistant professor and KU Leuven are determined at the start of the track and feedback is provided at regular intervals.

More senior profiles are hired in one of the higher professorial ranks: associate professor, professor or full professor. Tailored advice and solutions are available to ease the relocation of research projects, staff or equipment from another university or research institution.

Both junior and senior profiles are provided with a starting grant to facilitate scientific onboarding and accelerate research. We further facilitate the start of your career at KU Leuven with a system of academic coaches, an introduction programme and professional support for all aspects of your new position.

## Career progress

At KU Leuven, there is no hierarchical relationship between the professorial ranks. From the start of their career, all senior academic staff members are considered as independent academics and have full autonomy in building their own research group, applying for funding and supervising PhD students.

Assistant professors whose tenure track is positively assessed are offered a tenured position as an associate professor. Further career progress to a higher rank is possible by requesting a promotion, which is granted based on a performance-related evaluation by a domain-specific assessment committee of peers.

## Conditions of employment

KU Leuven salaries for senior academic staff follow the nationally set salary scales. Together with a set of fringe benefits they form an attractive package that enables senior academic staff members to establish a high standard of living. Tenured senior academic staff members have a civil servant classification. This implies, among other things, a more advantageous pension and continued payment of the full wage during periods of (extended) illness and maternity leave. Professors aiming for a long-term or tenured position have to acquire professional working proficiency in Dutch (level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The time spent on learning the language is valued when determining academic commitments.



Ambassador's Lecture by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkol Karman





Opening of the academic year in Leuven



## Professional development

We attach great importance to the broad professional and personal development of our academics and to the diversification of academic careers. We help you tackle the challenges of building and leading a research group and offer training opportunities for professional and personal skills. In career planning and development, special attention is paid to (external) collaboration and internationalisation possibilities, as well as opportunities to broaden or deepen research interests. Moreover, our sabbatical policy ensures periods of academic reflection throughout the career of every senior academic staff member.

## Inclusion and diversity

Diversity inspires new insights, perspectives and ideas. We firmly believe that inclusion of every employee's strengths and talents maximises the chances of achieving excellence in research and education.

We welcome all scholars regardless of gender, age, religion, cultural background, nationality or any functional disability. We stimulate a multiplicity of research opinions and methodologies.

We are mindful of the diverse practical and professional needs of our academics and take these into consideration when determining and assessing professional commitments: a biosketch is used to allow you to qualitatively describe your academic goals, contributions and achievements. We also take into account periods of academic inactivity due to pregnancy, long lasting illness or care duties.

## Sustainable academic careers

KU Leuven wants to create an environment in which individual staff members are able to strive for academic excellence in a sustainable way.

KU Leuven's 'Life@Work' policies were set up to help each staff member find and maintain a good balance between work and other areas of life. The range of initiatives is broad so as to provide solutions to diverse personal situations. To name just a few: KU Leuven offers flexible forms of work and holiday arrangements and several options for (part-time) work, career breaks and sabbaticals. We support families with small children through priority admissions in the KU Leuven childcare facilities, etc. There are also several support services for mental and physical health.

We foster collegiality and the sharing of responsibilities to create synergies, enhance work efficiency and find solutions for work and career planning.



University Residential Area Groot Begijnhof



International School Leuven

# RELOCATION AND INTEGRATION SUPPORT

**More than 20% of all KU Leuven staff have a foreign nationality**, so the university is well set to welcome foreign employees and their families and help with the various aspects of the relocation process.

## Partner (career) support

Relocating to another country often has an even bigger impact on your partner's career than on yours. KU Leuven helps by providing information on the Belgian labour market and by offering career coaching workshops, networking opportunities and language courses.

## Social security and taxes

Living and working in Belgium, living in one country while working in Belgium, or living and working in Belgium with your family living abroad: each situation has its own implications in terms of social security coverage and taxes. KU Leuven helps clarify these implications and provides you with information on the practical steps to take, from joining a health insurance fund to filing your Belgian tax declaration form.

## Housing

KU Leuven has its own residences to assist with temporary housing for international staff and helps you to find accommodation on the private housing market.

## Childcare and schooling

KU Leuven has childcare facilities with priority admission for children of international faculty members.

