

**Four PhD positions at UCL
on an interdisciplinary research project :
« Living together in an uncertain world.
What role for the School? »**

The **Interdisciplinary Research Group in Socialisation, education and training (GIRSEF)** based in the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL), offers **four doctoral fellowships** in the context of a four-years research project : **“Living together in an uncertain world. What role for the School?”**. The project is coordinated by **Prof. Eric Mangez in a team made of six PIs:**

Pr. Mathieu Bouhon
Pr. Hugues Draelants
Pr. Xavier Dumay
Pr. Vincent Dupriez
Pr. Eric Mangez
Pr. Marie Verhoeven

This collective and interdisciplinary questions the role of norms and values in contemporary education. More precisely the project aims to put back at the center of the analysis the role of the school in the construction of people's relation to others and to the collectivity. Such reflection seems urgent at a time when the debates to which terrorist attacks have given rise “have put the spotlight on the role schools should play in the civic and moral education of the whole population, in particular by creating a spirit of openness, critique and defense of liberties” and also in “combating radicalization [and] facile amalgams”.

To analyse the school's contemporary role in social integration one has to take into account the radical changes in contemporary societies and their modes of regulation and integration. Modern society is increasingly characterized by a form of normative indeterminacy. What can be expected of a pupil or a teacher? What values should be championed? What objectives should be pursued – equity or efficiency of the system, development of the pupils, their future employability, critical faculties, technical knowledge, creativity, rigour, adaptability? The answers are no longer given. The school can no longer appeal to a shared vision of society as a basis for the process of social integration. How are judgements to be made when the normative references

become unstable and contingent? Is the capacity to cope with uncertainties itself becoming the only possible stable reference? Should different values be taught to different publics? Is it up to the publics or organisations, and no longer the institutions, to determine the values and models that they want to prioritise?

Very little is currently known about how the educational landscape is being reconfigured and about the diversity of experiences that an increasingly fragmented system offers its pupils. In the framework of our project, we start out from the proposition that the normative indeterminacy that is developing produces different effects at different levels: that of educational systems (Axis 1), that of organisations (Axis 2), and that of the actors in the socialisation process (teachers (Axis 3a) and pupils (Axis 3b)). At each of these levels, processes that are indissociably cognitive and normative, but of different natures, are at work with a view to re-establishing references for education and socialisation. We formulate a threefold hypothesis, set out in detail in the description project: contemporary normative indeterminacy contributes to:

- (1) **the development and expansion** of a global governance of education, capable of absorbing more and more elements through the (inevitably reductive) self-referential prism of performance (Axis 1);
- (2) **fragmentation** of the educational institution into different organisations each taking specific normative orientations (Axis 2);
- (3) **growing complexity and diversity** of the experience of socialisation, which increasingly imposes on young people and their teachers the burden of reducing and ordering the excess of possibilities (the lack of certainties) that confronts them (Axes 3a “Teachers” and 3b “Pupils”)

Four doctoral theses, in sociology and sciences of education, will be written in the framework of this project. Each thesis will be linked to one of the four axis (axis 1, axis 2, axis 3a, axis 3b). Specific requirements for each position are described below.

The full description of the project will be sent to the candidates upon request: please send an email to Dominique Demey, dominique.demey@uclouvain.be.

The PhD fellows will be employed for 48 months full-time, ideally starting on October the 1st 2017, and by the end of this period they will have to submit a PhD dissertation linked to their specific research axis.

Axis 1 : The governance of educational systems

PhD candidate working on **axis 1** will:

- write his/her PhD on European and global governance of education, and the role played by social movements and interest groups in this context;
- collect and analyze European documentation (E&T 2020) by using qualitative and lexicometric methods
observe and analyze E&T2020 working groups at work
- prepare and conduct interviews with multiple stakeholders (participants to the OMC, politicians, experts, social movements) on the European scene;
- disseminate the project's results through research papers in international peer-reviewed journals, and communications at national and international conferences.

Applicants (axis 1) must

- be in possession of a master's degree¹ in Sociology, Political Sciences or Education Sciences.
- write and speak fluently in English and French;
- have a strong training background in qualitative methods;
- and preferably credit some ability of independent thinking and writing through, for example, reports and peer-reviewed publications.

