



## UNIVERSITAS SCHOLARSHIPS – CALL 2023

### MSc and PhD scholarship programme for students from developing countries

#### List of abbreviations:

ANGS:	Actors of the non-governmental Cooperation (Actoren van de Niet-Gouvernementele Samenwerking)
BAOW:	Advisory Body for Development Cooperation (VUB)
DGD:	Directorate General for Development Cooperation
IRMO:	International Relations office (VUB)
RIB:	Council for International Policy (VUB)
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goal
UOS:	University Development Cooperation
VLIR-UOS:	Flemish Interuniversity Council – University Development Cooperation

## 1. CONTEXT

UNIVERSITAS, a scholarship programme approved by the RIB on 5 November 2019, aims at strengthening existing cooperations between VUB and partners in the Global South. Consequently, the UNIVERSITAS scholarships will, as part of the internationalisation policy of VUB, contribute to the realisation of the SDGs.

An annual budget of 206.000 EUR is available for MSc/PhD scholarships for graduates from partner institutions from the South, conditionally the attribution of this central budget to IRMO.

## 2. GENERAL OUTLINE

The general objective of this programme is to generate substantial and relevant added value and impact, both for VUB and institutions in the partner countries, building upon an already existing collaboration between both institutions.

This call is **not meant for individual scholarship applications** by a student. Grants are awarded to candidates from an institution in a partner country that is already involved in sustainable development cooperation activities with VUB:

- The local institution must be located in one of the countries of the partner country list (see section 7);
- The application for one or more scholarships is jointly elaborated by two supervisors, one at VUB and one at the partner institution. The VUB supervisor cannot submit more than one application per call. An application can only include one or more scholarships for candidates from the same partner university ;
- The scholarships have to be linked to ongoing sustainable development cooperation activities at research group/department/faculty level. The grants awarded must be used to strengthen this collaboration. The grants are not meant to be used as seed money;
- In line with the Theory of Change, these grants must contribute to the intended long-term change of an already existing development-relevant collaboration.

### 3. INITIAL MASTER AND DOCTORAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The supervisors decide to award initial master grants, doctoral scholarships or a combination of both, depending on the activity or project they have to support.

Advanced masters are not eligible. In all cases, the student must obtain a diploma from VUB and has to enrol each year at VUB, also for interuniversity programmes.

### 4. FUNDING

The application for one or more Master and/or PhD scholarships cannot exceed **100.000 EUR**. This is the maximum amount that can be requested and granted. When required, this budget can be complemented by other funds of the department/research group.

The period during which the allocated budget can be used is as follows:

- Initial master: 1 or 2 years depending on the organization of the master programme (60 or 120 ECTS)
- PhD: maximum 5 years

Any remaining budget will return to the UNIVERSITAS scholarship fund for future calls. The scholarship payments are handled by the International Relations Office through a separate internal PKC account.

The allowances follow the scholarship guidelines as specified in the current VLIR-UOS financial guidelines, and are as follows:



#### FOR A FULL MASTER PROGRAMME

Study allowance: 1,400 EUR/month includes

- living expenses, board and lodging in Belgium (covers the cost of meals, personal transportation, personal expenses (e.g. internet) and accommodation)
- health insurance
- installation costs in Belgium
- indirect travel costs (including visa costs)
- tuition fee.

The scholar is also entitled to a return ticket in economy class to Belgium, including any necessary local flights at the start of the scholarship and a ticket to return to their country of residence at the end of the scholarship. In case of a 2 year Master, a return plane ticket between year 1 and 2 can also be included in the budget.

In case of an interuniversity programme: local travel costs between the different Belgian institutions can also be covered by the awarded grant, if they are considered in the budget.

PLEASE NOTE that VLIR-UOS [Scholarship guidelines](#) can be updated annually.

#### FOR A PHD WITH A MAXIMUM OF 24 MONTHS OF STAY IN BELGIUM

A stay in Belgium (or the Schengen area) cannot be longer than 10 consecutive months, and a maximum of 24 months stay in Belgium can be budgeted for the full PhD-period (which has a maximum of five years).

Research allowance: 1,900 EUR/month includes

- living expenses, board and lodging in Belgium (covers the cost of meals, personal transportation, personal expenses (e.g. internet) and accommodation)
- health insurance
- installation costs in Belgium
- indirect travel costs
- tuition fee.

