

FREIBURG INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: FRIAS EARLY CAREER FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

### **APPLICATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2023**

The Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies (FRIAS) is the University of Freiburg's international research college. It is at the centre of a very active research community and has acquired an international reputation for academic excellence since its creation in 2008. The Institute supports innovative research projects through individual and group fellowships.

### **FRIAS IS OFFERING INDIVIDUAL EARLY CAREER FELLOWSHIPS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/25**

Early Career Fellowships are available to researchers from any nationality and discipline based in Freiburg, Germany and abroad. Fellowships are available for **4 to 10 months between September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 and August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.**

Applicants must have a completed PhD plus a maximum of eight years of post-doctoral experience. Fellowships will allow researchers to conduct their own research projects. Since one of the aims of FRIAS is to foster cross-disciplinary communication, full-time presence at FRIAS is mandatory. Applicants are eligible to apply independent of nationality and home institution, including the University of Freiburg.

### **APPLICATION & CONTACT**

Please upload the **completed Early Career Fellowship application form** together with the **required documents** via the application portal for Early Career Fellowships (<https://www.frias.uni-freiburg.de/frias-early-career-fellowships>) and submit the complete application by **September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023; 13:00 h CET.**

## **ABOUT FRIAS**

FRIAS unites research in the humanities and social sciences, the natural and life sciences, engineering, and medicine. The Institute supports academic exchange across existing boundaries: between disciplines, between different cultures and countries, between established and younger researchers. Furthermore, FRIAS engages in activities opening the research community to society and politics. Fellows will be part of this community and benefit from the lively research environment of the university and its eleven faculties.

The Institute provides fellows with modern office spaces and an up-to-date infrastructure. Experimental scientists - prior to submission of the application - are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg where their research projects can be carried out. Accommodation is available through the university guest house and additional centrally-located apartments. Fellows have full access to all library services at one of the leading German university libraries. Special attention is given to fellows who plan to come to Freiburg with their families. FRIAS makes every effort to provide tailor-made solutions with regard to suitable accommodation, child care and educational facilities.

FRIAS is located in a truly European region, in proximity to both France and Switzerland, with close research ties to the universities of Basel (Switzerland) and Strasbourg (France).

More information: [www.frias.uni-freiburg.de](http://www.frias.uni-freiburg.de)

## Eligibility Requirements and Application Procedure

In order to be eligible, candidates must fulfil all of (1) the formal eligibility criteria and (2) the basic academic quality criteria.

### 1. Formal eligibility criteria

- Applicants must be in possession of a doctoral degree plus a maximum of eight years' 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 (a) six months work experience after their PhD in academic institution(s) in a country different from the country of their first academic degree OR (b) have received a Master/PhD or equivalent in a country different from the country of their first academic degree. Short stays such as holidays, conferences or summer schools are not considered.
- Applicants must submit the complete application dossier by the specified deadline. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Formatting rules must be observed. Page limits may not be exceeded.
- The proposal must meet the standards of academic English in international research.
- Applicants must propose a research project that can be supported at the University of Freiburg (regarding infrastructural, technical and laboratory requirements, especially in the experimental sciences). Prior to submission of the application, experimental scientists are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg (incl. letter of support) where their research project can be carried out.
- The research project must not involve topics that are excluded from funding due to ethical issues.

### 2. Basic academic quality criteria

Minimum requirements for publication record:

*Natural Sciences/Medicine/Engineering:*

- 4 publications since 1 January 2020

listed in Web of Sciences.

***Humanities and Social Sciences:***

- 4 publications since 1 January 2020

Peer-reviewed 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 submitted manuscripts not accepted for publication before the application deadline do not count.

FRIAS focuses on evaluating the quality of the applicant's recent research. For this reason, we only consider publications since 1 January 2020. Details of quantitative metrics such as impact factors and h-indices are not required and are not considered as part of the review.

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

Requirements regarding the internationality of the project:

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."

## Application Materials

**Candidates apply exclusively via the online application portal ([early career scheme](#)).** All required documents should be in pdf format. After final submission of the documents the applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. To view the application data and documents the applicants log into their application portal account.

The following materials (in English) are required to submit the application:

**Formatting:** font Arial, 11 pt, line spacing 1.5, all margins 2.5 cm.

Page limits may not be exceeded. We do not accept applications submitted by email or surface mail.

