

# Academic position in Media and Health Communication

Ref. ZAP-2020-182

The fulltime professor position (open-rank) will be held within the Leuven School for Mass Communication Research, a research unit within the Department of Communication Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences, KU Leuven (Belgium). KU Leuven represents a leading academic institution in Europe that is currently by far the largest university in Belgium in terms of research funding and expenditure. The university's mission is to provide excellence in academic education and research and to offer a distinguished service to society. Owing to KU Leuven's cutting-edge research, KU Leuven is a charter member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) and is consistently ranked among the top 10 universities in Europe.

Within KU Leuven, the Leuven School of Mass Communication Research (SMCR) represents a pioneering institution for media effects research. SMCR strives to contribute to the most advanced methodological techniques and theoretical insights in communication studies, cognitive and social psychology, sociology, and public health. The research focus lies on the use of information- and entertainment media (including social media, ICT, television, games, mobile devices), and on how these uses may harm or enhance various components of individuals' wellbeing. We have a strong expertise in explaining the processes through which various forms of media use affect physical, psychological and social wellbeing in the long run, and the conditions under which these processes occur. Therefore, a series of advanced methods are applied, including longitudinal survey studies, daily diary studies and content analysis. Issues studied in recent years include alcohol and drug use, sexuality and sexism, aggression, risk taking, depression, self-harm, (positive) body image, sleep, mental wellbeing, health information seeking, self-esteem, parental mediation, and nutrition.

The School adheres to the highest academic standards and strives towards publishing its research in top academic journals (e.g., Journal of Communication, Human Communication Research, New Media & Society). For this research, prestigious grants from multiple funding agencies are attributed yearly and SMCR's excellent research has been awarded on a yearly basis by different international and interdisciplinary organizations. SMCR staff is involved in various national and international multidisciplinary research projects, primarily of fundamental nature but also with societal relevance

<https://soc.kuleuven.be/smc>

## Duties

### Research

You will be expected to develop a research program, aim at excellent scientific output of international level, and support and promote national and international research collaborations in the broad field of health communication and in the context of the School for Mass Communication Research. Your research focuses on the development of innovative theory and advanced research techniques in this field. You have a strong background in predominantly quantitative research methods and have demonstrated research excellence in various ways (e.g., top ranked ISI publications, awards, societal impact etc.).

With this vacancy we aim to further strengthen and expand the research at SMCR. We are looking for a candidate with a strong experience in research in communication and the advancement of health and wellbeing in society. Specifically, your research may encompass one of the following subdomains of health communication: (1) effects of media use on various health (e.g., addiction, suicide,...) or societal issues (e.g., hate speech, sustainability,...), and ways of responding to these effects with communication and intervention, (2) the development and testing of mediated promotion and intervention campaigns aiming to advance public health or societal wellbeing, (3) health information seeking and effects (e.g., resistance to health information, public service announcements,...), and/or (4) technological perspectives on health communication (e.g., effects of VR on health outcomes, potential of mHealth in health promotion, artificial intelligence,...).

Your research may focus on the (strategic) uses or effects of different types of media including but not limited to, social media, entertainment media, television, news media, apps, video games, blogs, websites, serious games, virtual reality etc.

In close collaboration with SMCR staff, you contribute to the existing lines of research and set up your own program through the acquisition of research funding.

### Teaching

The Department of Communication Science, consisting of two research groups SMCR and IMS, organizes the Bachelor and Master of Communication Science, the (English) Master in Digital Media and Society, and is involved in the Master's program of Business Communication and Journalism. Your teaching will contain several courses at the Bachelor's and Master's level and will include theoretical and methodological courses on communication science in general and health communication in particular. You have experience in lecturing large groups and you have a broad employability due to in-depth and detailed knowledge about the social sciences, media sociology and media psychology. You supervise students working on their masterthesis and PhD students.

Your teaching is expected to meet the KU Leuven standards regarding academic program level and orientation and to be in keeping with the educational vision of KU Leuven. Commitment to the quality of education as a whole is naturally understood.

### Service

You provide scientific, social and internal services. This is reflected, among other things, in a constructive contribution to education and research, as part of a team's collective projects (e.g. through participation in meetings, teacher days, information sessions, recruitment activities, exchange programs).

### Profile

Applicants hold a Ph.D. degree in communication sciences, social sciences, psychology, public health or an equivalent diploma. We seek a scholar with a broad theoretical- and interdisciplinary interest and a strong background in quantitative research methods, whose research relates to and complements the current research lines at SMCR with a strong health communication profile. The successful candidate has an excellent research record as evidenced by more than one dimension, e.g., the quality of his/her PhD research, high-level publications in the important journals of our field (i.e., ICA journals) and related fields, research impact (e.g., citations) and acquired research funding. We value professional behavior and collegiality, and will encourage the candidate to collaborate with SMCR researchers as well as with interdisciplinary research groups and centers within KU Leuven. The candidate has a large international network and is eager to further develop this within the context of SMCR.

Applicants have demonstrated excellent teaching skills which preferably include experience in teaching large groups of students.

The official administrative language used at KU Leuven is Dutch. If you do not speak Dutch (or do not speak it well) at the start of employment, KU Leuven will provide language training to enable you to take part in administrative meetings. A thorough knowledge of English is required.

## Offer

We offer a full-time employment in an intellectually challenging and international environment. You will work in Leuven, a historic and lively city located in the heart of Belgium, within 20 minutes from Brussels, and less than two hours from Paris, London and Amsterdam. Depending on your experience and qualification, the position will be filled at one of the levels of the Senior Academic Staff (Tenure Track Professor, Associate Professor, Full Professor). Junior researchers are appointed as assistant professor on the tenure track for a period of five years; after this period and a positive evaluation, they are permanently appointed (or tenured) as an associate professor. The anticipated starting date for this position is September 1, 2021.

To facilitate scientific onboarding and accelerate research in the first phase a starting grant of 100.000 euro is offered to new professors without substantial other funding (e.g., ERC).

KU Leuven welcomes international scholars and their family and provides practical support with regard to immigration and administration, housing, childcare, learning Dutch, partner career coaching,...

## Interested?

For more information please contact Prof. dr. Kathleen Beullens, tel.: +32 16 32 32 19, mail: [kathleen.beullens@kuleuven.be](mailto:kathleen.beullens@kuleuven.be) or Prof. dr. Stef Aupers, tel.: +32 16 37 23 07, mail: [stef.aupers@kuleuven.be](mailto:stef.aupers@kuleuven.be) or dean prof. dr. Steven Eggermont, tel: +32 32 32 38, mail: [steven.eggermont@kuleuven.be](mailto:steven.eggermont@kuleuven.be). For problems with online applying, please contact [solliciteren@kuleuven.be](mailto:solliciteren@kuleuven.be).

You can apply for this job no later than February 22, 2021 via the online application tool :

<http://www.kuleuven.be/eapplyingforjobs/55921882>

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).