



## Pre-Doc Award 2024/2025 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

11 April 2024

### Application – Predoc requirements

#### **Am I eligible to apply if my graduation was more than eight months prior to the deadline of the application?**

It depends. Well-explained exceptions are possible. In this case, please add an explanation (maximum half a page, Times New Roman or similar font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing) outlining the reasons for the present timing and the motivation of the tandem to participate in the Pre-Doc Award programme to your application documents.

#### **May I apply if I have not yet finished my final degree?**

**For EU-citizens:** Yes. The Pre-Doc Award also addresses university graduates who achieve their final degree (certificate) within the first six months of the funding period (exceptions for state examination for the teaching profession). Please note that your remuneration will be lower if you start the funding period without having a final master's degree, diploma or state exam certificate. Please refer to the document *Application and Programme Details* for further information.

**For non-EU citizens:** Yes, but due to administrative issues (residence regulations) you have to prove that you will have your final certificate in the month before the contract starts. The contract can start between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

#### **When does the contract start?**

The contract starts between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 and 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

#### **Can I apply as a candidate if I am already on the doctoral candidate list of a faculty?**

No. If a candidate is already on the doctoral candidate list of a faculty, then she/he is a doctoral researcher and no longer has the status of being a "predoc" in the sense of this programme. This changes during the one-year funding. Many grantees put themselves on the doctoral list of their faculty during the year, also to fulfil the funding conditions of the foundations. Exceptions might be made for those who need the status of a PhD student to get a visa on an individual basis.

#### **May I apply when I have acquired my degree outside of Leipzig University?**

Yes. International and national candidates from outside of Leipzig are highly encouraged to apply, given that the candidate plans to complete the dissertation at Leipzig University and that the degree allows you to start doctoral studies in Germany. Contrarily, the postdoc has to have a working contract at Leipzig University.



**Do you recommend to continue the personal career pathway at another university, after the Pre-Doc Award period?**

No, the Pre-Doc Award aims to support young researchers in acquiring funding for their PhD at Leipzig University. The application, among other things, involves finding a potential future faculty supervisor and consequently the Pre-Doc Award period is thought to be a preparatory phase for doctoral research at Leipzig University.

**May I apply without a postdoc, junior or tenure track professor?**

No, that is not possible. Applications are made in tandem (predoc and postdoc).

## Application – Postdoc requirements

**May any postdoc apply?**

The Pre-Doc Award aims to support researchers in the qualification phase for a professorship. The main part of the current work shall be of scientific nature and in the majority of cases, they will possess a temporary employment contract or a position that is financed by a scholarship and associated to one of the faculties or research institutions at Leipzig University. They shall dedicate at least 25% of a full time equivalent to this position.

In summary, we address the following researchers and groups at Leipzig University:

- R 3 – established researchers (usually four to eight years after the dissertation), including junior group leaders and researchers with a habilitation certificate (PDs)),
- Junior professors, including junior professors on Tenure Track.

**Is it necessary for the postdoc to have the formal right to supervise/review dissertations?**

No, and in some cases this will likely not be possible. During the Pre-Doc Award period, the postdoc functions as a mentor and, where possible, as a content-related supervisor, providing feedback about and instructions for the predoc candidate's work.

For the dissertation after the Pre-Doc Award period, it depends on the regulations of the respective faculty if an involvement of the postdoc in supervising and/or reviewing the PhD might be possible in a formal or informal manner, e.g. as a member of a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC). Please refer to the document *Application and Programme Details* for further information.

**May a junior professor apply in the postdoc part?**

Yes. Please see above → 'May any postdoc apply?'

**May a postdoc who participated in the Pre-Doc Award in earlier cohorts apply again?**

Yes. Postdocs can participate in the programme several times.

**May a postdoc, junior or tenure track professor apply without a predoc?**

No, that is not possible. Applications are made in tandem (predoc and postdoc).



**May a postdoc apply with more than one predoc?**

Yes, postdocs may apply not only with one but with a maximum of two predocs. In this case, submit a separate application for each predoc. Please make sure that the application documents (cover letter, project proposal, etc.) are individually tailored to the respective predoc and the respective tandem predoc/postdoc.

**What if the postdoc, junior or tenure track professor is leaving or absent for a longer time during the funding period (e.g., contract end, change of work place, parental leave)?**

You may still apply in that case.

In case you are already aware of the postdoc leaving within the funding period, the postdoc mentoring and supervision for the time point after leaving shall be explained. In this case, please add an explanation (maximum one page, Times New Roman or similar font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing) to your application documents outlining your plans on how to secure the joint work. It may be that the postdoc is able to continue the supervision from elsewhere. It may also be that a substitute is found in the faculty or that the supporting faculty supervisor (professor involved in the application) steps in for the respective duties.

If the postdoc is leaving unexpectedly within the funding period or is absent for a longer period, the same applies.

In any case we aim to avoid that the predoc will be left on her/his own. The faculty supervisor supporting the application confirms to take on mentoring and supervising tasks during the Pre-Doc year or to find (together with the applying postdoc) a new postdoc tandem partner, should this be required.

