



Programme Information

Georg Forster Research Fellowships (HERMES) for postdoctoral researchers

In providing Georg Forster Research Fellowships (HERMES) for postdoctoral researchers, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation enables highly-qualified scientists and scholars from abroad who are just embarking on their academic careers and who **completed their doctorates less than four years ago**¹ to spend extended periods of research (6-24 months) in Germany.

The research fellowship programme is financed by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung* – BMZ) and co-financed by the European Union (EU) in the 7th Framework Programme.² The programme is scheduled to run from 01/07/2013 to 30/06/2018. Applications can be submitted no earlier than 01.07.2013 until mid-2015 (exact date TBD).

Scientists and scholars from all disciplines from developing countries, emerging economies and transition states (excluding People's Republic of China and India; c.f. [detailed list of countries](#)) may apply. The research outline must deal with issues of major relevance to the future development of the candidate's country or region of origin.

The research outline is carried out in cooperation with academic hosts at research institutions in Germany. Applicants choose their own topic of research and their host in Germany and prepare their research outline independently. Details of the research outline including information on the intended duration of the fellowship must be agreed with the intended host before applying. Short-term visits for study and training purposes or for attending conferences are not eligible for sponsorship.

Candidates are selected solely on the basis of the evaluation of their academic qualifications. There are no quotas for individual disciplines or countries. A candidate's academic eligibility is assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- academic record and academic performance to date (mobility, determination, breadth of research activities, academic productivity)
- quality of key publications specified in the application (originality, degree of innovation, applicant's contribution in cases of multiple authorship)
- originality and innovation potential of the suggested research outline (significance for the advancement of the discipline, convincing choice of academic methods, prospects for academic development of the applicant, clear focus and feasibility of realization within the requested funding period and at the chosen host institution)
- the applicant's future potential (academic potential, further academic development, career prospects).

Applications are assessed on the basis of independent peer reviews requested by the Humboldt Foundation. The final decision is taken by a committee composed of academics from all disciplines in the framework of the funding available.

¹ Researchers who completed their doctorates more than four, but no more than 12 years ago may apply for "Georg Forster Research Fellowships (HERMES) for experienced researchers".

² Funding for the Georg Forster Research Fellowship Programme, which has the same specifications and additional benefits as the Humboldt Research Fellowship Programme, is provided by the BMZ. European Union funding is used for additional fellowships and supplementary benefits for all Georg Forster (HERMES) Fellows (see the footnotes referring to the relevant benefits).

Fellowship specifications

The fellowship is worth 2,650 EUR per month. This includes a mobility lump sum and a contribution towards health and liability insurance.

Additional benefits for research fellows:

- **lump sum** for the fellow's return **travel expenses** if the costs are not borne by a third party;
- **language fellowship** for an intensive language course lasting two to four months at selected language institutes in Germany **immediately prior to** the actual period of research; language fellowships may also be granted to accompanying marital partners;
- **family allowances** for accompanying family members staying at least three months (monthly allowance: up to 326 EUR for marital partners and up to 234 EUR for each child);
- **flat-rate allowance** for accompanying children (under the age of 18) for stays of at least three months (400 EUR per month for the first child and 100 EUR per month for every additional child);³
- **additional extension** of the fellowship up to 12 months for research fellows accompanied by children under the age of 12 or alternatively a **subsidy towards recognized childcare costs** in Germany;⁴
- **purpose-based subsidy** towards a **pension plan** in the amount of up to €200 per month providing those receiving the subsidy contribute the same amount from their own finances;⁵
- **bridging grant** after at least 12 months' uninterrupted fellowship in Germany in the amount of €1,500 per month for 6 months (for fellowship lasting up to 12 months) up to a maximum of 12 months (for fellowship lasting more than 12 months) to cover periods of unemployment in Germany;⁵
- **a subsidy towards research costs** to be paid to the hosts in Germany amounting to 800 EUR per month (for research in the natural sciences and engineering) and 500 EUR (for research in the humanities and social sciences);
- **Europe allowance** for a research stay at a research institute in another European country (though not the research fellow's own country); for a designated period in the course of the fellowship if necessary to ensure the success of the research;
- **extensive alumni sponsorship** once a successful research stay has come to an end, especially for maintaining contacts with collaborative partners in Germany during the Humboldtian's entire academic career.

