

## Postdoctoral Researchers International Mobility Experience

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**PRIME 2021/22**

### Overview

#### Objective

With funds from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the DAAD PRIME programme funds temporary positions at German universities to support the international mobility of postdoctoral researchers.

Postdoctoral researchers who see their long-term career perspectives in Germany receive funding for a research stay abroad based on a temporary position at a German university. In addition to the stay abroad, the funding also includes a mandatory return phase for subsequent reintegration into the German science system.

#### Who can apply?

Applicants with above-average qualifications from all faculties can apply. They must have completed their doctorate with very good results before the start of funding.

An application is possible regardless of nationality and current residency. However, depending on nationality and place of residence, restrictions may apply when choosing the destination country for the stay abroad (see application requirements).

#### What can be funded?

Funding is being provided for an 18-month employment contract at a German university to conduct a 12-month research stay abroad with a subsequent return phase to Germany. Within the 12 months abroad, it is also possible to combine stays in several research institutions in one or several countries. Please indicate all destination institutions in the application form.

#### Duration of funding

The support is provided for 18 months, of which the first 12 months are spent abroad and the remaining 6 months of the return phase in Germany. (funding cycle 12+6)

Integration into the German social security system is a prerequisite for the research stay abroad. If this condition is not met before the start of the fellowship, funding will begin with a 1-month starting phase in Germany. (funding cycle 1+12+5)

#### Support

- Salary:  
temporary 18-month employment contract at a German university according to pay scale TV-L EG 13;  
It is at the discretion of the employing universities to determine the exact level within the salary group, based on the previous work experience of the fellows.
- Expatriate allowance:  
The monthly allowance for the research stay abroad is based on an area classification of the destination and the gross income of the fellows.<sup>1</sup>  
The DAAD will conclude a grant agreement with the respective German university covering the costs for the regular salary and the monthly expatriate allowance.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> According to the applicable table of "Anlage VI.1 zu § 53 BBesG".

<sup>2</sup> Funding for the position at the host German university is implemented between the DAAD and the university within the framework of project funding.

- Travel allowance:  
A lump sum travel allowance in accordance with DAAD rates for postdoctoral scientists will be paid for the selected candidate and, if applicable, accompanying spouse or partner (within the meaning of the German law on civil partnerships) and children who will accompany the fellow for at least one month during the research stay abroad. The travel allowance will not be part of the grant agreement with the German university but will be paid to the fellows directly by DAAD.

## Application requirements

### Eligibility requirements

- Only candidates with an above-average scientific record can be considered. You must have completed your doctorate before the start of funding with a very good result (at least magna cum laude / very good for a doctorate in Germany). If the doctorate is not graded, the decision lies with the DAAD selection committee.  
While not recommended, it is possible to apply in the final stages of the doctorate.
- Applicants must comply with the programme's mobility rule, i.e. they are free to choose any country (except Germany) as destination for their research stay abroad, provided they have not resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in that country for more than 12 months in total during the three years preceding the application deadline of 31 August 2021. Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention will not be taken into account.  
If the research stay abroad is to be undertaken in a country other than an EU member state<sup>3</sup> (MS) or an [associated country](#) (AC), the applicant must either be a national/resident citizen of an EU MS or AC, or have been continuously active in research for five years' full-time equivalent in a MS or AC, immediately prior to the time of recruitment. If this condition is not met, the applicant will be deemed ineligible.
- To be considered for funding, applicants living abroad are expected to state their intention to continue their research careers in Germany upon completion of the return phase.
- Applicants who are already permanently employed by the research milieu where the research training activities are planned to take place and that is recruiting them may not be supported.
- Applicants must accept that the research stay abroad and the return phase to Germany are both mandatory parts of the programme.<sup>4</sup>
- With filing the application, candidates declare acceptance of the "Rules of good scientific practice" and the ethical guidelines of the programme.

### Additional requirements

- Appropriate host institutions in Germany and abroad must have been identified at the time of application. The contact with these institutions and the agreement on modalities are the responsibility of the applicant.
- The employing host institution in Germany must be a university.<sup>5</sup>
- The German host university must confirm in writing that the postdoc will be employed for the entire funding period, should the application be successful. The necessary funds will be made available to the university through separate DAAD project funding. The university will nominate a mentor/scientific host for the fellow. It is expected that the

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<sup>3</sup> Great Britain / Northern Ireland will participate in Horizon Europe, and therefore be "associated".

<sup>4</sup> Exceptions are only possible in individual cases with approval of DAAD and the funding provider (BMBF). E.g. an early termination of funding may be admissible if the reintegration requirement can similarly be met by an otherwise longer-term or permanent position in Germany.

