

Guidelines for applicants.

Cleveland Clinic – Denmark: Quantum – AI Biomedical Frontiers Fellowship 2026



Facts about the call

Total amount available for granting:
DKK 21.6 million

Amount available per grant:
Up to **DKK 3.6 million**

Call opens:
16 September 2025

Call closes:
29 January 2026 at 14:00 CET

Applicant notification:
June 2026

Earliest start date:
1 September 2026

Latest start date:
1 September 2027

Review committee:

Committee for Interdisciplinary Research and Committee at the Cleveland Clinic

Contact:

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(contact information updated)



All Grant Recipients must comply with the [‘General Terms and Conditions’](#) for grants from the Novo Nordisk Foundation (the Foundation).

The Foundation will treat all applicant and application information confidentially. Read more about how the Foundation processes personal data under ‘privacy & security’ in the online application system, NORMA. See how to access NORMA in section 2 of these guidelines.

You can find more information about the Foundation’s application and granting process at the [NORMA Help Centre](#). Detailed information about the different parts of the application is available in NORMA.



1 Cleveland Clinic – Denmark: Quantum – AI Biomedical Frontiers Fellowship

1.1 Purpose

In a new initiative that blends innovation in quantum technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) with biomedical and clinical applications, the Novo Nordisk Foundation together with the Cleveland Clinic, launched the Cleveland Clinic – Denmark: Quantum-AI Biomedical Frontiers Fellowship Programme.

The programme invites early career researchers from Denmark and the Cleveland Clinic to apply for a three-year exchange fellowship. Fellows will develop a research project at Cleveland Clinic or a Danish research institute for up to 3 years, this may include an optional return phase of up to 1 year.

About Cleveland Clinic

Cleveland Clinic is a nonprofit, multispecialty, academic health system guided by the mission: “Caring for life, researching for health, and educating those who serve.” In 2024, more than 83,000 caregivers across the U.S., Canada, Abu Dhabi, and London supported 15.7 million patient encounters.

[Cleveland Clinic Research](#) is home to laboratory, translational, computational, clinical, and implementation science across our global system. Investigators advance discoveries from basic research and device development to clinical trials and real-world application. Our research footprint exceeds one million square feet – including two new state-of-the-art facilities in the Cleveland Innovation District – and continues to expand worldwide.

This [fellowship](#) fosters unique collaboration between researchers from Cleveland Clinic and Danish institutions to accelerate biomedical and clinical innovation. Through the [Cleveland Clinic-IBM Discovery Accelerator](#), we are applying high-performance computing, hybrid cloud, AI, and quantum technologies to over 50 projects. Fellows will have unparalleled access to the IBM Quantum System One – the world’s first quantum computer dedicated to healthcare – on our main campus.

This is an exceptional opportunity for early-career researchers – PhD candidates nearing graduation or postdoctoral researchers with fewer than two years of experience – who are eager to push the boundaries of discovery in a global setting.

Fellows will join leading experts in Cleveland, Ohio – the heart of our global health system.

The city combines the best of both worlds: a vibrant urban center with world-class arts and dining, alongside easy access to nature. From Cuyahoga Valley National Park to the region's "Emerald Necklace" Metroparks, residents enjoy outdoor adventure and peaceful escapes just minutes from campus. [Learn more about living in Cleveland.](#)

About research and living in Denmark

Denmark is an ambitious research nation where collaboration and academic freedom shape the foundation for discovery. Universities, hospitals, and industry are closely connected, creating an environment where ideas move seamlessly from basic science to innovation that benefits society.

The country is internationally recognised for its strong position within biotechnology, health data, and life sciences, and is rapidly building research communities within quantum technology and artificial intelligence. Access to advanced facilities, secure national data resources, and strong public-private partnerships provide a fertile ground for early-career researchers to pursue high-impact projects and build international networks.

Through the fellowship, researchers are hosted at leading universities, hospitals, and institutes in Denmark. They become part of vibrant research hubs where interdisciplinary collaboration is the norm, and where new solutions are shaped in close dialogue with global partners.

