



Programme Information

Georg Forster Research Fellowships for postdoctoral researchers

In providing Georg Forster Research Fellowships for postdoctoral researchers, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation enables highly-qualified scientists and scholars from abroad who are just embarking on their academic careers and who **completed their doctorates less than four years ago**¹ to spend extended periods of research (6-24 months) in Germany.

The research fellowship programme is financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung* – BMZ). Applications from women and people from Least Developed Countries (LDC) according to UN definition are particularly welcome.

Scientists and scholars from all disciplines from developing countries, emerging economies and transition states (excluding People's Republic of China and India; c.f. [detailed list of countries](#)) may apply. The research outline must deal with issues of major relevance to the future development of the candidate's country or region of origin.

The research is carried out in cooperation with academic hosts at research institutions in Germany. Applicants choose their own topic of research and their host in Germany and prepare their research outline independently. Details of the research outline including information on the intended duration of the fellowship must be agreed with the intended host before applying. Short-term visits for study and training purposes or for attending conferences are not eligible for sponsorship.

Candidates are selected solely on the basis of the evaluation of their academic qualifications. There are no quotas for individual disciplines or countries. A candidate's academic eligibility is assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- academic record and academic performance to date (mobility, determination, breadth of research activities, academic productivity)
- quality of key publications specified in the application (originality, degree of innovation, applicant's contribution in cases of multiple authorship)
- originality and innovation potential of the suggested research outline (significance for the advancement of the discipline, convincing choice of academic methods, prospects for academic development of the applicant, clear focus and feasibility of realization within the requested funding period and at the chosen host institution)
- the applicant's future potential (academic potential, further academic development, career prospects).

Applications are assessed on the basis of independent peer reviews requested by the Humboldt Foundation. The final decision is taken by a committee composed of academics from all disciplines in the framework of the funding available.

Fellowship specifications

Additionally to the **monthly fellowship rate of 2,500 EUR**, the following benefits can be granted:

¹ Researchers who completed their doctorates more than four, but no more than 12 years ago may apply for "Georg Forster Research Fellowships for experienced researchers".

- **mobility lump sum** as a subsidy for expenses in connection with necessary conference and research trips, archive and library stays, etc. in Germany and abroad (please see [Fellowship Guidelines A.3.5.](#));
- **subsidy towards the cost of medical and liability insurance** (please see [Fellowship Guidelines A.3.7.](#))
- **lump sum** for the fellow's return **travel expenses** if the costs are not borne by a third party;
- **language fellowship** for an intensive language course lasting two to four months at selected language institutes in Germany **immediately prior to** the actual period of research; language fellowships may also be granted to accompanying marital partners; **family allowances** for accompanying family members staying at least three months (please see [Fellowship Guidelines A.3.6.](#));
- **for single parents: flat-rate allowance** for accompanying children (under the age of 18) for stays of at least three months (please see [Fellowship Guidelines A.3.6.2.2.](#));
- **additional extension** of the fellowship up to 12 months for research fellows accompanied by children under the age of 12;
- **Europe allowance** for a research stay at a research institute in another European country (though not the research fellow's own country); for a designated period in the course of the fellowship if necessary to ensure the success of the research;
- **a subsidy towards research costs** to be paid to the hosts in Germany amounting to 800 EUR per month (for research in the natural sciences and engineering) and 500 EUR (for research in the humanities and social sciences);
- **extensive alumni sponsorship** once a successful research stay has come to an end, especially for maintaining contacts with collaborative partners in Germany during the Humboldtian's entire academic career.

For further information on this, please refer to section D of the [Guidelines and Information for Research Fellows](#), which also include further details pertaining to the fellowship and to the research stay. The Humboldt Foundation assumes that candidates will abide the [Rules of Good Scientific Practice](#) and the legally binding principles of scientific ethics during the application and sponsorship periods.

Application requirements

1. **Doctorate** or comparable academic degree (Ph.D., C.Sc. or equivalent), completed less than four years prior to the date of application. Candidates who have nearly completed their doctoral degrees are eligible to apply provided that they submit the manuscript of their dissertation or publications containing the results of their dissertation, however, at the earliest, 6 months prior to the completion of their dissertation.
2. **Academic publications** reviewed according to international standards and printed in journals and/or by publishing houses.
3. Choice of a **research outline of major relevance to the future development of the candidate's country or region of origin**
4. **Confirmation that research facilities are available and mentoring agreement** and a **detailed expert's statement** by an academic host at a research institution in Germany.
5. **Expert reviews** from the doctoral supervisor and one other academic qualified to give well-founded comments on the applicant's qualification, preferably including reviewers not working at the applicant's own institute.
6. **Necessary language skills:** humanities or social sciences and medicine: good knowledge of German if it is necessary to carry out the research successfully; otherwise a good knowledge of English; natural sciences and engineering: good knowledge of German or English.
7. **Citizenship** of an eligible country ([detailed list of countries](#)).
8. **long-term principal place of residence and work in an eligible country.** The following mobility rules apply (key date: submission of application):

- Eligible applicants must have been predominantly living and working in an eligible country for a minimum of 12 months in the 18 month period prior to submission of the application. All stays outside eligible countries are taken into account, regardless of their duration and reason. Persons who have earned their living with funding from German institutions or who have worked on a doctoral project at an institution in Germany for more than 6 months in the last 18 months, regardless of their place of residence, are also not eligible to apply.
- Willingness to return to an eligible country to contribute to the transfer of methods and techniques.

Eligible applicants must have lived outside Germany for a minimum of 12 months in total in the 18-month period prior to submission of the application.

Candidates who have completed their school education and one university degree or one university degree and their doctorate in Germany are eligible to apply provided that their habitual place of work and residence has been located in a developing country, emerging economy or transition state on the assumption of permanence and at least for the last five years. Visit the [Questions and answers](#) on the website for additional information.

Academics who have already been sponsored by the Humboldt Foundation are not eligible to apply for the Georg Forster Fellowship Programme but should turn to the Foundation's Alumni Programme for support for further research stays.

Application and selection procedure

Applications can only be submitted online. The completed application form, including the necessary additional documents, should be submitted at least four to seven months ahead of the prospective selection date.

Visit the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's [website](#) for further information on the online application process and all necessary documents as well as access to the online application system. A confirmation of receipt will be issued after the application has been submitted.

The expert reviews and the host's confidential statement must be uploaded by their authors directly to the applicant's online application form. The applicant will send the link needed to access the application form via e-mail to the designated persons. It is only possible to submit the application once all documents have been uploaded completely.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their documents are complete. Incomplete applications will be excluded from the selection procedure.

After providing all the documents and receipt of the host's statement, applicants will be notified about the proposed selection date. The application documents will then usually be forwarded to two independent reviewers for written review. On the basis of these independent peer reviews a selection committee composed of about 20 academics from all disciplines reaches a decision on approving research fellowships. The selection committee meets every year, in February, June and October. If an application has been approved, a fellow arriving from abroad may start the fellowship two months after the selection meeting at the earliest. Fellows must start their fellowships within twelve months of the selection meeting; otherwise the fellowship will be forfeited.

After a notification about a negative selection decision, candidates may apply informally by email to be informed about the factors which led to the rejection. In this case, applicants and their hosts will receive notification on this issue approx. four to six weeks after the selection committee meeting. It is not possible to appeal. However, applicants who have been rejected may submit a revised application provided that fundamental aspects of the original application have been significantly improved. In the case of unanimously rejected applications, a new application will be accepted only after 18 months.

Further information on the selection procedure can be found in the [Questions and answers](#) on the Humboldt Foundation's website as well as in the guidelines for a complete application attached in the application form.