

Tenuretrack professor in Cultural and Societal Storytelling (Faculty of Arts, KU Leuven)

Ref. ZAP-2025-164

KU Leuven is the largest university in Belgium and is consistently ranked within the top 10 universities in Europe. The University belongs to the League of European Research Universities (LERU) and attaches great importance to attracting and appreciating talent. At the Faculty of Arts, research is conducted in the fields of Arabic and Islamic studies, archaeology, art history, Chinese studies, history, Japanese studies, musicology, linguistics, literary and cultural studies and translation and interpretation studies. The Faculty employs over 800 junior and senior researchers, and teaches around 4,500 students in various study programmes at its campuses in Antwerp, Brussels, Kortrijk and Leuven. The Faculty strives to be an open and inclusive environment, with a focus on dialogue, social safety, sustainability and a healthy work-life balance,

We are looking for a motivated lecturer and researcher to be part of the Literary Studies and Cultural Studies Research Unit. The Literary Studies and Cultural Studies Research Unit is renowned for its research on literature and culture from antiquity to the present, employing both traditional and innovative methodologies. It has about 150 senior and junior researchers

<https://www.arts.kuleuven.be/literatuurwetenschap/english/welcome>

Duties

Research

You are a motivated, internationally-oriented researcher in the field of cultural storytelling, with an emphasis on the analysis of narratives in word and/or image and their societal impact, particularly in relation to inclusion and/or sustainability. Your research enhances the profile of the Faculty of Arts at KU Leuven Kulak (<https://kulak.kuleuven.be/>), where you demonstrate active engagement in interdisciplinary collaboration, both internationally and with colleagues on campus, within the faculty, and/or within university institutes such as the Leuven Interdisciplinary Language Institute (<https://www.kuleuven.be/ili>), the Leuven One Health Institute (<https://research.kuleuven.be/en/onehealth>), or the Leuven Centre for Health Humanities (<https://ghum.kuleuven.be/LCHH>). As a comprehensive and small-scale campus, KU Leuven Kulak offers a stimulating environment for interdisciplinary research collaboration, where expertise in societal storytelling intersects both thematically and methodologically with various research domains. Sustainability, alongside AI, is one of the transversal research lines on the Kortrijk campus.

You strive for excellence in your academic research and develop your own research plan. You publish at the highest academic level, initiate national and international collaborations and help promote and develop such agreements.

You succeed in securing competitive funding and attracting and supervising PhD students. The Faculty will help you find suitable funding opportunities and provide advice on applications. The Faculty attaches great importance to qualitative and correct supervision of PhD students.

You focus on science communication and contribute to public debate whenever possible.

Teaching

You provide high-quality teaching in the bachelor's programme Taal- en Letterkunde (Language and Literature) in Kortrijk and, in consultation with the Faculty's Education Committee, you develop an accessible and inclusive course offering on storytelling, primarily at the master's level (Leuven Campus). You are committed to the quality of the study programmes as a whole. You develop your teaching activities in line with the teaching philosophy of KU Leuven based on activating, research-based teaching and you use the opportunities provided by the Faculty and the University to further your teaching (for more information: www.kuleuven.be/english/education/education-at-ku-leuven).

Your initial teaching assignment comprises 10 credits which may grow over time—up to a maximum of 24 ECTS credits—in consultation with the Education Committee for Language and Literature, the Kortrijk Bachelor Campus, and the Faculty's Education Committee. This initial teaching assignment includes the following courses, some of which are also part of other bachelor's programmes in Kortrijk (including History).

10 ECTS in BA 1 & 2 (campus Kortrijk; annually)

- Ba1 Storytelling in de maatschappij (Kortrijk, 4 ECTS) ('Storytelling in society')
- Ba1 Bouwstenen van de literatuur, deel verhaalanalyse (Kortrijk, 2 ECTS) ('Foundations of Literature: Narrative Analysis')
- Ba2 Literatuur- en cultuurtheorie (Kortrijk, 4 ECTS) ('Literary and Cultural Theory')

Your teaching assignment also includes the supervision of bachelor's papers and master's theses.

Your teaching assignment is initially linked to the Kortrijk and Leuven Campus, but may include teaching assignments at other Faculty campuses in the future.

Together with the colleagues of your study programme you work on the development and improvement of the curriculum, including shaping learning sequences across individual courses, rethinking academic education in light of future societal challenges, and strengthening relationships with the work field.

Service

You are regularly present on the Kortrijk campus and participate in activities relevant to the campus and the Faculty. In the long term, you are willing to take up academic service tasks and positions on the Kortrijk campus and within the Faculty and contribute to the visibility and promotion of the education and research of the campus, Research Unit or study programme that you are part of (e.g. through participation in teacher days, information events and student recruitment events). You also actively contribute to the wider academic community, e.g. through services to academic societies and journals.

