

# AARHUS INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES

## AIAS



## AIAS-COFUND II Fellowships 2018 GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS



AARHUS  
UNIVERSITY

AARHUS INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES



Co-funded by  
the EU's Horizon 2020 research  
and innovation programme under  
Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions

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# Guide for applicants

## AIAS, Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies

### 1 About Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS)

Curiosity-driven and independent research for excellent scholars worldwide and across all research disciplines is the hallmark of the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) as AIAS focuses exclusively on research excellence and training of research talent. The fellowship programme is completely bottom-up and the selection of fellows is carried out on the basis of research proposals from applicants with excellence as the sole selection criterion. The programme offers a multidisciplinary training platform and creates an opportunity for researchers to gain freedom and independence to advance their own ideas. A fellowship at AIAS gives a genuine understanding of the methodologies and approaches of other scientific disciplines at the highest level, thus making cross-disciplinary inspiration and initiatives possible.

At AIAS, international researchers are collaborating and sharing knowledge with AU researchers from their own discipline, and at the same time, they are a part of a multidisciplinary and international environment of excellence at the Institute. This provides the individual fellow with a unique opportunity to focus fully on developing his/her research, while also collaborating with researchers with different research perspectives.

### 2 Types and duration of fellowships

The AIAS-COFUND II (Marie Curie) fellowship programme is co-funded by the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) and the European Union's H2020 Framework Programme under Grant Agreement No 754513. The programme provides research opportunities for the most talented researchers from around the world. Fellows can choose their research topic freely within all academic disciplines. Up to 15 fellowships are available in this call.

The programme encompasses two types of fellowships:

- **Junior fellowships:** For researchers with at least 2 -9 years of full-time postdoctoral research experience after completion of PhD at the time of the application deadline
- **Senior fellowships:** For researchers with 10+ years of full-time postdoctoral research experience at the time of the application deadline

Please note: PhD training is not considered in the calculation of experience.

AIAS is an independent institute initiated by Aarhus University. Aarhus University is a modern European university that offers an inspiring education and research environment for 40,000 students and 8000 employees, ensuring results of a high international standard. It has an annual budget of EUR 860 million. The university's strategy and development contract are available on <http://www.au.dk/en/>.

The university is dedicated to research, talent development, knowledge exchange and education in all fields – from the humanities to business and social sciences, and from science and technology to medicine. In recent years, Aarhus University has been advancing in the most important international rankings. Aarhus University has produced two Nobel Prize Laureates in the past fifteen years and is currently ranked in the worldwide top 150 by leading university rankings.

Transnational mobility among researchers optimizes the circulation of the access to and the transfer of scientific knowledge that will strengthen the skills of the individual researcher. The AIAS-COFUND II programme contributes with approximately 77 fellowships over a period of 5 years. In this call up to 15 fellowships are available. The commencement dates are 1 October 2018 and 1 February 2019.

A long-term aim of the programme is that a fellowship stay will result in a fruitful research collaboration and knowledge exchange between research groups in Denmark and the AIAS-COFUND II fellows. It is an ambition that this collaboration will continue after the termination of a fellowship and that it may also open for collaborations between Aarhus University and the fellow's future employer. The AIAS fellows must be based in Aarhus and physically situated in the AIAS buildings on the Aarhus University campus in Aarhus in order to participate in the AIAS programmes and events, and to organize academic activities such as workshops, public talks or speakers' series so that fellows contribute to the intellectual life at the Institute and at Aarhus University.

The duration of a fellowship and its appropriateness must be justified in the proposal and will be assessed, when the application is evaluated. The requested duration of a fellowship varies from 6 months and up to 36 months (12-36 months for junior fellows and 6-18 months for senior fellows) depending on what is suitable and realistic, with regards to the research proposal. The fellowship period should be consecutive and therefore it is not possible to split up the fellowship period into smaller parts.

