

EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowships

Application guidelines

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EMBC Member states: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and United Kingdom

EMBC Associate Member States: India, Singapore

Countries / territories covered by a co-operation agreement: Taiwan, Chile

EMBO subject areas: Cell Cycle, Cell & Tissue Architecture, Cellular Metabolism, Chromatin & Transcription, Development, Differentiation & Death, Evolution & Ecology, Genome Stability & Dynamics, Genomic & Computational Biology, Immunology, Membranes & Transport, Microbiology, Virology & Pathogens, Molecular Medicine, Neuroscience, Plant Biology, Proteins & Biochemistry, RNA, Signal Transduction, Structural Biology & Biophysics, Systems Biology

Contact: fellowships@embo.org

Guidelines for EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship applications

Application for an EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship is via an online application system as described below.

Applications are accepted throughout the year. Applications received before the second Friday of February at 14:00 CET will enter the Spring Selection Round. Applications received before the second Friday of August at 14:00 CEST will enter the Autumn Selection Round.

Eligibility

Applications are accepted from candidates who meet the following criteria:

PhD degree

Applicants must hold a PhD degree or equivalent at the start of the fellowship, but not necessarily at the time the application is complete.

Applicants who already hold a PhD degree are eligible if they obtained their PhD degree during the two years prior to the date the application is complete.

Exceptions to this rule are made for applicants with career breaks due to parental leave and mandatory military/civil service in which case the time of the career break will not be counted. Additional exceptions might be made on a case-by-case basis for extraordinary personal circumstances, such as severe illness. No exceptions will be made for voluntary career breaks other than parental leave. The Fellowship Office can provide further information and must be contacted prior to submitting a claim for an exception.

Candidates with a medical degree (M.D.) may be eligible to apply for an EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship provided they hold a PhD (MD-PhD programme), in which case, the rules explained above apply. If you do not have a PhD but have appropriate research experience that is **comparable to a PhD** and meet all other eligibility criteria, please contact the EMBO Fellowship office prior to submission.

Publications

Applicants must have at least one first (or joint first) author primary research paper accepted for publication or published in an international peer reviewed journal at the time the application is complete.

The following items should not be listed as publications:

- Papers submitted or in preparation not yet accessible to the community.
- Papers published not in English originally.
- Abstracts of presentations at conferences.

EMBO will consider primary research papers published on preprint servers (ArXiv, BioRxiv, MedRxiv, etc), but **a first-author publication in an international peer-reviewed journal is still a requirement**. Similarly, reviews, comments and patents can be listed where appropriate, but are not considered primary research publications.

Do NOT indicate the journal impact factor or any other metrics, commentaries, highlights or citations in the publication list. EMBO is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA, <https://sfdora.org>), which recommends “not to use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist’s contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions”.

Publication updates after the application is complete are not allowed without re-opening the application (see APPLICATION PROCESS). Publication updates once the selection process has started are not allowed at all.

Mobility

EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowships are intended to promote international exchange. All applications must involve a change of country. Please note that international laboratories such as EMBL are considered extra-territorial and hence movement, for example, from a university or institute in Germany to EMBL Heidelberg is permitted.

a) Applications to work in an EMBC Member State

Applicants, regardless of their nationality or the country in which they obtained their PhD, can apply for an EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship to work in any EMBC Member State provided there is international mobility (see list of EMBC Member States on page two).

b) Applications to work in an EMBC Associate Member State or Countries / territories covered by a co-operation agreement

Applicants who wish to work in an EMBC Associate Member State or a Country / territory covered by a co-operation agreement are eligible if they move from, are nationals of and have performed their PhD in

- an EMBC Member State or
- an EMBC Associate Member State or
- a Country / territory covered by a co-operation agreement.

c) Applications to work in a Non-EMBC Member State

Applicants must move from an EMBC Member State, must be nationals of an EMBC Member State and must have performed their PhD in one of the EMBC Member States. A maximum of 30% of fellowships are awarded in this category.

Please note:

Applications to move within the same country are eligible if the applicant has been living or working for a maximum of six months in that country during the previous 18 months counting back from the time the application is complete. Similarly, candidates can apply if they have already started working in the host laboratory, but only if they have been working there for a maximum of six months at the time the application is complete. This includes candidates that started working with the host supervisor and then moved with the host supervisor to a different location: the relevant start date will be the date the candidate joined the host laboratory regardless of location.

