

Programme Information

Feodor Lynen Research Fellowships

for postdocs

In providing Feodor Lynen Research Fellowships for postdocs, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation enables highly-qualified scientists and scholars from Germany 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) abroad. Scientists and scholars from all disciplines may apply for any country abroad.

All members of the Humboldt Network abroad may act as academic hosts for the Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship Programme. These include:

- Any scientists or scholars who have been sponsored by the Humboldt Foundation,
- Any hosts who have already supervised scientists or scholars who were sponsored by the Humboldt Foundation,
- Any (former) members of a Humboldt Foundation selection committee,
- Any participants in the Frontiers of Research Symposia organised by the Humboldt Foundation.

In addition, scientists or scholars who have been awarded one of the [selected research prizes](#) may act as hosts. The Humboldt Foundation can provide assistance with finding a host.

The research outline is carried out in cooperation with academic hosts at research institutions abroad. Applicants choose their own topic of research and their host abroad 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.

The Humboldt Foundation expects the host to contribute to financing the research fellowship. Over the duration of the fellowship, the host's contribution should account for approximately a third of the total fellowship amount. However, host institutes in developing and threshold countries and in other selected countries (c.f. [list of countries](#)) are not required to make a financial contribution. If a host in another country experiences obvious difficulties in raising a contribution, the Humboldt Foundation may accommodate this particular case.

Candidates are selected solely on the basis of their academic qualification. The assessment also considers the individual life journey and educational background, also and especially in terms of equal opportunities and accessibility. There are no quotas for individual disciplines or countries.

A candidate's academic qualification is assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- academic record and academic performance to date (mobility, determination, breadth of research activities, academic productivity)

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

- 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.

A stay abroad in the framework of the Humboldt Foundation's research fellowships for German junior researchers does not count towards the so-called "Twelve-Year Rule" in the University Framework Law.

Fellowship specifications

The provisions of the fellowship comprise a basic monthly fellowship amount and a monthly foreign allowance which may differ according to location and marital status. Family allowances for marital partners and children may be granted in addition. The estimated amount of the fellowship can be calculated with the "fellowship calculator" ([Stipendienrechner](#)).

Additional benefits:

- **return travel expenses** within reasonable limits (also for marital partners and children, where applicable)
- **parenting support** for research fellows who are accompanied abroad by children under the age of twelve. This support can alternatively be applied for in the form of an extension of the research fellowship or as a reimbursement of costs for childcare
- **reintegration allowance** for attending job interviews or participating in important career-promoting conferences in Germany
- a **return fellowship** may be granted for a maximum of twelve months immediately following the research stay abroad. It allows fellows to continue cooperation with their hosts in association with a research institution in Germany
- **alumni sponsorship** following a successful stay abroad, especially financial assistance for participating in conferences and for short-term visits from or to members of the Humboldt Network abroad (or in Germany when living abroad).

For further information on the fellowship and the research stay abroad, please refer to the [Guidelines and Information for Feodor Lynen Research Fellowships](#). 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**, 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 six 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. **Confirmation that research facilities are available and mentoring agreement** and a **detailed expert's statement** from an academic host at a research institution abroad who is eligible to act as such in the Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship Programme (see above).
4. **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.
5. **Necessary language skills:** good knowledge of the language spoken in the host country or at least a very good knowledge of English.

Potential applicants who have been in the host country for more than six months within the last 18 months prior to submitting the application are not eligible to apply. Any person who, regardless of their country of residence, has supported themselves for more than six out of the last 18 months with financing from institutions in the host country or who has worked on a doctoral project at an institution in the host country in the last 18 months also is not eligible to apply.

Academics who have already been sponsored by the Humboldt Foundation are not eligible to apply for the Feodor Lynen Research Fellowship Programme but should turn to the Foundation's Alumni Programme for support of 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. The selection committee meets every year in February, June and October.

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 checking the documents, 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 an interdisciplinary selection committee composed of about 20 academics reaches a decision on approving research fellowships. If an application has been approved, a fellow arriving from Germany 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 negative selection decision, candidates and their hosts may apply informally by email to be informed about the factors which led to a rejection. 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.

Further information on the selection procedure can be found in the [Questions & Answers](#) on the Humboldt Foundation's website as well as in the application form.