### **3 AIAS-COFUND fellowships 2018**

#### **3.1 Who can apply**

The target group is experienced researchers from all countries. MSCA Mobility rule applies: applicants must not have resided or carried out their main activities (work, studies etc.) for more than 12 months in Denmark in the 3 years immediately prior to the call deadline. Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention, compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

The bottom-up approach will be respected; all disciplines with free choice of research topics are eligible. The target group of the programme is talented researchers with a minimum of 2 years of relevant documented postdoctoral experience at the time of the application deadline.

#### **3.2 When and how to apply**

The research proposal must be submitted online via: [www.efond.dk/aias](http://www.efond.dk/aias) and must cover the sections described below. Information about the online application system can be found in section 3.6.

#### **3.3 Application deadline**

**Wednesday 24 January 2018 at 12.00 (noon) CET.** See a detailed timeline in section 3.7.1.

#### **3.4 Application requirements**

Below is an overview of the content needed for the application:

- Name, title and contact information (telephone + email)
- Year of completed PhD
- Date of birth, gender and nationality
- Home institution (department and name of faculty)
- Mobility statement
- Information about career breaks
- Additional information
- Area of research
- Desired start date
- Project duration
- Project title
- 5 Key words
- Project abstract and description (abstract will be used for public purposes thus it must not contain confidential information)
- References to the project description
- Argumentation for choosing AIAS
- Collaborations or connections at Aarhus University
- Statement of no conflict of interest with the Quality Assurance group and the Selection Committee Ethical statement
- Upload of figures to the project description, support letters etc. (if any)
- Upload of CV, PhD diploma, List of publications, ethical statement and budget in Pdf-files.

Please make sure that all the requested information is included in the application, and that the requested files are uploaded before submitting the application. If the requirements are not met, the application can be rejected.

### **3.4.1 Desired start date**

In this call up to 15 fellowships are available. The fellowships will commence on the 1 October 2018 or 1 February 2019. There is no guarantee that the desired start date can be met and another start date within the timeframe may be offered.

### **3.4.2 Mobility statement**

Indicate the period(s) and the country/countries in which you have legally resided and/or had your main activity (work, studies etc.) during the last 5 years up until the application deadline. The 5 years prior to the deadline must be covered. Wrong or missing information may cause your proposal to be ineligible. Any additional information you wish to make known to the evaluators should be included in the CV. Make sure to tick the box to confirm the accuracy of your mobility statement.

### **3.4.3 Career breaks**

Please account for any career breaks. For periods of leave, indicate the cause and state precisely the starting date and end date of the leave period.

When assessing applicants' research productivity, the external individual reviewers and the Selection Committee will take the applicants' individual career into account. Attention will be paid to individual career paths and circumstances caused by career interruptions and changes, e.g. maternity/paternity/parental/sick leave and compulsory military service or inter-sectoral and non-academic mobility such as working for industry, where the time for research has been very limited.

The AIAS-COFUND Fellowships have specific requirements in relation to the age of the applicant's PhD degree. Periods of leave of absence will be taken into account when calculating the age of applicant's PhD degree when determining whether the applicant is eligible for a junior or senior fellowship (See section 2). The actual months of maternity/paternity leave will be multiplied by 1.5 and subtracted from the age of the applicant's PhD degree. As for career breaks due to e.g. military service or any other leave from academia, the actual number of months will be multiplied by factor 1 and subtracted. The exact period of the leave, with start date and end date, must be stated in the application system and in the applicant's CV.

Example: A female applicant has been employed full-time in academia since obtaining her PhD 1 September 2007. She has two children and has had 10 months of maternity leave with each child. If she does not declare these career breaks, she would only be eligible to apply for a senior fellowship. However, if she declares her breaks (20 months \* 1.5) 30 months will be subtracted from the age of her PhD. Thus, she will be able to apply for a junior fellowship.

This procedure is to ensure that the evaluation of applicants is gender fair.

### 3.4.4 Additional information

A brief outline of your personal background, professional life achievements and expectations to the future. Not a listing of previous jobs and education as this information is to be found in the standard CV, which is to be uploaded in step 3.

