

Postdoctoral Researchers International Mobility Experience

PRIME 2019/20

Schedule

Call announcement:	1 May 2019
Application deadline:	30 August 2019
Selection results:	February 2020
Orientation seminar:	9/10 March 2020 (expected)
Earliest starting date:	1 May 2020
Latest starting date:	1 September 2020

Objective

In 2014 the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) initiated the PRIME programme to support the international mobility of postdoctoral researchers by temporary positions at German universities in place of conventional stipends.

With completing the programme's pilot phase that was partially co-financed by the EU, DAAD has successfully established this funding instrument and continues the programme since 2019 with support from the national funding provider, the BMBF.

Postdoctoral researchers of all nationalities, who see their long-term career perspectives in Germany, will be given the opportunity to combine temporary employment at a German university with a research stay abroad. The possibility of continuous coordination with the German host institution shall ensure an efficient reintegration following the research stay abroad.

Duration

The support is provided for 18 months, of which the first 12 months have to be spent abroad and the remaining six months in Germany (reintegration phase).¹

Support

Funding is provided through an 18-month temporary job position at the selected German university. The position will be remunerated according to the appropriate rate for postdoctoral researchers (according to the German pay scale "TV-L E13"). The specific level within the salary group "TV-L E 13" will be determined by the employing universities on the basis of the previous work experience of the fellows. DAAD will provide the respective universities with a grant agreement to cover the costs for the regular salary and an additional monthly expatriate allowance for the research stay abroad.²

An additional lump sum travel allowance in accordance with DAAD rates for the selected candidate and, if applicable, accompanying spouse or partner (within the meaning of the German law on civil partnerships) and children will be paid directly by DAAD.

Successful applicants will be invited to an orientation seminar before the start of the fellowship, together with current fellows and alumni. The seminar will presumably take place in Bonn on 9/10 March 2020. Applicants are asked to save the date but not to make any travel arrangements before receiving a letter of acceptance.

¹ Due to social security stipulations it may not always be possible to start the research stay abroad at the very beginning of the funding period. Alternatively, the option of 1 month in Germany followed by 12 months abroad and 5 months in Germany (total funding duration 18 months) may be chosen.

² The position at the German host institution will be financed through DAAD project funding. Additional benefits during the stay abroad will be covered up to a maximum amount dependent on the salary and country.

Eligibility

Eligibility to the programme is defined by four criteria:

- Applicants must have completed their PhD before starting the fellowship;
- 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 2019. Time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention is not taken into account.
If the research stay abroad is to be undertaken in a country other than an EU member state (MS) or an [associated country](#) (AC), the applicant must either be a national/resident citizen of an EU MS or AC, or have been continuously active in research for five years' full-time equivalent in a MS or AC, immediately prior to the time of recruitment. If this condition is not met, the applicant will be deemed ineligible;
- Applicants who are already permanently employed by the research milieu where the research training activities are planned to take place and that is recruiting them may not be supported;
- Applicants must accept that the research stay abroad and the return phase to Germany are both mandatory parts of the programme.³

Other Application Conditions

- Appropriate host institutions in Germany and abroad must have been identified at the time of application. The contact with these institutions and the agreement on modalities are the responsibility of the applicant.
- The employing host institution in Germany has to be a university.
- The German host university must confirm in writing that the postdoc will be employed for the whole funding period, should the application be successful. The necessary means will be made available to the university through separate DAAD project funding. The university will appoint a mentor/scientific host, who will inform the PRIME scholar during his/her stay abroad about developments at the institution and answer his/her queries to ensure a successful reintegration at the end of the period abroad. It is expected that the German university indicates at the time of application the possibilities for longer-term research perspectives at the institution following DAAD funding.⁴ On its website (www.daad.de/prime/contacts) 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.
- The foreign host institution shall be selected according to the scientific preferences/needs of the applicant and the research project. It can be a university, a non-university research institute, or an industrial research entity. It must be willing to support the postdoc in the realization of her/his research project and provide the necessary infrastructure. The type of support (office space, access to instruments, laboratories, libraries etc.) has to be defined and a mentor/scientific host appointed at the foreign host institution. DAAD cannot make funding available to the foreign host institution.

