

## MANUAL

## FRIAS EARLY CAREER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

Application deadline: September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 13:00 H CET

### Eligibility Requirements and Application Procedure

To be eligible, candidates must fulfil all of (1) the formal eligibility criteria and (2) the basic academic quality criteria. (3) Applicants must carefully follow all given form requirements and length limits listed in the Application material section.

#### 1. Formal eligibility criteria

- Applicants must hold a completed doctoral degree.
- Applicants must have a maximum of eight years of post-doctoral research experience at the time of the application deadline. Time off for family, medical reasons, or non-academic professional activities will not be counted as part of the relevant period (see FAQ).
- Applicants must have six month's research OR study experience at academic institution(s) in a country different from the country of their first academic degree by the time of application. Short stays, such as holidays, conferences, or summer schools, are not considered.
- Applicants must propose a research project that can be supported at the University of Freiburg (regarding infrastructural, technical, and laboratory requirements). Experimental scientists are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg (including letter of support).
- The research project must not involve topics that are excluded from funding due to ethical issues.
- Applicants must adhere to word count and page limits (see Application Materials).
- Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.
- Applicants must provide contact information for two referees who are willing to provide an evaluation of the candidate. FRIAS will contact the persons named after the basic eligibility check. Statements will be due by September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 (see FAQ)

## 2. Basic academic quality criteria

Minimum requirements for publication record: Please provide a list of publications that does not exceed 8 publications. 4 publications must be marked as peer-reviewed since January 1, 2020.

The publications can appear in different media, such as books, journals, repositories or websites, and can have different formats. These include monographs (counted as three publications), journal articles, articles on preprint servers, and contributions to anthologies. If available, please also provide a persistent identifier (e.g. DOI/Digital Object Identifier). An exception is made for papers that have already been accepted for publication, in which case the editor's confirmation of acceptance must be enclosed.

Textbooks, reprints, book reviews and editorial publications as well as manuscripts not accepted for publication before the application deadline do not count.

Time off for family, medical reasons or non-academic professional activities will not be counted as part of the relevant period (see FAQ).

The project should not be of local interest only but should have sufficient potential for international transfer.

There is no age limit for applying to the FRIAS Early Career Fellowship Programme although the candidates' achievements should be in line with their "academic age".

Where two candidates are equally suitable for a post, candidates of the underrepresented gender in the relevant academic field shall be given priority.

## Application Materials

Candidates apply exclusively via the online application portal ([early career scheme](#)). We do not accept applications submitted by other ways of communication. After final submission, applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt.

The following materials (in English) are required to be submitted with the application. Page and word limits may not be exceeded, formal structure requirements have to be fulfilled. **All required documents must be in PDF format.**

Information on the candidate and project (abstract, layman's abstract, motivation statement, ethical issue table) have to be filled into the online application form. Applicants are asked to provide contact information for 2 referees willing to provide an evaluation of the candidate. Additionally, the following attachments are required to be uploaded to the application portal:

**1. Project proposal** (max. 3000 words, including bibliographical references, 4 graphs) must have the following structure:

- (1) Research field, title, and short abstract of the research project.
- (2) Aims, theoretical framework, and methodology of the project.
- (3) Work plan and feasibility (time schedule).
- (4) Innovative potential, originality, and relevance of the project.
- (5) Issues concerning research ethics.
- (6) Bibliographical references.

**1. CV** in tabular form (max. 2 pages). For the compulsory structure of the CV, please use the [template](#).

**2. Publication list:** Please provide a list of publications that does not exceed 8 publications since January 1, 2020, including 4 publications marked as peer-reviewed (see [Basic academic quality criteria](#)).

**3. Copy of the PhD diploma:** if the writing system/script used in the diploma is not Latin (for instance, Cyrillic, Chinese), an official translation is requested.

4. **Letter of support** identifying a host laboratory in Freiburg where the research project can be carried out; applicable only to experimental scientists.
5. **Experiment sketch and timetable:** submitting a sketch and timetable of the experiments they wish to conduct in Freiburg; applicable only to experimental scientists.

## Selection Procedure

The selection process is highly competitive and strictly merit-based (expected success rate: ~15% of all eligible applications). It involves three steps:

### 1. Eligibility and basic quality check

To be eligible for application and proceed to the next step (i.e. international peer-review process), candidates must fulfil **all of (1) the formal eligibility criteria and (2) the basic academic quality criteria.**

The formal eligibility and the basic quality check are conducted by the FRIAS Board of Directors under the supervision of the Scientific Advisory Board ([SAB](#)). The SAB is comprised of renowned senior scientists from outside the University of Freiburg and is responsible for the selection of applications for fellowships. Applicants are informed on whether they have passed the basic eligibility check.