<sup>5</sup> On its website DAAD offers a list of [PRIME contacts at German universities](#) who can answer questions from potential applicants concerning their institution. Universities that did not specifically nominate a PRIME contact person are equally eligible as hosts.

- German university indicates, in its letter of invitation, the possibilities for longer-term research perspectives at the institution.<sup>6</sup>
- The foreign host institution shall be selected according to the scientific preferences/needs of the research project. It can be a university, a non-university research institute, or an industrial research entity. It must be willing to support the postdoc in the implementation of her/his research project and provide the necessary infrastructure. The type of support (office space, access to equipment, laboratories, libraries etc.) must be described in the invitation letter. DAAD cannot make funding available to the foreign host institution.
  - The starting date of the fellowship must be between 1 June 2022 and 1 October 2022. Postponement is possible only under exceptional circumstances (e.g. pregnancy, motherhood, parental leave) and must be approved by DAAD.

## Selection process

All applicants will receive information on the outcome of the formal eligibility check approximately within six weeks after the application deadline. All applications that subsequently enter the review process will be reviewed independently by two external experts (scientists from the respective subject area).

The final rating will be made by the interdisciplinary selection committee on the basis of the external reviews and the assessment of the committee members. Based on the final classification, a ranking list will be drawn up, according to which the successful applicants and reserve candidates are determined with regard to the available funds.

The selection does not include personal interviews but will be based exclusively on the submitted documents. All applicants will receive a result notification (funding, reserve list, rejection) about a week after the selection committee meeting. About two months after the selection, applicants will also receive a feedback summarizing the most important comments of the reviewers.

Successful applicants will be invited to an orientation seminar before the start of the fellowship, in which further information on the fellowship implementation process will be provided. The seminar is going to take place in April 2022.

After the successful candidates have declared acceptance of their fellowships, DAAD will inform their German host universities. They will then resolve any remaining open issues on the modalities of employment with the applicants and apply to DAAD for project funding to finance the fellows' positions. Following approval by the DAAD, funding can start on 1 June 2022 at the earliest.

## Selection criteria

The performance-based assessment will take into account:

1. the **achievements of the applicant to date** (scientific and other qualifications); and
2. the **quality of the proposed project** and its **consistency with further scientific qualification and long-term career planning**.

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<sup>6</sup> Universities are not required to provide a legally binding financial commitment beyond the DAAD funding period, but hosts are expected to demonstrate a sustained commitment to the candidate's career development.

The two aspects will be assessed separately according to the following scale (from 1 to 10):

- <6: insufficient
- 6-7: sufficient
- 7-8: satisfactory
- 8-9: good
- 9-10: very good

The final rating will be calculated as the average of the two separate scores. The following aspects are considered in the assessment:

## 1. Achievements to date

- a. academic performance:
  - grades, duration of studies
  - number and quality of publications<sup>7</sup>
  - other achievements (patents, conference invitations, prizes, supervision, teaching etc.)
  - attached letter of recommendation
- b. overall impression of the applicant, taking into consideration e.g.
  - additional scientific/practical/management experience
  - international mobility
  - interdisciplinary research experience
  - intersectoral mobility
  - social commitment
  - personal situation (e.g. unavoidable delays during academic career due to maternity and parental leave, care for children or other dependent persons, medical conditions; researchers with special needs, researchers displaced by conflicts)

## 2. Project quality and long-term career perspectives

- a. research project<sup>8</sup>:
  - quality;
  - originality;
  - relevance/up-to-dateness;
  - implementation (time schedule and work plan);
  - impact on the research field;
- b. suitability of the German host institution and the support provided there (scientific mentoring, technical/administrative support);
- c. suitability of the foreign host institution and the support provided there (scientific mentoring, technical/administrative support);
- d. appropriateness of the research project with regard to the long-term career plans (scientific qualification and acquisition of additional skills).

All information relevant to these selection criteria should be included in the application. This should be considered when preparing the curriculum vitae, research and time schedules, and supplementary information.

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<sup>7</sup> From the reviewers' perspective the hitherto research achievements as documented by the publications are of central importance. In addition to the number of publications, the applicant's own contribution (if several authors are involved), and also the standing of the journal and/or scientific publisher are important criteria. This will be viewed in the context of the duration of the applicant's research career and the specific publication culture of the relevant discipline.

<sup>8</sup> From the reviewers' perspective the applicant's scientific independence is of crucial importance. This should be demonstrated by choosing a new research focus and a new research environment, either after the PhD or in connection with the planned project. In case these conditions are not fulfilled we recommend commenting on the reasons for this in the "supplementary information".