Axis 2 : The level of organizations

PhD candidate working on **axis 1** will:

- write his/her PhD on diversification of the educational offer and the role organizations play in the restructuring of the field ;
- prepare and conduct interviews with multiple stakeholders (head of schools, entrepreneurs) mostly at the level of French speaking educational system;
- map the established or new actors (entrepreneurs, organisations, populations of organisations) by identifying the finalities that they prioritise or deprecate and the modes of organisation of the educational offer that they promote
- carry out a set of 6 to 8 in-depth, longitudinal analyses of cases of the development and institutionalization of alternative educational offers.
- disseminate the project's results through research papers in international peer-reviewed journals, and communications at national and international conferences.

Applicants (axis 2) must

- be in possession of a master's degree¹ in Sociology or Education Sciences.
- write and speak fluently in French and English;
- have a strong training background in qualitative methods;
- and preferably credit some ability of independent thinking and writing through, for example, reports and peer-reviewed publications.

¹ Candidates who have not yet completed their degree but plan to do so by September 2017 the latest are welcome to apply.

Axis 3a : The level of teachers and professionals in the socialization process

PhD candidate working on **axis 1** will:

- write his/her PhD on the way education professionals related to norms and values in their interaction with pupils ;
- prepare and conduct interviews with teachers and other education professionals;
- observe and analyze educational interactions;
- devise teachers questionnaire; analyze data from surveys by questionnaire (teachers aspect)
- disseminate the project's results through research papers in international peer-reviewed journals, and communications at national and international conferences.

Applicants (axis 3a) must

- be in possession of a master's degree² preferably in Education Sciences, or in sociology.
- write and speak fluently in French and English;
- have a strong training background in qualitative and quantitative methods;
- and preferably credit some ability of independent thinking and writing through, for example, reports and peer-reviewed publications.

Axis 3b : The level of pupils

PhD candidate working on **axis 3b** will:

- write his/her PhD on pupil socialization and the way they relate to norms and values;
- prepare and conduct interviews with pupils attending contrasted institutions;
- devise pupil questionnaire; analyze data from surveys by questionnaire (pupils aspect)
- disseminate the project's results through research papers in international peer-reviewed journals, and communications at national and international conferences.

Applicants (axis 3a) must :

- be in possession of a master's degree² in sociology.
- write and speak fluently in French and English;
- have a strong training background in qualitative and quantitative methods;
- and preferably credit some ability of independent thinking and writing through, for example, reports and peer-reviewed publications.

² Candidates who have not yet completed their degree but plan to do so by September 2017 the latest are welcome to apply.

Selection process

Applications should be sent to Pr. Eric Mangez (eric.mangez@uclouvain.be) before June 16th, 2017. Applicants should submit:

- a curriculum vitae (including grades obtained at university courses),
- one writing sample (chapter of master thesis, article, paper, book chapter or similar),
- one motivation letter specifying on which axis the applicant wishes to work and providing details regarding how the applicant meets the criteria for the position (max 2 pages)
- the names and contact details of two potential referees (including the master thesis supervisor).

Candidates who have not yet completed their degree but plan to do so by September 2017 the latest are welcome to apply. Skype or face-toface interviews with short-listed candidates will take place in last week of June 2017.

Applicants are invited to read the documentation related to the legal conditions of doctoral grants at <https://goo.gl/s3fFqg>³

For any other question please email Pr. Eric Mangez eric.mangez@uclouvain.be

Research environment

The pluridisciplinary (sociology, education sciences, psychology) research group GIRSEF was founded in 1998 at the Université catholique de Louvain. It is one of the biggest research centers on education and educational policy in Europe. The Girsef is organized in three research units: education policy and comparative education, learning and instruction, and work, training and lifelong learning. With 7 permanent staff and regular research seminars, the research unit on education policy and comparative education offers a vibrant environment for research and intellectual exchange.

Girsef is a research center of the UCL, a university with an international reputation in the fields of education and research that promotes the international mobility of people and knowledge in a privileged environment closed to the European capital. Continued collaborations with national and European universities will participate to the international environment of the research team.

³ <https://cdn.uclouvain.be/groups/cms-editors-pers/internet/Règlement%20des%20bourses%20de%20doctorat%20et%20de%20post-doctorat.pdf>