

VACANCY FOR 1 PHD OR POST-DOCTORAL POSITION

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Deadline for applications	April 11, 2021
Foreseen starting date	November 1, 2021
Department	Faculty of Law and Criminology – Human Rights Center
Contract	Limited duration (4 years for a doctoral position; up to 3 years for a post-doctoral position)
Degree requirements	Master's degree in law or a relevant social science if applying to the doctoral position; PhD degree in law or a relevant social science if applying to the post-doctoral position
Occupancy rate	100%
Vacancy Type	Research

JOB DESCRIPTION

We are seeking to fill one full-time research position as part of the iBOF project “Future-proofing human rights. Developing thicker forms of accountability”.

This position will be filled at either **doctoral or post-doctorate** level, as appropriate in view of the CV and experience of the post-holder.

To be eligible for the position as a PhD candidate, your highest degree must be a MA in Law and/or a relevant Social Sciences discipline. To be eligible for the position as a post-doctoral researcher, you must have a PhD in Law and/or a relevant Social Sciences discipline.

If the selected candidate is a PhD candidate, the position is for 48 months. If the selected candidate is a post-doctoral fellow, the position is for a maximum of 36 months (less if the project can be completed in a shorter period).

The postholder will become a member of the **Human Rights Centre at the Faculty of Law and Criminology and** will collaborate with colleagues at **other Flemish Universities** (mostly remotely). In addition, there will be the opportunity to work alongside the research team completing the **ERC research project “DISSECT: Evidence in International Human Rights Adjudication”** (on which, see <https://dissect.ugent.be/>).

Your task will be to investigate, as part of iBOF research team mentioned above and under the direction of Professor Marie-Benedicte Dembour, **the disappearance from legal consciousness of**

human rights violations, due to lack or neglect of evidence. You will do so by reference to a body of case law emanating from the European Court of Human Rights related, for example, to racial discrimination. You will examine what it is in the evidentiary regime of this Court which causes the disappearance from legal consciousness of the human rights violations upon which you focus, as well as how the said disappearance is experienced by applicants and navigated by legal representatives. You will interrogate the impact of this disappearance on the conceptualization of human rights violations. You will seek to identify good practices by looking at the evidentiary regime developed by other international human rights bodies with a better track-record of finding violations in your area of focus.

You will conduct fieldwork as appropriate.

If you are a doctoral candidate, you will write a PhD thesis; if you are a post-doctoral fellow, you will write academic publications. You will also attend academic conferences and participate in the dissemination of the findings of the research project.

English will be your main language of work.

We encourage candidates from minority groups to apply and have a recruitment process aimed at ensuring inclusion and diversity.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BROADER RESEARCH PROJECT

The position advertised here is one of seven research positions that we are currently seeking to fill in the context of a new research project on accountability for human rights. For more information about the other positions (including at other universities), please see [this page](#).

The overall research project is a multi-disciplinary and multi-method study that seeks to identify a variety of avenues for achieving better human rights protection that can provide the basis for a thicker conceptualization of the notion of (human rights) accountability.

It seeks to strengthen human rights law by identifying means or mechanisms that ensure a thicker form of accountability. This project proposes to further develop the concept of accountability so that it can face up to current social challenges, such as COVID-19, corporate abuse or surveillance dilemmas. Our particular concern is with the disconnect between the formal legal system and the lived experiences of those who suffer harms that could logically be – but are not yet - understood as a human rights violation.

Our overarching research question is: **How can thicker accountability for human rights violations be achieved, so as to ensure better human rights protection in line with the everyday experience of rights holders?** This question breaks down into three sub-questions:

1. What counts/should count, as a human rights violation, i.e. what types of substantive wrongs (do not) trigger accountability in practice?
2. Who can/should be held accountable (i.e. who is a duty-bearer), but now slips through the net?
3. How can the human rights framework be altered to accommodate this, i.e., what are good practices?

Within this overall project, the researcher selected for this vacancy will be working on work package (WP) 3.2., as described in the above section and in [this document](#).

PROFILE OF THE CANDIDATE

In order to be eligible, applicants must:

- hold a master's degree in law or a relevant social science if they are applying to do a PhD; or, alternatively, hold a PhD in law or a relevant social sciences if they are applying to do a post-doctoral study;
- have obtained their degree at the time of application or demonstrate convincingly that they will have that degree in hand by November 1, 2021;
- be fluent in English as their primary working language and as their primary publication language;
- be willing to spend period(s) of time abroad for fieldwork as appropriate and to participate in international conferences.

Furthermore, applicants who meet the following conditions will be ranked higher during the assessment procedure if they can demonstrate that they have:

- good knowledge of the human rights protection and accountability framework, including the European Court of Human Rights and the body/bodies with which this court will be compared;
- practical experience related to the fight against racial discrimination or the proposed case study;
- experience with both legal research and qualitative research methods;
- pre-existing networks relevant to the research and fieldwork.

