

DOC [Doctoral Fellowship Program of the OeAW]

## DOC

### [Doctoral Fellowship Program of the Austrian Academy of Sciences]

#### PROGRAM STATUTES

##### Objective

With the DOC fellowship program, the Austrian Academy of Sciences supports highly qualified doctoral candidates from all areas of research. The fellowship is intended to enable young researchers to devote themselves to writing their dissertation in a concentrated manner and with a clear time frame.

##### Target group

Highly qualified young scientists from all areas of basic research are invited to apply for a DOC fellowship from the OeAW who:

- are pursuing their doctoral or PhD studies in Austria,
- have completed their diploma or master's degree no more than two years before the application (deadline is 1 July of the year of submission) and
- can prove that they meet the admission requirements for doctoral or PhD studies in accordance with the regulations of the respective university.

Furthermore, application is conditional on the submission of a dissertation exposé, the positive opinion of the dissertation supervisor including proof of the provision of any material resources necessary for the implementation of the dissertation project.

##### Exceptions

Exceptions must be clarified before submitting an application by consulting the Department of Fellowships & Awards of the OeAW.

If the diploma/master's degree was completed more than two years before the submission deadline, the period can be extended to a maximum of four years. The following reasons for delays / interruptions are accepted: (child) care obligations, military or civilian service, disability, (chronic) illness.

The diploma/master's degree program must be fully completed at the time of application, i.e. the degree certificate must be submitted with the application documents. Exceptions are possible if proof is submitted with the application documents that all courses have been completed and the diploma/master's thesis has been graded. The final examination for the diploma/master's program must take place no later than six weeks after the submission deadline; the date should be communicated at the time of application.

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### **Application details**

Applicants are free to apply to other (funding) bodies. However, such applications and information about their outcome must be communicated in writing to the Department of Fellowships & Awards of the OeAW.

It is not possible to apply for another OeAW fellowship program at the same time.

It is possible to re-apply for the DOC program once, if the application requirements are met.

### **Compliance with the guidelines for good scientific practice**

When drafting the application, the program statutes of the DOC program and the Guidelines of Good Scientific Practice (<https://oeawi.at/richtlinien/>) must be observed.

By signing the online application form for a DOC fellowship, applicants confirm that they have written the submitted project proposal independently.

### **Research stay abroad**

It is possible to carry out a stay abroad of up to 12 months as part of a DOC fellowship.

It is also possible to carry out the dissertation project within the framework of a cotutelle agreement between an Austrian and a foreign university within the framework of a DOC fellowship.

### **Duration of funding**

DOC fellowships are granted for a period of 24, 30 or 36 months and must be commenced within four months of the announcement of the decision of the committee. In justified exceptional cases, a later start is also possible.

If there is proof of (child) care obligations or (chronic) illness or disability, the fellowship can be claimed as a part-time fellowship. In this case, the funding period can be extended by a maximum of half of the approved time.

### **Amount of funding**

The amount of the fellowship is adjusted every year; for more information, see: [fellowship rates](#)  
These amounts are personnel costs.

In addition, a travel allowance of max. 500 euros per year can be applied for to fund active participation in scientific meetings/conferences or for research stays abroad.

A cost subsidy of max. 1,900 euros (gross/gross) per year is available for childcare.

### **Payment**

The DOC fellowships are paid out in annual installments either directly to the fellowship recipients ("new self-employed") or to the university or non-university research institution in Austria where the fellowship recipients are employed.

The prerequisite for employment within the framework of the DOC program is the commitment of the institute management that a workplace can be made available if the fellowship is awarded.

There is no provision for payment of the fellowship for a period prior to the actual start of the fellowship.

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### **Conditions**

Additional employment (e.g. teaching assignments, tutorials) is permitted if they promote the program goal – the successful writing of the dissertation – and do not take up more than ten hours per week. Exceptions to this regulation must be clarified with the Department of Fellowships & Awards of the OeAW.

Should fellows fail to adhere to the conditions of the fellowship, they must pay back their funding.

