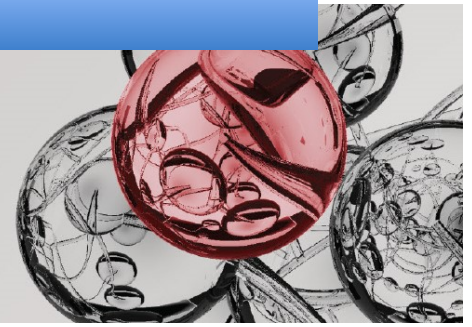


TALENT Doctoral Fellowship Programme



Frequently Asked Questions – 4th Call for Proposals

Important Introductory Remarks

The University of Copenhagen/the Faculty of Science (UCPH/SCIENCE) will base the decision as to whether candidates and proposals are admissible and eligible in the context of the TALENT Doctoral Programme on the documents and information submitted by the applicants through the [job portal](#). Please note that this is the **only valid way** to submit an application to the TALENT Doctoral Programme. **Applications sent via email will be discarded.** UCPH/SCIENCE will evaluate the applications after the application deadline: 13 February 2020.

Please observe that UCPH/SCIENCE made templates, which are mandatory to complete and submit as part of the application, to ensure that UCPH/SCIENCE receives all the information needed to evaluate the applications properly.

In order for a proposal to be admissible and eligible, the applicant must live up to the requirements re. mobility, research experience and level of educational degree. Furthermore, all mandatory templates must be used and all required enclosures must be submitted. All other conditions re. admissibility and eligibility must also be met. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to secure these aspects.

Requirements are indeed requirements, meaning that all applicants must comply with them. **Waivers will not be granted.**

The majority of questions received by the TALENT secretariat can be answered by reading this FAQ. Moreover, applicants are encouraged to acquaint themselves with the results of the [first](#), [second](#), and third call for proposals and the reasons for rejection, especially at step one of the evaluation: the eligibility and admissibility check. (The result of the third call for proposals is not available yet.)

- **NATIONALITY**

Q: *I am not a European citizen, am I still eligible to apply?*

A: The TALENT Doctoral Programme is open to all nationalities. However, it is important to note the so-called mobility rule, [eligibility criteria no. 1 on the TALENT website](#), which one must comply with, along with the other criteria and requirements.

- **MOBILITY**

Q: *I am originally from Italy but moved to Denmark 1 February 2019. Am I eligible to apply?*

A: The declaration re. mobility, which must be completed as part of the application procedure says:

In order to apply for an individual PhD fellowship under the TALENT Doctoral Programme, co-funded by Horizon 2020/Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, candidates must undertake transnational mobility according to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

*This means that all nationalities can apply, but candidates **must not** have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in Denmark for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately prior to TALENT's call deadline: 13 February 2020. Time spent on obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention, compulsory national service and/or short stays such as holidays are not taken into account.*

...Please indicate the period(s) and the country in which you have legally resided and/or had your main activity (work, studies, etc.) during the last 3 years...

From the information you provide, it seems that you have legally resided in Denmark more than 12 months during the period 14 February 2017-13 February 2020 and thereby do not comply with the mobility requirement.

Q: *Where does the criterion towards mobility come from? Are you sure that you are not discriminating the applicants by asking them to live up to this requirement?*

A: Since researcher mobility is at the very heart of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), there is the so-called mobility rule. In other words, the European Commission established the rule, which is part of the legal framework for MSCA. Please note that there are doctoral programmes in other European countries, which are co-financed (COFUND) by the MSCA scheme. The mobility rule would apply here too, but since it concerns a doctoral programme in another country, applicants who do not comply with the mobility rule in connection with the TALENT Doctoral Programme might be able to live up to it in another context. Applicants interested in doing a PhD in another country within the MSCA scheme could visit [EURAXESS](#), where all MSCA positions must be advertised.

