

INFORMATION AND FAQ

Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme

This document contains important information related to the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme, details of eligibility criteria, and answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). We recommend reading this document carefully before starting an application to the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme.

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Part I: Information about the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme

About the programme

The Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme is an initiative for international students to launch their careers in the vibrant environment of the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) research centres.

Approximately sixteen students are recruited annually and selected based on academic achievements, research experience, academic references, and interviews.

The four-year programme is divided into a pre-doctoral year followed by three years of PhD training in one of the following areas:

- NNF Center for Basic Metabolic Research (CBMR)
- NNF Center for Biosustainability (CFB)
- NNF Center for Protein Research (CPR)
- NNF Center for Stem Cell Medicine (reNEW)

The PhD fellowships are based at the University of Copenhagen, or the Technical University of Denmark (CFB). For more information about the research:

<https://cph-bioscience.com/en/research>

During the first (pre-doctoral) year of training, all students follow a common curriculum that includes short lab-rotations, common courses, and selection of the PhD project. This provides the students with a comprehensive preparation for the following three years of PhD studies and allows the students to make an informed choice about which laboratory to join. Students are expected to make an agreement with a supervisor to host their PhD project after completing three two-week rotation projects at the beginning of the pre-doctoral year. The supervisor should be one of the rotation project supervisors. Therefore, students are expected to join a laboratory approximately two months into the pre-doctoral year. It is not recommended for applicants to contact potential supervisors before starting the programme. At the end of the pre-doctoral year, all awardees must pass an assessment in order to qualify for the following three years of PhD education.

For more information about the programme: <https://cphbiosciencephd.org/>

Eligibility criteria

The Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme is intended for international students to relocate to Denmark and start their research careers at one of the NNF research centres.

- Applicants must submit an on-line application form before the deadline: 17 January 2022 (14:00 CET).
- At the time of starting the programme, applicants must hold a degree from a university outside Denmark. The programme is also open for applicants with Danish degrees who have full-time research experience from outside Denmark for a total of at least one year (if confirmed by a reference / references).
- At the time of starting the programme, applicants must hold a university degree that formally qualifies them to enter a PhD programme (i.e., they must be at an academic level equivalent to a Master's degree).
- Applicants who have worked or studied at an NNF research centre are eligible to apply if they have been there for less than a year, but should note that if they join the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme, they cannot do a rotation project or PhD project with their previous supervisor.
- The applicant must provide a minimum of two academic references. References should preferentially be from established research scientists that have supervised the applicant in a lab setting, or alternatively may be from academic teachers that know the applicant well.
- If the applicant is not a native English speaker, proof of English proficiency such as a valid TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge Advanced English, or GRE certificate must be provided. If the applicant has completed prior studies in English at university-level, proof of English proficiency will not be required. However, this must be indicated clearly in the applicant's CV. See the FAQ for more information.

Funding

- The NNF will provide up to four years of funding for each student. The funding covers the full salary and tuition fees. All fellowships will be administered by the host institutions of the centres.
- During the first year, the student is employed at their respective university and receives a pre-doctoral fellowship to cover their salary.
- Programme members are not formally enrolled as PhD students until the beginning of the second year of the programme.
- In years 2-4, the students will be formally enrolled as PhD students at their host institution and receive a PhD fellowship to cover their salary and tuition fees.
- Students that fail in their qualifying exam at the end of the pre-doctoral year will not receive funding for years 2-4.

Application process

International students will be recruited once per year through a competitive interview process. The interviews usually take place in Copenhagen in March. The NNF will pay for travel and accommodation for the selected applicants in association with the interview visit.

The interview process will include:

- An introduction to the research and facilities at the NNF research centres
- One-on-one meetings with potential supervisors of interest
- Meeting current Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme students and other applicants
- A panel interview with the admissions panel (Group Leaders from the NNF research centres)

If it is not possible for the applicant to attend the interviews in-person (e.g., due to coronavirus restrictions affecting international travel), the applicant will be given the opportunity to interview online.

The Programme Coordinator will contact selected applicants after they have received notification that they have been selected for interview, to exchange more information about the interview process.

When applying for the programme, the applicant must select which research centre they wish to join.

Applicants are required to explain their interest in chosen supervisors and/or research topics in the application form. Please note that mentioning a specific supervisor in the application does not commit the applicant to join, or do a rotation project, in that particular lab. Students joining the programme will be asked to make rotation project choices after starting the programme and will make an agreement with one of their supervisors to join their lab after completing the rotation projects. There is no guarantee that the student will be able to join the preferred PhD supervisor, as it is important that this is mutually agreed between the student and supervisor after the rotation project period. A maximum of one programme student per year can join each supervisor's lab for their PhD.

The applicant must provide the name and contact details of two referees in the application form. The referees will be contacted via the application system and asked to provide their reference in the online system. The applicant will not be able to see the referee's comments but will be able to see if their referee has submitted a recommendation. **Please note that it will not be possible to submit the application until two referees have provided their references.** The applicant should contact their referees in advance to make sure they are able to submit their recommendation in the online system before the application deadline.

The application must be completed and submitted using the NNF web-based application system, which can be accessed on the NNF homepage: <http://novonordiskfonden.dk/da/cphbiosciencephd> (click the button marked "Apply"). The applicant should refer to the document "How to apply" while working on their application.

Important dates:

- Applications can be submitted from 1 November 2021.
- Application deadline is **17 January 2022 (14:00 CET)**.
- Up to 40 applicants will be invited to interviews and up to an additional 20 will be placed on a waiting list. All applicants will be informed of the results in February 2022.
- Interviews will take place on **2-4 March 2022**.
- Final decisions will be communicated in **March 2022**.
- Selected students will start the programme in September 2022.

