

2014 Work Programme

Fusion Researcher Fellowships

Guide for applicants

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1. Introduction

The Fusion Researcher Fellowship action is set-up through calls for participation to the Associations. The evaluation of submitted proposals is performed through a set of procedures in order to ensure transparency and excellence in the selected projects. This guide details the procedures to be followed for these actions.

2. Eligibility to the programme

The following eligibility criteria apply.

- 1) This action supports the initial training of researchers, typically during the first years of their careers in research. More precisely, this action is directed towards researchers of all nationalities, namely:
 - Researchers in possession of a doctoral degree (PhD) who have completed their PhD and defended their thesis in the two years preceding the deadline for proposal submission of the present call;
 - Engineers in possession of a master degree in Engineering (or any equivalent university degree in Engineering) with a professional experience of at least 3 years up to 5 years after the master degree.

The candidate must be employed by a European fusion laboratory. In the case the researcher/engineer has not started her/his contract at the time of the application for the grant, the host Laboratory will have to provide a declaration of intent to recruit the researcher/engineer under an employment contract or equivalent contract compatible with the national legislation. He/she must be recruited by 30 June 2014.

- 2) The candidate's research project must be on a scientific or technical topic relevant to the objectives of the Work Plan for the implementation of the Fusion Roadmap in 2014-2018.
- 3) The implementation of this action will be through the *EUROFUSION Consortium* for the implementation of the Fusion Roadmap, which is still in the process of establishment. Members of the Consortium will be the current EFDA Associates. The applicant must therefore have a contract with either an Association or an institution having collaborative agreements with an Association. The post-doctoral contract (or equivalent) can be shared between two Associates allowing the post-doctoral work to be conducted successively in two complementary laboratories.
- 4) The application must be supported and sent by the Head(s) of the relevant Association(s).

3. Evaluation criteria and procedures

The evaluation of proposals is carried out by the EFDA Leader with the assistance of independent experts.

3.1. Experts selection

The EFDA Leader will nominate expert evaluators.

Experts perform evaluations on a personal basis, not as representatives of their employer, their country or any other entity. They are expected to be independent, impartial and objective, and to behave throughout in a professional manner. They sign an appointment letter, including a confidentiality and conflict of interest declaration. Confidentiality rules must be adhered to at all times, before, during and after the evaluation.

Conflicts of interest: Under the terms of the appointment letter, experts must declare beforehand any known conflicts of interest, and must immediately inform EFDA if one becomes apparent during the course of the evaluation. EFDA will take whatever action is necessary to remove any conflict.

Confidentiality: The appointment letter also requires experts to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the whole evaluation process. Under no circumstance may an expert attempt to contact an applicant on his own account, either during the evaluation or afterwards.

At the beginning of the evaluation, the experts will be briefed by EFDA on the evaluation procedure, the experts' responsibilities, the issues involved in the particular area/objective and any other relevant item.

3.2. Eligibility criteria of the proposal

On receipt by EFDA, proposals will be assessed against the relevant eligibility criteria. Proposals which do not fulfil these criteria will not be included in the evaluation.

A proposal will be considered eligible only if it meets all of the following conditions:

- It is received by EFDA before the deadline given in the call;
- It is compliant with the criteria defined under section 2;
- It is complete (i.e. both the requested administrative forms and the proposal description are present).

3.3. The evaluation procedure

The evaluation procedure will be carried out in three stages:

- evaluation of the proposal content by the experts in view of the establishment of a short list (the number of short listed candidates should be up to about twice the number of foreseen fellowships),
- interviews of all short-listed candidates,
- Consensus meeting to define the final ranking of the proposals.

3.3.1. Scoring

Each candidate will be evaluated against the pre-determined evaluation criteria given Annex 1 and scored according to the thresholds and weightings also given in Annex I.

Each criterion will be scored out of 5. Half marks can be given. The scores indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:

- 1 - *Poor.*
- 2 - *Fair.*
- 3 - *Good.*
- 4 - *Very Good.*
- 5 - *Excellent.*

3.3.2. Short Listing.

The evaluation of the candidates by the experts in view of the establishment of a short list will be carried out in three steps:

In the first step the experts are acting individually; they do not discuss the proposal with each other, nor with any third party. The experts record their individual opinion in an Individual Assessment Report (IAR), giving scores and also comments against the evaluation criteria. Each proposal will be assessed by at least two experts.

In the second step, all experts will hold a consensus meeting under the chairmanship of the EFDA Leader to discuss the complete set of proposals. The experts having assessed a same proposal will discuss to reach a consensus on the scoring. All criteria where a significant difference appears (more than 1 point) will be addressed. When, after the discussion, differences in scoring subsist which do not exceed one point, the average marks will be used for this (these) criterion (criteria). The outcome of this meeting is a summary table showing the scores of all candidates agreed between the experts.

In the case it is impossible to reach an agreement between the expert evaluators, EFDA will designate a new expert evaluator to act as arbitrator.

EFDA will take the necessary steps to assure the quality of the IARs, with particular attention given to clarity, consistency, and appropriate level of detail. If important changes are necessary, the reports will be referred back to the experts concerned.