**All required documents should be in pdf format.**

### 1. Cover page (max. 1 page).

1. Title, name (last, first), e-mail address, link to webpage (optional)
2. Date of doctorate (PhD defence)
3. Current institution (Name of institution/city/country)
4. Research field
5. Project title
6. Envisaged period of research stay at FRIAS
7. The two most important reasons for choosing FRIAS at the University of Freiburg as a host for the research project.
8. Established contacts at Freiburg University (name, department; if applicable: host laboratory).

### 2. Project proposal (max. 6 pages).

1. The compulsory structure of the project proposal is as follows:
2. Research field, title and short abstract of the research project.
3. Aims, theoretical framework and methodology of the project.
4. Work plan and feasibility (time schedule and projected costs).
5. Innovative potential, originality and relevance of the project.
6. Added value of conducting research at FRIAS and the University of Freiburg (both for the applicant and the local research community).
7. Issues concerning research ethics.
8. Bibliographical references.

3. **CV** in tabular form (max. 2 pages), incl. contact details of two referees.

For the compulsory structure of the CV please use the [CV template](#) that you can download in the applicant's account.

4. **Publication list:** 4 peer-reviewed publications since 1 January 2020 (see [Basic academic quality criteria](#)).
5. **Completed [ethical issues table](#)** (questionnaire in the applicant's account, mandatory for all disciplines).
6. **Copy of the PhD diploma:** if the writing system/script used in the diploma is not Latin (but, for instance, Cyrillic, Chinese, Arabic or other), a Latin script certificate or official translation is requested.
7. **Letter of support:** only applicable to experimental scientists to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg where their research project can be carried out.
8. **Experiment sketch and timetable,** if applicable experimental scientists are required to hand in a sketch and timetable of the experiments the applicant wishes to conduct in Freiburg.

## Selection Procedure

The selection of fellows under the FRIAS Early Career Fellowship is highly competitive and strictly merit-based (expected success rate of all eligible applications: ~15%). The FRIAS Fellowship selection process involves three steps:

### 1. Eligibility check

In order to be eligible for application, candidates must fulfil all of (1) the **formal eligibility criteria** and (2) the **basic academic quality criteria**.

The FRIAS Board of Directors will conduct an initial check of candidates in accordance with the formal eligibility criteria (1) and the basic academic quality criteria (2) of the programme. The formal eligibility and the basic quality check are conducted under the supervision of the chair and co-chair of the SAB. The SAB is comprised of renowned senior scientists from outside the University of Freiburg. The committee is responsible for the selection of applications for fellowships.

An application failing one or several of the formal eligibility and basic academic quality criteria cannot proceed to the next step - the international peer-review process.

Applicants are informed on whether or not they have passed the basic eligibility check, and their applications are forwarded for peer review.

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

In the second stage, the eligible proposals are forwarded to external experts who evaluate the research project and the CV. These experts are selected in line with the following criteria (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

The reviewers are asked to give a written assessment of the applicant's CV and the research proposal.

The evaluation of the research project 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 his/her 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

The applicants are informed once the peer-review process is completed.

### 3. Final selection by the external FRIAS Scientific Advisory Board

FRIAS Fellows are ultimately selected by the [FRIAS SAB](#). This board consists of up to 11 internationally renowned academics from different disciplines, all from outside of the University of Freiburg and many of them from abroad. The Board is independent in its decision making. Both the FRIAS Board of Directors and the SAB are responsible for compliance with highest standards of academic quality in its research programmes and selection processes. The functions, rights and responsibilities of the SAB are described in the FRIAS statutes.

On the basis of the original proposals and the expert reviews, the SAB creates a final ranking list. The SAB is asked to guarantee the above-mentioned criteria.

The top candidates are directly selected for funding and informed immediately about this by FRIAS. They are offered an Early Career Fellowship at FRIAS. The applicants not selected in the final round are informed accordingly. Depending on the quality of the applications, there will be a waiting list in order to fill any positions not accepted by one



of the directly selected applicants. Upon request, applicants will be given access to anonymised assessments of their proposals.

### Calendar of implementation of the current selection process

Publication of the call for applications	10 July 2023
Submission deadline for applications	15 September 2023
Basic eligibility check	October 2023
Peer-review	October 2023 – January 2024
Final selection by SAB	February 2024
Notification of selected fellows	March 2024
Start of fellowships	01 September 2024

### 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 will not be 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

[uwe.blaurock@jura.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:uwe.blaurock@jura.uni-freiburg.de)

#### Gender & Diversity

Where two candidates are equally suitable for a post, candidates of the underrepresented gender in the relevant academic field shall be given priority. The duration of the applicants’ academic career with respect to family-related career breaks and careers outside academia will be considered during the selection process.

