

EACR-Mark Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowships Programme Guidelines

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EACR-Mark Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded for a period of three years and support excellent postdoctoral researchers in laboratories throughout Europe.

The goals of the programme are:

- To support talented EACR members during their postdoctoral training
- To advance innovative areas of cancer research
- To grow a global network of scientists with diverse expertise

Measures of success:

- Professional advancement
- Publishable discoveries
- Follow on funding or collaborations
- Engagement with members of the Mark Foundation community

Fellowship Programme

The submission of proposals for an EACR-Mark Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship is via an online application portal on the EACR website www.eacr.org/eacr-fellowships. Applications are accepted in line with the published timeline.

Eligibility

Applications are accepted from researchers who meet the following criteria:

- Applicants must be an [EACR member](#) with a PhD and with no more than 5 years postdoctoral experience (excluding career breaks such as parental leave or long-term illness) at the outline proposal submission deadline.
- Applicants must work actively and currently in cancer research.
- Applicants must have had at least one first (or joint first) author primary research paper published in an international peer reviewed journal at the time of application. Papers must be published in English. Abstracts of presentations at conferences and review articles should not be listed as publications. Publication updates once the selection process has started are not allowed.
- Fellows must be based at a European academic institution for the duration of the Fellowship. This means that applicants must have the agreement of the host institution to employ them according to the terms of the Fellowship, if they are not already employed at that institution.
- Proposed research projects must have the potential to advance our understanding or address challenges in the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of cancer. Projects for this award must be

centered on evidence-based laboratory, data, and/or medical science. Projects investigating psychosocial aspects of cancer cannot be considered.

- Fellowships are not transferrable between individuals. Transfers between institutions may be considered on an individual basis, such as in cases where a fellow's advisor moves to a different European academic institution during the Fellowship period.
- Applicants can only submit one application to each call, but can submit applications to more than one call.

Industrial research laboratories and applied projects

- Applications to work in an industrial or for-profit research laboratory will not be considered.
- Projects with an aim to develop an application, commercial product or process, or a device may be considered if there is a fundamental biology question behind the project to be answered. For instance, development of technologies that enable biological discovery and/or include biomarkers may be eligible for funding.

Application process

EACR members will be invited to submit an outline project proposal following an announcement in the EACR's email news bulletin and on its website.

Applications and supporting documentation are only accepted via the EACR online application portal. For details on how we will store and use this information please view the EACR [Privacy Policy](#). Please also note that:

- Applications must be written in English, including any supporting documents, and no special formatting is allowed.
- No application can be completed without all the information required including references and an acceptance letter from the host institution. At the outline proposal stage, the online application form is made up of 6 tabs. The first tab lists the 'Fellowship details', followed by five tabs to be completed: 'Contact info', 'Experience', 'Referees', 'New institute', and finally, the 'Outline proposal' tab. An additional 'Full proposal' tab will become available to applicants shortlisted to submit a full proposal after the outline proposal review is complete. *On the 'Contact info' tab, please ignore the question: "Do you already have any professional contacts at the company that is co-sponsoring this postdoctoral fellowship?". This question is not relevant for this fellowship and can therefore be left blank.*
- Information will save automatically and may be updated at any time prior to submission of the application. All sections must be completed before submission. Incomplete applications will not be accepted. Once an application has been submitted, no further changes are allowed.
- Changes in address or contact email that occur after submission of an application should be notified to the Fellowships and Awards Officer.

Stage 1: Outline Proposal

- Project Title
- Summary and significance of the proposed research (Maximum 250 words). Please provide a synopsis of the proposed activity.
- Outline proposal for research at the host institute (Maximum 1500 words not including references) including:
 - Project aims and objectives
 - The oncology question to be addressed
 - Brief methodology
 - Expected results
 - Dissemination plan
- Proposed start and end date of the Fellowship. Note that on or after 01 April 2025 is the earliest possible start date, and the Fellowship duration must be 36 months.

