



Alexander von Humboldt  
Stiftung/Foundation

## **Alexander von Humboldt Professorship for Artificial Intelligence**

### **International Award for Research in Germany**

Alexander von Humboldt Professorships are financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research through the Federal Government Strategy on Artificial Intelligence and are awarded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation to academics from abroad who are internationally recognised as leaders in their field. This funding enables the award winners to pursue groundbreaking research at universities and research institutions in Germany. Virtually unaffected by administrative constraints, they will enjoy a high degree of freedom in creating their own working conditions.

Leading academics working in a field of artificial intelligence – for example, machine learning, computer linguistics, pattern analysis and recognition, robotics and autonomous systems, knowledge-based systems or combinations of these – will be targeted with the aim of attracting them to Germany with an Alexander von Humboldt Professorship.

In addition to the research, e.g. in the fields of computer science, mathematics and engineering, developments also give rise to research questions in the life sciences, humanities and social sciences. In view of this, the research award is therefore aimed concurrently at academics in all subject areas, e.g. in cognitive science or linguistics – that is, also at those who are global leaders in investigating the social frameworks and impacts of artificial intelligence, such as socio-economic, ethical or legal aspects.

Consequently, nominations are also explicitly welcomed that address artificial intelligence as a cross-cutting theme involving different disciplines and for which possible spill-over effects in relevant economic sectors can be achieved. For a successful nomination, it is a prerequisite that the award winner's research maintains a focus on automatic decision-making processes and on their applications or impacts.

Academics from abroad are eligible to be nominated for this international award if they are at the forefront of their discipline globally and this can also be demonstrated in the form of patents or program code. The award winners are expected to contribute towards enhancing Germany's sustained international competitiveness as a research location in consequence of the award.

The award funds, totalling 5 million EUR for academics in experimental disciplines and 3.5 million EUR for researchers in theoretical disciplines, are made available over a period of five years, which can be extended by up to two years. Even by international standards, this sponsorship allows award winners to profit from competitive general conditions that create the basis for a long-term academic future in Germany. This applies both to their personal income and the financial resources for their research work.

Universities and non-university research institutions in Germany profit from academic expertise from abroad and thus gain support for their own strategic (re-)orientation. It is also an opportunity for them to attract established, cutting-edge researchers from abroad to their own institutions on an enduring basis, in order to invigorate their international cooperation and to consolidate any links resulting from it.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation particularly welcomes nominations on behalf of qualified female academics, academics as well as younger, internationally-recognised researchers who have distinguished themselves by their outstanding performance and are thus examples for sustainably shaping their specialist field.

### **Nomination entitlement**

The award is granted on the recommendation of others. Nominations may be submitted by German universities; non-university research institutions may also submit nominations jointly with a German university. Nominations must be forwarded to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation through the rector or president of the respective university or, where applicable, the academic director or head of the non-university research institution.

### **Nomination requirements**

Nominations may be submitted on behalf of top-rank researchers of all disciplines working abroad who are conducting research in the field of artificial intelligence and who would be eligible for appointment to a professorship in Germany. Academics of German nationality are also eligible to be nominated provided that they have established their academic careers abroad. Academics working in Germany may not be nominated for this award.

The decisive criteria for selecting award winners are the nominee's academic qualification and the persuasiveness of the concept outlining the nominee's importance for and prospective involvement in the process of achieving the nominating institution's strategic goals. On the one hand, it is thus assumed that the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship will contribute to the internationalisation of the future-oriented topic area of artificial intelligence in Germany; on the other, it is expected that synergies will be achieved in the focus and structure of the academic environment at the receiving institution. Even though the award winners will be at the centre of the sponsorship provided by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, they will also be the starting point for sustainable structural change both at the receiving universities and research institutions as well as in their environment. As such, they should act as a catalyst for the continuation of development at the receiving institution.

The nominating institution must therefore demonstrate how it intends to ensure that the award winner's future academic work in his/her field of research will have a decisive impact, in particular on the following:

- honing the unique profile of the university/research institution by international standards
- taking the university/research institution into the top league worldwide
- achieving greater international visibility for the university/research institution
- sustainably promoting Germany as a location for research

Furthermore, nominators must explain how they intend to continue the award winner's long-term affiliation to their institution, even after Humboldt Foundation sponsorship has come to an end (this should usually entail appointment to a W3 professorship or directorship).

Applications may be submitted both prior to appointment or advertising procedures and during ongoing appointment procedures.

### **Selection procedure**

Visit the [website](#) for detailed information on the selection procedure or contact the Humboldt Foundation by telephone or email with further enquiries or case specific questions (c.f. Regulations on the Selection Procedure, p.2).

Applications should be completed online. The application deadlines are **15 April** and **15 September** of every year. The completed application form, including the necessary additional documents, should be submitted online by the application deadline. Visit the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's [website](#) for further information on the online nomination process and all

necessary documents as well as access to the online nomination system. A confirmation of receipt will be issued after the application has been submitted.

Nominators are responsible for ensuring that their documents are complete. Incomplete nominations might be excluded from the selection procedure.

Up to ten award winners will be selected annually by an independent selection committee of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation which will usually meet six to seven months after the closing date, i.e. in April and October. Selection will be based on an independent, peer review.

### **Use of award funds**

The award funds are made available over a period of five years to finance the award winner's research in Germany. An extension of the funding period by up to two years is possible. Award winners may draw over a period of five years up to 180,000 EUR p.a. from the award funds for their personal incomes. In duly justified cases the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation may, upon application of the receiving institution, agree to an increase of this amount to up to 250,000 EUR p.a. Other income, including additional salary payments by the receiving institution or from third parties, will not be set against this.

The Humboldt Foundation particularly welcomes measures on the part of the nominating institution to promote equal opportunities for women academics.

### **Further information**

The [Regulations on the Use of Funds](#) contain detailed information on the programme, the award winners' accounting obligations as well as the legally binding principles of scientific ethics (see Section IX, [Regulations on the Use of Funds](#)), and the [Rules of Good Scientific Practice](#).

as of: August 2019