³ Exceptions are only possible in individual cases with approval of DAAD and the funding provider (BMBF). E.g. an early termination of funding may be admissible if the reintegration requirement can similarly be met by an otherwise longer-term or permanent position in Germany.

⁴ Universities are not required to provide a legally binding financial commitment beyond the DAAD funding period, but hosts are expected to demonstrate a sustained commitment to the candidate's career development.

- The starting date of the fellowship must be between 1 May 2020 and 1 September 2020. A postponement is only possible under exceptional circumstances (e.g. pregnancy, motherhood, parental leave) and has to be approved by DAAD.
- The “Rules of good scientific practice” and the ethical guidelines of the programme must be accepted.

Application Documents

The application form will be available at the application portal. To get to the portal please click on [Stipendiendatenbank für Deutsche⁵](#), fill in “Fachrichtung” (subject of your research), “Zielland” (country of the period abroad) and Status “Promovierte” (position) 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 the application form has been completed, all other application documents (except the letters of recommendation) can be uploaded. All documents for upload must be in pdf format. Except for the certificates (s. point 9), **all** documents must be submitted **in English** as the evaluation and selection process will be conducted by international reviewers and an international committee.

The following documents have to be submitted:

1. completed **application form**;
2. **curriculum vitae** with no chronological gaps and in tabular form in accordance with **EU standards** (or equivalent) <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>;
3. **short summary** of the research project with a clearly recognizable working title and an indication of keywords. The summary should enable the assignment to a specific subject area and be suitable for use as preliminary information for potential reviewers. The length of the summary should not exceed 2,000 characters (including spaces);
4. a detailed and independently prepared **research proposal** upon which both the German and foreign host institutions have agreed. In the evaluation of the proposal particular emphasis will be placed on the quality of the research plan. It should detail the preliminary work undertaken and the relevance of the topic for research, and explain why the chosen institutions are especially suitable for the realization of the planned project. The strategy for the investigation of the scientific problem should be readily understandable and the choice of methods and work equipment be adequately established. Please provide a precise description and a clear presentation. The total length of the research proposal should not exceed 20,000 characters (including spaces, but not bibliographical references). Bibliographical references may be included as an annex;
5. **time schedule** for the realization of the planned work abroad and in Germany (e.g. in the form of a bar chart/Gantt-Chart);

⁵ Regardless of their nationality, PRIME Fellows will be considered as German employees during the whole funding period. Hence, the application for this outgoing mobility will be carried out through the DAAD scholarship database for Germans. “Germany” as country of residence is a default setting that cannot be changed by the applicant.

6. **invitation letter from the German host.** This letter should detail why the university is particularly suitable for the execution of the research project, the support to be provided, the name(s) of the mentor/scientific host and possibly also the longer-term research perspectives at the institution. The scientific host and the mentor may also be the same person;
7. **binding declaration from the German host university ([form 1](#))**, to provide a temporary position for the funding period at the rate appropriate for postdocs at the institution within the framework of project funding from the DAAD, should the application be successful;
8. **invitation letter from the foreign host.** This letter should detail why the institution is particularly suitable for the execution of the research project, the support to be provided and the name(s) of the mentor/scientific host. The scientific host and the mentor may also be the same person;
9. degree certificate for the most recent **academic degree** (usually the PhD). If the document is not available in English or German, it must be translated. If the PhD has not yet been completed, the certificate of the master's degree (or an equivalent document, e.g. diploma) must be submitted and an **additional statement** by the supervisor is required, stating when successful completion of the PhD is expected;
In the application process, a pdf copy of the degree certificate will suffice. However, before starting the fellowship successful candidates must provide a certified copy of the degree certificate.
10. **publication list** categorized according to (a) publications in peer review journals, (b) specialist books, and (c) conference proceedings and indicating the type of publication (original paper, review etc.). For each publication the state of publication (published, in print, accepted, submitted) and complete bibliographical information (including the first and last page number) must be provided. Where available, please include electronic links;
11. **list of the most important publications** (maximum of three) and the **reasons for their selection** (importance of the scientific results, significance for the research project, new methodological approach etc., no more than 3.000 characters including spaces in total). Please comment on your specific contribution if several authors are involved. For each of the max. three publications the electronic link (URL) must be provided. If the publications are not available online, single articles can also be uploaded. However, please strictly refrain from uploading entire monographs/volumes as part of the application;
12. **short summary of the doctoral thesis** (up to 7.000 characters including spaces);
13. **supplementary information** (if applicable) on other scientific, professional and social activities, and possibly on your personal situation, as far as you consider this information as relevant for the assessment of your proposal. The selection criteria listed below may be used for guidance;