### 3.4.5 Area of research

Candidates can submit a research project in the listed scientific areas, grouped in four main areas:

1. Science & Technology
2. Health & Medical Sciences
3. Business & Social Sciences
4. Arts & Humanities

Secondly, select **one** scientific sub area. A second can be selected if necessary.

The sub areas are:

- Mathematics
- Physics
- Chemical Sciences
- Architecture
- Engineering
- Computer Science
- Pharmaceutical Sciences
- Odontology
- Clinical Medicine
- Forensic Medicine
- Public Health
- Molecular Biology
- Biology
- Agronomical Sciences and Veterinary Medicine
- Earth Sciences
- Food Science
- Art, Music and Design
- Cultural Studies
- Digital Media, Communication and Informatics
- Languages and Linguistics
- Literature and Art History
- Ancient and Archaeological Sciences
- Religion
- History
- Philosophy
- Anthropology
- Pedagogical Sciences
- Psychology
- Social and Political Sciences
- Juridical Sciences
- Business and Marketing
- Economic Sciences and Statistics

### **3.4.6 Key words**

List 5 key words/terms that describe your research area and project. The keywords will be used when selecting an appropriate reviewer to evaluate the application.

### **3.4.7 Abstract**

The abstract (max. 2,000 characters incl. blanks) should provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the proposal, how these will be achieved, and their relevance. This summary will be used as the short description of the proposal in the evaluation process, when communicating with the evaluation committees. It must therefore be short and precise and should not contain any confidential information. Please use plain typed text, avoiding formulae and other special characters.

### **3.4.8 Project description / Research plan**

An academic project description (max. 12,500 characters incl. blanks, excl. list of references) describing the specific research area that you wish to pursue at the Institute, including justification of fellowship duration/and or project timeline. List of references is a separate text box (max. 2,500 characters incl. blanks). See section 3.5 for the general assessment criteria. The online application system will only allow text in the text box. Figures relating to the project description must be uploaded in step 3 as pdf-files. Please use line breaks to organize your project description, since all formatting (bold and italic font) will be reset in the text box. Before applying, the applicant is welcome to seek an agreement letter of an Aarhus University (AU) academic (host researcher) who may also act as a host and mentor to the applicant, if granted a fellowship. The host researcher can inform the applicant whether the appropriate facilities for the research project are available at the university. Seeking the agreement of an AU host researcher before applying is not a requirement, but is advised. If you already have established contact, this can be described in the application. An agreement letter or a confirmed collaboration with researchers at AU is not included in the evaluation. See section 3.4.10.

### **3.4.9 Arguments for working within the AIAS framework**

An account of why you would like to carry out your research work within the AIAS framework (max. 5,000 characters incl. blanks). Especially why this multidisciplinary institute would have an added value for your research and how it can contribute to the development of your career. The account should also include your visions and ideas on how you expect to actively add to the creation of the social and academic environment of AIAS. This part should only focus on the environment at AIAS and not the collaborators (if any) in general at Aarhus University.

### **3.4.10 Collaborations or connections at Aarhus University**

Please state if connections to AU research environments have already been established and describe plans for cooperation and contact information of the collaborator. Letters of agreement/recommendations from such collaborators can be uploaded in step 3 in the application system as pdf-files but is not part of the evaluation of the application where excellence of the applicant and of the proposed research is the sole criterion.

### **3.4.11 Statement of no conflict of interest**

The applicant will have to declare that there is no conflict of interest between the applicant and any of the members of the Quality Assurance group (henceforth QA group) and any of the members of the Selection Committee. The applicant must declare that she/he has had no research collaborations or co-published any papers with any of the Selection Committee members



and any members of the QA group within the past 10 years prior to the deadline of the call. The members of the QA group and the Selection Committee are listed at the website:

<http://aias.au.dk/aias-fellowships/aias-cofund-fellowships/>

### 3.4.12 CV

The CV should be a maximum of **5 pages** in one pdf-file to be uploaded in step 3 in the online application system. The CV must describe your personal background, education and career until now. In the evaluation of scientific achievements both already achieved and potential results will be evaluated – the latter is particularly the case for junior fellows.

