

JOB OFFER

PhD Position: Ethics of AI and risk distribution in military operations (M/F/X)

SCGW > Military Ethics

Project MIAMICC

Publication: 28/02/2025

CONTEXT

The [Royal Military Academy](#) is fully recognized as a university, fulfilling the same criteria as civilian universities. The RMA is also conducting scientific research at university level for projects funded by the Belgian Defense department or external sources.

In the framework of the study MIAMICC ("Moral Implications of the Use of AI on the Mitigation of Civilian Casualties") we are looking for a full-time researcher in Military AI Ethics/PhD candidate with a Master's degree in Philosophy.

We value diversity and equal opportunities. Whether you are a man, a woman or X, or come from any background, we firmly believe that diversity enriches our community, and we encourage all qualified candidates to apply.

PROJECT:

You work within the Department of Behavioral Sciences (Research Unit Military Ethics) of the Faculty of Social and Military Sciences of the RMA and in close collaboration with the Chair Ethics and AI at the KU Leuven Institute of Philosophy.

We invite applications for a fully funded PhD position to explore the moral implications of the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in military operations, particularly focusing on the distribution of combat-related risks between combatants and noncombatants. Key themes include: the ethical impact of AI on risk distribution in combat scenarios, noncombatant immunity, normative considerations regarding precision, accountability and proportionality in AI-driven military targeting decisions, ethical implications of the use of AI in military operations. The PhD candidate will contribute to the growing scholarship on AI ethics and military ethics and emerging defense technologies (AI-enabled decision support systems, semi-autonomous weapons, autonomous weapons systems).

MAIN TASKS:

The selected candidate will :

- Conduct research in the field of AI ethics and military ethics aligned with the project's objectives
- Present research findings at conferences and publish in peer-reviewed journals
- Prepare a doctoral thesis under the guidance of the supervisors
- Actively participate in research group activities and collaborate with academic and military stakeholders.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE:

Ideal degree: Master's degree in Philosophy.

This position is open for junior profiles (ideally 0-3 years of experience) and young graduates are also encouraged to apply.

The candidate must meet all the requirements to be admitted to the doctoral program of the KU Leuven. Please find here a link to the requirements (<https://hiw.kuleuven.be/en/research/phd/doctoralprogramme#section-0>.)

If the applicant has not yet obtained a Research Master's degree in Philosophy, during the doctoral research the applicant will be required to take a number of additional courses in Philosophy in order to be allowed for the doctoral defense.

"MUST HAVE" skills:

- Training or experience in Philosophy
- Good command of the English language (oral/written).

"NICE TO HAVE" skills:

- Familiarity with military ethics, AI ethics, international humanitarian law or artificial intelligence.
- Training or experience in conducting academic research and the production of scientific output (papers and participation in scientific conferences).

Personal skills :

- You conduct scientific research in an independent and upright way within a multidisciplinary environment.
- You communicate your results in a clear, concise and precise manner.
- You take initiative.
- You are involved and result oriented.
- You are honest, loyal toward the institution and respect confidentiality.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- The researcher may be exposed to classified information and will therefore have to obtain the required security clearance. The candidate must consent with the background check required to obtain this clearance, which will be executed by Belgian Defense.
- Working for the Patrimony requires living in Belgium for the duration of the study.

APPLICATION

Please send by email:

- a CV (including academic qualifications and relevant experience and contact information of two referees who may be contacted)
- a motivational letter explaining your suitability for this position
- a sample of academic writing (e.g. thesis chapter or research paper)
- a scan of your ID card (both sides)

to Ann-Katrien Oimann (ann-katrien.oimann@mil.be) / Lode Lauwaert (lode.lauwaert@kuleuven.be) and to erm-deao-rsw@mil.be

Please mention clearly the reference of the project: "MIAMICC".

Application deadline: **31 March 2025**.

The interviews will take place at the Royal Military Academy, Hobbemastraat 8, 1000 Brussels. If needed, online interviews can be organized. The date and time of the interview will be communicated to the preselected candidates.

CONTRACT

- Probable date of recruitment: **From September 2025**, in consultation with the applicant.
- Status: Full-time employment based on an open-ended contract with the Patrimony of the Royal Military Academy (you will not be a civil servant).
 - Please note that your contract will be open-ended, but the financing of the contract will be tied to the funding project, which is guaranteed for 4 years. The financing of your contract beyond that period is therefore not 100% guaranteed. However, the Patrimony has a policy to keep the good elements on board and the research focus of this job offer fits within our core research activities, so there is a high chance that we will be able to offer you follow-up projects beyond that date if you decide to stay.
- Wage scale: class A1 (holder of a Master's degree in Science or equivalent). RMA-Patrimony applies a merit-based research career track, allowing researchers to advance in wage scale based upon annual evaluations.
- Holiday pay.
- Access to a vibrant research environment within the Chair Ethics and AI within the KU Leuven.

EXTRA LEGAL BENEFITS

- Possibility to benefit from a bilingualism allowance (Dutch/French) following a SELOR test;
- End-of-year bonus;
- Free DKV hospitalization insurance. Possibility of additional affiliation for one or more persons living under the same roof: spouse, child(ren) (50% of the price per additional member);
- Bike allowance / Free public transport (home-work commute);
- Meal vouchers (6€ / day);
- Free access to campus sports facilities outside working hours;
- On-campus restaurant and cafeteria with democratic prices (discount on the daily menu);
- Flexible working hours within the 38-hour week;
- Teleworking possible with allowance (2 days / week max);
- Holidays:
 - 29 days holiday / year from the 1st year of contract (then from 45 years: +1 day holiday every 5 years)
 - 1 week OFF every year between Christmas and New year's Eve (independent of the annual balance of holidays).
- Advantages and interesting offers thanks to the Benefits@work card (discounts, vouchers...);
- Entitlement to services offered by the 'Office Central d'Action Sociale et Culturelle de la Défense' (OCASC): among others holiday centres, discount on travel organised by the tour operator...;
- Possibility to benefit from the nursery funded by Belgian Defence (subject to availability).

WORKPLACE

Royal Military Academy, Avenue de la Renaissance 30, 1000 Brussels. Occasional travels abroad for scientific conferences, etc.

If you have any questions, please reach out via: ann-katrien.oimann@mil.be