



Promote your research



1

Very quickly, as a PhD student, you will be led to play the game of scientific communication. Communicating and publishing are a business card for any researcher. It is an important mission to communicate your thoughts and results to your peers, to specialists in the field, to the press and to the general public (1).

1/PUBLISH YOUR WORK

Publishing your research results is an essential step in knowledge dissemination and sharing. Whether it is in the form of a poster, an abstract of a conference, the proceedings of a symposium, the writing of a scientific article or a contribution to a chapter of a book, the publication of your work allows:

- to **make yourself** and your research activities known;
- for **other researchers to reproduce your results** and to use them as a basis for further research and the advancement of science;
- for **funders**, who finance your research, to be able to benefit from its results;
- to **share with the public** scientific advances that have a societal impact (popularization).

The preparation of an article is also a good exercise, as it has to comply with many rules and good practices, such as the fact that in some disciplines it is usually written in English, which is the language of international scientific dissemination.

All the universities of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation have an «institutional directory», which is a centralized database containing all the scientific production of the researchers of a university. Each university has also defined an «institutional mandate in terms of open access dissemination of scientific publications and deposit in the institutional directory».

› Publish in Open Access

The decree of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation on Open Access, applicable as of 15/09/2018, implies a mandatory dissemination of research results in open access. Publishing in Open Access implies the availability, via the net, of all scientific production financed by public fundings. The institutional directories of universities allow to comply with this new regulation, taking into account the different models of Open Access. For more information on Open Access, see the «Rights and duties of researchers» sheet.

› Publish or patent?

If the results of the research work can be patented, any communication is to be avoided before the patent application is filed, in order to avoid disclosing in the public domain results that require prior protection. It is preferable, in this case, to contact the research administration or the «technology transfer office» of your university (for more information, see also the sheet «Rights and duties of researchers»).



2/PARTICIPATING TO SYMPOSIA

Participation to symposia, workshops, conferences and study days is an integral part of the work of a researcher. This is an opportunity to present the progress of one's research, to make oneself known to the scientific community, to get direct feedback on one's results, to exchange on the latest advances in one's field, to develop one's network and to create new scientific collaborations.

› Which symposium?

There are two types of colloquia. Some, such as international conferences, are based on a relatively broad subject, bringing together a large scientific audience and welcoming hundreds, even thousands of people. These events are above all an opportunity to network and make yourself known to the scientific community active in your theme. For young researchers, it is also an opportunity to listen to eminent specialists and to open their minds to new horizons. Other symposia, such as workshops or study days, take place in a smaller circle and focus on a specific issue. These in-depth and specialized scientific discussions contribute to the enrichment of the thesis and the development of high-quality contacts.

› How to participate?

From the beginning and throughout your thesis, you will be asked to discuss and plan your participation in communication events about your research with your thesis supervisor and your support committee. As one of the qualities required of a researcher is curiosity, you are free to inquire about scientific events in your field and offer to participate to additional conferences.

Symposia are often scheduled several months, sometimes several years in advance. It is therefore possible and even advisable to plan them from year to year and to make financial arrangements. Depending on your status as a researcher (assistant, grant-holder, own funds), you can apply for different funds to finance your travel and subsistence expenses, in Belgium and/or abroad.

You can participate in a conference in different ways: as a simple listener, as a poster presenter or as a paper presenter. You will have to submit your application by proposing an abstract, or even the first draft of an article on the subject of your presentation. Please make sure you check the deadlines for registration and respect them. The competition is sometimes tough for internationally renowned events! Registration fees are most often imposed.

If you have the opportunity to present at the conference, allow sufficient preparation time for your presentation and presentation materials. Take care of the content and graphics of your presentation materials, practice, with your stopwatch in hand, in front of other researchers before the day. Check with the conference organizers to find out how the conference will proceed: how long the presentation will last, how much time will be allowed for a talk and/or how much time will be allowed for question from the public presentations. Aim for a slightly shorter timing, especially when speaking in a language that is not your mother language (2).