The quality of primary and secondary education in the local schools in Flanders is excellent. These schools use Dutch as the educational language. French-speaking education is possible in Brussels or Wallonia (only about 15 kilometres from Leuven). Several schools organise special support for children with a different native language. The schools are subsidised, so no extra tuition fees are applicable. In addition, KU Leuven is a founding partner of the International School of Leuven, a school for pre-primary and primary education with an English-taught curriculum. Other international schools with English-taught, French-taught or German-taught curricula are located in nearby cities like Brussels, Ghent and Antwerp.

## Immigration and registration

When relocating from a country outside of the European Economic Area or Switzerland, you will have to obtain permission to reside and work in Belgium. KU Leuven will submit this application for you and will follow up on your immigration process as well as that of your family.





Staff celebration



University trail

## YOUR WORK LOCATION AT KU LEUVEN

### Learning Dutch

KU Leuven has its own language institute with a broad range of free Dutch courses and individual coaching for international staff members. We also have free offerings for partners.

### Social and cultural activities

Within the KU Leuven university community you can find diverse social, cultural and leisure associations as well as many different organised activities. Buddies are matched with new arrivals to welcome our international staff and help you feel at home.

[www.kuleuven.be/relocating](http://www.kuleuven.be/relocating)

Due to a reform in the Flemish higher education landscape integrating academic university college programs into universities, as of 2013 KU Leuven has 14 campuses in 10 different cities in Belgium. This allows students to enrol in higher education close to home.

The largest campus – home to the large majority of our international staff members – is in Leuven. Leuven is a small but lively and family-friendly city in the centre of Belgium, only 25 km from Brussels and 15 km from the international airport. Leuven is the capital of the province of Flemish Brabant. It has about 100,000 inhabitants and hosts an additional 45,000 students.

KU Leuven also has campuses in the other provincial capitals of Flanders: Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges and Hasselt (Diepenbeek). Our campus in Brussels, the capital of both Belgium and Europe, is especially attractive to many degree-seeking international students. The campuses of Aalst, St.-Katelijne-Waver and Geel are smaller and limited to industrial engineering programmes. Our campus in Kortrijk gives students living in the west of the country the possibility to follow one of several bachelor programmes close to home.

Belgium is a small country and has a well-developed road and rail network with cheap and frequent public transport services, making it easy to commute from one city to another, or to commute in from the countryside, whichever you may prefer.

## LIVING IN BELGIUM

Belgium has much to offer. It is a place rich in art, history, and architecture. Gastronomy has a special place in the hearts of the Belgian people, resulting in many excellent restaurants and the availability of an overwhelming range of top quality food products from all over the world in our supermarkets. We are famous for our dynamic cultural scene and music festivals.

We have three official languages – Dutch, French and German – and the level of English proficiency is generally quite high. The country is located in the heart of Europe and, as such, is an ideal base for exploring the rest of Europe. London, Paris, Cologne, and Amsterdam are all a proverbial stone's throw away. Many international organisations and companies as well as the European Union have their headquarters in Belgium.

Belgium also has a high standard of living. In international comparative reports, Belgian healthcare, childcare and schooling often stand out as being of very high quality, available at little or no cost. The extensive social security system guarantees advantageous support arrangements in case of care duties (small children, medical assistance, etc.), illness or retirement.

Belgians are known to be quite reserved at first, but once you get to know them, you will see that they are sincere and loyal people.

## INTERESTED IN A CAREER AT KU LEUVEN?

Take a look at the KU Leuven job site:  
[www.kuleuven.be/jobsite](http://www.kuleuven.be/jobsite)

Or contact our HR professionals for further information:  
[HRsenioracademicstaff@KULeuven.be](mailto:HRsenioracademicstaff@KULeuven.be)

Organisational structure of KU Leuven:  
[www.kuleuven.be/organigram/eng](http://www.kuleuven.be/organigram/eng)



Halle, Hallerbos



Brussels, Atomium



Antwerp, port house



Leuven, old market



Bruges, belfry



Belgian chocolates



KU LEUVEN  
Oude Markt 13 Box 5005  
3000 LEUVEN, Belgium  
[www.kuleuven.be/english](http://www.kuleuven.be/english)



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