



Pre-Doc Award 2021/2022

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

6 April 2021

Application – Predoc requirements

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

Yes, 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 master's degree?

For EU-citizens: Yes. The Pre-Doc Award also addresses university graduates, who achieve their degree (certificate) within the first six months of the funding period. Please note that your remuneration will be lower if you start the funding period without having a final master's degree 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 1st October 2021 and 1st January 2022.

When does the contract start?

The contract starts between 1st October 2021 and 1st January 2022.

Is a postponed start of the contract possible?

Yes, well-explained exceptions are possible (up to two months). 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 planned postponed start to your application documents.

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".

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.

Can I apply without a postdoc?

No, that is not possible.

Application – Postdoc requirements

May any postdoc apply?

The Pre-Doc Award aims to support researchers in the period of qualifying for a next career step after their dissertation. 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.

In summary, we address the following researchers and groups:

- R 2 – recognized researchers (usually two to four years after the dissertation),
- 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, Tenure Track Professors.

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 also a Junior or Tenure Track 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.

What if the postdoc 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 already are 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 explana-



tion (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*, 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.

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 August.



Further aspects

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

No. If you have a 19-hour per week contract (Pre-Doc Award), you cannot have a second employment contract as a research assistant (WHK) at Leipzig University. It is also not possible to extend the Pre-Doc Award funding phase by reducing the weekly hours.

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 allow that the scholar works for 8 to 10 hours per week. In case you consider applying for a predoc scholarship as well, please directly address the scholarship provider to ask whether it accepts a job as a research assistant (WHK) with 19 hours per week.

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 promotion or why it will even benefit these plans.

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

The Pre-Doc Award programme is targeting a period prior to the dissertation and serves as a preparatory phase. During the Pre-Doc Award year, the preparation phase might already shift towards the first phase of actually conducting the PhD research. Then a registration is possible, in line with the regulations of the respective faculty, each of them maintaining a doctoral list. The enlistment is prerequisite for the registration as a PhD student, which can be enquired at the Student Service Centre (Studierenden Service Zentrum, SSZ).

Some scholarship associations require the PhD student status for an application. Of course, in this case, you may seek this status at the relevant point in time. Exceptions are also made for those who need the status of a PhD student to get a visa.

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

Yes. The German Act on Fixed-Term Employment Contracts (WissZeitVG) 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.