Further mobility rules:

- Applicants wishing to work in the country in which they officially obtained their PhD are not eligible. If the PhD is officially shared between two institutions in different countries, both countries will be excluded. Visits of less than 6 months to the future supervisor or any other laboratory in the proposed destination country are permitted.
- Applicants wishing to work in the country where they developed their PhD studies, even if the PhD is officially issued by a different country, or to work again with the candidate's PhD supervisor, no matter where the latter is located, are not eligible. Again, visits of less than 6 months to any other laboratory in the proposed destination country are permitted.
- Applicants wishing to return to a laboratory where they have already worked for more than six months, either in one or in several visits are not eligible, regardless of where that laboratory may be located.

Other eligibility rules

Scientific scope

Research proposals must be within EMBO's scientific scope (EMBO subject areas are listed on page two). A more detailed description can be found at <http://www.embo.org/about-embo/subject-areas>

Number of applications per selection round

Candidates may only submit one application, for one project, at one host laboratory at each round of selection. Two applicants can apply to the same host laboratory provided they propose different projects.

Re-application

Re-application is permitted only once, irrespective of a change of project or change of host lab. Candidates can re-apply for the next round of selection while a decision is being made on their first application, but they should re-apply only if they will not be eligible after the decision on the first one is made.

Industrial research laboratories and applied projects

Applications to work in an industrial research laboratory with the sole intention to develop new commercial products or procedures will not be considered. Applications to work in an industrial or for-profit research laboratory to develop a basic research project in biology are eligible.

Projects with an aim to develop an application, commercial product or process, or a device may be considered if there is a fundamental biology question behind the project to be answered. For instance, development of technologies that enable biological discovery (microscopy, PCR, etc.) may be eligible for funding.

Application process

Applications for an EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship are accepted via the EMBO [online application system](#).

There are no application deadlines for EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowships, but there are two cutoff evaluation dates:

Second Friday of February, 2 PM Central European Time: Complete applications up to this date will enter the Spring Selection Round. Results for this round will be announced at the beginning of June.

Second Friday of August, 2 PM Central European Summer Time: Complete applications up to this date will enter the Autumn Selection Round. Results for this round will be announced at the beginning of December.

Although the online application system will be open throughout the year, the system may be closed for short periods after each selection deadline for technical and maintenance purposes and occasional downtimes may occur at any time. Candidates must take these potential issues into consideration during their application process.

Applicants need to register for an EMBO online application account. Once login details for the account have been received by e-mail it is possible to start an application.

Applications must be written in English and no special formatting is allowed. Similarly, figures and tables cannot be included in the application.

Applications and supporting documentation (two reference letters and the acceptance letter from the receiving institute) are only accepted via the EMBO [online application system](#). Please keep in mind that one of the reference letters must be from the PhD supervisor and none of the reference letters can come from referees in the receiving institute.

No application can be completed without all the information required, including the two reference letters and the acceptance letter from the receiving institute.

The date, according to Central European (Summer) Time, on which the candidates confirm that their application is complete is the reference date for eligibility and evaluation. Changes in address or email that occur after submission of an application are the only changes permitted after the application is confirmed as complete without re-opening it. All other changes, including publication updates, will require the office to re-open the application and ***this will cause a change in the submission date to the date in which the application is again complete and submitted. Please note that this may cause the application to become ineligible.*** Once the application enters the evaluation process no further changes are allowed.

IMPORTANT: Registration for an EMBO online application account is not sufficient to enter the corresponding evaluation round. ***An application is only regarded as complete once all the required information is submitted AND the candidate confirms completion.*** Applications completed after 14:00 CE(S)T on the day of the evaluation deadline will enter the next evaluation round. ***NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE.***

Selection process

The primary selection criteria applied by the EMBO Fellowship Committee are scientific excellence of the candidate, the project and the host laboratory.

Aspects considered in particular are:

Scientific achievements of the applicant

- Scientific contributions and CV.
- Performance of the applicant based on reference letters.

Project proposal

- Quality, novelty and biological significance of the proposed research.
- Coherent and logical presentation of the research project.

Host laboratory

- Suitability of the host laboratory for the proposed research project and training of the applicant.
- Scientific achievements of the host laboratory.

Applications to work with host laboratories with which the candidate has collaborated in the past or to develop a project on a similar topic to the candidate's PhD work generally receive lower priority for funding.

