



Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships Presentation

Frequently Asked Questions

Link to SAS internal procedure for application: <https://www.sas.ac.uk/support-research/fellowships/externally-funded-fellowships/marie-sk%C5%82odowska-curie-postdoctoral>

Link to the MSCA handbook/manual: https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-marie-skłodowska-curie-actions/horizon-europe-msca-how-apply_en#ecl-inpage-293

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Contact page:
<https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/contact>

Eligibility questions

As indicated during the presentation, confirmation of eligibility is the responsibility of the applicant and we're not usually able to respond to questions around eligibility. Please refer to the guidance or contact the national point of contact : <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp>.

The UK National Contact point can be accessed here: <https://www.ukro.ac.uk/mariecurie>

Q: If the country where I reside or its neighbouring countries do not have a National Point of Contact, should I write to the NCP in my country of nationality? Or, instead, should I write to an NCP in the country of the host institution?

A: You can write to both.

Supervisor

Q: How much involvement and time is required from the supervisor at the application level?

A: The supervisor should be involved in the process from the start. The supervisor is not meant to write or change the proposal but guide the applicant through the aspects related to subject expertise and the available institutional support. The supervisor must agree to support the proposal in its final form.

Q: Does the supervisor's research have to be on exactly the same area? Could one opt for a supervisor with a specialism that doesn't map exactly onto the project but helps make it interdisciplinary? Which of these options would increase the proposal's success?

A: Ideally, the supervisor (in addition to the institution) should have expertise in the same subject field. However, there may be instances where subject fields do not exactly match but nevertheless complement the proposed research. The supervisor needs to feel confident that they can support and mentor the researcher if successful. It is possible to have more than one supervisor/mentor to ensure the subject field is adequately covered and help towards the interdisciplinary nature of the

proposal. Success is not only based on the quality of the research and that the proposal sufficiently covers excellence, impact and innovation, but also on how it fits with the institution (which includes the supervisor(s)) to ensure that the proposed project delivers its true potential.

Q: Should applicants contact a potential mentor before submitting an expression of interest to see if the mentor is interested in supporting the project?

A: Yes, it is recommended.

Sponsoring institution

Q: How many applications can an institution sponsor?

A: There is no limit.

Q: How important is the size and reputation of the beneficiary University to the success of an application?

A: It is not important. All that matters is the quality of the research and the match with the institution to guarantee the successful delivery of outputs.

Q: Is there any type of criterion on the part of the funder for the distribution of scholarships among the host institutions?

A: No, there is not. The quality of the proposed research and the match with the institution are the criteria on which all applications are judged.

Secondment

Q: Does the Secondment have to be in the country of outgoing phase or the country of the beneficiary University? Could it be in a different country (non EU)?

A: Researchers receiving a Postdoctoral Fellowship may opt to include a secondment phase within the overall duration of their fellowship **in any country worldwide**. The secondment phase can be a single period or be divided into shorter mobility periods.

NB:

- **For European Postdoctoral Fellowships**, secondments cannot exceed one third of the standard fellowship duration and should be in line with the project objectives, adding significant value and impact to the fellowship.
- **For Global Postdoctoral Fellowships**, optional secondments are permitted for up to one third of the outgoing phase. A maximum of three months can be spent at the start of the project at the beneficiary (or any other organisation mentioned in the description of the action), allowing the researcher to spend time there before going to the associated partner in the Third Country. Secondments cannot take place during the mandatory twelve-month return period to the host organisation in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.

Global Scheme

Q: For the Global scheme, can any Third-country University be eligible? I have the agreement of the mentor but don't know how to check at the administrative level.

A: **Global Postdoctoral Fellowships** are open to European nationals or long-term residents who wish to engage in R & I projects with organisations outside EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. These fellowships require an outgoing phase of a minimum 12 and a maximum 24 months in a non-associated Third Country, and a mandatory 12-month return phase to a host organisation based in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country.

Letter(s) of commitment from associated partners (only for hosts of the outgoing phase of Global Fellowships or non-academic placement) must be attached to the application. The institution must formally agree to host you as the period of time spent during the outgoing phase is significant.

The details of the associated partner during the outgoing phase will also appear on Part A of the application and will need to be clearly stated in part B. As such, it is imperative to have received formal approval from that partner. The University of London would then contact the associated partner and would ask to have a non-binding agreement arranged with us, such as a Memorandum of Understanding to, confirm their association and commitment to the fellowship.

Please note: for Global PF proposals, the absence of a letter of commitment will render the proposal inadmissible and the proposal will not be evaluated.

Q: Could the host of the outgoing phase (Global Scheme) be in the country of Nationality, if one has not lived in that country for ten years?

