

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. This thus corresponds to the described position. 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.