Pre-Doc Award 2020/2021
Application and Programme Details

6 April 2020

Application Details

Pre-doc requirements

Graduates with an excellent academic record
- From Leipzig University and other nationwide and international universities
- From diploma or master’s degree courses or those leading to a state examination
- In the transition period at the end of the university studies, either being
  - shortly before completion of studies (final certificate has to be achieved within the first 6 months of the Pre-Doc Award funding period), or
  - maximum of eight months after graduation (date of the certificate is decisive).
- With the intention of a doctorate and interest in a scientific career

Postdoc requirements

- Postdocs
  - of all faculties and research institutions at Leipzig University
  - with a temporary employment contract or a position that is financed by a scholarship
  - in the period of qualification after the dissertation
  - with the main part of their work being of scientific nature
- Junior Professors and Tenure Track Professors from Leipzig University

(Both groups are in the following jointly addressed with the term ‘postdoc’.)

Application Documents

Please provide the following documents, preferably via email, as one pdf-document:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document title</th>
<th>Explanation and remarks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover letter</td>
<td>- 1-2 pages maximum (Times New Roman or similar font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing)</td>
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<td>- Statement jointly written by the Pre-Doc candidate and postdoc summarizing the objectives of the joint work, reasons for the application and detailing the previous and/or planned working relationship.</td>
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<td>- The postdoc is asked to explain the planned support for the Pre-Doc candidate in achieving the joint objectives.</td>
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<td>- At the end of the cover letter both, Pre-Doc candidate and postdoc shall confirm that they have read, and agree to adhere to, the Pre-Doc Award Programme Details (see underneath).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project proposal, containing</td>
<td>- 3 pages maximum, including references and graphics (Times New Roman or similar font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing)</td>
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| (1) Research question(s) / Hypothesis | - In addition to the specific research question, the broader research context in which it can be classified and to which subject area it is assigned should be outlined
| (2) Research objectives | → The proposal should be self-explanatory (also for an audience not doing research in the same field of expertise) and allow for a classification in the field of expertise and assessment of eligibility
| (3) Potential results | - Should outline the main features of the planned dissertation project, as well as the work in the Pre-Doc Award year
| (4) Work plan incl. timeline (focus: Pre-Doc Award year; dissertation may be considered in addition) | - Does not have to be a final exposé of the later doctorate
| (5) Plans for applying for third party funding for the doctoral project / research project |

**CV of the Pre-Doc candidate**

**CV of the postdoc**

**List of publications of the postdoc (and, if applicable, of the Pre-Doc candidate)**

3 pages maximum, if necessary please focus on the most recent and subject-related publications

**Pre-Doc: Graduation certificate**

- 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*, please provide additional documents (see final line of this table).

**Confirmation of support of potential faculty supervisor(s)**

This shall not be a letter of recommendation, but rather a signed confirmation regarding the following points:
- Project is known and supported in terms of content
- The best possible ideological and organizational support will be granted (e.g. by granting access to colloquia for the Pre-Doc candidate; integration into the working group)
- Willingness, in case of departure or longer absence of the postdoc, to take on mentoring and supervising tasks during the Pre-Doc Award year, or to find (together with the applying postdoc) a new postdoc tandem partner
- Willingness, in case of success of the Pre-Doc Award candidate, to supervise him or her in the doctoral research / dissertation and to include the postdoc in further supervising, or, if more suitable, to help in finding other supervisor(s).

If you expect to achieve the final certificate of the candidate after the start of the funding period and within its first 6 months, please provide in addition:
- Plausible justification in plain text (half page maximum, Times New Roman or similar font, size 11, 1.5 line spacing)
- Your personal schedule outlining the major steps to be taken until receiving the final certificate from studies (including the period during which any final thesis is evaluated)
- As far as possible documents that provide proof of the statuses and the to be expected certificate within the first six months of the funding period (e.g. an extract from the examination regulations stating the time period you have for preparing the final thesis after its registration and proof of the registration of your thesis)
- Transcript of records
- 1-page exposé on the content of the master thesis
Application Language

Submissions are possible in either English or German. When applying, please be aware, that, due to the international character of the programme, the preferred communication language for any activities and most of the written communication will be English.

