

5 Key Success Factors for MSCA Individual Fellowship applicants

Also known as *very common mistakes*

1. Not just another research proposal

A MSCA Individual Fellowship project is not just another research proposal. Strictly speaking, the research only counts for 12,5% of the overall score! All the other evaluation criteria need to be answered to as well, with the same rigor, detail and passion as when writing about your research.

2. It is all about the details: never be general, always be specific

General statements like 'I will participate in courses offered by the KU Leuven to expand my generic skills' will *not at all* convince your evaluators. Instead, write something along the lines of 'As I do not yet have experience in supervising students, I will be coaching two Master students with their final-year thesis.'

3. Establish a two-way 'transfer of knowledge'

You, the postdoc, should be learning new things from your supervisor, the research group and the KU Leuven and your supervisor, the research group and the KU Leuven should be learning new things from you. That is, simply said, the two-way transfer of knowledge that the EU is looking for. Sounds easy, right? Yet one of the most common mistakes that applicants make is that they fail to explain how they will transfer the knowledge, skills and network that they already possess to their supervisor, the research group and the KU Leuven.

4. Integrate your project in the KU Leuven

Your supervisor and his/her expertise on your research topic is crucial for the success of this project: there should be a perfect match. But successful projects go beyond the fellow-supervisor alliance. These projects are truly integrated in the KU Leuven and make optimal use of all the available resources. This may mean setting up internal collaborations, appointing co-supervisors or mentors, using infrastructure outside to own research group, taking courses, participating in KU Leuven outreach activities, ... and much more.

5. Last but not least: own your project and show your passion!

Evaluators want to see that you *own* your project: it should be your project, your research, your passion. They need to be convinced that you really want to dedicate the next two years of your life to this and to nothing else. How can you convince them? Be designing a project that you really *are* excited about. Your writings will only breathe passion if you truly *are* passionate about your project.