Programme Information

Henriette Herz Scouting Programme

Programme objective

Through the Henriette Herz Scouting Programme, financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is opening up a new way of accessing the Humboldt Research Fellowship Programme. By introducing a new, active scouting procedure, successful academics in Germany will be able to directly address sought-after, young researchers from abroad, who have not yet applied to the Foundation, and invite them to conduct joint research at their institutions. Both in terms of subject and region, the programme will thus recruit new research partners to come to Germany. At the same time, the aim is to increase the percentage of women in the Humboldt Research Fellowship Programme.

In order to scout such individuals, who should have completed their doctorates within the last 12 years, the Humboldt Foundation is seeking to utilise the international connections and engagement of selected researchers in Germany: in a competitive peer-review process, approx. 40 scouts will be selected every year who will then themselves identify junior researchers abroad and recommend them to the Foundation for sponsorship. Up to 100 additional Humboldt Research Fellowships will be granted in this way annually.

In terms of career path, academic performance, originality and future potential the quality standard of the junior researchers being scouted must equate to the level of successful applicants in the Humboldt Research Fellowship Programme.

Procedure

The additional Humboldt Research Fellowships are granted in a three-step process:

1. **Selection of scouts** by a selection committee in a peer-review process
2. **Granting of up to three Humboldt Research Fellowships on recommendation of the scouts** to excellent junior researchers abroad, whereby the first fellowship should be granted to a female researcher
3. **Ex-post evaluation of the research fellows sponsored** 12 months after the respective fellowship has been completed

The ex-post evaluation of research fellows at the end of sponsorship is, moreover, the basis for re-applying to become a scout once again. Both the research fellows and the scouts are expected to take part in the ex-post evaluation. Thus, scouts can only submit a new application for the permission to recommend new fellows 12 months at the earliest, after the ex-post evaluation of the last fellowship recipient has been completed. In the interim, they drop out of the procedure until the selection committee has made a new decision.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation aims to select as many new scouts as possible for the programme. Up to 50 percent of new permissions to recommend a research fellow can be granted to previously active scouts.
Specifications

Scouts can identify up to three potential research fellows abroad and recommend them for a Humboldt Research Fellowship. If the results of the formal review are positive, the fellowship will be granted by head office directly. This will enable scouts to confirm quickly and definitively and recruit the foreign researchers for the Humboldt Network and for research in Germany. Research fellows will be sponsored in the framework of the Humboldt Research Fellowship Programme (see also Guidelines on the Recommendation Procedure).

Just like all other hosts, scouts also become members of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation’s network. During their activity as scouts they are eligible to receive sponsorship for travel to the institute of potential candidates and be invited to attend the Foundation’s annual meeting in Berlin together with their Humboldtian. In the context of alumni sponsorship, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation can support visits to alumni’s own institutes abroad by covering travel expenses. These visits should be used to continue scientific contacts and for lectures.

Target group

The Henriette Herz Scouting Programme addresses researchers at different career stages in all disciplines in Germany. The target group includes the following individuals:

- Internationally renowned researchers who have an extensive network through which they can identify outstanding candidates abroad and who already have considerable experience in supervising international junior researchers.
- First-time hosts who are pursuing new, innovative research approaches, are very well connected internationally and who are particularly engaged in promoting junior researchers. They may only just have been appointed as a professor or head of their own research group and want to specifically expand their team with highly qualified junior researchers from abroad.

Requirements for an application to become a scout:

1. **Position**: professorship or comparable executive position in Germany
2. **Visible academic success**: outstanding, internationally recognised academic record, commensurate with the respective career level, (substantiated, for example, by initial awards, outstanding publications, particularly innovative research or by approved research proposals)
3. **Successful promotion of junior researchers’ careers**
4. **International connections**: extensive international collaborative network with the potential to scout international research talents

Application procedure

Applications may be submitted online to the Foundation at any time. Further information on the online application procedure, on all the necessary documents as well as access to the online application form can be found on the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation’s website. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application package is complete and accurate.

Applicants are asked to submit the following documents together with the online application:

- **A list of three selected key publications** which substantiate particularly innovative and excellent research
- **A concept for identifying, selecting and hosting international junior researchers** (approx. 1-2 pages)
- **Two references**: one from an international collaborative partner and one from a supervised junior researcher
Selection procedure

Once the application has been formally checked by head office, the application documents are usually forwarded to two independent peer reviewers who provide written reviews. An independent selection committee, convened by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and composed of researchers from all disciplines, then selects the best applications in the respective round based on the peer reviews and in accordance with the financial means at its disposal. The selection committee meets twice a year, at the end of May and the end of November. The first selection committee meeting is scheduled to be held in December 2020.

Attachments

Details and terms of the recommendation procedure and the ex-post evaluation can be found in the relevant guidelines. Information on the terms of sponsorship for research fellows are included in the Guidelines and Information for Research Fellows. The Humboldt Foundation assumes that the Rules of good scientific practice and the legally binding principles of scientific ethics will be respected.