Fellowships are awarded to candidates. However, the selection process also takes into consideration the specific research project proposed by the candidate and the suitability of the host laboratory. For this reason, substantial changes to the proposed project or moving to a different host laboratory will result in the termination of the fellowship. However, exceptions can be made under extraordinary circumstances. The EMBO Fellowship Office has to be informed of any intention to change the research project or the host laboratory once a fellowship has been awarded. Requests for such changes are examined by the Head of the Fellowship Programme and the Chair of the Fellowship Committee on a case-by-case basis. Provided that they are fully justified, exceptions might be made.

Evaluation timeline (times are approximate)

0-5 weeks after cutoff date. First stage of evaluation: pre-screening

All complete applications are screened by the EMBO office to ensure eligibility requirements are met. All applicants, eligible or not receive an acknowledgement e-mail approximately within one week of the evaluation cutoff date.

Each eligible application is then assessed by three members of the Fellowship Committee.

During the pre-screening, the committee reviews a condensed application form, which consists of the summary of the applicant's main scientific achievements along with the list of publications, the summary and biological significance of the proposed work, justification for choice of the host lab, as well as reference and acceptance letters.

All applicants are informed about the outcome of the pre-screening by email five to six weeks after the cutoff date. Approximately, the top 30% of the applications are selected for the second round of evaluation.

6-14 weeks after cutoff date. Second stage of evaluation: interview

For applicants who successfully pass the first evaluation step, an interviewer, who is an expert in the applicant's area of research, is selected from among the EMBO Members and EMBO Young Investigators. For practical reasons, it is not always possible to have a personal interview and an interview by videoconference will be arranged instead. If an interview cannot be arranged at all, the application will be sent for written evaluation, although these cases are extremely rare.

Interviews will usually require the applicant to travel outside their country of residence; it is the applicant's responsibility to arrange the interview with the interviewer and to make sure they have all required documents in order before they travel. Candidates must give a seminar as part of the interview procedure. The interview should take place at the interviewer's convenience.

Interview travel expenses will be reimbursed by EMBO. The most economical and reasonable form of transportation (economy class flight, second class rail) must be chosen. A claim form will be issued and together with receipts has to be returned to the EMBO Fellowship Office in Heidelberg within 4 weeks after the interview. We require the original receipts and invoices in order to proceed with the reimbursement. If this is not possible (for instance, the university keeps the receipts), scanned signed versions will be required. Subsistence and accommodation expenses are covered by a flat rate daily allowance depending on the country visited.

14-17 weeks after cutoff date. Third stage of evaluation: selection

Five members of the EMBO Fellowship Committee evaluate independently and in full each application selected for the second stage, along with the respective report from the interviewer.

The committee then meets to take the final funding decisions and a *preliminary* list of awarded applications is published on the EMBO website within one week of committee meeting. All applicants are officially informed about the outcome by email within one week of the committee meeting.

Successful applicants in the Spring Selection Round of the year must start their fellowship between July 1st of that year and February 15th of the following year. Successful applicants in the Autumn Selection Round of the year must start their fellowships between January 1st and August 15th of the following year. Due to practical limitations, fellowships can only start on either the 1st or the 15th of each month.

Please note: no feedback will be provided to applicants. Due to the large number of applications committee members evaluate, they cannot include any individualized comments in their assessments.

Benefits

Starting in the Spring 2020 Call, EMBO will offer funds in EMBC member states for host institutions to issue employment contracts to awardees. Fellows outside EMBC member states will receive a stipend as before. Details are explained below.

Fellowships in EMBC member states

Fellowship Duration

Fellowships are awarded for a period of 24 months although shorter durations can be requested. The minimum fellowship duration that can be requested is 12 months. Fellowships must be started within one calendar year from the relevant evaluation cutoff.

Contract

EMBO provides funds to the host institution with the sole intention to cover the cost of an employment contract to be issued by the host institution to the awardee. These costs include employer's social contributions, awardee's social contributions, taxes and the net salary of the awardee. The EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship does not cover bench fees, overheads, funds for consumables or any other financial benefits to the host supervisor or the receiving institute. The [grant rate](#) depends on the country being visited. The transfer of funds and their use is regulated by a grant agreement that will be signed by both EMBO and the Host Institution. The contract between the host institution and the awardee will be issued according to the local and national regulations in each of the EMBC member states.

Child care allowance

For children under the age of six, fellows can claim support for incurred child-care costs up to the amount of €2.500 per fellowship year and per child. The corresponding amount is prorated according to the fraction of the year in which child-care expenses were incurred. The resulting amount will be transferred directly to the fellow as a reimbursement.