- **AGE**

Q: *Is there any age limit in terms of being eligible to apply?*

A: There is no biological age limit but (please see the Guide for Applicants, page 2, point 2, incl. note 1):

2. [Applicants] **Must at the TALENT call deadline (13 February 2020) be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience [NOTE]1) of their research careers and **must not yet** have been awarded a doctoral degree.**

Note 1 'Full-time equivalent research experience' is measured from the date when the researcher obtained the degree entitling him/her to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited, in this case Denmark, even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged.

In conclusion: the term young in the call refers to the researcher age, i.e. years of research experience. There is no biological age limitation for applicants.

- **IN THE FIRST FOUR YEARS (FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE) OF THE RESEARCH CAREER**

Q: I have difficulty understanding [eligibility criteria no. 2](#) for applicants:

2. **Must** at the TALENT call deadline (13 February 2020) be in the first four years (full-time equivalent research experience [NOTE 1]) of their research careers and **must not yet** have been awarded a doctoral degree.

Note 1 'Full-time equivalent research experience' is measured from the date when the researcher obtained the degree entitling him/her to embark on a doctorate, either in the country in which the degree was obtained or in the country in which the researcher is recruited, in this case Denmark, even if a doctorate was never started or envisaged.

Would you please explain?

A: The question is best explained by way of examples:

- An applicant got her MSc on 13 March 2016 and has worked full-time as a research assistant since then. In other words, she lives up to the requirement of being in the first four years of her research career because she will have worked 3 years and 11 months as a research assistant at the time of the application deadline: 13 February 2020.

- An applicant got his MSc degree on 13 February 2015 and has worked (full-time): two years as a research assistant at the University of Bulgaria, one year as a research assistant at the University of Sweden, one and a half year as a bartender in Australia and six months as a research assistant at the University of France. During the five-year period: 13 February 2015-13 February 2020, the applicant has three and a half years research experience and is thereby within the first four years of his research career.

Applicants are encouraged to pay attention to the word **equivalent and the following in the Guide for Applicants (page 2, note 4):**

In case of career breaks, the TALENT secretariat encourages applicants, for whom it would be relevant, to submit evidence-based/documented CVs...

To avoid any misunderstanding: **if an applicant has had other jobs outside research or been on parental leave, it is important to highlight it in the CV (template provided) because time away from research will not count towards the four years (from the date of being awarded the MSc degree, alternatively BSc degree).** (Part time work in research is calculated proportionately.) It is up to the applicant to document that he/she fulfills the requirement of being in the first four years of his/her research career.

- **SUPERVISOR(S)**

Q: *Should an applicant have been in contact with and/or made an agreement with a potential main supervisor from one of the 12 departments at the Faculty of Science, the University of Copenhagen before the applicant can submit an application?*

A: The Guide for Applicants (page 2):

Applicants are also asked to indicate the department they see most fit to host their project and the names of three suitable main and co-supervisors.

This does not imply that the applicant in advance should have been in contact with and/or made an agreement with a potential supervisor from one of the 12 departments at the Faculty of Science, the University of Copenhagen. The mandatory template for the cover/motivation letter requires the applicant to list potential supervisors, incl. potential department, **but the applicant does not need pre-approval in order to mention potential supervisor(s) or**

department. That being said, the choice is not legally binding for the Faculty of Science. The mentioned template reads:

- *At the department you indicated above, whom do you consider most suitable to be your main supervisor? Mention maximum three names.*
- *Whom do you consider most suitable to be your co-supervisor(s)? The person(s) could work at another department than the one you indicated above but the person(s) could also be from other universities, industry etc. Mention maximum three names.*

The Guide for Applicants (page 2, note 2) says about the main supervisor: *The proposed main supervisor must be employed at SCIENCE/UCPH and be, as a minimum, an Associate Professor. During the evaluation process, the Head of Department must approve the choice of main supervisor. Further on, the Head of the PhD School will make the final decision.*

Under each programme area (bottom of the page) (e.g. [Health & Genomics](#)) you will find **examples** of the departments, centres and sections covering the mentioned area. It is up to you as an applicant to investigate the options you have when it comes to indicating a potential programme area, a potential department and potential supervisor(s). Moreover, please note **that the open positions are within the departments at the Faculty of Science at the University of Copenhagen** and that the applicants must indicate which of [these 16 programme areas](#) their project falls within. The text under each programme area, 'the research department' contains a link to an overview of [all 12 departments at the Faculty of Science](#).