Application requirements

1. **Doctorate** or comparable academic degree (Ph.D., C.Sc. or equivalent), completed less than four years prior to the date of application. Candidates who have nearly completed their doctoral degrees are eligible to apply provided that they submit the manuscript of their dissertation or publications containing the results of their dissertation, however, at the earliest, 6 months prior to the completion of their dissertation.
2. **Academic publications** reviewed according to international standards and printed in journals and/or by publishing houses.
3. Choice of a **research outline of major relevance to the future development of the candidate's country or region of origin**
4. **Confirmation that research facilities are available and mentoring agreement** and a **detailed expert's statement including a statement on ethical issues** concerning the planned research stay by an academic host at a research institution in Germany.
5. **Expert reviews** from the doctoral supervisor and two other academics qualified to give well-founded comments on the applicant's qualification, preferably including reviewers not working at the applicant's own institute.

³ Child benefit for people who are not single parents is solely financed from EU resources.

⁴ The subsidy towards recognized childcare costs is solely financed from EU resources.

⁵ These support payments (subsidy towards a pension plan and bridging grant) are solely financed from EU resources.

6. **Necessary language skills:** humanities or social sciences and medicine: good knowledge of German if it is necessary to carry out the research successfully; otherwise a good knowledge of English; natural sciences and engineering: good knowledge of German or English.
7. **Citizenship** as well as **principal place of residence and work in a developing country, emerging economy or transition state** (excluding People's Republic of China and India, c.f. detailed list of countries).

Potential applicants who have been in Germany for more than six months at the time of application are not eligible to apply.

Candidates who have completed their school education and one university degree or one university degree and their doctorate in Germany are eligible to apply provided that their habitual place of work and residence has been located in a developing country, emerging economy or transition state on the assumption of permanence and at least for the last five years. Visit the FAQs on the website for additional information.┘

Academics who have already been sponsored by the Humboldt Foundation are not eligible to apply for the Georg Forster Fellowship Programme (HERMES) but should turn to the Foundation's Alumni Programme for support for further research stays.

Application and selection procedure

Applications can be submitted at any time from 01/07/2013 to mid-2015 using the following address:

**Alexander von Humboldt Foundation
Selection Department
Jean-Paul-Str. 12, 53173 Bonn, Germany**

If this is not possible, they may be forwarded to the Humboldt Foundation via the branch offices of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) or the missions of the Federal Republic of Germany abroad.

Please be sure to only use currently valid application documents, which can be downloaded at the site of the [programme's website](#) or obtained from the Foundation directly. The complete application should be submitted to the Humboldt Foundation at least four to seven months ahead of the prospective selection date. Due to the funding regulations of the European Union, applications that are sent to the Foundation before 01/07/2013 can unfortunately not be considered for the Georg Forster Research Fellowship programme (HERMES).

The Humboldt Foundation will confirm receipt of the application by email. It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure that they have submitted all the necessary documents. Applications not submitted as a single entity will take longer to process. Largely incomplete applications will be returned to applicants unprocessed.

After providing all the documents and receipt of the host's statement, applicants will be notified about the proposed selection date. The application documents will then usually be forwarded to two independent reviewers for written review. On the basis of these independent peer reviews a selection committee composed of about 15 academics from all disciplines reaches a decision on approving research fellowships. The selection committee meets every year, in February, June and October. If an application has been approved, a fellow arriving from abroad may start the fellowship two months after the selection meeting at the earliest. Fellows must start their fellowships within twelve months of the selection meeting; otherwise the fellowship will be forfeited.

When receiving the information about the selection decision, candidates may apply informally by email to be informed about the factors which led to a rejection, should their applications have been turned down by the selection committee. In this case, applicants and their hosts will receive notification on this issue approx. four to six weeks after the selection committee meeting. It is not possible to appeal. However, applicants who have been rejected may submit a revised application provided that fundamental aspects of the original application have been significantly improved.

Further information on the selection procedure can be found in the [FAQ](#) on the Humboldt Foundation's website as well as in the guidelines for a complete application attached in the application form.

Further details pertaining to the fellowship and to the research stay can be found soon in our [Guidelines and Advice for Research Fellows](#). Moreover, the [Rules of Good Scientific Practice](#) and the [ethical rules of the 7th EU Framework Programme](#) apply both to applications and sponsorship.