

Testamentary practices at the periphery of the ius commune tradition: **freedom and oppression** (C. 1420–1620)

Study in Leuven (DC5)

**Doctoral Candidate position within the MSCA Doctoral Network
TESTAMENT.**

About the location

Leuven, a vibrant and historic city, located 25 km east of Brussels, is known as a top European knowledge hub. It is home to KU Leuven, a university which recently celebrated its 600th anniversary. The town is known for its historic architecture. It is bike-friendly and walkable and hosts several museums and churches, the Great Beguinage (UNESCO World Heritage), as well as the “Old Market”, often called the longest bar in Europe.

Description of the project

This DC will be based at KU Leuven, at the Research Unit Roman Law and Legal History. The KU Leuven Research Unit Roman Law and Legal History, which is a department of the Faculty of Law and Criminology, is an interdisciplinary and internationally oriented research group, which currently consists of four professors and about ten junior researchers. Next to a research axis on the history of international law and colonial legal history, the department has a strong focus on and track record in the study of *ius commune*, especially in the early modern period (15th-18th centuries).

The DC will be supervised by prof. dr. Wouter Druwé (legal history, KU Leuven) and co-supervised by prof. dr. Agnieszka Bartoszewicz (social history, University of Warsaw). In the course of this fellowship, the DC will work six months in Warsaw, and three months at the City Archives in Leuven.

This Doctoral Candidate (DC) will focus on the law of last wills within the university town of Leuven, with a special emphasis on joint last wills of spouses. For this research, a variety of sources will be used, including learned legal treatises, consultations by law professors, archives of public notaries and of the Leuven court of aldermen. The DC will study ways in which attempts were made to adapt the existing particular law on joint last wills of spouses to or on the basis of principles of Roman and canon law, and how these attempts were (or were not) the reflection of power relations.

Responsibilities

In the framework of the MSCA Doctoral Network “TESTAMENT”, the Doctoral Candidate will have the following responsibilities:

- Researching the regulatory framework and societal context concerning joint last wills of spouses in Leuven (15th-16th centuries), and preparing a doctoral dissertation on this topic.
- Actively participating in the activities of the TESTAMENT-network (summer and winter schools, monthly online meetings, concluding conference).
- Presenting the research at at least one international conference.
- Writing at least one peer-reviewed scientific article.
- Actively participating in the activities of the Research Unit and of the Doctoral School of KU Leuven.
- Conducting a six-month research stay at the University of Warsaw (which can be divided in several shorter terms).
- Conducting a three-month internship at the City Archives of Leuven, where the DC will be involved inter alia in a citizen science project on the transcription of relevant documentation from the Leuven court of aldermen.

Profile

We are looking for a candidate who meets the following requirements:

- You are creative and ambitious, hard-working, and persistent.
- You have a master's degree in law or history or you will have it by August 2026.
- You have good communicative skills, and the attitude to partake successfully in the work of a research team.
- You have a good command of the English language (spoken and written).
- You have a good passive command of Dutch (or its early modern variant) and/or French (or its early modern variant). Active command of Dutch is an advantage.
- You have a good passive command of Latin.

Eligibility criteria

Supported researchers must be doctoral candidates, i.e. not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the date of the recruitment.

Recruited researchers can be of any nationality and must comply with the following mobility rule: they must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting beneficiary (Belgium) for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before their recruitment date.

Offer

A meaningful job in a dynamic and ambitious university, in an interdisciplinary setting and within an international network. In addition, we offer you:

- Full-time employment for three years, with an intermediate evaluation (go/no-go) after 1 year.
- The gross amount of the doctoral scholarship (tax-free) will be approximately 3.055,61 euro per month if you are single with no dependent family members. It will be higher if you have a registered partner without income and/or dependent child(ren); it will be lower if you have a registered partner with income.
- Additional benefits are in accordance to KU Leuven regulations.
- High-quality training programs and other support to grow into a self-aware, autonomous scientific researcher.

Application process

Do you recognize yourself in this profile and would you like to know more? Please contact prof. Wouter Druwé:
wouter.druwe@kuleuven.be.

We invite you to submit a complete application by using the online application tool. Only applications that are submitted in this way are taken into account.

The application should include a motivation letter (including the topic of your master thesis project), a curriculum vitae (including contact details of at least two references) and a list of your bachelor and master courses and grades (and ranking, if available).

Promising candidates will be contacted by email. Deadline for applications is Monday 20 April. After a first selection, candidates will be invited for a first round of interviews (online) on Wednesday 6 May 2026. A second round at the location of employment (KU Leuven) will be organized a few weeks later. The successful Doctoral Candidate will be employed from 1 September 2026.

Important Dates

Deadline: Monday 20 April

First round of interviews (online): Wednesday 6 May 2026

Second round: at the location of employment (KU Leuven), a few weeks later

Start date: 1 September 2026

Contact & Application

Contact: prof. Wouter Druwé:
wouter.druwe@kuleuven.be

Where to apply:

- Website (KU Leuven): <https://www.kuleuven.be/personeel/jobsite/jobs/60632822>
- Website (euraxess): <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/415300>

There are also vacancies for Doctoral Candidates at other faculties and institutions within the TESTAMENT-Consortium. For more information on those other DC-positions, please consult our project's website. Do not hesitate to apply for all TESTAMENT's vacancies you are eligible for.