Scholars are also entitled to one return ticket in economy class per stay in Belgium, including any necessary local flights (indicative number of 4 return tickets in total). The supervision and research fee for a PhD trajectory is a lump sum of 7,440 EUR in total. This fee is intended to cover material and operational costs associated with the scholar's specific research. It can also be used to cover the attending of a conference or training programme participation of the scholar.

#### GENERAL

All other travel (e.g. travel Flemish supervisor) and operational costs must be paid on a different budget. With the UNIVERSITAS-funding, only economy class flight and/or train tickets can be purchased.

The grants are personal and meant for the student to study or perform research in Belgium. Extra costs for family (e.g. family reunion) will be borne by the student.

## 5. WHO CAN SUBMIT A PROPOSAL?

An UNIVERSITAS scholarship application can be submitted by any **ZAP-member of VUB**. A ZAP-member can only submit **one application per call**. The application must be submitted to the International Relations Office by the supervisors' faculty RIB-representative.

If a RIB-member is applying for a UNIVERSITAS scholarship, then the second ZAP-member of that same faculty and who is member of the RIB must submit the application.

The RIB-member who submits the application to the International Relations Office is responsible for informing the (necessary) appropriate bodies of the faculty.

The above is meant to guarantee the involvement, awareness, and support of the faculties and to improve the coherence between different development cooperation related activities and/or projects within a faculty in line with its policy plan.

## 6. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A SCHOLARSHIP?

### CANDIDATES FOR MASTER SCHOLARSHIPS:

- Must be affiliated to the local institution at the moment of application and remain associated as research or teaching staff at the local institution after obtaining the Master degree;
- Must be permanent resident in the country of the local institution at the time of application and have the nationality of that country, (or of a country included in the partner country list);
- Must be able to present excellent academic credentials;
- Must meet the admission requirements for the chosen master programme.

### CANDIDATES FOR PHD SCHOLARSHIPS:

- Must be and remain employed as research or teaching staff at the local institution and must return to the country of the local institution after obtaining the PhD degree;
- Must be permanent resident in the country of the local institution at the time of application and have the nationality of that country, (or of a country included in the country list);
- Must be able to present excellent academic credentials for the academic programme that allows to apply for a PhD. The period between obtaining the Master's degree and the start of the doctoral study may not exceed 10 years and the candidates' activities during this period should contribute to the expertise gained regarding the PhD-topic;
- Must meet the VUB enrolment requirements for PhD students;
- Residence in Belgium during doctoral studies can be financed for a maximum of 10 consecutive months per year and max. 24 months for the full PhD period by the UNIVERSITAS funding.

Grants for Master and PhD students of institutions where an Institutional University Cooperation programme is running, can be allocated if the content of the chosen Master programme or the research topic of the PhD student is clearly not related to that IUC-programme.

If the content of the chosen Master programme or the research topic of the PhD student is directly connected with the scope of the IUC-programme and if at the moment of application, the IUC-programme is in year 10, 11 or 12, then all the possibilities offered within the IUC-programme regulations for financing of scholarships of year 10 must have been explored and used, and the financial balances of year 9 and 10 must be less than 5% of the total operational budget of that year. Only then can the scholarship application be accepted.

#### RESERVE CANDIDATES:

It is possible to add a reserve candidate for each proposed candidate. The reserve candidate must comply to the same selection criteria as the effective candidate. A reserve candidate can only replace an effective candidate when the latter declines the scholarship before the start of the academic year or research activities.

### 7. WHICH COUNTRIES ARE ELIGIBLE?

Eligible are the **17 partner of VLIR-UOS in their FYP2 (2022-2027)**. One country, Sri Lanka, was proposed during the 2020 call to be added to the list of eligible countries, thus added to this list for the current 2023 call (see section 8).

The 18 countries are: Benin, Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, Bolivia, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, Philippines, Vietnam, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, Sri Lanka and South Africa.

### 8. CAN COUNTRIES BE ADDED TO THIS LIST OF COUNTRIES?

To enable new countries to be added to the list of eligible countries, there is a possibility to propose new countries in the application form. Upon approval by RIB, the new country **will be included in the next call**.

The request for adding a new country must be accompanied by documents proving that development-relevant activities have already been carried out or/and are ongoing with (a) chosen institution(s) in this new country, with formally approved budgets.