Please note that the NNF does not provide feedback if the application is not selected for funding.

Contact**For questions about the application process or about the programme:**

- Copenhagen Bioscience PhD Programme Coordinator
cphbiosciencephd@sund.ku.dk

For questions about technical issues with the online application form:

- norma-support@novo.dk

Part II: Frequently Asked Questions

My prior studies have been undertaken in English; do you still require proof of English proficiency?

No, if you have completed your university-level education in English, proof of English proficiency will not be required. Remember to indicate this in your application.

Which international English proficiency tests are accepted?

We accept all internationally recognized tests, including TOEFL, IELTS, Cambridge Advanced English, or GRE.

Can I submit my English test results after the application deadline?

We strongly prefer that you submit your test results before the deadline. In exceptional circumstances, we may accept late test results, as long as the expected test date is provided in the application.

My TOEFL/IELTS/GRE has expired; do I have to retake the test?

Yes, you should provide a valid proof of English language ability.

Is there a minimum score for the English test?

We do not define a minimum score cut-off. However, excellent English ability is essential for participants in the PhD Programme, as all supervision and teaching is conducted in English. Therefore, we recommend a minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (B2), TOEFL score of 80, or equivalent other test result.

I received my Bachelor's degree in country other than Denmark, but am currently studying for my Master's degree in Denmark; can I apply for the programme?

The Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme is intended for international students to relocate to Denmark and start their research careers at one of the NNF research centres. Applicants currently studying for a Master's degree in Denmark are only eligible if they have obtained at least one year of full-time research experience from outside Denmark, confirmed by a reference letter. The applicant may not have worked or studied at any of the NNF research centres for more than one year, and if they have done so should note that if they join the programme, they will not be able to do a rotation project or PhD project with their previous supervisor.

I received my Master's degree in Denmark; can I apply for the programme?

The programme is open for applicants with Danish degrees who have at least one year of full-time research experience from outside Denmark, confirmed by a reference letter. The applicant may not have worked or studied at any of the NNF research centres for more than one year, and if they have done so should note that if they join the programme, they will not be able to do a rotation project or PhD project with their previous supervisor.

I am currently studying to receive my Master's degree but have not yet received it; can I still apply?

Yes, you can provide us with an official document from the University informing us of the expected completion date in the meantime. However, upon admission you must provide the university with the proper documentation to support your application. Note that you must expect to have completed your degree and be able to relocate to Copenhagen to start the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme no later than September 1, 2022.

I have received my degree in another language than English; do I need to get an official translation of my diploma and grade list?

Yes, unless your degree was issued in any of the Scandinavian languages. Translations of university degrees must be provided by the university or by an official translator and should be stamped accordingly.

Do I need to translate my grades to a certain grading system?

Yes, when applying you will be required to provide us with your Grade Point Average (GPA) translated to the US system. You should use [this](#) online calculator to convert your grades. You should also include your grades

in the original format and explain the grading system used in the original. If you have not completed your degree, or your degree is by research (e.g., an MRes) please provide your best estimate of your GPA (in the original and US systems) and explain how and why you estimated it.

Is there a minimum GPA score requirement?

We recommend a minimum GPA (US system) score of 3.0.

Do I have to provide you with two academic references?

Yes, at least two references are required. References should preferably come from scientists who have directly supervised you in an academic or industrial research environment.

Should I provide a letter of recommendation from my two academic referees?

No, you must provide the names and contact details of the referees that you wish to include in the application system. Your referees will then be asked to provide their reference directly into a form in the application system. You will not be able to see your references, but you will be able to see if your referee has submitted a recommendation or not. **Please note that you will not be able to submit your application until two references have been provided.** You are advised to notify your referees in advance to ensure they can submit their references before the application deadline.

What if my referees fail to submit a reference?

If your referee does not respond to the invitation to provide a reference, you can add another referee instead. Please note that you will not be notified if a referee declines the invitation to submit a reference. You will be able to monitor the status of your invitations using the "View Referee Form Status" button on the application form itself.

Are my professional qualifications also of importance for the evaluation of the application?

Yes, if your previous professional qualifications are within a relevant topic.

How can I find out more about the research topics offered by the PhD programme?

We recommend that you look at [the list of supervisors on the programme website](#), and follow the links to potential supervisors' webpages. Note that the PhD project is only decided upon after the applicant joins the PhD programme, following discussion with the supervisor.

Should I contact a potential PhD supervisor prior to applying for the programme?

It is not necessary to contact potential supervisors before the interviews. You will have the opportunity to meet 2-4 supervisors relevant to your interests during the interviews. At the beginning of the pre-doctoral year, you will also complete three short lab rotation projects to facilitate a good student-supervisor match.

Are the start dates flexible?

No, you must start on the programme start date (September 1, 2022). You also must be able to attend the full curriculum during the first year. It is not possible to skip the first year, and it is unlikely that you will complete the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme in less than four years.

Is there an age limit?

No.

Is there a fee for application to the Copenhagen Bioscience PhD programme?

No.

Can I apply for more than one research centre at the same time?

When applying for the programme, you also apply for a specific research centre. However, you can indicate in your application if you are interested in other research centres as well. It is also possible to submit up to four separate applications, to different research centres, in the same call.

What is the salary, and is it sufficient to pay rent in Copenhagen?

We cannot state an exact salary, since it is calculated on an individual basis according to experience. However, Danish universities publish approximate PhD student and research assistant salaries. You can visit the links from the programme [website](#) to find out more. The salary is sufficient to pay rent and live comfortably in Copenhagen.

Is it difficult to find a place to live when moving to Copenhagen?

We help students to find [accommodation](#) for their first year.

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