Based on the definitive marks which are agreed between the experts at the end of this consensus meeting, a short list will be established by EFDA. The short list will include not more than twice the number of foreseen fellowships.

3.3.3. Interviews with the short listed candidates

The evaluation will then progress toward individual interviews of the short listed candidates.

The interview board will be constituted of all the experts involved in the evaluation process and of the EFDA Leader (or his representative). The board is chaired by the EFDA Leader. The secretariat of the board is provided by EFDA. EFDA will ensure fair and equal treatment of the candidates in the interview and in the following Consensus meeting. Presentation in English will be requested.

The interview process and criteria are detailed under Annex II.

3.3.4. Consensus meeting, final scores and ranking

After the interview, the board will hold a final meeting in order to:

- (1) Agree on the final score attributed to each short listed candidate (the final score is constituted of the sum of the two marks attributed at the end of the first stage assessment (consensus meeting) and during the interview, with a weight of respectively 1/3 and 2/3)
- (2) Produce a final ranking of candidates and a proposal for the attribution of fellowships.

In the case of proposals with the same final score, the board will decide the priority order based on the mobility plan foreseen in the project or at the end of the two years fellowship (if any). Preference will be given to the research projects including visits or long stay in other laboratories during the two years of the Fellowships programme or at the end of it.

4. Proposal content

The proposal will contain the following information:

- A letter from the Head Research Unit addressing the application to EFDA and certifying that the post-doctoral (or equivalent level) contract with the Association or an institution having relevant links with the Association has started or declaration of intent to recruit the researcher/engineer under an employment contract or equivalent contract compatible with the national legislation.
- The CV of the candidate with all relevant information (specifically the European and international experience).
- A copy of the PHD thesis of the candidate (or the Master thesis in case the candidate fulfil requirements of paragraph 2.2). If not available in English, a summary of the thesis in English is to be provided.

- A copy of the report of the PHD jury, when available.
- A list of several referees (with their e-mail addresses), including at least one who did not work with the candidate but may know him/her well enough.
- The list of scientific publications of the candidate.
- The work programme (research project) of the candidate including:
 - A description, by the candidate, of his/her research project and its objectives (maximum length: 2 pages). This report shall explain the importance of the project for fusion research and for the candidate's training/development.
 - A coherent description of the foreseen work indicating the foreseen breakdown including the participation in training actions, research actions involving specific expenditure, long term missions in other laboratories, key meetings and conference attendance and showing how these contribute to the achievement of the scientific goals of the work programme (maximum length: 2 pages). A specific paragraph will cover the JET related activities, when applicable. This part of the work will have to be agreed with the EFDA Associate Leader for JET before the Association applies for the grant.
 - A list of milestones to be reached.
 - A list of deliverables to be produced.
- A financial summary for expenses proposed by the Association, including the following information per year and researcher:
 - Salary cost (including fees, superannuation and social charges).
 - A global forecast of training expenses related to the successful execution of the research project, if any (e.g. purchase of hardware, consumables, participation in conferences and training courses, fees for scientific journals, memberships in scientific associations etc.)
 - Contribution to overheads, if any.
- A summary of the foreseen Mobility (months), if any (*Please note that rules and conditions for Mobility support as well as the funding level have not yet been defined*).
- The following complementary documentation will be submitted:
 - Experience of the Association in the topic of the research/post-doctoral project (maximum length: 1 page).
 - Organisation by the Host Association of the tutoring (maximum length: 1 page).
 - Short CV of the Tutor and main relevant publications (maximum length: 3 pages).

Annex I: Evaluation criteria, thresholds and weightings for the short-listing

Fusion Researcher Fellowships		
Criterion:	Threshold	Weighting
Quality of the thesis *	3/5	40%
Research project	3/5	40%
Scientific publications	2/5	10%
European / International background	1/5	10%

* PhD thesis for applicant relating to § 2.1 and the master
(or equivalent University) thesis in case of applicant relating to § 2.2

European / International background: although young researchers are not expected to have a huge international experience, a number of elements will already be taken into account in the evaluation of the candidate, such as Erasmus grants or equivalent stages, the languages spoken by the candidate will also be among the criteria (this will be checked during the interviews of the short-listed candidates).

Proposals that fail to reach the threshold as indicated for each individual criterion and at least 75 % in the total mark shall be excluded from the final ranking.

Annex II: Evaluation criteria for the interview.

Individual interview will last about 25 minutes and will consist in

- a presentation by the candidate (about 10 minutes)
- questions by the interview board (about 15 minutes).

The evaluation criteria for the interview will be based on the following criteria:

- Quality of the presentation
- Scientific/technical background

The knowledge of several languages or some international background will be considered as a plus.

At the end of the interview the board will proceed with a debriefing and attribute an interview mark to each candidate.

In the case of proposals with the same final score, the board will decide the priority order based on the mobility plan foreseen in the project or at the end of the two years fellowship (if any). Preference will be given to the research projects including visits or long stay in other laboratories during the two years of the Fellowships programme or at the end of it.