• **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

Q: *Should I draw up my project description in collaboration with a potential supervisor?*

A: The Guide for Applicants (page 1) points out that TALENT is a bottom-up programme, which means that you are the one to draw up your project. Please note the mandatory template for the project description.

• **ENGLISH SKILLS**

Q: *The master programme I attended was in English. Do I still have to document my English skills?*

A: The Guide for Applicants (page 2, incl. note 3):

English skills: *applicants with English as their second language (non-native English speakers) must have passed a language proficiency test such as IELTS, TOEFL, Cambridge Advanced English or Cambridge English: Proficiency (CPE) **with a certain score [NOTE]3 and must therefore submit a copy of their test score sheet when applying.***

Note 3: *The Faculty of Science accepts the following tests and scores: IELTS – Academic (IDP Education, British Council and Cambridge English Language Assessment) with a minimum score of 6.5. TOEFL Tests: ITP TOEFL-test with a minimum score of 560 points; Internet-based TOEFL-test with a minimum score of 83 points. Cambridge English: Proficiency (CPE) or Advanced (CAE) passed at level C1 or C2. For more information go to [this website](#).*

You **must comply with this requirement; otherwise, your application will not be eligible.**

Q: *When is English considered to be my native/first language?*

A: English is considered one's native/first language if one is from the following countries: Anguilla, Antigua, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Barbuda, Belize, British Virgin Islands, Canada (except Quebec), Dominica, Grand Cayman Islands, Grenada, Guyana, Irish Republic, Jamaica, Montserrat, New Zealand, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos Islands, United Kingdom: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, & Wales and United States of America.

To sum up: if you are originally from one of the above-mentioned countries, you are not required to present an English test along the lines otherwise described. To ensure transparency, you could document this fact by submitting a copy (pdf) of your passport.

- **BSc vs. MSc**

Q: *I have a BSc and anticipate to be awarded my MSc on 15 August 2020. Do I fulfill the requirements regarding education/degrees in order to apply?*

A: The Guide for Applicants (page 2) reads:

3. [Applicants] **Must hold a relevant MSc degree at the time of applying.** However, candidates, who do not hold an MSc degree, are also considered eligible **if their credentials and CV equal those achieved on an MSc.** This could be in the form of five years of full-time undergraduate and postgraduate education **OR** four years of full-time undergraduate education combined with relevant courses, fieldwork, scientific publications or conducted research **(these aspects must be documented by uploading additional documents as part of the CV).**

Thus, the degree that will count (in this case) at the application deadline 13 February 2020 is the BSc degree. One will therefore have to document (not just mention) that one is on MSc level, even though one does not yet have an MSc. **In conclusion: an applicant not holding an MSc will be subject to an individual assessment of his/her qualifications, based on the information and documents as provided by the applicant. It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to present his/her case at the time of applying. If the submitted documentation is not sufficient, the applicant will not go on in the evaluation process. The TALENT secretariat will not and is not obliged to contact the applicant in order to receive any missing information or documents.**

Q: *Can I apply without having my final diploma at the application deadline?*

A: Applying without a final diploma is feasible, **but the thesis must be defended and the final diploma, incl. other official documentation of the obtained degree provided at the point of employment, i.e. no later than 1 August 2020. In case this is applicable to your particular situation, you are strongly encouraged to mention it in the table 'Additional' in the template for the CV, incl. publications.**

- **ENROLLMENT AS A PHD STUDENT**

Q: *Do I have to be enrolled as a PhD student at the University of Copenhagen/the Faculty of Science at the time of the application deadline?*

A: As you can read in the Guide for Applicants, there are no requirements towards being enrolled as a PhD student at UCPH/SCIENCE in order to apply for a fellowship within the TALENT Doctoral Programme. Page 2 of the mentioned guide says: *applicants awarded a TALENT doctoral fellowship must be enrolled in the 180 ECTS/three year PhD programme at SCIENCE.* I.e. enrollment is required **only**, if one is offered a fellowship.