## Application procedure

### Application documents

The application form will be available at the DAAD application portal. To get to the portal please click on [Stipendiendatenbank für Deutsche](#)<sup>9</sup> fill in “Fachrichtung” (subject of your research), “Zielland” (country of the period abroad) and “Programme für” *Promovierte*, and select the programme.

Please mind the [instructions on registering](#) on the portal, choose **English** as portal language and activate, if necessary, the compatibility view of your browser.

Once your portal registration has been completed, you can generate and download the form for the required letter of recommendation.

After entering the applicant data, all other application documents (with the exception of the letter of recommendation) can be uploaded to the portal.

In order to upload the documents, all attachments must be available as pdf files. With the exception of the certificates (see below), **all** documents must be submitted **in English**, as the evaluation and selection process are carried out by international reviewers and an international committee.

Applications that were sent before the deadline can be updated and supplemented until the deadline.

### Documents to be uploaded in the DAAD-Portal:

1. completed **application form**
2. **curriculum vitae** without chronological gaps and in tabular form (please specify the month and duration, e.g. MM / YY - MM / YY);  
e.g. EU standard <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>
3. **short summary** of the research project with a clearly recognizable working title and an indication of keywords. The summary should enable the assignment to a specific subject area and be suitable as preliminary information for potential reviewers. The length of the summary should not exceed half a page.<sup>10</sup>
4. a detailed and independently prepared **research proposal** coordinated with the German and foreign host. In the evaluation of the proposal particular emphasis will be put on the quality of the research plan. It should detail your own preparatory work, explain the relevance of the subject area for research and why the selected host institute is particularly suitable for carrying out the project. The strategy for examining the scientific problem should be understandable and the choice of methods and work equipment be adequately explained. Please provide a precise description and a clear presentation. The total length of the research project should not exceed 7-8 pages (without references). Bibliographical references may be included as an annex.
5. **time schedule** for the realization of the planned work abroad and in Germany (e.g. Gantt chart)

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<sup>9</sup> Regardless of their nationality, PRIME fellows will be funded as employees in Germany and posted abroad within the framework of their domestic employment. The application for this form of outgoing mobility will therefore be carried out through the DAAD scholarship database for Germans. “Germany” as country of residence is a default setting that cannot be changed.

<sup>10</sup> For all documents with a page number limit the minimum font size allowed is 11 points. Standard character spacing and a minimum of single line spacing is to be used. Text elements other than the body text, such as headers, foot/end notes, captions, formulae, may deviate, but must be legible; however, these elements should not be used as mechanism to circumvent the rules. For example, text within a table or graphical element should be kept to a minimum.

6. **binding declaration from the German host university (form 1, [word/pdf](#))** to provide a temporary position for the funding period according to TV-L E13 within the framework of DAAD project funding, should the application be successful.
7. **invitation letter from the German host (form 2, [word/pdf](#))**. This letter should detail why the university is particularly suitable for the implementation of the research project, the support to be provided, the name(s) of the mentor/scientific host, and the longer-term research and career perspectives at the institution.
8. **invitation letter from the foreign host**. This letter should detail why the institution is particularly suitable for carrying out the research project, the support to be provided and the name(s) of the mentor/scientific host.
9. **certificates of the two most recent academic degrees** (usually doctorate and master or comparable degree) with a transcript of records. If there is no transcript available for the respective degree certificate, please explain why. If the document is not available in German or English, a German or English translation is required.  
If the doctorate has not yet been completed, a **statement from the PhD supervisor** is required, in which she/he explains when successful completion of the doctorate is expected.  
In the application process, a pdf version of the degree certificates will suffice. However, successful candidates must provide a certified copy of the PhD certificate before starting their fellowship.
10. **publication list** categorized according to publications in peer-reviewed journals, books, and conference proceedings, and indicating the type of publication (original paper, review etc.). For each publication the state of publication (published, in print, accepted, submitted) and complete bibliographical information (including the first and last page number) must be provided. Please include electronic links if available.
11. **list of the most important publications** (min. 1, max. 3) and **reasons for their selection** (importance of the scientific results, significance for the research project, new methodological approach etc., max. 1 page). Please comment on your specific contribution if several authors are involved. For each of the max. 3 publications the electronic link (URL) must be provided. If the publications are not available online, single articles can also be uploaded. However, please strictly refrain from uploading entire monographs/volumes as part of the application.
12. **short summary of the doctoral thesis** (1-2 pages)
13. **supplementary information** (optional) on other scientific, professional and social activities, or on your personal situation, as far as you consider this information relevant for the assessment of your proposal and want to make the selection committee aware of it.
14. completed and signed **ethics issues checklist (form 3, [word/pdf](#))**<sup>11</sup> for checking whether ethical standards of scientific research might be affected by the planned research project. This document is a mandatory declaration and must be submitted by every applicant.