Relocation allowance

The relocation allowance is intended to cover travel costs up to the amount of €5.000 for the fellow and his/her family to the receiving institute. The relocation allowance further includes the equivalent of half a month of the grant rate (1/24 of the yearly rate described above).

Please note:

- If the applicant is already at the receiving institute at the time the application is complete or has been working at the receiving institute/host laboratory for more than 6 months at the start of the fellowship, the travel allowance will not be paid.
- If the fellowship is terminated within the first 6 months, the entire travel allowance will have to be returned.
- If the fellowship is terminated within the 7th month and up to 12 months, half of the travel allowance will have to be repaid.

EMBO Fellows' Network

Every two years, fellows awarded three and four years earlier are invited to the [EMBO Fellows' Meeting](#) in Heidelberg. Similarly, once every two years, fellows residing in North America are invited to the [US Fellows' Meeting](#). These events bring fellows together in a friendly atmosphere. Fellows are asked to present their research, share experiences, and establish new collaborations and contacts. It is also an opportunity to meet the EMBO staff and give feedback and suggestions on the programme.

Alternating with the [EMBO Fellows' Meeting](#) in Heidelberg, every two years fellows will be invited to the EMBO Alumni Fellows' Meeting (details to be announced).

EMBO encourages current, former and prospective fellows to follow the programme in [Facebook](#) and Twitter (@EMBOFellows) for further information and events. This is also a great opportunity to meet and connect with your colleagues.

EMBO Laboratory Leadership Courses

EMBO offers its Postdoctoral Fellows free places on the EMBO Laboratory Leadership Courses. Fee waivers are granted to fellows at the end of their fellowship within 5 years of being awarded the fellowship (counting from January 1st of the year of the award, i. e., 1 January 2012 for 2017 courses) and only if the fellowship had been held for at least 6 months.

The waiver covers the Laboratory Leadership Course and accommodation. Travel costs are not included. Fellows are given priority to courses organized around the time of EMBO Fellows' Meetings (either in Heidelberg or the US) to avoid additional travel expenses. Eligible courses are:

- Lab Leadership Course for Postdocs.
- Project Management.
- Negotiation.
- Creativity for Scientists.

EMBO Non-Stipendiary Fellowship

In case of early termination or non-acceptance of the EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship due to funding from another source, postdoctoral fellows can become holders of a non-stipendiary fellowship. EMBO Non-Stipendiary Fellows are entitled to attend the Fellows' Meetings and, if they have held the fellowship for at least 6 months, the Laboratory Leadership Course for postdocs free of charge at the end of their fellowship.

Please note: It is not possible to directly apply for a non-stipendiary fellowship. Non-stipendiary fellowships are only offered to applicants who decline the already awarded EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship or terminate it early. Applicants who receive another award during the evaluation period and cannot guarantee that they will take up the EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship for at least 12 months will be excluded from the selection process.

Fellowships in EMBC associate member states, countries/territories covered by a co-operation agreement and non-member states

Fellows outside EMBC member states receive a stipend (see below) for 24 months unless a shorter time is requested (minimum of 12 months) and have access to **child care allowance**, **relocation allowance**, **EMBO fellows' network** activities and **Laboratory Leadership courses**, similar to fellows in EMBC member states. Please note that additional benefits listed below compensate for benefits that are normally regulated by employment contracts in EMBC member states.

Stipend instead of an employment contract

The stipend is solely intended to cover the cost of living in the host country. The EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowship does not cover bench fees, overheads, funds for consumables or any other financial benefits to the host supervisor or the receiving institute. The [stipend rate](#) depends on the country being visited and might be subject to taxation. **We cannot advise on national tax regulations and we recommend fellows to contact the relevant authorities in the host country.**

Dependent child allowance

EMBO fellows are entitled to receive a country-specific additional allowance for dependent children under the age of 18. See the [stipend rate](#) sheet for further information.

Parental leave

Fellows whose children were born during their fellowship are entitled to 3 months paid parental leave. Fellows who take parental leave during the fellowship are entitled to an extension of their fellowship for an equivalent period. This extension has to be requested by the host supervisor at the end of the fellowship. Parental leave has to begin within 6 months of the birth of a child.

Fellows must inform the Fellowship Office of their intention to take parental leave.

Part-time work

For child-care reasons it is possible to work part-time (50% or 75% of full time) during the fellowship.

Please note: *The maximum fellowship duration (full-time plus part-time) must not exceed 36 months.*