Life in Denmark is characterised by balance and ambition. Safe and family-friendly cities, excellent childcare and healthcare, generous parental leave, and efficient public transport create the framework for combining professional growth with a fulfilling personal life. With a rich cultural scene and easy access to nature, Denmark offers an environment where science and quality of life go hand in hand. [Learn more about living in Denmark.](#)

1.2 Areas of support

The programme aims to leverage quantum technologies and/or AI around key scientific areas. Below is a non-exhaustive list of example areas for your reference:

- **Enhanced diagnostic precision:** Utilising quantum sensing and/or AI-driven analytics to improve diagnostics, thereby increasing accuracy and reducing diagnostic times.
- **Innovative drug discovery:** Applying quantum computing and machine learning algorithms to simulate and predict molecular interactions at an unprecedented scale and speed, potentially reducing the time and cost associated with discovering new drugs.
- **Optimisation of clinical trials:** Employing sophisticated data analysis tools to improve the design and efficiency of clinical trials, enabling more personalised medicine approaches.
- **Personalised medicine development:** Using AI to analyse vast datasets from genomic information and clinical records to tailor treatments to individual patients.

Collaborative excellence and industrial engagement

In addition to a focus on academic research, this programme also encourages applicants to consider industrial placements lasting three to six months with leading technology companies and startups. These placements are intended to provide practical experience and foster the translation of research innovations into market-ready medical solutions.

1.3 Eligibility

The fellowship supports postdoctoral research projects up to 3 years for researchers going from Cleveland Clinic to Denmark, or from Denmark to Cleveland Clinic. The researcher may include an optional return phase of up to 1 year.

All applicants must meet the following requirements at the time of application:

- Will have obtained a PhD degree within 5 years of the fellowship start date. **Note:** *Periods with leave of absence do not count towards the 5 years.*
- Will have a degree in medicine, natural and technical sciences, biomedicine, or biotechnology.
- Can apply as a PhD student if the PhD supervisor signs a declaration stating that the applicant is expected to graduate before the start date of the fellowship.

Applicants to a Danish research institution:

- Must demonstrate association/affiliation with the Cleveland Clinic.
- Must establish contact with a hosting principal investigator (PI) at a Danish research institution who has committed to being the primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship.
- Must establish contact with a PI at the Cleveland Clinic who may serve as a collaborator on the project and has committed to host the Fellow during his/her return phase to the Cleveland Clinic, if included.
- Must provide a hosting letter from the Danish PI's research institution agreeing to host the candidate under the conditions of the grant.
- Must be available to work fulltime for the duration of the programme. Leave of Absence qualifies as exceptions (documentation must be available on request).
- Must maintain a valid passport and be eligible for a Danish work visa.

Applicants to the Cleveland Clinic:

- Must demonstrate association to the Danish educational system or research environment (e.g. graduated from a Danish university, Danish citizenship, or several years of research experience at a Danish research institution).
- Must establish contact with a host PI at the Cleveland Clinic who has committed to being the primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship.
- Must establish contact with a PI at a Danish research institution who may serve as a collaborator on the project and has committed to host the Fellow during his/her return phase to the Danish research environment, if included.
- Must provide a hosting letter from the Danish PI's research institution agreeing to host the candidate under the conditions of the grant.

- Must be available to work fulltime (1 FTE) in the U.S. for the duration of the grant. Leave of Absence qualifies as exceptions (documentation must be available on request).
- Must demonstrate adequate English language skills via taking and passing English proficiency tests applicable to all international postdoctoral fellows at Cleveland Clinic.

Special rules for applications:

- Applicants can only submit one application at a time for any of the NNF postdoctoral fellowship grants and must receive notification of the outcome before re-applying.
- The project can receive partial funding from other sources. Any co-funding must be explicitly mentioned in the application.

The general conditions for receiving a grant from NNF can be found on our [webpage](#).

1.4 Funding

The duration of the fellowship is up to three years. A total of up to DKK 21.6 million is available for six grants of up to DKK 3.6 million each.