- **ALREADY OBTAINED A PHD DEGREE/ALREADY A POST DOC**

Q: *I already have a PhD but would like to pursue a second one. Am I eligible to apply?*

A: No, since [eligibility criteria no. 2 on the TALENT website](#) clearly stipulates that an applicant must not yet have been awarded a doctoral degree.

Q: *I am enrolled as a PhD student at another university and would like to apply for the TALENT Doctoral Programme. I am wondering if I fulfill [eligibility criteria no. 2 on the TALENT website](#)?*

A: Eligibility criteria no. 2 on the TALENT website states that an applicant is eligible to apply **as long as the applicant has not yet been awarded a doctoral degree**, so yes. However, the other requirements, e.g. the ones re. mobility and research experience must still be fulfilled.

- **TEMPLATES IN GENERAL**

Q: *Where do I find the templates mentioned in the job advertisement and do I have to use them?*

A: The Faculty of Science/the University of Copenhagen made four templates – which are **mandatory** to complete and submit as part of the application – to ensure that UCPH/SCIENCE receives all the information that is needed to evaluate the applications properly.

- **THE TEMPLATE FOR THE PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Q: *Is it OK to delete the three sections Excellence, Impact and Implementation, incl. the headings, subheadings and the evaluation criteria in the project description and make up a different project structure?*

A: **No, you are to address each and every section, heading, subheading and criteria. Otherwise, your application will be incomplete and thereby be deemed ineligible** during step one (the eligibility and admissibility check) of the evaluation.

- **PUBLICATIONS**

Q: *May I apply even though I do not have any publications on my CV?*

A: Yes.

- **BUDGET**

Q: *Do I have to make a budget as part of my application for the TALENT Doctoral Programme?*

A: **No, applicants are not to draw up budgets. There are no requirements in the application material towards drawing up a budget. Funding will be provided for the selected projects/candidates, incl. salary. Applicants are not asked to fund the projects themselves (not fully nor partly).** The TALENT Doctoral Programme is financing part of the salary (app. DKK 500,000 over the three years employment period), while the rest of the money for salary, lab work etc. in order to execute the project is coming from department level. The PhD School will ask recruited fellows to submit a budget within the first three months of their project, where the expected and necessary running costs (e.g. courses, change of environment) are outlined, **negotiated and agreed with the department.** (The latter is paying the costs.) At the application stage, it is not relevant for the applicants to think about the project expenses. It will come at a later stage and **only** be relevant for the selected candidates, i.e. the ones who are actually employed.

- **TUITION FEES**

Q: *If accepted by the TALENT Doctoral Programme, am I to pay tuition fees?*

In case you are wondering whether the University of Copenhagen/the Faculty of Science would charge tuition fees from the selected candidates personally, **the answer is no**. Please note that, normally, universities in Denmark do not operate with tuition fees.

- **LIVING IN DENMARK**

Q: *If I am selected for a fellowship, do I have to move to Denmark?*

A: **Yes, if selected, you must live and reside in Denmark and you will and must be employed by one of the 12 departments at the Faculty of Science/the University of Copenhagen.**

- **RELOCATION COSTS RELATED TO MOVING TO DENMARK**

Q: *If I am selected for a fellowship and move to Denmark, will the TALENT Doctoral Programme cover my relocation costs?*

A: If you are selected for a fellowship, the TALENT Doctoral Programme will **not** cover your relocation costs. However, the PhD salary in Denmark is generous in the sense that it is an actual paid job; please refer to page 3 of the Guide for Applicants.

- **HOUSING COSTS**

Q: *Does the TALENT Doctoral Programme cover costs for housing?*

A: If selected, the PhD student will receive a salary (susceptible to taxes) and the student will have to cover rent, food and other living expenses out of the salary (after taxes). In other words, the programme does **not** cover housing, but provides a salary.