

Cover letter Bart Smets

I am writing this letter to apply for the position of PhD-student at the LIGB, KU Leuven, in variation in care processes.

I first completed a Bachelor's degree in Social-Economic Sciences at the Universiteit Antwerpen (UA). After earning this degree with distinction, I subsequently enrolled in the Master's program in Applied Economic Sciences: Economic Policy at the same university. Here, I learned the necessary applied econometric and theoretical skills to conduct basic economic research. I also gained my first hands-on experience with economic research during this time by working on a paper on the effect of education on white-collar crime, writing referee reports, and completing my master's thesis on the impact of COVID-19 on global income inequality.

Subsequently, I enrolled in the Master of Advanced Studies in Economics. This research master's is targeted at students who wish to pursue a PhD and subsequent research career (in economics), and its coursework consists of PhD-level courses. By following this program, I have become capable of both understanding and producing state-of-the-art economic research. My master's thesis during this year was written on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on multidimensional inequality in the Netherlands.

Since November 2023, I have worked as a PhD student in health economics (at a department of medicine) at the Universiteit Antwerpen. Here, I work on the economic evaluation of interventions against epidemics. Nevertheless, I have realized that other research, certainly in quantitative public health, would interest me as well. The research described on the variation of care processes thus aligns with my research interests. Professionally, my long-term goal would be to aim for an academic career or to join an international research organization.

Note: Please do not contact my current department without my consent and treat this application as strictly confidential.

I would also have already lost 2 years of my PhD-bursary in Flanders (and cannot apply to FWO), which means that I would only be eligible for a bursary for 2 years. If this is a problem, please disregard this application.