Eligible project expenses include:

- Salary for the applicant (1 FTE per year)
 - Project Supplement at Danish universities
 - Direct administrative expenses at Danish hospitals
 - Direct administrative expenses at Cleveland Clinic
- Operating expenses
 - Equipment
 - Consumables
 - Bench fee
- Dissemination, Training, and Education
 - Conference participation including travel
 - Publication costs
 - Relocation expenses including travel
 - Health insurance

Please carefully read the boxes below and Section 3.4 for details about eligible expenses.

Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

For each salary entry, please specify the FTE in years within the designated FTE field. This will indicate the proportion of a full-time position that the project funding will support for each year of the grant period. One full-time employee for one year equals 1.0 FTE.

Bench fee (not applicable to Danish universities)

Bench fee can be included in the budget for support of individual researchers to cover expenses needed to conduct the proposed research.

Bench fee is calculated per academic employee actively working on the project [eligible to apply for salary]. It may only be used for expenses related to the research project which cannot be included within another individual budget category. Bench fee may account for a maximum of DKK 8,000 per month per FTE. The budget must specify the expenses covered by the bench fee, which may include:

- Common or shared laboratory expenses and consumables
- Laboratory utilities (electricity, gas, water)
- Maintenance of essential equipment
- Service contracts
- Technical and IT support

PLEASE NOTE that bench fee cannot cover rent, administrative support, representation, social contributions etc. A valid bench fee policy in line with the Foundation's requirements must be available at the time of application, and this official documentation from the administrating/co-applicant's institution must be provided upon request.

Project supplement for research grants: (Danish universities only)

The project supplement contributes to the coverage of indirect costs at Danish universities, and replaces budget posts such as administrative costs, bench fee and parental leave.

The administrating institution must disclose in the hosting letter if the applicant will be promoted to a position in VIP group A, cf. the Project Supplement Agreement, during the project period and confirm that the applicant is not entitled to Project Supplement in this period. The change must be reflected in the budget.

More information on the joint model for project supplement is found at [Universities Denmark's website](#). Questions related to the project supplement should be directed to the research support units at your university.

Direct administrative support

Administrative support may account for a maximum of 5% of the total budget and must be included therein. The administrative support:

- can cover expenses such as for accounting, payment of salaries, purchasing, hiring, as well as auditing and financial reporting on the project
- cannot cover administrative expenses that are not directly related to the project

- is not automatically included in the grant and must be stated/applied for in the application budget but should not be specified in detail

The Novo Nordisk Foundation will not award funding for:

- Commercial activities
- Overhead/indirect costs (such as rent, electricity, water and maintenance)
- Double funding of projects:
- If the applicant has received funding for the proposed project from other sources, in part or in full, this must be accounted for in the budget, as no budgetary overlaps are allowed
- If an identical or overlapping project proposal has been submitted to other funding institutions than the Foundation, it must be noted in the application
- If the applicant receives funding for the project, or parts of the project, from other sources following submission of the application to the Foundation, the Foundation must be informed immediately

1.5 Language

The application and all additional materials must be submitted in English.

1.6 Application process

BEFORE APPLYING

To start the application process, follow the institute specific guidance below. Please find application requirements detailed in Section 3.

Applicants to a Danish research institution:

The applicant must establish contact with a PI at a Danish university or hospital who will be the applicant's primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship. The applicant should work closely with their identified PI on the research proposal and budget.

For questions related to identifying a faculty host at a Danish university, the applicant is welcome to contact:

- Aarhus University – Lise Refstrup Linnebjerg Pedersen, PhD and Specialist Consultant at the Quantum Campus Aarhus (lrlp@inano.au.dk).
- Technical University of Denmark – Lena Nilsson, Senior Executive Officer at the Office for Research, Advice and Innovation (lenil@dtu.dk).
- University of Southern Denmark - Mikkel Girke Jørgensen, PhD and Research Development Manager at the Science Faculty Administration (mikkelj@bmb.sdu.dk).

For all other Danish research institutions, applicants are welcome to contact Senior Scientific Manager Kamilla Nørregaard, PhD from the Novo Nordisk Foundation (knr@novo.dk) or Priya Putta, PhD from the Cleveland Clinic (puttap@ccf.org).

Applicants to the Cleveland Clinic:

The applicant must establish contact with a PI at the Cleveland Clinic who will be the applicant's primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship ([see a list of participating researchers here](#)). The applicant should work closely with their identified PI on the research proposal and budget.