› Valorization into the doctoral training

Participation in a colloquium can be valued in the doctoral training through credits (conditions to be seen according to the universities).

› Organizing a conference

Would you like to organize a congress or a symposium at your institution? Consult the [University of Geneva](#) or [KU Leuven](#) checklists. Don't hesitate to contact the Communication Service of your institution, which can help you with the logistical aspects of the event.





3/COMMUNICATING WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC: SCIENTIFIC MEDIATION

The aim of scientific mediation is to reconnect the world of science with the rest of society through the transmission of popularized information. The aim is to transmit complex knowledge in an accessible way by banishing scientific jargon without distorting the original purpose.

As a researcher, you have a responsibility to disseminate your research to the general public. By doing so, you contribute to making university research and the research profession accessible to the greatest number of people. You provide the public with the keys to understanding the societal challenges of research and to making informed personal and civic decisions.

Did you know that FWB universities have mediation and science dissemination services?

These services offer many events and activities in which you can actively participate:

- conferences and other meetings between researchers and the public; e.g. ex : [Pint of Science](#) and [MT180](#),
- exhibitions,
- video capsules,
- animations ; e.g.: [Printemps des Sciences](#),
- popular articles, newsletter, and website.

Introducing you to scientific mediation will allow you:

- to acquire transversal competences (popularization, communication)
- to approach your research project from a new angle
- to develop your creativity
- to create collaborations (internal & external)
- to take part in popularization events (conferences, animations, ...)
- to approach new audiences (general public, schools)

For more information, please contact the science popularization services of your institution:

UNamur

ULB

UMons Cell

UCLouvain

ULiège

USaint-Louis Bruxelles

Confluence of Knowledge : <http://cde.unamur.be/>

Several services are offered at the ULB. For more information : doctorat@ulb.be
contact@umons.ac.be

<https://uclouvain.be/fr/sciencetoday>, audrey.binet@uclouvain.be;

Science Infuse : anne.bauwens@uclouvain.be

https://www.campus.uliege.be/cms/c_9347654/fr/culture-scientifique

Research Administration Service : sar@usaintlouis.be





4/COMMUNICATING WITH THE PRESS

Another way to promote your research and expertise to the general public is to communicate with the press. You have not yet collaborated with the press?

Here are a few reasons why you should consider it:

- **To relay your work to the general public**, which is part of your social responsibility as a researcher.
- **To be accountable to the community** if your research receives public funding.
- **To increase your visibility** and create new professional opportunities, be it collaborations with other research institutes, partnerships with external actors, or even a future employer.
- **To contribute to the reputation** of your university.

You do not think the press would be interested in your research? The press needs you for several reasons:

- Because you are a **source of information**.
- Because you're an **expert in a subject**. This is useful for the journalist who wants to "dig deeper" into a current issue.
- Because you deal with social issues that **are of interest to media consumers**.

So here are a few tips for getting the press attention:

- **Target journalists/media** according to your research topic. There is no one type of press, but media with different forms, editorial lines and target audiences.
- **Link** your thesis topic to a news item.
- When communicating with the press, **think about the "4 C's"**: be concrete, concise, clear, and consistent. More concretely, this means expressing an idea in sentences, giving concrete examples related to the everyday life of the general public, contextualizing, avoiding academic writing and being more direct. Don't hesitate to add a touch of humor as well. A good exercise to start: summarize your thesis in a tweet (140 characters).

As well as a few tips for a successful experience with the press:

- As far as oral expression is concerned, **keep your sentences short**, avoid verbal tics, finish each sentence, look at the journalist (and not at the camera). Repeat the journalist's question to begin his answer (example: Do you have many students in your institution? In our institution, we have a lot of students...).
- Be clear about the message you want to get across and stick to it. "Don't answer the reporter's question, but give your answer."
- **Define a skeleton/keywords of the message** you want to convey (do not memorize a text). Practice before an interview.
- **Understand the reporter's angle**, the story he/she wants to tell and the common thread. To do this, don't hesitate to ask for clarification before the interview.
- **Identify the format**. There is a difference between a 30-second interview on the news and a one-hour on-set program with multiple speakers.
- **Ask your university's press office for advice**. Media coaching may be organized at your university.