## **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 additionally receive a research cost contribution, a budget for individual training, a mobility allowance (if applicable) and will be reimbursed for the travel costs of the inbound and the outbound journey (if applicable). If eligible, Fellows accompanied by at least one child receive an additional monthly family allowance.

## 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 ethical issues arising from their proposed research in detail in the project outline. The applicant 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, to identify proposals requiring ethical evaluation.

In addition, experts in the international peer-review procedure are asked to indicate relevant ethical issues raised by the proposal.

If there were any potential issues, and if the application were to successfully pass through the formal selection procedure, the project proposal is then referred to the university's ethics commission. This body operates on the basis of a code of procedure that fulfils the necessary requirements for such a commission as stated in various German laws. The same procedure applies should ethical issues arise during work on a given project.

The ethics commission 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. In the event that the requirements and restrictions are extraordinarily difficult to fulfil, the Scientific Advisory Board 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.

Specific procedures for the use of human embryonic stem cells are in place. In case FRIAS receives a proposal using human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) the following specific procedure applies:

The international experts must mention in their evaluation report, if the use of hESCs is justified and necessary for the success of the project.

If the project is suggested for funding, the FRIAS programme coordinator will forward the research proposal and the scientific evaluation reports to the University's Ethics Committee (EC).

The research using hESCs may not start until the proposal receives the approval of the EC ethics review.

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

### Application deadline?

The completed Early Career Fellowship application form together with the required documents must be uploaded via the application portal for Early Career Fellowships (<https://www.frias.uni-freiburg.de/frias-early-career-fellowships>) and submitted by September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 13:00h CET.

### How do I apply?

Candidates apply exclusively through the online application portal ([Early Career scheme](#))

Applicants complete and submit the application form. After sending the application form you need to register. After registration you can edit the application form, upload the required annexes as detailed below and complete the ethical issues questionnaire. All required documents should be in pdf format. After final submission of the documents the applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt. To view the application data and documents the applicants log in their application portal account.

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

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

In case of technical problems, please contact the Institute. If there are any technical difficulties during the last 3 days before the application deadline, the application process will be extended by 48 hours.

### When will a decision be made?

The final decision on the applications in the current selection round is expected to be announced by April 2024.

### Are there specific research priorities?

No. Application is open to proposals from all disciplines that can be supported at the University of Freiburg. Not only disciplinary but interdisciplinary projects are possible. 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.

As an attractive, but strictly non-obligatory option, future fellows may consider the opportunity of being connected with larger research clusters and centres at the university, where the University of Freiburg is particularly competitive on an international scale.

For a comprehensive list of excellence clusters, priority programs, research centres, collaborative research centres (SFBs), EU-projects, graduate schools and research training groups as well for further information on the 11 faculties and their research profile please consult: <https://uni-freiburg.de/research/research-profile>.

An interest to be connected with one of the research areas of particular strengths can be indicated as part of the application.

### **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 includes applicants who are based in Germany or are currently working at the University of Freiburg.

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

Yes. FRIAS will provide fully furnished offices for double occupancy, and whenever possible single occupancy. Experimental scientists -prior to submission of the application- are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg where their research projects can be carried out

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

In general, the applicant does not need an academic host at the University of Freiburg. However, experimental scientists are required to identify a host laboratory in Freiburg (incl. letter of support) where their research project can be carried out prior to submission of the application.

The fellowship allows the researcher to conduct his/her own research project. The determining selection criteria are the academic excellence of both the applicant and of the project proposal. Personal qualifications with regard to experience and capability to conduct the research project are also considered during the evaluation of the applications.

### **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 because of family or medical reasons. Likewise, the time period of the basic academic criteria (4 publications since 1 January 2020) can be extended.

Maternity time off is calculated with 18 months per child whereas for paternal or medical time-off the documented timeframe is relevant. The time off has to be accrued during the time period that is relevant for the eligibility criteria and has to be formally documented (e.g. child birth certificate etc.).

### **Do fellowships need to start September 1, 2024?**

Fellowships should be conducted within the period between September 1, 2024 and August 31, 2025.

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

Yes, there is. Our FRIAS fellow service team assists families in finding suitable accommodation in the Freiburg area considering their particular needs regarding price, size and location. Together with the University of Freiburg's Family Service, we provide information on the German system of child care and schools. Fellows are supported in finding appropriate child care 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. Fellows accompanied by at least one child receive an additional monthly family allowance of 250 €. 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).