All applicants are welcome to contact Priya Putta, PhD from the Cleveland Clinic (puttap@ccf.org) with questions related to identifying a faculty host.

AFTER SUBMISSION

The proposals are evaluated by the [NNF Committee on Interdisciplinary Research](#). Up to six proposals are selected for evaluation by a committee at the Cleveland Clinic.

Applicants will be informed of their grant status after all applications have been assessed. The notification e-mail will be sent from norma-noreply@novo.dk to the e-mail address provided when creating a profile in NORMA.

IF SELECTED

Selected fellows are required to initiate contact with both their host and home institutions to coordinate all aspects of their appointment. This includes, but is not limited to, discussions regarding visa arrangements, intellectual property (IP) agreements, and other administrative or legal matters.

By accepting the fellowship, fellows agree to adhere to the policies and procedures of the host institution. This includes compliance with institutional requirements and programmatic expectations.



Application system opens	16 September 2025
Application deadline	29 January 2026 8:00 EST / 14:00 CET
Evaluation of applications	February – May 2026
Applicant notification	June 2026
Earliest possible start date	1 September 2026

1.7 Assessment criteria

NNF's Committee on Interdisciplinary Research will primarily assess the applications based on the following criteria:

- The creativity, novelty and ambition of the proposed research project
- The innovation potential, if relevant
- The scientific excellence and merit of the applicant
- The appropriateness and involvement of the host research group
- Recommendation Letter from former/current PI
- Support Letter from the prospective PI
- Hosting Letter from hosting institute



2 The application and grant management system NORMA

2.1 Creating and submitting an application

The Foundation uses the application and grant management system NORMA:

<https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk>

If you do not have a user profile in NORMA, you can create one by clicking **Register** on the login page. The main applicant should only have one user profile. Please use your work e-mail address for registration.

The registered user who submits an application will be legally responsible for the truthfulness of the content of the application.

You can find guidance on how to create and submit an application at: [NORMA Help Centre](#).

If you experience technical problems and cannot find a solution in the NORMA Help Centre, please contact NORMA Support: norma-support@novo.dk.



3 Application content

This section provides guidelines on the content required in the sections of the online application form for this call. Detailed information about the different parts of the application is available in NORMA.

3.1 Applicant

The **Applicant** tab pertains to information about the main applicant.

MAIN APPLICANT

CV (Maximum 4,000 characters): Include a short bibliographic overview summarising total number of peer-reviewed publications, number of first authorships, number of corresponding authorships, and number of citations.

Publication list (Maximum 5,000 characters): List up to 10 relevant publications including a complete list of all authors with your name highlighted. Include a link to an updated profile with a full publication list on Google Scholar, Scopus or ORCID.

Summary of own research (Maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces): Provide a short summary of your previous research experience and explain how your research interests fit into the current proposal and collaboration.

Supplementary Information (Maximum 2,000 characters including spaces): If applicable, list all instances where you have submitted the same or similar proposal in the last six months. Also provide a list of any potential submissions you plan to make in the next 6 months. Wherever possible, provide the project title, funding agency, requested amount, duration, submission deadline, and anticipated notification date.

Note: If you receive funding for the project, or parts of the project, from other sources following submission of this application, please inform NNF by emailing the grant manager (INT-support@novo.dk). Receiving other funding will not impact the assessment of your application with NNF, but failure to disclose other funds may result in retraction of this fellowship.

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT GRANTS FROM NNF

List previous or ongoing grants with NNF where you were/are the main applicant or co-applicant. You must provide the application number, project title, grant period (in years), grant

amount and the percentage share of the grant (100% if there is no co-applicant). Briefly summarise how the grants are related to the current application. Leave blank if not applicable.

3.2 Institution

Please provide details about the institution administering the grant. This institution will employ the applicant during the grant period and oversee the administration, allocation, budgeting and financial reporting.

3.3 Proposal

PROJECT TITLE

Use the format '*CC – project title*' (maximum 150 characters, including spaces).

