

Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, AIAS



AIAS-COFUND fellowships 2016

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS



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GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS



AIAS, AARHUS INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES

1 About Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS)

The mission of the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) is to advance highest quality research by attracting talented, highly qualified fellows worldwide and within all disciplines. The AIAS strives to provide the fellows with ideal opportunities to further develop their research, and encourage the fellows' participation in various kinds of collaboration with researchers, research groups and advanced students at Aarhus University (AU). The goals for the AIAS are ambitious and reflect the increasingly influential position of AU as a world-class research university. Most importantly, the AIAS reflects the commitment of AU to support research talent and realise the promise inherent in the research endeavour. The AIAS includes a comprehensive spectrum of disciplines with a view to foster cutting edge research results.

At the AIAS, international researchers are both 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. This provides the individual fellow with a unique opportunity to focus fully on deepening his/her research, while also collaborating with researchers with different research perspectives.

2 Types and duration of fellowships

The AIAS-COFUND (Marie Curie) fellowship programme is co-funded by the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) and the European Union's 7th Framework Programme under Grant Agreement no 609033. The programme provides research opportunities for the most talented researchers from around the world. The goal of the AIAS-COFUND fellowship is to generate excellence in research by attracting the most talented researchers worldwide and across all research disciplines. Fellows can choose their research topic freely within all academic disciplines. 10 to 12 fellowships are available in this call.

The programme encompasses two types of fellowships:

- **Junior fellows:** Researchers with at least two years of experience after completion of PhD on the date of the application deadline
- **Senior fellows:** Researchers with 10+ years of postdoctoral research experience

The AIAS is an independent institute initiated by Aarhus University. Aarhus University is a modern European university with more than 44,500 students and 12,000 employees. 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. Aarhus University has an annual budget of over USD 1 billion.

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 100 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 programme contributes with approximately 70 fellowships over a period of 5 years. In this call 10 to 12 fellowships are available. The commencement dates are 1 October 2016 and 1 February 2017.

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

The duration of a fellowship must be justified in the proposal, and its appropriateness will be assessed, when the applications are 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.

2.1 Incoming mobility

The programme is open for both incoming mobility and reintegration. The target group is experienced researchers from all countries. The applicant shall demonstrate mobility and must therefore at the time of the deadline for submission of proposals not have resided or carried out his/her main activity (work, studies etc.) in Denmark for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

2.2 Reintegration

Reintegration fellowships are for nationals from EU member states and EU associated countries who have carried out research for at least three years in a country outside the European Union, and who wish to return to Denmark/EU in order to become established in a longer-term career after a period of transnational mobility. At the time of the deadline for submission of proposals, applicants shall not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies etc.) in Denmark for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to the deadline. Compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.

3 AIAS-COFUND fellowships 2016

3.1 Who can apply

Apart from the specific mobility demands, all criteria in the evaluation process (see section 3.5) are valid for both the integration and the reintegration fellowship scheme. The bottom-up approach

will be respected, i.e. within the scope of the AIAS, all disciplines with free choice of research topics are eligible. The target group of the programme is talented researchers with at least two years of fulltime postdoctoral prior to application deadline.

3.2 When and how to apply

The research proposal must be submitted via the AU online application system, using www.efond.dk/aias and must cover the sections described below. Information about the online application system can be found in section 3.7.

3.3 Application deadline

Friday, 5 February 2016 at 12.00 (noon) CET. See a detailed timeline in section 3.8.1.

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
- Personal background
- Area of research
- Desired start date
- Project duration
- Project title
- 3 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 the AIAS
- Collaborations or connections at Aarhus University
- Suggestion of peer reviewers incl. contact information
- Statement of no conflict of interest with the Quality Assurance group, the Selection Committee and your own proposed reviewers
- 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 10 to 12 fellowships are available. The fellowships will commence on the 1 October 2016 or 1 February 2017. 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 deadline for the submission of the application. 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.

3.4.3 Personal background

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

3.4.4 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

Next you will have to select **one** scientific sub area. 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
- Digital media, communication and informatics
- Languages, linguistics and cultural studies
- 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

If the sub area above does not completely describe your research area, a second sub area may be selected.

3.4.5 Key words

List 3 key words/terms that describe your research area and project.

3.4.6 Abstract

The abstract (max. 2,000 characters incl. blanks) should provide the reader with a clear understanding of the objectives of the proposal, how they 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 and for other public purposes. 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.

