

# PhD position on research ethics

Ref. BAP-2021-605

A successful candidate will be selected to work on two research projects coordinated by the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law (an interdisciplinary centre that performs research on ethical and societal issues with regard to innovations in biomedical research and health care, [www.cbmer.be](http://www.cbmer.be)). Staff members of this center publish their work in international peer reviewed journals, participate in national and international research projects, and provide advice to academic and professional organizations.

[HTTP://www.cbmer.be](http://www.cbmer.be)

## Project

The researcher that will be hired will lead research activities in the domain of research ethics in two different projects. The main focus will be on a project funded by the CELSA Alliance (KU Leuven – Jagiellonian University Medical College) that will focus on the ethical aspects related to research strategies that purposefully mislead research participants. Although methodologies that use deception in their design could potentially increase relevant scientific knowledge in a huge number of areas, there is a lack of understanding about the conditions under which such a methodology is justified and a lack of clarity about what constitutes an appropriate context in which research participants can be deceived. Therefore, the use of deception in research studies has been heavily criticized because of ethical concerns regarding its use; because of the lack of proper informed consent and the fact of misleading the participant to the real purpose of the study. More recently, the development of the General Data Protection Regulation challenges the use of deception even more. This project will allow (1) to systematically identify research studies that used deception; (2) to investigate the experiences of researchers who have used a methodology in which deception was used; and (3) to systematically map research ethics guidelines and recommendations in order to analyse to what extent and the ways in which recommendations deal with the use of deception in research. This project will be jointly supervised with professor Jan Piasecki (Jagiellonian University Medical College) and professor Dieter Baeyens (Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, KU Leuven).

Alongside the first project, the researcher will be involved in a bilateral Flanders (Belgium)- Canada project funded through the Research Foundation Flanders on the ethical aspects related to the research use of crowdsourced medical data for biomedical research. Smartphone applications for health are being increasingly used as a platform for collecting and sharing large volumes of crowdsourced personal health data for biomedical research and algorithm training. Consumer genetics products are similarly allowing individuals to have direct access to their own genetic data and to share such data with researchers. Using smartphone and genetic data in these ways presents numerous opportunities to expand biomedical knowledge, though it also raises certain risks. Some of these include risks to personal privacy and risks associated with unclear ethical and legal obligations on the part of app developers and researchers.

The research activities will be done through a multi-disciplinary lens and by studying the ethical and policy concerns both from a theoretical and from an empirical perspective through interviews with experts and stakeholders.

## Profile

- Master degree as prerequisite
- An outstanding record of undergraduate and master's degree work;
- Highly motivated candidate with strong interest in the ethical and social aspects of research;
- Experience with empirical qualitative methods in the social and health sciences (e.g., document analysis, interviews);
- Proven proficiency in English, both written and orally;
- Strong writing and analytical skills;
- Good communication and organization skills;
- Ability to meet deadlines and complete a PhD thesis within the defined project time;
- Capacity to work both as an independent researcher and as part of a team;
- Ability to work in an interdisciplinary context.

## Offer

We are offering one full time appointment (100%) as a PhD student for a period of 4 years, within the Centre for Biomedical Ethics and Law (Faculty of Medicine, KU Leuven). The starting date can be negotiated.

## Interested?

For more information please contact Prof. dr. Pascal Borry, tel.: +32 16 37 95 17, mail: [pascal.borry@kuleuven.be](mailto:pascal.borry@kuleuven.be) or Prof. dr. Dieter Baeyens, tel.: +32 16 32 60 68, mail: [dieter.baeyens@kuleuven.be](mailto:dieter.baeyens@kuleuven.be).

Please add in your application besides the required parts a copy of a recent academic publication or a recent paper or master thesis, as well as the names and contact details of two referees.

Interviews are currently planned on Thursday 9 September 2021.

You can apply for this job no later than August 26, 2021 via the online application tool :

<http://www.kuleuven.be/eapplyingforjobs/light/60046348>

KU Leuven seeks to foster an environment where all talents can flourish, regardless of gender, age, cultural background, nationality or impairments. If you have any questions relating to accessibility or support, please contact us at [diversiteit.HR@kuleuven.be](mailto:diversiteit.HR@kuleuven.be).