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<sup>11</sup> If this declaration or the reviewing process indicate that ethical rules mandatory in the EU/in Germany or the host country could be violated, the following procedure will apply: Even projects otherwise positively assessed will only receive funding if compliance with these rules can be achieved through minor modification. If ethical aspects are not satisfactorily detailed in an otherwise positively assessed proposal, the commitment for funding will be postponed, and can only take place where an adequate explanation is provided by a specified deadline.



**15. language certificate for the period abroad:**

For postdoctoral research stays we generally assume that English is the working language at the host institute. Confirmation by the host institute and a proof of language proficiency are not required. If knowledge of other languages is required to carry out the project, e.g. for fieldwork, the following regulations apply:

A proof of language proficiency is not required in the following cases:

- The respective language is the applicant's mother tongue.
- The applicant has studied / completed a degree programme in the respective language (proof required).
- The applicant has lived consecutively for at least one year in a country in which the respective language is the official language.
- The applicant has worked continuously for at least one year in an environment in which the respective language was used as the permanent working language.

Please indicate if one of the exceptions mentioned here applies to you and briefly explain how language proficiency may be verified by other documents in your application (e.g. curriculum vitae). This will facilitate the formal examination of the application. If none of the exceptions above apply, proof of language proficiency is required. An official language certificate for the respective language will be accepted, which should not be older than three years and must describe all four aspects of language proficiency (speaking, listening, reading, writing).<sup>12</sup> Certificates of participation in language courses will not be accepted if they do not rate the above-mentioned aspects of language proficiency.

**16. A certificate for the knowledge of German**<sup>13</sup> is required unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- i)* The applicant originates from a country where German is the official language;
- ii)* The applicant has lived consecutively in a German-speaking country for at least one year;
- iii)* The applicant credibly states that knowledge of English is sufficient to implement the planned project.

**17. checklist of the application documents (form 4, [word/pdf](#))****18. one confidential letter of recommendation** from a university professor and the corresponding recommendation form. The recommendation form is available in the DAAD portal's section "Personal Funding"; after registering, the document can be generated.

The letter of recommendation should refer to the applicant's personal and scientific suitability for the planned project. It should usually be submitted by the supervisor of the doctoral thesis. If this is not the case, please explain.

The recommendation letter must be sent by post to DAAD, Section ST43/PRIME, either by the author or the applicant.

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<sup>12</sup> One possibility is the template "Language Certificate for Candidates from Germany Applying for a DAAD Scholarship Abroad", which is available at the following link:

[https://www.daad.de/medien/ausland/dokumente/daad-sprachnachweis\\_deutsche.pdf](https://www.daad.de/medien/ausland/dokumente/daad-sprachnachweis_deutsche.pdf).

DAAD language certificates must be issued by the respective (foreign) lecturer or by an authorized examiner from the language centre or the department for the respective foreign language. Here you will find a handout ([https://www.daad.de/medien/ausland/dokumente/handreichung\\_sprachenzentren.pdf](https://www.daad.de/medien/ausland/dokumente/handreichung_sprachenzentren.pdf)) for lecturers and language centres to fill out the form.

<sup>13</sup> More information is available at <https://www.daad.de/en/study-and-research-in-germany/plan-your-studies/the-german-language/>

Except for the letter of recommendation (see item 18), all documents have to be uploaded to the application portal in pdf format. The letter of recommendation must be sent by post to the following address:

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD)  
Section ST43 / PRIME  
Kennedyallee 50  
53175 Bonn  
Germany

The DAAD portal generates an automatic confirmation of receipt for the letter of recommendation. Please contact us if you have not received such a confirmation within two weeks after the application deadline.

### **Schedule/Application deadline**

Announcement of the call:	1 May 2021
Application deadline:	31 August 2021
Selection result:	late March 2022
Orientation seminar for new fellows:	April 2022
Earliest starting date:	1 June 2022
Latest starting date:	1 October 2022

### **Remark on the application documents**

The DAAD reserves the right not to consider incomplete applications. The applicant is responsible for the timely submission of the complete documents.

### **Data protection**

Application documents remain with the DAAD and become its property. The data of fellowship holders are saved by the DAAD in accordance with the Federal Data Protection Act and the EU General Data Protection Regulation, insofar as they are necessary to process the application or the fellowship. The documents of unsuccessful applicants will be deleted after a reasonable period.

### **Contact and further information**

Section ST43  
Brid Schenkl  
E-Mail: [prime@daad.de](mailto:prime@daad.de)

Here you can find answers for frequently asked questions ([FAQ](#)).

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