### 3.4.13 PhD diploma

Your PhD diploma must be uploaded as an attached file in step 3 in the online application system as a pdf-file. When selecting the year of completed PhD in the application system, the year must be consistent with the date stated on the diploma.

### 3.4.14 List of publications

A maximum of **5 pages** in one pdf-file must be uploaded in step 3 in the online application system.

### 3.4.15 Budget Proposal

Please use the Excel-template found at <http://aias.au.dk/aias-fellowships/aias-cofund-fellowships/> and save it as a pdf-file. The budget proposal must be made in euros (EUR). Upload the budget proposal as a pdf-file in the application system in step 3.

Please justify the following expenses in the budget proposal, if relevant:

1. Expenses for running costs, e.g.: Field work, laboratory expenses, research materials, large computer/server capacity, special types of software/licenses, publication costs etc.
2. Expenses for the planning of scholarly events at AIAS, e.g.: workshops, seminars and symposiums. Note the size of the event in the budget (no of participants, invited speakers etc.).
3. Financial aid for specific technical assistance needed for the research project can be granted in special cases.

**Please note: The proposed research budget must reflect the research proposal. The budget proposal will be negotiated in case a fellowship is awarded. A fellowship offer is not an immediate approval of the proposed budget.**

The following **are included** in a fellowship and **will not** have to be justified in the budget:

- o A competitive salary equivalent to the Danish wage levels for the period of time during which fellows are staying at the Institute. The salary is negotiated when the fellowship is awarded.
- o The journey to and from Aarhus (economy class, only one return travel) for fellows, and for the accompanying family if any.
- o Expenses related to visa and work permit applications (for applicant and accompanying family).

- o Research travels, e.g. the participation in research-related seminars, conferences etc. relevant for the individual project and career development will be granted up to a certain limit upon prior approval.
- o Expenses for standard computer, office supplies etc.
- o Relocation cost to Aarhus up to a certain limit (subject to prior approval and on the basis of quotes)

The following types of expenses **will not be covered**:

- o Salary expenses for PhD students and postdocs.
- o Secretarial and PA assistance.
- o Private housing costs.
- o Expenses related to ordinary Danish costs of living.
- o Other expenses related to accompanying family.
- o Relocation costs from Aarhus

#### **3.4.16 Ethical statement**

All applicants must disclose any ethical issues in the research project and how these ethical issues will be handled. The mandatory ethics issues form is available for download at <http://aias.au.dk/aias-fellowships/aias-cofund-fellowships/> and **must be submitted** with the application. The form should be filled in and signed even if there are no ethical issues to be reported.

#### **3.4.17 Mandatory documents**

All applicants must upload the following 5 documents as attachments to the application:

1. CV
2. PhD diploma
3. List of publications
4. Budget proposal
5. Ethical issues form

Please note that if the application lacks one of the above listed documents, the application will be considered ineligible and disregarded. All documents must be attached as pdf-files and the available templates (budget and ethical issues form) must be used.

### **3.5 Assessment criteria**

The primary assessment criteria are research excellence of the project proposal and the applicant. The single most important goal of the evaluation process is to select the most talented and most promising fellows possible, and to provide them with the best research environment, training and career development opportunities.

The following will be evaluated (weight of the criteria in brackets):

- 1. Relevance and expected impact of the proposed research (20%):**
  - a. Relevance of the proposed work to the scope of the call
  - b. Motivation and suitability concerning the setting of AIAS
  - c. Broader impact (scientific, knowledge creation, socio-economic etc.)
  - d. Incremental vs. transformative gains
  - e. Associated risks
  
- 2. Scientific quality of the proposal (30%):**
  - a. Scientific/intellectual merits of the proposed research: clear, convincing and compelling
  - b. Thoroughness: definition of the problem and proposed solutions, review of state of the art
  - c. Novelty and originality
  - d. Potential for the creation of new knowledge, exciting ideas and approaches
  - e. Application of existing methodologies/technologies in new areas
  - f. Appropriateness of the research methods, infrastructures, equipment and fieldwork
  - g. Feasibility: scientific, technological, access to infrastructure, project timeline, research design and deliverables, associated risks
  - h. Appropriateness of requested resources
  - i. Budget
  - j. Staff effort
  - k. Access to infrastructure
  - l. Equipment and consumables
  - m. Travel
  - n. Networking and dissemination
  - o. Ethical issues: compliance with standard norms and ethical practices when dealing with safety and security, use of animals and human subjects, environment, embargos and sanctions
  