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Provide a brief stand-alone summary of the project describing its purpose and activities (Maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Describe the proposed project in detail (maximum 20,000 characters, including spaces):

- Include purpose, background, methods, collaborations, innovation potential (if relevant) and the significance of the project.
- Clearly demonstrate the novelty and interdisciplinary approach of the proposed research.
- Include a justification of the proposed grant period with a description of the activities.
- To enhance interdisciplinary aspects of the project, consider including co-mentors. Indicate any potential co-mentor(s) if applicable.

Limit the use of abbreviations and acronyms, and ensure they are defined upon their first use since their meanings can vary across disciplines. Applications will be evaluated by an interdisciplinary committee, of which some members may not be experts in your research area.

ILLUSTRATION UPLOADS

A maximum of four illustrations can be uploaded with the proposal. The following file formats for illustrations are accepted: JPG, JPEG, PNG and BMP. The maximum allowed size for each illustration is 50 MB and 1050*1650 pixels.

LITERATURE REFERENCES

Provide the reference information for the literature cited in the project description (maximum 8,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Provide a brief summary in non-technical language for general readers. If the application is awarded, the text may be published (maximum 1,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

3.4 Budget

GRANT PERIOD

Enter the project grant period, defined by the project start and end data. NORMA generates the grant period in project years, which is reflected in the budget template. The maximum grant period for this call is 3 years.

CREATE BUDGET

The budget will open in a new tab, in which subcategories can be added. All budget items must be entered in Danish Kroner (DKK). *Refer to Section 2.1 for more information about working in NORMA.*

For information on how to fill out the budget template please visit [NORMA Help Center](#)

ELIGIBLE BUDGET EXPENSES

The total amount applied for should not exceed DKK 3.6 million, with approximately DKK 1.2 million per year.

The applicant should discuss the budget and get approval from the involved PIs on the expense categories related to project-related costs prior to submitting the application. Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses:

Applicants to a Danish research institution:

- **Salary for applicant** including pension, according to collective agreements of Danish public institutions for postdoctoral fellows. The Danish host institution will administer the salary and process reimbursements for expenses related to living abroad, travel, and relocation. **Note:** *salary for people other than the applicant (scientific or administrative) cannot be covered by this grant.*
- **Project supplement** DKK 250,000 per year, each year the Fellow is at a Danish university as Postdoc. *Refer to Section 1.4 for more information.*
- **Equipment** required for the project, not exceeding 20% of the total budget.
- **Operating expenses** related to the research, including consumables, reagents, analysis, and computational resources.
- **Bench fee** up to DKK 8,000 per FTE. Only applicable when the Danish host institute is a Danish hospital. *Refer to Section 1.4 for more information.*
- **Conference participation** up to DKK 50,000 per budget year can be requested for travel and registration expenses in relation to presenting the project at conferences and workshops.
- **Publication costs** of results emanating from the research project.
- **Relocation expenses** up to DKK 110,000 over total grant period.

- **Direct administrative expenses at a Danish Hospital.** A maximum of 5% of the annual project-related costs must be reserved for administrative expenses when the Danish Host is a Danish Hospital.
- **Direct administrative expenses at Cleveland Clinic during return phase.** A maximum of 5% of the annual project-related costs must be reserved for administrative expenses to the Cleveland Clinic. The funds allocated to the Cleveland Clinic will be transferred as annual upfront instalments from the Danish host institution.

Applicants to the Cleveland Clinic:

- **Salary for applicant** including pension, according to collective agreements of Danish public institutions for postdoctoral fellows. The Danish host institution will administer the salary and process reimbursement for relocation. **Note:** *salary for people other than the applicant (scientific or administrative) cannot be covered by this grant.*
- **Project supplement during return phase:** DKK 250,000 per year, each year the Fellow is at a Danish university as Postdoc. *Refer to Section 1.4 for more information.*
- **Equipment** required for the project, not exceeding 20% of the total budget total.
- **Operating expenses** related to the research, including consumables, reagents, analysis, and computational resources.
- **Conference participation** up to DKK 50,000 per budget year can be requested for conference and workshop related travel and registration expenses related to the project.
- **Publication costs** can be requested to publish results emanating from the research project.
- **Relocation expenses** up to DKK 110,000 over total grant period.
- **Health Insurance** approximately DKK 100,000 per year for health insurance for the fellow and accompanying family. Annual rates as offered by Cleveland Clinic Postdoctoral Fellow designation should be requested from Priya Putta, PhD (puttap@ccf.org). *Note: This budget post is only eligible if additional health insurance is required, cf. terms under 'Host Letter', section 3.5.*
- **Direct administrative expenses at Cleveland Clinic.** A maximum of 5% of the annual project-related costs must be reserved for administrative expenses to the Cleveland Clinic. The funds allocated to the Cleveland Clinic will be transferred as annual upfront instalments from the Danish host institution.
- **Direct administrative expenses during return phase to a Danish Hospital:** A maximum of 5% of the annual project-related costs must be reserved for administrative expenses to the Danish Host Institution, when this is a Danish Hospital.

Any additional comments and budget justifications should be included in the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION field in NORMA.

3.5 Appendices

All uploads must be in PDF format. NORMA automatically places these uploads at the end of the application. Appendices other than those specified here are not permitted and will not be included in the evaluation.

Applicants to a Danish research institution:

- **Support Letter (Danish PI)** A signed letter of support from the PI in Denmark including an endorsement of the proposed research.
- **Support Letter (Cleveland Clinic PI)** A signed letter of support from the PI at the Cleveland Clinic including an endorsement of the proposed research.
- **Host Letter** from the Danish administrating institution, that must confirm that the institution will administer the fellowship for the entire grant period. The letter must also state that the fellow will be covered by the Danish Government's Travel Insurance (Statens Tjenesterejseforsikring) during their stay at the foreign university. If additional health insurance is required—either by law, because it is required by the foreign institution or due to specific risks in the host country—the university will ensure and confirm in the hosting letter that the fellow is covered. This can be done either by reimbursing the fellow for any health insurance premium paid while abroad, or by the university itself taking out the necessary additional insurance. All such expenses must be included in the application under the budget category “Expenses related to living abroad”. The Host Letter must be signed by the head of the institute or another authorised signatory.
 - For Danish universities: The administrating institution must disclose in the hosting letter if the applicant will be promoted to a position in VIP group A, cf. the Project Supplement Agreement, during the project period and confirm that the applicant is not entitled to Project Supplement in this period.
- **Recommendation Letter** One other professional letter of recommendation.
- **PhD Completion Letter** (only relevant for applicants who have not finished their PhD at the time of submission): A statement from the current PhD supervisor confirming the anticipated completion of the PhD degree prior to the fellowship start date.
- **To be provided on request:** Documentation for Leave of Absence.

Applicants to the Cleveland Clinic:

- **Support Letter (Cleveland Clinic PI)** A signed letter of support from the Cleveland Clinic PI including an endorsement of the proposed research.
- **Support Letter (Danish PI)** A signed letter of support from the PI in Denmark including an endorsement of the proposed research.
- **Host Letter** from the Danish administrating institution, that must confirm that the institution will administer the fellowship for the entire grant period. The letter must also state that the fellow will be covered by the Danish Government's Travel Insurance (Statens Tjenesterejseforsikring) during their stay at the foreign university. If additional health insurance is required—either by law, because it is required by the foreign institution or due to specific risks in the host country—the university will ensure and confirm in the hosting letter that the fellow is covered. This can be done either by reimbursing the fellow for any health insurance premium paid while abroad, or by the university itself taking out the necessary additional insurance. All such expenses must be included in the application under the budget category “Expenses related to living abroad”. The Host Letter must be signed by the head of the institute or another authorised signatory.
 - For Danish universities: The administrating institution must disclose in the hosting letter if the applicant will be promoted to a position in VIP group A, cf.

the Project Supplement Agreement, during the project period and confirm that the applicant is not entitled to Project Supplement in this period.

- **Recommendation Letter** One other professional letter of recommendation.
- **PhD Completion Letter** (only relevant for applicants who have not finished their PhD at the time of submission): A statement from the current PhD supervisor confirming the anticipated completion of the PhD degree prior to the fellowship start date.
- **To be provided on request:** Documentation for Leave of Absence.