Postdoctoral Researchers International Mobility Experience
PRIME 2024/25

Objective

DAAD PRIME funds the international mobility of postdoctoral researchers with temporary positions at German universities. Postdocs who see their long-term career perspectives in Germany receive funding for an independent research stay abroad, based on temporary employment at a German university. The grant also includes a mandatory return phase for reintegration into the German science system.

The programme aims to provide participants with an important qualification for a continued career in science. The target group are postdoctoral researchers who see their long-term professional career in Germany. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) provides the funds for this programme.

Who can apply?

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

There are no restrictions regarding 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?

We provide funding 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.

During your 12 months abroad, you may combine stays at several research institutions in one or several countries. Please indicate all host institutions in the application form.

Duration of funding

We provide support for 18 months: the first 12 months are spent abroad, and the remaining 6 months of the return phase are spent in Germany (funding cycle 12+6). If your science or insurance and residence law requires an alternate schedule, other models may be chosen with approval of DAAD.

Integration into the German social security system is a prerequisite for the research stay abroad, therefore funding may have to begin with a 1-month starting phase in Germany (funding cycle 1+12+5). The respective local statutory insurance determines your status.

Support

The DAAD will conclude a grant agreement with the respective German university covering the costs for the regular salary and the monthly expatriate allowance.[1]

- o Salary:
  temporary 18-month employment contract at a German university according to pay scale TV-L EG 13. Your exact pay is determined by the universities based on your previous work experience.
- o Expatriate allowance:
  A monthly expatriate allowance for the research stay abroad is based on an area classification of the destination and the gross income of the fellows.[2]

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[1] Funding for the position at the German host university is implemented as project funding

[2] According to the applicable table of "Anlage VI.1 zu § 53 BBesG".

- o Travel allowance:
  PRIME Fellows receive the DAAD lump sum travel subsidy for postdoctoral scientists. Spouses (either by marriage or according to German law on civil partnerships) and children are also eligible if they accompany the fellow for at least one month during the research stay abroad. The travel allowance is not part of the grant agreement with the German university but is paid directly by DAAD.

Application requirements

Eligibility requirements

- o Only candidates with an excellent scientific record, including at least one publication (co-authorship is accepted), will be considered.
  You must have completed your doctorate before the start of funding with excellent marks. 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.
- o You may apply up to six years after the (first) doctorate. Parental and care periods are considered.
- o 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 30 August 2024. Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention will not be considered.
- o Applicants who are EU nationals, resident citizens, or have been continuously active in research for three years' full-time equivalent in the EU prior to the time of recruitment may spend their research stay outside of the EU. All other applicants must stay in the European Union for their 12-months "abroad" phase.
- o To be considered for funding, applicants living abroad are expected to state their intent to continue their research careers in Germany upon completion of the return phase.
- o Applicants who already have a permanent employment contract with the prospective host institution for the intended research activity are not eligible for funding.
- o Applicants must accept that the research stay abroad and the return phase to Germany are both mandatory parts of the programme.[3]
- o With your application, you agree to the "Rules of good scientific practice" and the ethical guidelines of the programme.
- o Re-application is only possible once - within a maximum of 2 years - after consultation with the PRIME team. The improvements must be labelled in your project proposal and explained on an extra page.

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[3] Exceptions only after review of case with DAAD approval (e.g., early termination of funding may be admissible if the reintegration requirement is met by a long-term or permanent position in Germany.)

Additional requirements

o Applicants must identify and contact suitable host institutions in Germany and abroad themselves. The agreement on modalities are the responsibility of the applicants.

o The employing host institution in Germany must be a university.[4]

o 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 DAAD project funding. The university will nominate a mentor/scientific host for the fellow. The German host must comment on prospects for a sustained research career at the institution. Universities are not required to provide a legally binding financial commitment beyond the DAAD funding period, but hosts are expected to show sustained commitment to the candidate's career development.

o The foreign host institutions must be selected according to the scientific preferences/needs of the research project. They may be universities, non-university research institutes, or industrial research entities. They must support the postdocs in the implementation of their research projects 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.

o The fellowships must start between 01 June 2025 and 01 November 2025. Postponement is possible only in exceptional circumstances (e.g., pregnancy, motherhood, parental leave) and must be approved by DAAD.

Selection process

All applicants receive information on the outcome of the formal eligibility check approximately six weeks after the application deadline. All applications that enter the review process are reviewed independently by external experts (scientists from the respective subject area). Our interdisciplinary selection committee decides on the final rating based on the external reviews and generates a ranking list. Available funds determine the number of successful applicants and reserve candidates.

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

Successful applicants are invited to a virtual orientation seminar before the start of the fellowship, in which further information on the fellowship implementation process is provided.

After the successful candidates have declared acceptance of their fellowships, DAAD notifies their German host universities. They will apply for DAAD project funding to finance the fellows' positions. Following approval by the DAAD, funding can start on 01 June 2025 at the earliest.