### 2. International peer-review by external experts

In the second stage, eligible proposals are forwarded to external experts who evaluate and provide a written assessment of the applicant's research project and CV. These experts are selected based on criteria defined by the German Research Foundation (DFG):

- no formal affiliation to the university
- familiarity with the area
- distance from the applicant (non-bias)
- broad overview of the research landscape
- experience as a referee
- international expertise

## Evaluation criteria

The evaluation considers the following standardised criteria:

1. Academic excellence of the applicant (weighting 40 %):
  - 1.1. Excellence of the candidate in terms of career development
  - 1.2. Excellence of their contribution to the research field
2. Excellence of the proposed project (weighting 40 %):
  - 2.1. Quality of the proposed project and the proposal
  - 2.2. Innovativeness of the proposal
3. Experience and capability of the applicant (weighting 20 %):
  - 3.1. Is the candidate well qualified to conduct the research project?
  - 3.2. Can the candidate be expected to benefit from a FRIAS fellowship?

Finally, all reviewers are asked to give a clear rating on the application:

- **Excellent** – relevant criteria are fully met and exceeded
- **Very good** – relevant criteria are fully met
- **Good** – relevant criteria are met, but with shortcomings
- **Fair** – while relevant criteria are met, weaknesses are clearly visible
- **Clearly below average** - relevant criteria are not sufficiently met

### 3. Final selection by FRIAS SAB

FRIAS Fellows are ultimately selected by the SAB. Both the FRIAS Board of Directors and the SAB are responsible for compliance with highest standards of academic quality in research programmes and selection processes.

Based on the original proposals and the expert reviews, the SAB creates a final ranking list. The top candidates are directly selected for funding and offered an Early Career Fellowship at FRIAS. All applicants are immediately notified of the results. Additionally, there will be a waiting list to fill any positions not accepted by one of the initially selected applicants.

Upon request, applicants will receive summaries of the anonymised assessments of their proposals.

#### Calendar of implementation of the current selection process

Publication of the call for applications	01 July 2024
Submission deadline for applications	13 September 2024

Basic eligibility check	September 2024
Submission deadline for Statements of Evaluation	30 September 2024
Peer-review	October 2024 – January 2025
Final selection by SAB	February 2025
Notification of selected fellows	March 2025
Start of fellowships	01 September 2025

## Financial Aspects

Successful applicants will become FRIAS Fellows with all the corresponding rights and obligations for the requested funding period. Early Career Fellowships include a full-time employment contract with the University of Freiburg, valid for the duration of the fellowship. An Early Career researcher receives approximately €4,900 per month pre-tax. For Fellows with an employment contract at their home institution, a reimbursement of teaching replacement costs throughout the fellowship is possible. Fellows will also receive a research cost contribution, a budget for individual training, a mobility allowance (if applicable), and reimbursement for travel costs of the inbound and the outbound journey (if applicable).

## Redress

Complaints or a formal redress can be sent either to the FRIAS Managing Director or to the University of Freiburg's Representative for Academic Self-Regulation at any stage of the application/selection process until two months after notification of the final selection results. However, in general, the referee reports and decisions of independent experts are not overruled.

### FRIAS Managing Director

Dr. Annette Doll

FRIAS, Albertstr. 19, 79104 Freiburg i.Br., Germany

[annette.doll@frias.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:annette.doll@frias.uni-freiburg.de)

### Representative for Academic Self-Regulation

The representative investigates the concreteness and significance of the allegations in accordance with plausibility criteria and informs the responsible governing bodies if he deems further action to be necessary. He is bound to strict confidentiality. This is an official and independent position working on the basis of an official university statute.

Prof. Dr. Uwe Blaurock  
University of Freiburg, Fahrenbergplatz, 79100 Freiburg, Germany  
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## **Ethical Issues**

The FRIAS Early Career Fellowship Programme considers both the need to ensure freedom of research and the need to protect the physical and moral integrity of individuals and the welfare of animals.

In order to identify ethical issues at an early point in the application process, all applicants are required to fill in the “ethical issues table”. Furthermore, applicants are requested to explain in detail in the project outline any ethical issues arising from their proposed research. Applicants should explain how these will be addressed.

A preliminary screening during the eligibility check also scrutinises potential ethical issues, even if they were not pointed out by the applicant. In addition, experts in the international peer-review procedure are asked to indicate relevant ethical issues raised by the proposal.

