

Postdoctoral Fellowships in Germany: Frequently Asked Questions

Is there an age limit for applicants?

No, there is no age limit for candidates, but you should have finished your Ph.D. (and defended your thesis) by the time of application (September 11th, 2018). Furthermore, your Ph.D. had to be completed after October 1st, 2013. The date of the defense of your thesis (marked on the Ph.D. certificate) will serve as a reference. If you have defended your thesis, but have not yet received your Ph.D. certificate, this can be submitted at a later stage.

Parental leave and similar obligations after completing your Ph.D. can be considered as additional time. If this applies to you, please consult the programme manager at the Foundation.

May I apply before receiving my Ph.D. certificate?

Generally, the Ph.D. certificate is required for an application. In particular cases, the certificate may be submitted later, e.g. when your defense is scheduled only shortly before the deadline and you have not received your certificate.

Is U.S. citizenship required?

U.S. citizenship is not required for an application. However, candidates must have been based at an institution in the U.S. for at least two years prior to applying.

I have a junior/an assistant professorship. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes.

Do I have to be employed as a postdoc in the U.S. in order to be eligible?

The respective target group are promising young scholars in their postdoctoral research phase based at U.S. institutions. If your Ph.D. was acquired a while ago, you might have worked as a postdoc already or been employed at a research/academic institution in some other ways, for example as a lecturer, an assistant professor, etc. We expect candidates to be employed by an institution in the U.S. at the time of application and leading up to the fellowship; for candidates from the U.S., it is not necessary to be employed during the time of the fellowship.

Is it possible to apply for a fellowship shorter than 9 months or start at a different time than September/October?

The stay at your host institution should cover a minimum of 9 months; alternative starting dates may be arranged upon consultation with the host institution after a grant has been awarded.

How many fellows receive funding each year?

We can support up to 10-12 fellows each year.

Is the fellowship only intended for the humanities?

The fellowship primarily aims at the humanities, but candidates from social sciences, with very close thematic relation to the humanities are also welcome to apply.

May I apply only for the listed institutions?

The German host institution can be freely chosen by the applicant. If an institution other than those listed in the “Information for Applicants” is chosen, a letter of support has to be provided by the desired host institution (please see the additional form that needs to be filled in). In any case, it is advisable to briefly justify the motivation for your choice.

May I apply to several institutions?

If more than one institution suits your research project, you can apply to several institutions. Please add a list that includes your desired institutions, ranked according to your preferences.

Does the host institution provide office space and accommodation?

The host institution will provide office space and access to its libraries. However, in most cases fellows have to organize accommodation on their own (funds to cover costs for accommodation can be included in the budget).

Will I receive the money directly from the Volkswagen Foundation?

Grants will be made to the German host institution, which is responsible for administering the funds. This means that you receive your stipend from your German host university.

General information regarding your budget

- You find a guideline with more details on the budget and its items in the “Information for Applicants”.
- Personnel expenditure is limited to your own position. It is not possible to hire student assistants in this programme (e.g. for research or translating services).
- Please indicate in your application whether you would like to travel with your children. Subsidies for child care can be applied for according to the information on family-related benefits (see www.volkswagenstiftung.de → funding → for grant recipients -> additional funding and training opportunities -> family and career).
- The budget has to be uploaded via the electronic application system.
- The budget justification (maximum of 1 page) is a separate document and should explain any specificity/peculiarity in the budget.
- Please mention in your application whether you require any equipment. It is not possible to apply for these funds at any later stage.

Whose signature is required for the ‘letter of confirmation (home institution)’?

The letter of confirmation has to be signed by the dean of the faculty. With this letter, the home institution confirms that a leave of absence will be granted during the stay abroad (if applicable).

Should the “short publication of interest” be written in English or German?

The publication of interest may be in English (preferably) or German.

How detailed does the syllabus for the seminar at the host institution have to be?

Please define a topic for an undergraduate or graduate seminar (2 hours/week) in your research proposal if applying to a university and provide a short course syllabus. It will be sufficient to briefly list the topics to be dealt with. A detailed course bibliography is not required. Please note that you not have to submit a course syllabus, if you are applying to a non-teaching institution.

General information regarding your workshop

- The aim of the workshop is to establish international contacts (preferably to European scholars).
- The workshop should primarily address junior scholars.
- The applicant is responsible for its organization and final realization.
- The fellowship usually covers accommodation, meals and transportation; hiring student assistants cannot be covered.

- The workshop funds cannot be used to cover honoraria for invited guests.

Do I have to name referees in my application?

No, we do not need referees. All applications are reviewed externally.

Visa information

- You require a student visa (national D visa for longer stays) which you can apply for in advance at a German consulate or after your arrival in Germany at the relevant foreigners' authority in your intended place of residence. For further information please see:
<http://www.germany.info/>
<https://www.daad.de/deutschland/nach-deutschland/bewerbung/en/9199-visa-application/>
- A result of the Schengen Regulations is the freedom of movement within the Schengen area provided that you possess a national visa and a valid travel document.

Do I require health insurance coverage for Germany?

Yes, if your medical insurance does not cover costs for medical treatment abroad you will have to get a health insurance covering your stay in Europe when applying for a visa. Please see https://www.daad.de/medien/versicherung/deutschland/merkblatt_tarif_790-d_2016_01_01_2015.10.14.pdf

Where can I get help regarding the electronic application system?

Follow this link: <https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/vwsantrag/tipps.do?siteLanguage=en>

May I apply per e-mail?

No. Please provide your application via the electronic application system:
<https://portal.volkswagenstiftung.de/vwsantrag/login.do?siteLanguage=en>

Where do I indicate the title of my project?

Please select “Application Data“ on the electronic application system. Here, you find boxes dedicated for the title and the duration of your project.

I would like to benefit from the dual career option

Please make sure that you mention the dual career option in your cover letter. In case your application is shortlisted and you are invited to present your project at the review panel meeting, your spouse gains the opportunity to also submit his/her application and will also be invited to the panel meeting.

My application was refused. May I re-apply next year?

No. You may not apply again for the same programme.

I do not speak German. May I take language classes during my research stay?

You may take an intensive German course alongside your research. In case you are accepted, you could already start to learn German while still in the U.S.