In case the postdoc leaving or being absent cannot or does not organize a substitute, the predoc candidate shall address to the faculty supervisor and/or the programme coordinator, who will then, together with the faculty supervisor and predoc strive for a solution.

## Application – Formalities

**Which formalities must be observed for the candidature?**

A standard set of documents has to be provided. Please refer to the Pre-Doc Award document *Application and Programme Details* for further information.

**What needs to be taken into account in case the final certificate of the candidate is not yet achieved?**

There are two scenarios:

- If the degree will be obtained *after the application deadline, but prior to potentially starting the Pre-Doc Award funding*, please hand in a transcript of records as well as an estimation of date of receiving the final certificate. Once received, please submit it without being asked.
- If the degree will be obtained up to six months *after starting the Pre-Doc Award funding period* (exceptions for state examination for the teaching profession), please provide the requested additional documents outlined in the Pre-Doc Award document *Application and Programme Details*.



**How much detail should the application include on the plan for acquiring scholarships and/or third-party funding?**

The plan should be as detailed as possible. One of the evaluation criteria is the potential of the proposed project to acquire funding. To outline steps and ideas about where and when to apply for scholarships and/or third-party funding is almost as important for the Pre-Doc Award programme as the planned research itself. Please consider the funding agencies' terms and conditions (e.g., language of application, nationality of applicants) in your funding plans.

**Will applications be accepted without a confirmation of support of (a) potential faculty supervisor(s)?**

No. The confirmation is an important part of the application. If, for plausible reasons, the confirmation cannot be obtained by the deadline, it may be submitted shortly thereafter, but has to be present in any case prior to the selection committee meeting in July. In case a junior or tenure track professor applies in the postdoc role, he/she is eligible to provide the respective statement her-/himself.

## Further aspects

**How is the Pre-Doc Award funding provided?**

Funding is provided through a position as a graduate assistant (WHK, *Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft*) 19 hours per week for 12 months.

**I am an international applicant. Does the Pre-Doc Award Programme provide funding for costs incurred in connection with me moving to Leipzig/Germany?**

No. The Pre-Doc Award Programme provides funding through a position as a graduate assistant (WHK, *Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft*) for 12 months (Please see above → 'How is the Pre-Doc Award funding provided?'). Costs incurring regarding your move to Germany, e. g. for flights, visa, have to be covered by yourself. Please also note that your first salary is usually paid only at the end of your first month of employment.

**Is it possible to combine two contracts as a graduate assistant (WHK) at Leipzig University at the same time?**

No. If you have a 19-hour per week contract as a graduate assistant (WHK, *Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft*) through the Pre-Doc Award Programme, you cannot have a second employment contract as a graduate assistant (WHK, *Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft*) at Leipzig University due to tariff regulations. It is also not possible to extend the Pre-Doc Award funding phase by reducing the weekly hours. But it is possible to combine the contract as a graduate assistant with other employments outside Leipzig University.

**Is it possible to receive an additional scholarship during the Pre-Doc Award funding period?**

This mainly depends on the scholarship provider. Usually, the funding bodies of scholarships do not allow their scholars to work more than a set number of weekly hours. In case you consider applying for another kind of predoc scholarship as well, please directly address the scholarship provider to ask whether it is compatible with the employment provided through the Pre-Doc Award.



**I have been offered a position as a research assistant (*Wissenschaftliche:r Mitarbeiter:in*) at Leipzig University. Is the Pre-Doc Award funding compatible with such a position?**

Due to tariff regulations, you cannot hold a position as a research assistant (*Wissenschaftliche:r Mitarbeiter:in*) and as a graduate assistant (WHK, *Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft*) with the Free State of Saxony at the same time. In case you would like to take up a position as a research assistant (*Wissenschaftliche:r Mitarbeiter:in*) during your Pre-Doc Award funding period, please reach out to the coordinator so that an individual solution for your case can be sought.

**Is it possible to leave Leipzig temporarily during the Pre-Doc Award funding period?**

Yes, especially if this is related to your Pre-Doc Award project or research. If you are already planning such a period, please mention these plans in your application (cover letter or additional explanation of half a page maximum). Please illustrate why it will not negatively affect your joint work during the Pre-Doc Award year to acquire funding for your doctorate or why it will even benefit these plans.

**May the predoc candidate inscribe as a PhD student during the Pre-Doc Award funding period?**

Yes. Many grantees put themselves on the doctoral list of their faculty during the year depending on the progress and PhD preparation status. Some scholarship associations even require the PhD student status for an application. Of course, in this case, you may seek this status at the relevant point in time.

**Does the “Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz” apply for the Pre-Doc Award funding period?**

Yes. The German Act on Fixed-Term Employment Contracts (*Wissenschaftszeitvertragsgesetz, WisZeitVG*) regulates the time limits of contracts in science before and after the doctorate. Without a completed doctorate, a temporary contract is possible up to a period of six years (in medicine nine), as long as the employment serves the employee's own scientific or artistic qualification. The period preparing a PhD is regarded as a period of qualification and consequently, will count when it comes to sum up times of the potential maximum of years until reaching your PhD certificate.