14. completed and signed [form 2 \(Ethical-Issues-Table\)](#)⁶ for checking whether ethical standards for scientific research might be affected by the planned research project. This document is a mandatory self-declaration and has to be submitted by every applicant;
15. **language certificate for the period abroad;**
the language skills must be sufficient to successfully conduct the research project at the host institute. However, an additional certificate for English is not required on the level of postdoctoral funding. For all other languages relevant to the research project proof is required, unless one of the following exceptions applies:
- i)* the applicant is a native speaker of the language in question.
 - ii)* the applicant has studied in the respective language (full-time; this must be confirmed by adequate documents).
 - iii)* since the beginning of studies the applicant has lived for at least one year without interruption in a country where the respective language is the official language.
 - iv)* since the beginning of studies the applicant has worked for at least one year without interruption in a working/research environment in which the respective language has been the regular working language (this must be confirmed by adequate documents).

If one of the above-mentioned exceptions applies, please be sure to upload a separate document in which you briefly explain why an additional language certificate is not necessary and how language proficiency is proven by other documents in your application, such as the CV. This will facilitate the formal examination of the application.

An official language certificate for the respective language will be accepted. It should not be over three years old and rate all four language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing)⁷. Certificates of participation in language courses will not be accepted, if no rating for the above mentioned language skills is indicated.

If the language at the host institute is not the official language of the host country, a certificate for the working language at the institute is sufficient. In this case the foreign host must confirm the working language at the institute in the letter of invitation.

16. **A certificate for the knowledge of German**⁸ is required unless one of the following exceptions applies:
- i)* the applicant comes from a country where German is the official language;
 - ii)* the applicant has lived for at least one year (without interruption) since the beginning of studies in a German-speaking country;
 - iii)* the German host confirms that knowledge of English is sufficient to realize the planned project. In this case no additional language certificate is required.

⁶ If the Ethical Issues Table or the reviewing process indicate that ethical rules set by the EU or mandatory 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 the specified deadline.

⁷ One possibility is the submission of the "Language Certificate for Candidates from Germany Applying for a DAAD Scholarship Abroad", which is available at https://www.daad.de/medien/ausland/dokumente/daad-sprachnachweis_deutsche.pdf. The assessments are conducted by the lecturers at the respective language seminar of the German university. Information shall be available through the international office of the institution. Native speakers, who are not lecturers for the respective language, are not authorized to issue the language certificate.

⁸ Further information is available at: <https://www.daad.de/deutschland/nach-deutschland/voraussetzungen/en/6221-german-language/>.

17. two recent **letters of recommendation** that should in particular refer to the applicant's personal and scientific suitability for the planned project. Where possible, one letter of recommendation should be submitted by the supervisor of the doctoral thesis. Following registration in the portal applicants must generate and download the respective form in the section "Personal Funding" → "Gutachten anfordern". Applicants must send this form to their referees. The letters of recommendation consist of the generated form and a freely-worded letter of reference. They must be sent by post in a sealed envelope to DAAD (Section ST43/PRIME), either by the referee or the applicant.