Supporting documents for Stage 1:

- A letter of support from the PI or Head of Department at the host institute

- Two reference letters written specifically for this application

Stage 2: Full Proposal (*for shortlisted applications only*)

Full proposal for research at the host institute (Maximum 3000 words) including:

- Background
- Hypothesis and aims
- Methodology
- Contingency plans
- Dissemination plan

Supporting documents for Stage 2:

- A letter of support from the PI or Head of Department at the host institute which has been countersigned by the Grants Office or equivalent person with authority. Note that this can be the same letter submitted at the Outline Proposal stage, but this version must be countersigned by the Grants Office or equivalent person with authority. Please upload the letter on the 'New institute' tab of the online application portal in the 'Letter of support' section.
- One PDF document, which is limited to one page only, of schematics/preliminary data to support the proposal. Please note that this is optional and not essential to the application.

Selection Process

The EACR will establish an independent Fellowship Review Panel. The primary selection criteria to be applied by the Panel are scientific excellence of the candidate, the project and the suitability of the host laboratory. Aspects considered in particular are:

- Scientific achievements of the applicant
- Quality, scope, novelty and significance of the proposed research
- Suitability of the host laboratory for the proposed research project
- Letter of support from the host institution
- Referees' comments
- Potential impact on the applicant's career

Panel members will individually score applications at both stages of the process. All applications will be considered by a minimum of three panel members. Shortlisted applications will be sent to The Mark Foundation for review. Fellowship(s) will be awarded based on the Review Panel's scores and final rankings.

Panel members review and score each application but do not provide comments or individual feedback. As such, please note that individual feedback will not be provided to applicants at any stage of the application process.

Timeline

Reasonable efforts will be made to adhere to this timeline.

Duration	Action
15.05.2024	Launch call for EACR-Mark Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship applications
21.08.2024	Outline proposal submission deadline
1 Week	Pre-screening There will be a 1-week pre-screening period when applications will be checked to ensure eligibility requirements are met. Applicants will be notified during this stage if they do not meet the eligibility requirements.
4 Weeks	Panel Review Completed outline proposal applications will be sent to the Review Panel for scoring and the agreement of final rankings.
1 Week	The Mark Foundation Review Top-ranking applications will be sent to The Mark Foundation for review. If a project is not suitable, The Mark Foundation will establish a dialogue with the Review Panel.
1 Week	<u>All applicants</u> will be informed of the outcome of the first stage review by email. Please note that individual feedback will not be provided. Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal.
6 Weeks	Period allocated for preparation and submission of full proposals.
15.11.2024	Full proposal submission deadline
3 Weeks	Panel Review Completed full proposals will be sent to the Review Panel for scoring and the agreement of final rankings. Fellowships will be awarded according to the number to be funded.
1 Week	All applicants will be informed of the outcome by email.
1 Week	Successful applicants will have 1 week to accept the EACR-Mark Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship(s).
6 Weeks	Signing of contracts.
On or after 01 April 2025	Earliest start date of Fellowship(s)
Year 1 report	Submission of Year One Report
Year 2 report	Submission of Year Two Report
Year 3 report	Submission of Final Report

Funding

Fellowships are awarded for a period of three years. The Mark Foundation will provide funds to the EACR to cover the cost of the Fellowship. The EACR will enter into an agreement with the host institution and will administer the transfer of funds. Funding will be based on the [published EMBO rates](#); the country-specific fellowship rate published by EMBO will be used to determine the award amount the first year, with a 5% increase each consecutive year. Each Fellowship will also receive an additional 10% of the annual rate to be used at the employer's discretion towards overhead costs. There is no separate consumables budget and it will be for the host institution to decide how the overhead funds are spent.

EACR Fellows' Network

Fellows will be invited to join a network of EACR fellows for informal networking and advice. Fellows are invited to register for the annual EACR Congress which may take place either in-person or virtually. This event will bring Fellows and funders together in a friendly atmosphere. Fellows are asked to present their research, share experiences, and establish new collaborations and contacts. It is also an opportunity to meet the EACR staff and give feedback and suggestions on the programme.

Fellowship Terms and Conditions

The Fellow's host institution and the European Association for Cancer Research will develop a written Project Agreement with mutually agreed terms including intellectual property arrangements. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached, the award will not be made.

Fellowships are not transferrable between individuals. Transfers between institutions may be considered on an individual basis, such as in cases where a fellow's advisor moves to a different European academic institution during the Fellowship period.

The Fellow agrees to provide reports to the EACR on request.