

JOB OFFER – PHD CANDIDATE (FULL-TIME, 4 YEARS)

We are looking to recruit a PhD Candidate to work on a project on the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on Belgian healthcare institutions. This is a full-time, four-year research grant, available immediately.

Main tasks

You will work as a PhD Candidate under the joint supervision of Prof. François Pichault (LENTIC/HEC Liège) and Prof. Christophe Dubois (Faculty of Social Sciences/Liège University). As a PhD Candidate, you will conduct a research project on the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on hospitals (of which a detailed description is provided below). Your main tasks will include:

- a) performing a literature review on relevant theme and theories;
- b) collecting empirical data through fieldwork within hospitals;
- c) conducting rigorous analyses of your material;
- d) communicating on your research results in scientific conferences;
- e) producing high-quality outputs, including scientific journal articles and a thesis

As a PhD Candidate, you will enrol in a PhD training program of 60 ECTS to support the realization of your thesis. You are expected to work in relative autonomy, to manage your workload and your tasks, to commit time and effort to the research project, and to display initiative, creativity, and scientific curiosity. PhD Candidates may, depending on their interests and on a case by case basis, be assigned other tasks to broaden their expertise – research-action missions in firms, participation in teaching activities, organization of seminars, etc.

Key competencies

- Requirement: Master degree in Management science, Human Resource Management, Sociology, Work Psychology, or equivalent
- An appetite for research, familiarity with qualitative research methods, and a basic understanding of organizational and management theory
- Proficiency in French (for the field work) and in English (for scientific productions)
- Having obtained a Master thesis with a grade is an asset
- Prior knowledge of the healthcare sector is an asset, but not a prerequisite

How to apply

Applications should include 1) a CV that provides information with regard to the key competencies as specified in this job offer (please indicate the title of your thesis and the grade obtained); 2) a cover letter (max. one page) detailing your motivation for working as a PhD Candidate. Applications must be sent to Grégory Jemine, Postdoctoral Researcher at the LENTIC (gjemine@uliege.be), for January 4 at the latest. Suitable candidates will be recontacted for an interview. For more information, do not hesitate to contact us at the mail address above.

The research project: a post-crisis analysis of organizational learning and emerging norms in healthcare institutions

Since its outbreak in China, the COVID-19 crisis has deeply affected the health sector in various countries worldwide, and most especially hospitals. Early literature suggests that hospitals have faced shortages of material resources and critical supplies as well as major changes in their workforce (such as absenteeism, the creation of temporary teams, and the displacement of specialists). Emergency telework and telemedicine policies had to be implemented, and information as well as communication management became key issues during the crisis. Yet, at the current time, there is little empirical data on how Belgian hospitals managed these challenges, nor on how they plan to draw lessons from the crisis and adapt for the future. In light of the issues highlighted above, the goals of the research project are twofold: first, it aims to provide a better understanding of how Belgian hospitals reacted to the aforementioned challenges, by drawing on crisis management and organizational adaptation theories. Second, the project investigates the return to a “normal”, post-crisis working context in hospitals, hence mobilizing the literature on emerging norms and organizational learning. The research is based upon three qualitative case studies conducted in three hospitals, and will involve interviews with three target groups: deciders and directors; health workers who were at the forefront during the crisis; and health workers who were temporarily displaced for dealing with the crisis. Interviews will be structured on the basis of a literature review that includes at least the four aforementioned challenges (shortage of resources, workforce changes, telemedicine and teleworking emergency implementation, and communication management). The project would be conducted by a PhD student co-supervised by François Pichault and Christophe Dubois.