- 3. Quality of the applicant (30%):**
  - a. Academic qualifications and achievements in relation to their stage of career
  - b. Research experience and level of independence
  - c. Demonstrated expertise of the applicant in similar projects
  - d. Applicants' scientific networks and ability to successfully disseminate research findings, i.e. knowledge transfer activities
  - e. Publication track record
  - f. Bibliometric indices
  - g. Career breaks, i.e. has the applicant had any career break after obtaining her/his PhD due to e.g. maternity, paternity or parental leave, or compulsory military service. If so, these are to be taken into consideration.
  - h. Potentials
  
- 4. Research environment (20%):**
  - a. An account of whether the AIAS framework as a multidisciplinary institute would have an added value for the research conducted and how it contributes to career development
  - b. The applicant's visions and ideas on how to actively add to the creation of the multidisciplinary and academic environment of AIAS.
  - c. Mobility and career development aspects

## 3.6 Online application system

- › Go to the website: [www.efond.dk/aias](http://www.efond.dk/aias)
- › Choose “**Application form, Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies**”
- › Create an account using your email address and a personal password. It is important that you use a valid email address, since all further correspondence will be communicated to this address.
- › Once you have registered, the application can be edited until submission.
- › Please note that each text box in the application form can hold a limited number of characters (as described in the application requirements (section 3.4), but the characters are not calculated the same way as in Microsoft Word. Hence, the boxes allow for 5% extra. If the limit of characters is exceeded, a warning comes up and the application cannot be sent.
- › All steps must be filled in and files uploaded (mandatory documents i.e. CV, PhD diploma, List of publications, Budget, Ethical issues form and supplementary documents, if any, such as Letters of support from collaborators at Aarhus University, agreements letters, recommendations etc.) before submitting the application. After submission the application can no longer be edited, and it is only possible to view the application.
- › The application system (Efond) is available in any browser and on tablets such as iPhone and iPad.
- › You will receive an auto generated email receipt from the application system when the application is submitted correctly. The receipt may end up in the junk folder of your Inbox, so please ensure that you have received the receipt after submission.

## 3.7 Application process and evaluation

### 3.7.1 Timeline

- Opening of call: 14 November 2017.
- Deadline for applications: **24 January 2018** at 12.00 (noon) CET.
- Evaluation period: February-May 2018.
- Applicants will receive answers: June 2018.
- Fellowship periods will commence: 1 October 2018 and 1 February 2019.

### 3.7.2 Processing procedures

Immediately after the deadline for applications, the applications will be subject to an eligibility screening by the AIAS administration team. The eligibility screening will be carried out in a strict and consistent manner, and the screening is final with no possibility of resubmission in the current call. Applications that are not eligible will be rejected and applicants will receive a rejection letter based on administrative grounds.

The evaluation and selection process is based on an open, fair and transparent competition between the applicants.

Three different bodies will be involved in the evaluation and selection process:

- Three individual peer reviewers in remote evaluation
- The Selection Committee
- The QA group

The applicants must provide 5 keywords. Based on the 5 keywords, the scientific field and subfield indicated by the applicant, three external reviewers are chosen from databases such as the 'EU Participant Portal Database of Reviewers' that includes both European and Non-European experts. Applicants are always reviewed by peers at their own academic level or higher.

The identity of the external individual reviewers will not be disclosed to the applicants. The identity of the members of the Selection Committee is public; however, the applicant shall not seek contact to members of the AIAS-COFUND Selection Committee. The assessments and scores provided by the external individual reviewers will be sent to the applicants when the final answer regarding the fellowship is announced.