Profile

You hold a PhD in in Literary Studies or Cultural Studies (or equivalent within the Humanities) and have successfully defended your dissertation at the time of submitting your application. You have a proven expertise in the narrative analysis of stories in word and/or image, with a focus on inclusive and/or sustainability-related storytelling. You are familiar with narratological traditions, show a strong and broad theoretical and methodological interest (e.g. in relation to cultural theory, language and discourse, and/or intermediality and multimodality), and enjoy working at the intersection of disciplines. You are open to critical reflection on nuanced interpretations of the research concepts of sustainability and storytelling, and you are willing to collaborate with societal and non-academic partners. You have excellent teaching skills and an affinity with designing and delivering multi-faceted university education.

You have a strong and validated, international academic portfolio with highly regarded publications in your field. You also have a clear vision of how your research can develop further in relation to the available research expertise.

You openly and enthusiastically contribute to the university study programmes of the future, organized at the Kortrijk campus and, more broadly, within the Faculty of Arts in a spirit of open collaboration. Organisational skills, leadership qualities and good social skills are a must. Experience with scientific outreach or collaboration with the work field is a plus.

A good knowledge of English is required. The official administrative language used at KU Leuven is Dutch. If you do not speak Dutch (or do not speak it well) at the start of employment, KU Leuven will provide language training to enable you to take part in administrative meetings. Before teaching courses in Dutch, you will be given the opportunity to learn Dutch to the required standard.

Offer

We offer a full-time tenure-track professorship (ZAP) in a dynamic faculty with diverse disciplines. You will be part of an intellectually challenging and international environment, with plenty of space and opportunity to grow as a lecturer and researcher, thus making a significant contribution to society. KU Leuven provides support and benefits for starting professors who have a partner and/or family, cf. www.kuleuven.be/english/life-at-ku-leuven/partner-and-family.

You will be appointed as tenure-track professor for a period of five years. After a positive assessment following the five-year term, you will receive a permanent professorship at the level of 'hoofddocent' (associate professor). Within this function promotions to higher academic degrees are possible. All academic degrees have the ius promovendi.

You will work at the Kortrijk campus, in a historic and lively city in the west of Belgium, only thirty minutes from Ghent, forty-five from Bruges and right next to Lille (France). Brussels, the capital of the European Union, is only ninety minutes away while Paris, London and Amsterdam can be reached by train in two to three hours.

The start date for this position is 1 September 2026. To facilitate scientific integration and the start-up of research, KU Leuven provides start-up funding of 110,000 euros for new professors.

KU Leuven is well equipped to welcome foreign professors and their families and offers practical support with immigration and administration, housing, childcare and career coaching for the partner.

More information

KULeuven KULAK
https://www.kuleuven.be/personeel/jobsite/docs/kul_waarderingskader_eng-1.pdf
Leuven Interdisciplinary Language Institute
Leuven One Health Institute
Leuven Centre for Health Humanities
Partner and family
Education at KULeuven

Interested?

If you are not a native speaker of Dutch, you can submit your application in English.

Your application includes the following documents:

- a motivation letter
- a biosketch summarising your most important academic achievements (in various fields: teaching, research, services to society, outreach, etc.). You may also mention personal factors that have played a role in your career here (e.g. pregnancy, illness, care) so that these can be taken into account when assessing your submission. (max. 2 pages)
- a curriculum vitae, including a full publication list
- an annotated document describing your five most important publications (or other academic achievements)
- a vision statement on how you want to fulfil your teaching assignment in the future (max. 2 pages)
- a research plan for the next five years (max. 2 pages)

KU Leuven attaches great importance to research integrity and ethical conduct and will therefore ask you to sign an integrity statement upon appointment.

Candidates who are shortlisted by the Faculty Assessment Committee (BeCo) will be invited for an interview and a trial lecture.

For more information about this vacancy, please contact the Dean of the Faculty, Prof. Dr. Liesbet Heyvaert (email: liesbet.heyvaert@kuleuven.be) or the Campus Dean for Arts at KU Leuven Kulak, Prof. Dr. Kurt Feyaerts (tel. +32 487 52 76 21; email: kurt.feyaerts@kuleuven.be).

For problems with online applying, please contact soliciteren@kuleuven.be.

You can apply for this job no later than February 19, 2026 via the online application tool :

<http://www.kuleuven.be/eapplyingforjobs/60589717>

KU Leuven strives for an inclusive, respectful and socially safe environment. We embrace diversity among individuals and groups as an asset. Open dialogue and differences in perspective are essential for an ambitious research and educational environment. In our commitment to equal opportunity, we recognize the consequences of historical inequalities. We do not accept any form of discrimination based on, but not limited to, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, ethnic or national background, skin colour, religious and philosophical diversity, neurodivergence, employment disability, health, or socioeconomic status. For questions about accessibility or support offered, we are happy to assist you at <a href="<https://www.kuleuven.be/wieiswie/en/person/ue715673>">this email address.