Some tools to reach the press:

- **Write a press release**, in the form of an A4 page maximum. It must be factual and in line with current events.
- Even if it may be less useful in the context of a thesis, **organizing a press conference** is more justified for example if several actors have to speak or if a field visit (laboratory, event, etc.) is planned.
- **Write a white paper**. Maximum 4500 signs. Diffusion online and/or in the paper version of the targeted media. The waiting period for publication is sometimes long but the advantage is that you master the message from A to Z. Moreover, although it is not the most widely read section of a newspaper, it is the subject of many publications and shares.
- **Join the Expertalia platform**. **Expertalia** is a database of experts from various backgrounds. This tool, developed by the Association of Professional Journalists, was created for dual use. It is intended for journalists, to provide them with an additional tool to facilitate the daily practice of their profession and also for experts, to give them visibility in the media landscape. For more information: www.expertalia.be
- **Be followed on social networks**: follow the news related to your expertise. React, share articles and analysis on social networks and more particularly on Twitter. Social networks are a source of information for the press.
- **Subscribe to the expert guide of your university's press service**. Report your expertise and your contact details. The university maintains an expert guide for journalists and the press office will be able to provide information to journalists looking for an expert.

5

i GOOD TO KNOW:

- You can always refuse an interview
- You can ask to review an article, but the reporter is not obliged to accept your request. In addition, deadlines are often very tight.
- You can use the «off» option, i.e. give the reporter information while asking him or her not to quote you. Be careful to specify to the journalist that this is «off» information.
- You can ask the journalist not to publish the information you have given him or here before a certain date (and time).





Before contacting the press, please contact:

UNamur	presse@unamur.be
ULB	Research Communication Service : com.recherche@ulb.ac.be
UMons	Direction de la Communication : Valery.SAINTGHISLAIN@umons.ac.be
UCLouvain	presse@uclouvain.be
ULiège	Communication Service : communication@uliege.be
USaint-Louis Bruxelles	Communication Department : communication@usaintlouis.be and http://www.usaintlouis.be/sl/691.html

REFERENCES

- (1) Conseil du doctorat de l'Université de Liège, Pars en thèse : le guide du doctorat à l'Université de Liège. Liège, Septembre 2016 version.
- (2) Equality Office of the Universities of Latin Switzerland (Eds.) (2013). Getting off to a good start on your thesis. Guide for doctoral students, Lausanne, BuLa.

INFORMATION & CONTACT

UNamur, Euraxess Unit	euraxess@unamur.be, https://www.unamur.be/en/research/euraxess
ULB, PhD Unit	doctorat@ulb.be, www.ulb.be/doctorat
UMons, Doctorate Unit	phd@umons.ac.be
UCLouvain, PhD cell	doctorat-adre@uclouvain.be
ULiège, PhD Unit doctorat@uliege.be	doctorat@uliege.be, www.recherche.uliege.be/doctorat
USaint-Louis Brussels, Doctorate Unit	doctorat@usaintlouis.be



The PhD@Work project aims to strengthen and enhance the transversal skills of researchers. It is an integrated and inter-university project which has several sub-objectives: to continue the effort already made to strengthen the transversal skills of PhD students and PhDs, in better adequacy with the needs of the socio-economic world; to promote these skills to recruiters in order to improve the employability of PhDs and to support innovation; to develop supports, tools and support for professional integration; and to organize communication and events aimed at PhD students and PhDs as well as academics and companies. The project leader is the ASBL Objectif Recherche and the partner universities are UMONS, UCLouvain, USaint-Louis Brussels, ULB, UNamur and ULiège.



The PhD Welcome Pack was written by UNamur in collaboration with the partners of the PhDs@Work project.