With the exception of the letters of recommendation (see section 17.) all documents have to be uploaded in pdf format in the application portal. The letters of recommendation have to be sent by post to DAAD:

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD)
Section ST43 / PRIME
Kennedyallee 50
53175 Bonn
Germany

DAAD reserves the right not to consider incomplete applications. The responsibility for submitting a complete application by the end of the deadline lies with the applicants.

Selection Criteria

The performance-based assessment will take into account:

1. the **achievements of the applicant to date** (scientific and other qualifications, and particular conditions which have influenced the academic progress); and
2. the **quality of the proposed project** and its **consistency with further scientific qualification and long-term career planning**.

Both aspects will be judged separately and both scores contribute equally to the final rating. The assessment will focus in particular on the following points of the application:

1. Achievements to date:

- a. academic performance:
 - grades, duration of studies;
 - number and quality of publications⁹;
 - other achievements (patents, conference invitations, prizes, supervision, teaching etc.);
 - the recommendations from the application's referees;
- b. overall impression of the applicant, taking into consideration e.g.:
 - additional scientific/practical/management experience;
 - international mobility;
 - interdisciplinary research experience;
 - intersectoral mobility;
 - social commitment;
 - personal situation (e.g. unavoidable delays during academic career due to maternity and parental leave, care for children or other dependent persons, illness; researchers with special needs, researchers displaced by conflicts).

2. Project quality and long-term career perspectives:

- a. research project¹⁰:
 - quality;
 - originality;
 - relevance/up-to-dateness;
 - implementation (time schedule and work plan);
 - impact on the research field;
- b. suitability of the German host institution and the support provided there (scientific mentoring, technical/administrative support);
- c. suitability of the foreign host institution and the support provided there (scientific mentoring, technical/administrative support);
- d. appropriateness of the research project with regard to the long-term career plans (scientific qualification and acquisition of complementary skills).

All information relevant to these selection criteria should be included in the application. This should be considered in particular when preparing the curriculum vitae, research and time schedules, and supplementary information.

⁹ From the reviewer's perspective the hitherto research achievements as documented in publications are of central importance. In addition to the number of publications, the applicant's own contribution (if several authors are involved), and also the quality of the journal and scientific publisher are important criteria. This will be viewed in the context of the duration of the research activities and the specific discipline culture.

¹⁰ From the reviewer's perspective the applicant's scientific independence is of crucial importance. This should be demonstrated by choosing or having chosen a new research focus and a new research environment, either after the PhD or in connection with the planned project. In case these conditions are not fulfilled we recommend commenting on the reasons for this in the "supplementary information".

Selection Process

After the deadline has past, applicants will receive information on the outcome of the formal eligibility check approx. within six weeks.

All applications that enter the review process thereafter will be reviewed independently by two external experts (scientists from the respective subject area). Depending on the total number of applications that meet the formal requirements, a pre-selection by the selection committee will be conducted if necessary.

The final rating will be made by the interdisciplinary selection committee on the basis of the external reviews and assessment of the committee members.

For the two main criteria

1. achievements of the applicants to date (scientific and other qualifications, and particular conditions which have influenced their academic progress); and
2. the quality of the proposed project and its consistency with further scientific qualification and long-term career planning,

the rating will be according to the following scale (from 1 to 10):

- 1-2: very weak
- 3-4: weak
- 5-6: acceptable
- 7-8: good
- 9: very good
- 10: outstanding

The final rating will be the average of the two individual scores. It will produce a ranking list, according to which successful and reserve candidates will be identified, taking into account the available funding. The committee will determine a cut-off point below which funding is not possible.

Usually within six to eight weeks after the selection meeting, rejected applicants will receive feedback summarizing the reviewers' most important criticisms of their application.

Successful applicants will receive information on further procedures for the implementation of their fellowships including the invitation to an orientation seminar. Reserve candidates will receive a provisional notification.

After the successful candidates have declared acceptance of their fellowships, DAAD will inform their German host universities. They will then resolve any remaining open issues on the modalities of employment with the applicants and apply for project funding to finance the fellows' positions. Following approval by the DAAD, funding can start on 1 May 2020 at the earliest.

Funded by



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