

PhD student-Cancer biology

Cancer Ecosystems and Metastasis Laboratory (CEMLab)

Position

The **Cancer Ecosystems and Metastasis Laboratory (CEMLab)** at the **Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB)**, led by **Panagiotis (Takis) Karras**, is seeking motivated researchers to undertake a **PhD in cancer research**. The candidate will focus on a project to better characterize the drivers of cancer metastasis, profile the inter- and intra-tumor heterogeneity and plasticity combining mouse models and clinical samples. The successful applicant will join the **ULB Faculty of Medicine** and the **Institute Jules Bordet** within the campus.

About CEMLab

CEMLab investigates the cellular and molecular mechanisms driving the metastatic cascade and explores how the tumor ecosystem evolves in primary and metastatic organs. Our goal is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the molecular mechanisms and cell-cell interactions that favor metastasis and promote tumor outgrowth in distant organs.

Profile

The applicant must hold an M.Sc. (or expecting to receive within 2025) in biomedical sciences, with strong academic performance. Additionally, the applicant should have documented **experience in laboratory work, preferably in cancer research or a related field**. Excellent oral and written communication skills in English are essential. The ideal candidate should be capable of working both independently and collaboratively, with demonstrated strong teamwork and interpersonal skills. Previous research contributions leading to published studies will be considered a significant advantage.

What we offer

We offer a full-time, two-year funded contract with the possibility of extension, providing a dynamic research environment that values excellence, professionalism, and teamwork. Successful candidates will be encouraged and supported in applying for national funding opportunities (FNRS, Télévie, FRIA). This position offers the opportunity to collaborate closely with physicians in an interdisciplinary team and

includes access to training courses for professional development. Immediate start is available, and the salary will be commensurate with experience, in accordance with ULB's pay scale.

Want to join us?

Interested candidates are invited to submit their applications via email to Panagiotis Karras at panagiotis.karras@ulb.be. The application should include:

- A **cover letter** outlining relevant skills and experiences,
- A **CV** for assessment, and
- Contact details for **two references** (including names and contact information).

Join us in **Brussels**, the vibrant heart of Europe! A highly international city, Brussels offers an exceptional quality of life and a dynamic environment to thrive in.

Deadline

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. **Early submissions are encouraged as the position is available for immediate start.**

Relevant publications

Karras P, Black J., McGranahan N. and Marine J-C. Genetic versus non-genetic driver mechanisms of metastasis. *Nature* 629, 543–554 (2024).

Nowosad, A., Marine, J.-C. & **Karras, P.** Perivascular niches: critical hubs in cancer evolution. *Trends Cancer* (2023).

Karras, P. *et al.* A cellular hierarchy in melanoma uncouples growth and metastasis. *Nature* **610**, 190–198 (2022).

X. Li, **P. Karras**, R. Torres, F. Rambow, J.v.d Oord, J.C. Marine, L. Kos. Disseminated Melanoma Cells Transdifferentiate into Endothelial Cells in Intravascular Niches at Metastatic Sites. *Cell Rep.* **31**, (2020).

Karras, P. *et al.* p62/SQSTM1 Fuels Melanoma Progression by Opposing mRNA Decay of a Selective Set of Pro-metastatic Factors. *Cancer Cell* (2019).