Selection

Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria are
- Qualification of the candidate and postdoc
- The fit of the collaboration of postdoc and candidate
- The overall quality of the application
- Plausibility and comprehensibility of the proposed research and working schedule
- The potential for acquiring future funding for the candidate

Who is evaluating the applications?

The Vice-Rector for Research and Young Academics will appoint a selection committee, which will decide on the projects to be funded. Although this committee is interdisciplinary, it is not possible to represent all subjects.

The committee will include:
- The Vice-Rector for Research and Young Academics
- The referent of the Vice-Rector for Research and Young Academics
- At least three representatives from the Research Commission
- A representative of the Department of Research Services
- The Commissioner for equal opportunities
- If applicable, the representative for Employees with Disabilities

The referent for academic staff development, coordinating the Pre-Doc Award, will take part in the selection commission in a consultative capacity and in the function of protocolling the session.

Programme Details

Pre-Doc Award Programme Timeline

The application deadline is 21 June 2020. Notification of the selection process will be given in the second half of July 2020. The administrative steps to prepare for a potential employment are to be taken shortly afterwards. The start of the programme for all projects shall be 1 October 2020. Exceptions are prone to individual discussion.

The Pre-Doc Award programme consists of the individual project activities for each Pre-Doc Award tandem and a number of pre-defined activities for the overall group cohort. The most important of them are the Pre-Doc Award Kickoff Event (October 2020) as well as a Final Symposium towards the end of the funding period (September 2021).
**Expectations of the Awardees**

When selected for funding within the Pre-Doc Award programme, all awardees (Pre-Doc candidates and postdocs) are expected to adhere to the following aspects. In order to assure that all candidates and postdocs are aware of this, a confirmation is requested in the cover letter of the application.

1. **Strive for third party funding:**
   Candidates – supported by the postdoc – shall further develop the doctoral project presented in the application and prepare an application for a doctoral scholarship during the funding period and/or
   The postdoc – in collaboration with the candidate and based on the planned doctoral project – shall apply for third party funding, ideally as the Principle Investigator (PI) of a project that also secures funding for the Pre-Doc candidate.

2. **Participate in the Pre-Doc Award framework programme:**
   Pre-Doc candidates and postdocs shall participate in the Pre-Doc Award events and networking activities, particularly:
   - Kickoff event (half day; October 2020 at Villa Tillmanns)
   - Workshop “Introduction to Scientific Writing” (obligatory for Pre-Doc candidates and voluntary for postdocs)
   - Peer networking and discussion meetings for the participants (frequency to be decided during the Kickoff event with Awardees; likely 90 minutes each)
   - Final symposium (full day; September 2021)

3. **Support public relations for the Pre-Doc Award:**
   Candidates and postdocs shall support the public relations for the Pre-Doc Award by providing related information for respective channels, e.g. the website and Leipzig University’s staff magazine ‘LUMAG’, if requested. They shall also make the Pre-Doc Award visible in the Leipzig University Research Information System (leiris) and “Forschungsbericht” (FOB). They are further encouraged to add the Pre-Doc Award to their personal CVs.

4. **Provide information for the programme evaluation:**
   Candidates and postdocs shall participate reliably in the Pre-Doc Award evaluation. This means, the Pre-Doc candidates and postdocs may keep the coordination informed about the submissions, their status quo and particularly outcome. For a mandatory mid-term and final evaluation, a questionnaire will be provided to ease and standardise the procedure. The final evaluation will include, among general feedback about the programme, the following information for each submission: the submission date, the name of the funding body, the date of the funding body’s answer and the outcome (funding granted or not and if the funding was accepted or not by the Awardees). As the application process may take longer than the Pre-Doc Award funding period, this also applies for answers received after the Pre-Doc Award funding period.