3.4.7 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 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 should be considered a possibility and will not be considered as any form of pre-selection. Therefore, in order to avoid the risk of the host letter compromising transparency amongst applicants, it will thus not be a part of the evaluation. If you already have established contact, this can be described in the application. See section 3.4.9.

3.4.8 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 the AIAS. This part should only focus on the environment at the AIAS and not the collaborators (if any) in general at the university.

3.4.9 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 recommendations from such collaborations can be uploaded in step 3 in the application system as pdf-files.

3.4.10 Suggestions of 5 peer reviewers by the applicant

To review the application, contact information of each reviewer (Name, address, email address and preferably a link to their profile on a university/institution/company website etc.) should be included. A reviewer must be at least at the level of an associate professor. A reviewer is not a referee but a professional within your specific field of research that can assess the project proposal.

The applicants will have to declare that there is no conflict of interest between the applicant and the reviewers suggested by the applicant. This means that the suggested reviewers cannot be a close colleague, a co-publisher or collaborator within 10 years prior to the deadline of the call, a personal friend, wife/husband, partner or any blood relation.

3.4.11 Statement of no conflict of interest

The applicant will also 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 (applicant declaring that she/he has had no research collaborations or co-published any papers with the suggested reviewers, 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 stated 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 results and future potential 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 online application system as a pdf-file.

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

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 should be made in euros (EUR). Upload the budget as pdf-file in the application system in step 3.

The following types of research related expenses are accepted and should be justified in the budget, if relevant:

- Research travels, i.e. travelling activity related to the part of the project which is carried out at the AIAS, e.g.: the participation in research-related seminars, conferences etc.
- Financial aid for specific technical assistance needed for the carrying out of the research project may be given in some cases.
- Expenses for the arrangement of scholarly events, e.g.: workshops, seminars and symposiums at the Institute.
- Expenses for extraordinary heavy running costs, e.g.: laboratory expenses, large computer/server capacity, special types of software etc.

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

- Competitive salaries equivalent to the Danish wage levels for the period of time during which fellows are staying at the Institute. Salaries will be negotiated when the fellowship is awarded.
- The journey to and from Aarhus (economy class, only one return travel) for fellows, and for the accompanying family if any.
- Expenses related to visa and work permit applications (for applicant and accompanying family).
- Expenses for ordinary running costs (standard computer, office supplies, research materials etc.).
- 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:

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

3.4.16 Ethical statement

All applicants must disclose any ethical issues in the research plan and how you intend to deal with ethical issues in their research project. An ethics issues table 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 even if there are no ethical issues to be reported.

3.4.16 Mandatory documents

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

- CV
- PhD diploma
- List of publications
- Budget
- Ethical statement

Please note that if an application lacks one of the above listed documents, the application will be considered ineligible and disregarded. All documents must be attached as pdf-files.

3.5 Assessment criteria

The primary assessment criteria are research excellence, training and career development. The single most important goal of the evaluation process is to obtain the most talented and most promising group of fellows possible, and to provide them with the best training and career development opportunities at the AIAS.

The following will be evaluated:

1. Relevance and expected impact of the proposed research (weighting 20%):

- a. Relevance of the proposed work to the scope of the call
- b. Motivation and suitability relating to the frames at the AIAS
- c. Broader impact (scientific, knowledge creation, socio-economic)
- d. Incremental vs. transformative gains
- e. Associated risks
- f. Requested resources
 - i. Budget
 - ii. Staff effort
 - iii. Access to infrastructure
 - iv. Equipment and consumables
 - v. Travel
 - vi. Networking and dissemination
- g. 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
- h. Gender balance

2. Scientific quality of the proposal (weighting 35%):

- 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
 - i. Conventionality
 - ii. Potential for the creation of new knowledge, exciting new ideas and approaches
 - iii. Use of novel technologies/methodologies
 - iv. Innovative application of existing methodologies/technologies in new areas
 - v. Potential for the creation of new fundamental questions and new directions for research
 - vi. Feasibility: scientific, technological, access to infrastructure, recruitment, project timeline, management plan and deliverables, associated risks
 - vii. Appropriateness of the research methods, infrastructures, equipment and fieldwork

3. Quality of the applicant (weighting 35%):

- 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(s) in similar projects
- d. Applicants' scientific networks and ability to successfully disseminate research findings, i.e. knowledge transfer activities
- e. Publication track record – 5 most relevant articles for the fellowship application
- 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
- h. Potentials

4. Research environment (weighting 10%):

- a. An account of why the AIAS framework as a multidisciplinary institute would have an added value for the research conducted and how it contributes to career development
- b. Visions and ideas on how to actively add to the creation of the social and academic environment of the AIAS.
- c. Suitability of the environment (AIAS) to conduct the proposed research
- d. Mobility and career development aspects

3.6 Career breaks

Career breaks will be taken into account, when evaluating the academic quality of the applicant. 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 with regards to the applicant's publication track record and involvement in research projects.

