



Programme Information

Humboldt Research Fellowships for postdoctoral researchers

Humboldt Research Fellowships for postdoctoral researchers are the instrument with which 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. Scientists and scholars from all disciplines and countries may apply.

Research projects are carried out in cooperation with academic hosts at research institutions in Germany. Candidates choose their own research projects and their host in Germany and prepare their own research plan. Details of the research project and the time schedule must be agreed upon with the prospective host in advance. 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 their academic record. 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, strength of purpose, breadth of specialisation, academic productivity)
- quality of key publications cited by the applicant (originality, innovativeness, applicant's contribution (in cases of multiple authorship))
- quality of research plan (originality, scientific methods, focus, feasibility at host institute, potential for applicant's academic development, prospects of success within the sponsorship period)
- the applicant's future potential (academic potential, further academic development, career prospects)

Applications are assessed by independent peer reviewers appointed 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

The fellowship is worth 2,250 EUR per month. This includes a mobility lump sum and a contribution towards health and liability insurance.

Additional benefits:

- an **allowance for research costs** to be paid to the hosts in Germany amounting to 800 EUR per month (for research projects in the natural sciences and engineering) and 500 EUR (for research projects in the humanities and social sciences);

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

- **language fellowship** for an intensive language course for the fellow and his/her marital partner lasting two to four months at selected language institutes in Germany **immediately prior to** the actual period of research;
- **lump sum** for the fellow's **travel expenses** if the costs are not borne by a third party;
- **family allowances** for visits by family members lasting at least three months (up to 326 EUR for the marital partner and up to 234 EUR per month for each child);
- **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 project;
- **extensive alumni sponsorship** once a successful research stay has come to an end, especially for maintaining contact with collaborative partners in Germany during the Humboldtian's entire academic career.

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.
2. **Academic publications** reviewed according to international standards and printed in journals and/or by publishing houses.
3. **Confirmation that research facilities are available and mentoring agreement** and a **detailed expert's report** by an academic host at a research institution in Germany.
4. **Expert references** from the doctoral supervisor and two other academics qualified to give well-founded comments on the applicant's eligibility, preferably including reviewers not working at the applicant's own institute.
5. **Language skills:** scholars in the humanities or social sciences and physicians must have a good knowledge of German if it is necessary to carry out the project successfully; otherwise a good knowledge of English; scientists and engineers must have a good knowledge of German or English.

Potential applicants who have been in Germany for more than six months at the time of application should check with the Humboldt Foundation (info@avh.de) whether formal requirements have been met before submitting their application documents.

Candidates of German nationality are eligible to apply provided that their habitual place of work and residence has been located abroad on the assumption of permanence for at least five years. Candidates who have completed their schooling and university education or their university education and doctorate in Germany are subject to the regulations governing German citizens. Visit the FAQs on the website for additional information.

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

Application and selection procedure

Applications may be sent to the following address at any time:

**Alexander von Humboldt Foundation
Selection Department
Jean-Paul-Str. 12, 53173 Bonn, Germany**

If this is not possible, they may be forwarded to the Humboldt Foundation via the branch offices of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) or the missions of the Federal Republic of Germany abroad.

Please be sure to only use valid application documents, which can be downloaded at the [programme's website](#) or obtained from the Foundation directly. The complete application should be submitted to the Humboldt Foundation at least four to seven months ahead of the prospective selection date.

The Humboldt Foundation will confirm receipt of the application by email. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that he or she has submitted all the necessary documents. Applications not submitted as a single entity will take longer to process. Grossly incomplete applications will be returned to applicants unprocessed.

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 50 academics from all disciplines reaches a decision on approving research fellowships. The selection committee meets three times a year, in March, July and November. 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.

When submitting applications candidates may also apply to be informed about the reasons for a rejection should their applications be turned down by the selection committee. In this case, applicants and their hosts will receive separate notification on this issue in addition to the selection decision 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 manifestly improved.

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

Further details pertaining to the fellowship and to the research stay can be found in our [Guidelines and Information for Research Fellows](#). Moreover, the [Rules of Good Scientific Practice](#) and the [ethical rules of the 7th EU Framework Programme](#) apply both to applications and sponsorship.