

Alexander von Humboldt Polish Honorary Research Scholarship Programme

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS ***2018 call for proposals***

General information

Scholarships are awarded to outstanding German scholars with the highest qualifications and a significant contribution to a global research community, as recognition for their previous research achievements and in order to enable them to conduct scientific research at a selected institution in Poland.

This scheme of outstanding importance for the Foundation for Polish Science, is the equivalent of Humboldt-Forschungspreise, the prestigious award granted by the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung of Germany to eminent foreign scholars. The **Alexander von Humboldt Polish Honorary Research Scholarship Programme** is intended as a form of appreciation for the outstanding achievements of its beneficiaries, at the same time being aimed at stimulating long-term co-operation between Polish and German scholars.

Since 1996, these fellowships have been awarded by the Foundation for Polish Science to eminent German scholars with the highest qualifications and a significant contribution to global research. Eligible candidate should possess the position of professor or an equivalent position outside of a university.

The research stay (from 3 to 6 months long) may be split into several periods over three years. At present, the amount awarded as fellowship is **4000 € per month**.

Content of an application

- Information about the candidate's academic track record and major achievements,
- A list of candidate's major publications,
- Copies of at least three most relevant publications from the period of past five years

These materials will serve as a basis for external reviewers in order to assess candidate's research output and previous achievements, including the candidate's contribution to his/her discipline of science.

Therefore, it is advisable for candidates to provide information regarding their scholarly education, present and past employment, most important fellowships, research grants and awards, visiting professorships, invited talks at the most prestigious conferences, experience in innovation and technology transfer (if applicable), involvement in public engagement, etc.

- Appropriate description of the research project which the candidate intends to pursue in Poland,

These materials will serve as a basis for external reviewers in order to assess scientific excellence of the planned research to be conducted in Poland.

Description of the project itself shall be no longer than four (4) pages. It should be a well-balanced description appropriate to the nature of the programme and its budget, i.e. only personal stipend for up to six (6) months. In principle, it's advisable to include an abstract, a brief state of the art, clear description of the scientific aim(s) of the project, execution of task(s) and expected outcome(s).

- A reference letter by a Polish host scholar.

This could be utilized by external reviewers in order to assess a scientific potential of the Polish host institution and a host scholar, i.e. project feasibility.

The peer-review assessment

Once the assessor accepts the invitation to participate in the peer-review process, he/she will be granted access to an **on-line application system** where the candidate's application(s) can be downloaded.

We expect the assessor to prepare an individual **merit-based critique** of the candidate's application using the evaluation form, and to give an overall **grade** for the application.

In case access was granted to multiple applications, assessor shall also create a **ranking list**.

Assessment criteria:

- Candidate's research output and previous achievements, including in particular an assessment of the candidate's contribution to his/her discipline,
- Scientific excellence of the planned research to be conducted in Poland.

While reviewing the application assessor may also take into account a scientific potential of the Polish host institution and a host scholar.

Critique - the assessor is asked to write a short commentary based on the scientific excellence of the candidate and a merit of the proposed research plan. Such assessment shall be no longer than 3 to 4 pages.

We will be grateful if the strong and weak sides of the application are set out based on the assessment criteria.

Grade - the grade is used to assess scientific excellence of the candidate and his/her application. It is awarded on a scale from 1 to 7:

- **7 - Outstanding** (exceptionally strong application of a path-breaking potential which definitely should receive funding; a high-risk project that – if successful – may have outstanding impact),
- **6 - Excellent** (very strong application with just negligible weaknesses which most likely should receive funding; a solid proposal of an excellent scientific value),
- **5 - Very good to excellent** (very strong application with minor weaknesses which may be granted funding),
- **4 - Very good** (strong application with minor weaknesses which may receive funding only if there are sufficient funds),
- **3 - Good** (application with same strengths, but also moderate weaknesses which probably should not receive funding),
- **2 - Weak** (application with a few strengths, but also at least one major weaknesses or several minor weaknesses which most likely should not receive funding),
- **1 - Poor** (application with very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses which definitely should not receive funding).

Decimal grades shall not be used.

Ranking list (*this section of the peer-review process applies only to assessors who were granted an access to multiple applications*)

In the first stage of the assessment process, all of the applications are reviewed at the individual basis with a merit-based critique of each application followed with an assignment of a specific grade given to each application.

Subsequently, a ranking list should be prepared for a whole group of applications with the aim to identify the best applications. **The higher position in the ranking, the better overall value of the application**, while to the contrary, applications towards the bottom of the list represent weaker values. Also, a short commentary (up to 2 pages in length) shall be prepared as a justification for the ranking. We are particularly interested in the assessor opinion on what was the level of the competition and if there were clear disproportion among candidates and their applications.

General information

Each application is evaluated by at least three assessors.

The assessor should evaluate the application according to the assessment criteria following the instruction manual. i.e. giving the grade and writing a brief critique pointing out the application's strengths and weaknesses.

The assessor's identity will not be revealed to the applicant, only the grade and the commentary may be passed on to the applicant.

The Foundation reserves the right to request supplementary information from the assessor.

The Foundation may terminate its agreement with the assessor if the work is not performed within the deadline or contains incomplete information.

The Foundation is concerned to receive the reviews within a time and in a form enabling honest and unbiased evaluation and qualification of the applications submitted for the competition.

Ethical rules for assessors

An assessor's consent to review an application submitted for a Foundation for Polish Science competition is equivalent to that assessor agreeing to treat all information received as confidential, including the applicant's name and other data contained in the application. Treating the data as confidential also means that the contents of the application may not be used for any other purpose than their evaluation.

The assessor will evaluate the application impartially and compare it with the highest scientific standards in a given field.

Withdrawal from an evaluation does not free the assessor from the obligation to maintain confidentiality of information.

Meeting the evaluation deadline guarantees proper running of the application selection procedure and ensures equal chances for all applicants. The assessor agrees to inform the Foundation immediately of his/her inability to complete the evaluation on time.

The assessor may not be in any conflict of interest with the applicant which would prevent an impartial evaluation of the application. If in doubt, the assessor should describe the potential conflict of interest to the programme officer in charge.

The assessor's reporting of a conflict of interest does not mean the Foundation will necessarily dispense with their evaluation. The assessor should withdraw from the evaluation if he/she is unable to be impartial.

Potential conflict of interest

A list indicating the most frequent cases of a conflict of interest between an assessor and an applicant:

Personal relations:

- being related to the applicant,
- being a legal guardian of the applicant or having their power of attorney,
- being in personal conflict with the applicant.

Professional relations:

- being in a subordinate/superior relation with any applicant taking part in a given competition,
- a managerial position (dean, director, manager) or research work (or applying for such work) at the applicant's home institution,
- being the applicant's superior during the past three years.

Research ties:

- scientific supervision over the applicant during the past five years,
- joint publications during the past three years,
- direct scientific competition with the applicant.

Economic ties:

- personal economic interest related to the application under evaluation (competitive or shared interest).