For applicants who have been on maternity, paternity, parental or sick leave after obtaining their PhD, the external individual reviewers and the Selection Committee will allow for an extended period of time since the degree was obtained when determining whether the fellow is categorized as a junior or senior fellow. The extended period is calculated by multiplying the actual number of months on leave by factor 1.5. As for career breaks due to e.g. military service, the extended period is calculated by multiplying the actual number of months in the military by factor 1.

This procedure is to ensure that the evaluation of applicants is gender fair. The exact period of leave and type of leave must be stated in the applicant's CV.

3.7 Online application system

- › Go to the website: www.efond.dk/aiaas
- › 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 (CV, PhD diploma, List of publications, Budget, Ethical Statement form and Recommendations, if any) 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 even 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.

3.8 Application process and evaluation

3.8.1 Timeline

- Opening of call: Monday, 2 November 2015.
- Deadline for applications: Friday, 5 February 2016 at 12.00 (noon) CET.
- Evaluation period: February-May 2016.
- Applicants will receive answers: Late June 2016.
- Fellowship periods will commence: 1 October 2016 and 1 February 2017.

3.8.2 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.

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 reviewers in remote evaluation
- The Selection Committee
- The QA group

The three external individual reviewers are selected from the suggested peers by the applicant, from the European databases of evaluators or AU's database of external reviewers. The three reviewers shall be distinguished researchers within the specific research area of the application in question. Reviewers must be at least at an associate professor level with publication lists in peer-reviewed journals and must be external to AU with at least one reviewer being non-Danish.

The identity of the external individual reviewers will not be disclosed to the applicants. The disclosure of the identity of the applicants to the external individual reviewers and the Selection Committee is a necessity in order to base the evaluation of the applicants on the chosen selection criteria in particular with regards to the quality of the applicant, and the applicant's potential for further progress. 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 until the final selection has been published.

3.8.3 Rebuttal opportunities

The assessments and scores provided by the external individual reviewers are available to the applicants upon request when the final answer regarding the fellowship has been given.

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 administrative grounds with regards to procedural errors only. Hence, a rebuttal cannot be based on the scientific evaluation remarks.

A rebuttal is only to be filed once a decision has been made as to which applicants will be offered a fellowship. The AIAS administration team will forward any rebuttal to the Selection Committee and the QA group. If the QA group agrees with the applicant 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 the AIAS and in Denmark

4.1 Benefits and services at the AIAS

The AIAS-COFUND 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. The 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.

Aarhus University has an International Centre with 30+ employees who are dedicated to help international staff members and students with practical and logistical matters that may arise from pre-arrival to post-departure. The International Centre has been established to help international

staff members and students moving to or living in Denmark with matters relating to their settling in at the University and in Aarhus.

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 that also apply to the AIAS-COFUND fellows will allow for 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 and 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 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 advise foreign researchers whether or not they qualify for the special tax rate for foreign researchers.

4.3 Life in Aarhus

Aarhus was founded over 1,000 years ago as a Viking settlement at the mouth of a river. The city first began developing c. 1900, when industrial growth attracted rural populations. The population of Aarhus has almost doubled since 1935 and is still growing, although rather more slowly than in recent decades.

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



Aarhus is the second-largest city in Denmark situated by the sea in the heart of Jutland. The Municipality of Aarhus covers approximately 300,000 inhabitants with an additional 1,200,000 people living in the surrounding region of East Jutland, making it the second-largest region in Denmark. Aarhus is a "young" city due to the relatively large population of younger inhabitants. This naturally follows

the location of many educational institutions and schools where young people from outlying districts move into the city to study. However, many of them move away once their studies are completed. Read more about the city of Aarhus at:

<http://www.aarhus.dk/da/omkommunen/english.aspx>

More information about Denmark can be found on 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, HelleVillemkold at helv@au.dk

or by telephone: +45 87 15 35 58

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

For further information about the SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME, FP7 Marie Curie Actions – People, please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>.