In addition to these project specific elements, candidates will be selected by reference to the following criteria:

- ability to work both independently and in a multi-disciplinary and international team;
- quality of academic writing/presentation skills;
- capacity and willingness to contribute to the well-being and well-functioning of the teams of which they are part;
- social media experience, or interest therein;
- meticulousness, organization skills and capacity to manage deadlines.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply, please send us:

- A **cover letter** (double-spaced, font 12, 4 pages maximum) outlining your motivation, your research proposal, and what you are bringing to both your specific and the broader research projects;
- a **detailed CV** (including publications, if any);
- a **transcript of your degree(s) and grades**

- If your diplomas are in a language other than Belgium's national languages (Dutch, French or German) or English, their translation in one of the aforementioned languages;
- two **letters of recommendation**; and
- a **writing sample** in English, ideally an academic or research paper on a topic related to your research proposal (10.000 words maximum).

Applicants are asked to submit these documents as **one pdf file** via **email** to research.hrc@ugent.be with the subject line "Application - iBOF - MBD".

We may not be able to process applications that do not follow the formal requirements indicated above.

The deadline for submission is **April 11, 2021**.

The foreseen starting date is **November 1, 2021**.

For inquiries, please contact prof. dr. Marie-Benedicte Dembour at mariebene.dembour@ugent.be

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The submitted dossier will form the basis of a first selection. Longlisted applicants will then be invited to complete a home-based written assignment, probably in the last week of April. Any candidate who may require special facilities should indicate this in their application, and we will try to accommodate their request.

The written assignment will be used to decide which candidates will be shortlisted. Shortlisted applicants will be invited for a video conference interview, which is likely to take place between 20 and 28 May 2021.

This interview will serve to gauge whether the candidates meet all the requirements as well as to rank them by reference to the quality and relevance of their academic and practical experience for this project.

The top-ranked candidate will be offered the job.

The selecting process will be carried out by Prof. Dembour, in collaboration with the project's steering group and the university's human resource department. Should we believe that your skills and expertise are better suited for one of the other vacancies on the project, we will be happy to pass this information along to the relevant PI. If you do not wish for your application to be considered for other positions, please indicate this explicitly in your cover letter.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Several elements, including prior experience and family situation, will be factored into the calculation of the salary offered.

The starting salary is € 2165 net per month for a PhD candidate without family and previous relevant experience.

The University also offers several social benefits to which the candidate has access, such as commuter allowances, access to university restaurants. More information can be found [here](#).

The position must result in a PhD thesis (PhD candidate) or appropriate publications (post-doctoral position) within the contract period.

The selected candidate will be expected to live in or near Ghent, except when travelling and spending periods of time elsewhere as required by their study.

In Ghent, you will be part of a small research team working on related topics as part of the iBOF research project as well as working alongside the DISSECT research team. Beyond Ghent, you will be part of the larger research team working on the iBOF project “Future-proofing human right. Developing thicker forms of accountability”. Your institutional base will be the Human Rights Center of the Faculty of Law and Criminology of Ghent University (see below).

The selected candidate can enroll in relevant courses at the University of Ghent and beyond.

INSTITUTIONAL EMBEDDING

Ghent University

[Ghent University](#) is a top 100 university and one of the major universities in Belgium. Our 11 faculties offer a wide range of courses and conduct in-depth research within a wide range of scientific domains.

Ghent University occupies a specific position among the Flemish universities. We are a socially committed and pluralistic university that is open to all students, regardless of their ideological, political, cultural or social background.

In its mission statement, Ghent University identifies itself as a socially committed university. This implies that the institution reflects about the positive impact that its activities can have upon society, and that it attempts to optimize that impact. It also implies the reflection about the potential negative impact of activities upon society, and the attempt of minimizing such impact.

Research is the motor of Ghent University. Boundaries are pushed. Researchers make discoveries. These discoveries impact people worldwide, give new impulses to teaching, and provide a foundation for a knowledge society.

Over the course of its 200-year history Ghent University has built up a strong scientific reputation. Ghent University invests both in fundamental, high risk science as in applied research. The university is known for its scientific expertise in life sciences and medicine, materials and agricultural science, veterinary medicine, psychology and history, and many more.

Faculty of Law and Criminology

The Faculty provides academic teaching and services based on innovative scientific research.

The education within these programmes is supported by the innovative scientific research performed within the 3 faculty departments encompassing all possible disciplines within the fields of law and criminological sciences.

Human Rights Center

The Human Rights Centre at the Faculty of Law and Criminology at Ghent University is an academic center specialized in human rights law. We are proud of our dynamic international team, counting many young researchers and of our broad research and teaching expertise, covering international, regional, national and comparative law of human rights. Human Rights Centre members work on a range of thematic issues, including legal pluralism, freedom of expression, gender, indigenous peoples' rights, and the European Court of Human Rights. Members also actively engage with human rights practice by supervising clinical projects and submitting third-party interventions to the European Court of Human Rights.

DIVERSITY

We ensure equal opportunities, equal treatment and equal access to the vacancies for all who apply. We ensure an objective and non-biased assessment procedure. Origin, ethnicity, gender, age, employment disability, sexual orientation and other identity factors will not be a factor in assessing candidates' competences. Candidates belonging to vulnerable or minority groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more information about the project, please click [here](#).

For more information about the position, please write to prof. dr. Marie-Benedicte Dembour (mariebene-dembour@ugent.be).

For more information about the other vacancies in this project, please click [here](#).