A: The mobility rules indicate that the applicant must not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the beneficiary (for European Postdoctoral Fellowships), or the host organisation for the outgoing phase (for Global Postdoctoral Fellowships), for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before the call deadline. For confirmation on mobility rules, please contact the national point of contact.

Q: Can the time abroad required for the Global Fellowship be the time between the application deadline and the actual starting point of the project?

A: Please refer to the mobility rules above. The mobility rules are up to the point of application, not the starting date of the fellowship if successful. For confirmation on mobility rules, please contact the national point of contact.

Proposal

Q: Does the proposed project have to be fully original (something totally new and different from what you have done for your PhD and other collateral research)?

A: While it can draw on previous experience and training – either obtained in the PhD or previous postdoc – the research proposal should be original and train through collaboration, mobility and new methodologies the researcher to the next level of her/his career.

Q: Some funders/academic departments consider PAR (participatory action research) as a 'second class' methodology, should it be avoided in a MSCA research proposal? Are research methodologies such as Oral History and Participatory Action frowned upon?

A: The proposal will be read by peers in the field whose work may also be based on qualitative methods. Therefore, applicants should not be concerned about including qualitative methodologies (such as Oral History and Participatory action) in their proposal.

Q: Is it possible to be too ambitious? One can promise a lot but would it be possible? What about the budget for those ideas? Say for a database?

A: Indeed, the project can and even should be ambitious, but it has to be feasible at the same time. When writing your project, applicants should make sure they provide detailed information about the project. In this way, assessors would be convinced of the feasibility of an ambitious project.

The budget is fixed. The outputs may include a database if this is relevant for your training.

Q: What would you say is the “ideal” profile of a candidate? Taking into account publications, experience, academic background (university of origin), or any other dimension you can think about?

A: It is all about the research question, the idea and how it is formulated, and how all the elements – collaborations, impact, engagement – connect together. There is no ideal profile of a candidate.

Publications

Q: For someone who is just finishing a doctorate, is there a minimum number of publications that you would suggest a researcher have before applying?

A: Publications (as with any other achievement) are measured against the researcher’s current stage of their career. Please be mindful that the eligibility rules do indicate that applicants **must have a maximum of eight years’ experience in research, from the date of the award of their PhD degree.** Periods of experience outside research and career breaks will not count towards the above maximum, nor will time spent undertaking research in third countries for nationals or long-term residents of EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries who wish to reintegrate into Europe. As such, there is some expectation that the applicant would have published during that time.

Process

Q: You ask for details of publications in the Expression of Interests to be submitted to SAS. This is the opposite to what I have been told about the MSCA as a scheme with less focus on publications and more on skills. How important are publications?

A: This is to give the potential supervisor an idea of the work you have done thus far.

Resubmission

Q: If I get below 70% in the assessment of my application, does it mean that I cannot reapply in the future, even with a different project and at a different institution?

A: Proposals involving the same recruiting organisation (and for Global Postdoctoral Fellowships this also includes the associated partner hosting the outgoing phase) and individual researcher which were submitted to the previous call of the MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships under Horizon Europe and received a score of less than 70%, cannot be resubmitted the following year. The application process will ask whether this is a resubmission or not. This would not prevent you from re-applying for a different project at a different institution.

Evaluation

Information on the evaluation process: this is done by lay people. The assessment is all about the researcher and how their project fits their subject field.

Applicants receive substantive feedback on the proposals, which is something rarely offered by funding bodies.

General

Q: What is the percentage of Latin American applicants that get the grant? How many of them are women older than 30? is there a quota by regions within Latin America? e.g. Central America, Southern Cone

Q: How are the universities ranked?

A: The horizon dashboard might be able to give you some insight:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard>

Notes on Post-award: if you are successful

The approval of the award and the formal signing are undertaken in collaboration with the University of London Research Services team on behalf of the institution.

The successful applicant will receive a contract of employment as the School's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow and will have the same benefits as any member of staff at the University of London. Support will be given to ensure that the appropriate right to work visa for the UK is obtained.

The fellow will be based in one of the institutes and the day-to-day operations will be supported by the institute staff and supervisor. Research Services will support the fellow with any questions regarding the management of their grant and their budget, as well as anything involving contacting or reporting to the funder.

The fellow will have access to all training made available to professional and academic staff and will become an integral part of the School and the University's community. Network and office facilities will be provided. Based in London, and as part of the federation of the University of London, access to resources and other relevant courses can be negotiated during the fellowship.

Should the fellowship include a secondment or associated partner, we will require a collaboration agreement with us to ensure that all parties are clearly aware of their responsibilities and commitments, as described in the proposal.