### 9. SELECTION

#### SELECTION PROCEDURE:

All timely submitted applications will be checked for eligibility by the UOS Unit of the International Relations Office. The selection committee will be asked to confirm the eligibility check, and to score the eligible applications. Applications with a score of 65% or more are considered eligible for funding. The approved applications will be ranked according to their score. The funds will be allocated to the applications with the highest scores. The final selection is done by the RIB.



## SELECTION CRITERIA

A score will be given for each of the following five criteria:

- **Quality:** coherence of the proposal? Is it well structured? Is all the requested information provided as to allow to give a well-founded score for the other four criteria? Is the proposal clearly written?
- **Effectiveness:** Is it a win-win situation for both institutions, what will be the immediate added value of this application to the objectives of the existing collaboration between VUB and the local institution?
- **Efficiency:** Are all conditions (expertise of the supervisors, existing collaboration, joint selection process, potential candidates) present to guarantee that both locally and at VUB, the research plans can be executed successfully and that the allocated funds can be used optimally?
- **Impact:** What is the added value for VUB and for the local partner in the long run?
- **Sustainability:** what is the commitment of the local institution to retain the candidates after graduation? Which activities are planned for the future by both VUB and the local partner to continue the collaboration? How well are the future activities related to the grant embedded in the strategy/management and/or research policy of the VUB department/faculty?

## COMMUNICATION OF THE SELECTION RESULTS

The selection results by RIB will be communicated by IRMO to the VUB supervisor. The VUB supervisor informs the local supervisor and the selected scholarship candidates.

## 10. FOLLOW-UP AND REPORTING

The progress and/or study results of the supported students must be closely monitored by the VUB supervisor. If problems occur, they must be immediately reported to the BAOW via the UDC unit, so that the necessary adjustments can be made immediately.

Annual progress reports of PhD students and marks sheets of MSc students have to be submitted by the VUB supervisor to the UOS unit as soon as this information is available.

## 11. FREQUENCY OF THE CALL

An annual call is launched by IRMO and sent to the deans, heads of departments and research groups, directors of English taught Master Programmes, RIB and BAOW members.

When necessary, modalities can be adapted by the BAOW and approved by the RIB.



## 12. PLANNING

The timeline of this UNIVERSITAS call is as follows:

Date	Action	Responsible
15 Dec 2022	Launch call	IRMO
20 Feb 2023 17:00	Deadline for application	VUB-supervisor/RIB member
1 March 2023	Eligibility check and pre-selection by selection committee	IRMO & selection committee
21 March 2022	Selection by RIB	RIB
31 March 2023	Selected MSc students apply in CALI	Students

This timeline is important for Master students to start their study at VUB in academic year 2023 -2024, as the deadline for application in Cali is 31 March 2023.

The VUB supervisor is requested to provide the students with all information and documents required for the application as soon as the UNIVERSITAS call is launched. This information can be found in the following link: <https://www.vub.be/en/studying-at-the-vub/how-to-apply#required-documents>.

Once selected, the application procedure of Master students has to be followed up very strictly by the VUB supervisor in order to comply with the deadline for application in Cali.

## 13. SUBMISSION AND CONTACT

Submission: The application form and annexes must be submitted by e-mail to [ICOS@vub.be](mailto:ICOS@vub.be) by the supervisors' faculty RIB-representative.

Contact for more information: [ICOS@vub.be](mailto:ICOS@vub.be) or [francoise.de.cupere@vub.be](mailto:francoise.de.cupere@vub.be)



#### 14. INDICATIVE AMOUNTS

The amounts listed below are an estimation of the cost of a Master and PhD student within this UNIVERSITAS scholarship scheme. They can be used to calculate the budget needed. The requested budget should be in agreement with the planned scholarships.

One year Master	Unit	Times the unit	Total
Allowance	1.400 €	10 or 12	16.800 €
Travel by plane	1.200 €	2	2.400 €
<b>Indicative total</b>			<b>19.200 €</b>

Two year Master	Unit	Times the unit	Total
Allowance	1.400 €	22 or 24	33.600 €
Travel by plane (variable)	1.200 €	3	3.600 €
Interuniversity transport if relevant (indicative)			900 €
<b>Indicative total</b>			<b>38.100 €</b>

PhD	Unit	Times the unit	Total
Travel by plane (variable)	1.200 €	5	6.000 €
Allowance	1.900 €	24	45.600 €
Research allowance (can not be used for travel of the Flemish promotor)	310 €	24	7.440 €
<b>Indicative total</b>			<b>59.040 €</b>