If the application successfully passes through the formal selection procedure, the project proposal is referred to the University’s Ethics Committee (EC) in case any potential ethical issues are identified. The same procedure applies if ethical issues arise during work on a given project. The EC issues a decision that may include requirements and restrictions. This decision is binding under the employment contract and different laws. As soon as the decision is issued and if it does not stand in the way of the project, the fellowship is offered to the applicant. If the requirements and restrictions are extraordinarily difficult to fulfil, the SAB has the authority to turn down an application on these grounds.

On the basis of the European Commission's Code of Ethics for Researchers the following fields of research cannot be funded:

- Research activities directed at human cloning for reproductive purposes.
- Research activities intended to modify the genetic make-up of human beings that could make such changes heritable (apart from research relating to cancer treatment of the gonads, which may be funded).
- Research activities intended to create human embryos solely for the purposes of research or stem cell procurement, including the technique of somatic cell nuclear transfer.
- Research that leads to the death of human embryos.

Ethical issues also include the avoidance of any breach of research integrity, which means, in particular, avoiding fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or other kinds of research misconduct. In grave instances and after due process has established wrongdoings, fellowship offers can be retracted and current fellowships can be revoked.

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the Early Career Fellowship Programme**

### **How do I apply?**

Applicants complete and submit the online application form ([Early Career scheme](#)) by September 13, 2024, 13:00 H CET. After registration you can edit the application form, upload the required annexes, and complete the ethical issues questionnaire. It is highly recommended to start the application early enough to become familiar with the technical processing.

### **What if there are difficulties in accessing the online application site?**

If you encounter difficulties in submitting your online application, please contact the Institute by email ([fellowships@frias.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:fellowships@frias.uni-freiburg.de)).

### **Who can I name as a possible author of the Evaluation of Candidate?**

Evaluators must not currently be in a cooperative professional or active supervisory relationship with the applicant. They must not be currently affiliated at the same institution.

### **How does FRIAS obtain the Evaluation of Candidate?**

Applicants are required to provide contact details for two referees willing to provide an evaluation. FRIAS will contact the persons named, if the basic formal eligibility check is successfully passed. The persons should expect to be contacted between September 16th and September 20th, 2024 with a submission deadline by September 30th, 2024. FRIAS will provide a template to the evaluators that must be used to ensure comparability.

### **Are there specific research priorities?**

Application is open to proposals from all disciplines that can be supported at the University of Freiburg. Projects of an open nature (e.g., preliminary projects which are intended to lead to larger third-party funding) as well as those of a concluding nature (e.g., leave of absence for the publication of research results gathered earlier) can be supported within this funding period.



## **Does the location of my home institution play a role in my eligibility to apply?**

Applicants from around the world are invited to apply. This also includes applicants who are based in Germany or are currently working at the University of Freiburg.

## **Will working space be provided?**

FRIAS will provide fully furnished offices for double occupancy, and whenever possible, single occupancy. Prior to submission of the application, experimental scientists are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg.

## **Do I need to find an academic host at the University of Freiburg?**

In general, applicants do not need an academic host at the University of Freiburg. However, experimental scientists are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg (including letter of support) prior to submission of the application.

## **How is time off for family, medical reasons or non-academic activities calculated?**

The time period of the formal eligibility criteria that applicants must have a maximum of eight years' post-doctoral research experience after their PhD can be extended if the applicant has a documented time off due to family or medical reasons. Likewise, the time period of the basic academic criteria (4 peer-reviewed publications since January 1, 2020) can be extended.

Maternity time off is calculated with 18 months per child, whereas in case of paternal or medical time-off, the documented timeframe is relevant. The time off must be accrued during the time period that is relevant for the eligibility criteria

## **Do fellowships need to start September 1, 2025?**

Fellowships should be conducted within the period (4 to 10 months) between September 1, 2025 and August 31, 2026.

## **Is there support for fellows with families?**

Our FRIAS fellow service team assists families in finding suitable accommodation in the Freiburg area considering their needs regarding price, size, and location. Together with the University of Freiburg's Family Service, we provide information on the German system of childcare and schools. Fellows are supported in finding appropriate childcare facilities and in the process of enrolling their children at day-care centres, kindergarten, and schools. Every effort is made to provide individually adapted solutions when general

options are not suitable. Moreover, fellows with children receive additional financial support through state child benefits ('Kindergeld').

**Do you have further questions?**

Please feel free to contact us: [fellowships@frias.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:fellowships@frias.uni-freiburg.de)