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[4] 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.

Selection criteria

1. Academic performance
- grades, duration of studies
- number and quality of publications[5]
- other achievements (patents, conference invitations, prizes, supervision, teaching etc.)
- attached letter of recommendation
- international mobility
- "Scientific age," achievement age
- interdisciplinary research experience

2. Project quality
a. research project[6]:
- quality
- originality
- relevance/innovation
- implementation (time schedule and work plan)
- impact on the research field
b. suitability and support of the German host institution (scientific mentoring, technical/administrative support)
c. suitability and support of the foreign host institution (scientific mentoring, technical/administrative support)

3. Potential and long-term career perspectives
- Suitability of the research project in regard to long-term career plans (e.g. academic qualification and acquisition of complementary skills)
- Overall impression of the applicant, considering non-academic specialist knowledge and skills, as well as civic commitment
- language skills (if applicable). You only need a certificate, if the language relevant to your project is not your first language (or English).

All relevant information with regard to the selection criteria should be included in the application. Supplementary notes may be added to the curriculum vitae, the research and time schedule and the career plan. Delays in academic development due to pregnancy, parental leave, caring for children and relatives, illness, disability, experience of flight/displacement need to be listed in order to be considered.

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[5] In addition to the number of publications, the applicant's own contribution (if several authors are involved), and the standing of the journal and/or scientific publisher are important criteria. The assessment of the publications considers the duration of the applicant's research career and the specific publication culture of the relevant discipline.

[6] The applicant's scientific independence is of crucial importance to our review board. You may demonstrate your independence by choosing a new research focus and a new research environment, either after the PhD or in connection with the planned project. If you choose to remain with your current mentors, make sure to comment in your career plan.

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[7] 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 (including the letter of recommendation) may be uploaded to the portal.
To upload the documents, all attachments must be available as pdf files. Except for 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 to the DAAD-Portal[8]:
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. your **career plan** (one page max.)
    Please outline your career planning and explain how the intended PRIME funding will advance your further professional development as a scientist.

4. a) **short summary/abstract** of the research project (not to exceed half a page) with
    b) a clearly recognizable working title and
    c) an indication of keywords.
    The summary must enable the allocation to a specific subject area and be suitable as preliminary information for potential reviewers.

5. 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

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[7] Regardless of 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.
[8] 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.

research and why the selected host institute is particularly suitable for carrying out the project. The strategy for investigating the scientific problem should be coherent and the choice of methods and tools justified. 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.
When reapplying, you must enclose a separate statement on improvements with the project proposal (1 extra page).

6. **time schedule** for the realization of the planned work abroad and in Germany (e.g., Gantt chart)

7. **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.

8. **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.

9. **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.

10. **certificates of the two most recent academic degrees** (usually doctorate and master or comparable degree) with a transcript of records/marksheet. If there is no transcript available for the respective degree certificate, you must 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.
Certificates may be submitted as PDF files.

11. **publication list**, categorized according to publications in peer-reviewed journals and books.
Please indicate the type of publication (original paper, review etc.) and the status (published, in print, accepted, submitted) and add complete bibliographical information (including the first and last page number). Conference papers and presentations must be listed on the CV.
Please mark your three most important publications (at least one) and give reasons for the selection (particularly important scientific results, high relevance for the planned research project, new methodological approach, etc.). If several authors are involved, specify your own contribution. The electronic link (URL) must be provided for each of the marked publications. If the publications are not available online, individual articles may be uploaded. Do not submit entire monographs.

12. **short summary of the doctoral thesis (1-2 pages)**

13. completed and signed **ethics issues checklist** (form 3, **word/pdf**)[9] 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.

14. **language certificates**, only if your project requires special language skills.

15. **checklist of the application documents (form 4, word/pdf)**

16. 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 and must be uploaded with the rest of the application.
The letter of recommendation refers to the applicant's personal and scientific suitability for the planned project. The supervisor of the doctoral thesis should submit it. If it is from another professor, you must provide an explanation. Recommendation and invitation letters need to be from different professors.

All documents must be uploaded to the application portal in PDF format.

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

Schedule/Application deadline

Announcement of call:	May 2024
Application deadline:	30 August 2024
Selection result:	mid-March 2025
Orientation seminar for new fellows:	March/April 2025
Earliest starting date:	01 June 2025
Latest starting date:	01 November 2025

Remark on application documents
The DAAD reserves the right to reject incomplete applications. Applicants are responsible for the timely submission of all required documents.

Data protection
Application documents remain with the DAAD and become its property. The data of fellowship holders are stored by DAAD in accordance with the Federal Data Protection Act and the EU General Data Protection Regulation, as far as they are necessary to process the application or the fellowship. Unsuccessful applications are deleted after a waiting period.

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[9] 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.

Contact and information:
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Frequently asked questions are here: (FAQ)

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