5. **Keep your contact data up to date:**
   Pre-Doc candidates and postdocs shall inform the Pre-Doc Award coordinating office in case of any relevant change of contact data or employment status.
**Funding Terms**

The funding of the Pre-Doc Award is a position as a research assistant (*Wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft, WHK*) with 19 hours per week for 12 months. The candidate will be employed by Leipzig University, Federal State of Saxony. In most cases, the rate will be the one for WHKs with a master’s degree (or equivalent degree). Should you wish to apply for the Pre-Doc Award funding phase and make use of the option that the final degree will be received within the first six months of the funding period, the rate for WHKs with a bachelor’s degree will apply for this first part of the funding. For graduate students striving for a state exam, the contract, in this case, would start with a position as student assistant (*Studentische Hilfskraft, SHK*). As soon as the final certificate is achieved, both contracts can be changed to WHK (master/state exam).

Detailed information on WHK contracts can be found in the intranet of Leipzig University.

**Who is who in the Pre-Doc Award**

There are on the awardees’ side at least three people involved in the Pre-Doc Award application and programme: The Pre-Doc candidate, the postdoc, a supervisor/professor.

1. **The Pre-Doc candidate**
2. **The postdoc**
   - The postdoc shall function as a mentor for the Pre-Doc candidate, supporting the process and progress, as well as other questions related to the Pre-Doc Award and later dissertation period.
   - If the discipline of the tandem allows, he/she will also be the content-related supervisor of the candidate. For the period after the Pre-Doc Award year, his/her ongoing contribution to the supervision of the PhD is strongly recommended.
   - At the same time, the postdoc is an awardee him-/herself. He/she gains access to the programme network and fosters personal supervision skills. Individual advice regarding the postdoc awardee role or personal career pathway may be requested from the academic staff development.
3. **The supervisor**
   - For administrative handling as well as the planned dissertation, the involvement of a professor is essential.
   - He/she, usually the head of the chair, institution or working group, functions as the disciplinary superior of the Pre-Doc candidate. This means, he/she has to sign the employment forms and usually all other official documents and shall support the Pre-Doc in the best possible ideological and organizational way (e.g. by granting access to colloquia for the Pre-Doc candidate; integration into the working group).
   - At the same time, in most cases, this person will be the/a supervisor of the future dissertation project and potentially one of the reviewers of the dissertation.
   - Other (junior) professors and, depending on the regulations for supervising and reviewing PhD researchers of the faculty, postdocs may later on be involved in the supervision of the PhD, e.g. via forming a Thesis Advisory Committee (TAC).

We strongly recommend to prepare and sign a supervision agreement outlining the roles, rights and duties of the above named for the Pre-Doc Award period.

The template provided by the Research Academy Leipzig may serve as an orientation for this: https://www.ral.uni-leipzig.de/informationen-fuer/hochschullehrende/betreuung-von-promovierenden/
Administrative Steps

Prior to the employment, the employing institution will have to hand in a “request for employment” (ANTRAG auf Einstellung einer Hilfskraft an der Universität Leipzig) signed by the head of the institution. This form can be found in the intranet. The form shall be amended by the “Anlage: Begründung für Befristungen nach dem WissZeitVG”. Detailed information about steps to take, contact persons and templates for the forms will be provided after the selection of the funded awardees.

Contact Information

The Pre-Doc Award is led by the Vice-Rector for Research and Young Academics, Prof. Dr. Erich Schröger. The programme is coordinated by the referent for academic staff development, Dr. Nicole Koburger, supported by Laura Matthes. Please submit your application, preferably via email, as one pdf-document to Dr. Nicole Koburger.

The contact details are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme Lead: Vice Rectorate for Research and Young Scientists</th>
<th>Programme Coordination: Academic Staff Development</th>
<th>Coordination Assistance: WHK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Prof. Dr. Erich Schröger +49 341 97-30020  
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Please also read the FAQs for further information.