### **Reporting**

Halfway through and three months before the end of the funding period, fellowship recipients must submit a work report and a statement from the dissertation supervisor on the progress of the project by e-mail to the Department of Fellowships & Awards of the OeAW ([stipendien.berichte@oeaw.ac.at](mailto:stipendien.berichte@oeaw.ac.at)).

In all publications that are produced as a result of the funding, the note "funded within the DOC program of the OeAW" must be mentioned.

### **Selection criteria**

- Quality of the dissertation project,  
i.e. originality / innovativeness, scientific methods, focus, feasibility of the project, prospects of success in the requested funding period, independence of the thesis
- Quality of the scientific environment and dissertation supervision
- Evaluation of any points of criticism in the review
- Applicant's academic career and previous academic achievements,  
i.e. competitive course of study, publication performance, mobility, additional commitment (teaching, conference organisation, etc.)
- Future potential of the applicant,  
i.e. scientific potential, career prospects

### **Selection procedure**

The fellowship committee consists of scientists who work at a university or a non-university research institution in Austria. The committee is reconstituted every year.

#### Preselection

The applications are assigned to the members of the fellowship committee according to the respective research area. In the first selection round, the committee members draw up a shortlist of applications that will be reviewed by international experts. This selection is made on the basis of the scientific quality of the dissertation project and/or the scientific qualification of the applicant; the reasons are communicated to the applicant in writing in the event of rejection.

For the applications that are reviewed by international experts, the committee members propose suitable reviewers. In addition, experts from the database of the Department of Fellowships & Awards of the OeAW can be named.

There is no fixed pool of reviewers; for each application, experts are sought who can assess the proposal on the basis of their own scientific experience or research activities in accordance with the international standards in the respective field. These reviewers work on a voluntary basis, i.e. they do not receive any financial compensation for this activity.

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Applicants have the right (e.g. for reasons of competition or because of a school dispute) to exclude up to three scientists from the review process.

### Review procedure

At least one expert opinion is obtained for each application. In the case of interdisciplinary proposals that cover several research areas, the number can be increased.

A review consists of a written statement and a formal assessment of the scientific quality of the dissertation project on a scale of 1-10 (1-2 = inadequate, 9-10 = excellent). The following criteria are taken into account:

- Originality, innovativeness and relevance of the project in the research area
- Reception of the current state of research
- Clarity of research questions (hypotheses)
- Appropriateness of the methodology (incl. work plan and schedule)
- Feasibility of the project (institute equipment, scientific environment)

Finally, the reviewers are asked to make a summary recommendation as to whether the application is recommended for funding or should be rejected in its present form.

If the written statement is not conclusive, a further expert opinion will be obtained. The reviewers are asked to disclose possible reasons for bias. If bias is found retrospectively, the expert report will not be evaluated.

### Decision on the award of fellowships

The decision on the awarding of fellowships will be made in the spring (May/June) of the year following the submission deadline.

Due to the large number of applications, related disciplines will be grouped into panels; approximately 20-40 applications per panel will be discussed comparatively.

On the basis of the expert opinions, the committee members draw up a reasoned ranking of the applications assigned to them; the applications are assessed on the basis of the expert opinions and the scientific qualifications of the applicants and assigned to one of the following categories:

A = fully eligible for support,

i.e. rated unrestrictedly excellent in all aspects

B = eligible for funding if sufficient funds are available,

i.e. clearly eligible for funding, but points of criticism have been formulated in the reviews and/or the scientific qualification of the applicant is not assessed as unreservedly excellent

C = not eligible for funding in its present form

In the panel meeting, the applications will be discussed comparatively; the expert opinions, but also other criteria relating to the scientific qualification of the applicant, are discussed in detail.

The decision on the awarding of the fellowships is made by the entire panel.

It is pointed out that due to budgetary conditions, applications must be rejected despite a positive evaluation.

Legal recourse is excluded.

### **Legal status**

The OeAW has no influence on the content and organization of the dissertation project. The criterion for funding is the fulfilment of the exposé prepared by the fellowship recipient.

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The Austrian Academy of Sciences does not acquire any rights to the results of the research work through the payment of the fellowship, nor does it exert any influence on the type of cooperation of the recipient(s) with research institutions and research groups.

[As of January 2025]