### **3.7.3 Rebuttal opportunities**

If an applicant finds that the administrative procedure described for applications was not followed, the applicant has the opportunity of filing a rebuttal to the AIAS administration team. A rebuttal must be done in writing, and can be based on procedural errors only. Hence, a rebuttal cannot be based on the scientific evaluation remarks or the selection of reviewers. The rebuttal must be filed within the rebuttal opportunity period as stated in the rejection letter.

The AIAS administration team will forward any rebuttal to the QA group. If the QA group decides that the administrative processes have not been followed and hence that the rebuttal is justified, the applicant will be offered to have her/his proposal re-evaluated without the applicant having to wait for the next call.

## **4 Working at AIAS and in Denmark**

### **4.1 Benefits and services at AIAS**

The AIAS-COFUND II fellows will be employed at the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, and will receive an employment contract. Foreign employees are entitled to social security benefits in Denmark. The employment contract will specify the most important terms and conditions of employment such as salary, income-based contribution to a pension fund, holiday allowance, working hours, etc.

The AIAS fellows can expect assistance with practical and logistical matters that may arise from pre-arrival to post-departure. AIAS has dedicated relocation employees who, in collaboration with the International Centre at Aarhus University, will be of assistance in solving matters regarding visa applications, relocation, accommodation, language courses, spouse support, childcare options, finding schools for accompanying children, etc.

### **4.2 General employment conditions in Denmark**

- 37 hour work week
- 5 (+ 1) weeks paid holiday annually
- Salary paid during illness
- If you have a sick child, you are entitled to stay at home with your child under the age of 18 on the first two days of illness with full salary

The Danish working conditions will allow both female and male researchers to combine family and work, children and career. In Denmark, employment conditions and wages are regulated through collective agreements negotiated by trade unions and employers' organizations. However, vacation, equal opportunities, health, and safety are all areas regulated by law.

Foreign employees are covered by the same rules and regulations as Danish employees, and are therefore covered by the Danish social security system and entitled to social security benefits. Social security in Denmark is tax-funded, i.e. as a fellow you will not have to pay health insurance contributions or long-term healthcare insurance. Danish taxes are high. However, more attractive and special taxation rules (known as "The researcher taxation rule") are applicable to most foreign researchers. The HR Department at Aarhus University and the Danish tax authorities will be able to advice foreign researchers whether they qualify for the special tax rate for foreign researchers.

### **4.3 Life in Aarhus**

Right next to the sea and to ancient forests, the City of Aarhus lies as a vibrant urban environment surrounded by the beauty of nature. Aarhus is an open, inclusive city where there is room for everyone. Young and old, families with children, students, artists, established businesses and start-ups: No matter who you are or where you come from, Aarhus will make you feel at home.

With a population of 320,000, Aarhus is Denmark's second-largest city and the fastest-growing in the country. In the past ten years, the city has received 15,000 new residents and created 20,000 new jobs, the majority within the knowledge, service and innovation industries.

Being a city of engaged citizens, innovative businesses and students from all over the world, Aarhus is characterised by a strong spirit of cooperation and social cohesion.

Aarhus has often been called the City of Smiles, and is proud of this nickname. Unpretentious, easy-going, fresh, optimistic, ambitious and buzzing with life. The City of Aarhus's vision is that Aarhus is and continues to be a good city for everyone.



Photo of the campus area (the yellow buildings) and part of the city, 2005. Photo: Erik W. Olsson

More information about Denmark can be found on [www.workindenmark.dk](http://www.workindenmark.dk) - a public organization that offers practical information and general advice on all issues related to work in Denmark.

## 5 Sources of help and additional information

For additional information regarding the application system, process or the AIAS programme in general, please feel welcome to contact:

**Programme Manager, Helle Villekold at [helle@aias.au.dk](mailto:helle@aias.au.dk)**

**or by telephone: +45 87 15 35 58**

For further information about the AIAS, please visit: <http://aias.au.dk>

The AIAS-COFUND II programme has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 754513. For further information about the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, please visit:

<https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/h2020-section/marie-sklodowska-curie-actions>