

ново nordisk
foundation

Benefitting people and society

Guidelines for applicants

DATA SCIENCE

INVESTIGATORS 2026



Facts about the call

Total amount available for granting:

DKK 99 million between all three career levels

Amount available per grant:

Up to DKK 14.7 million

Call opens:

6 March 2026

Call closes:

15 July 2026 14:00 CEST

Applicant notification:

December 2026

Earliest start date:

1 January 2027

Latest start date:

1 December 2027

Review committee:

Committee for Data Science

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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 Investigators – Data Science

1.1 Purpose

The Data Science Investigator Programme supports excellent research leaders based in Denmark at different career stages within data science and computational science. The intended impact is to strengthen the quality and size of the Danish academic environment for data science research and education, which in turn will allow for an increased and improved output of new candidates skilled in data science, to meet the strong demand for such competencies from all sectors of society. All projects must be with immediate or potential future applications within areas of relevance to NNF's [Strategy](#).

The programme consists of three career-level specific grants under the NNF Research Leader Programme:

- The '**Data Science Emerging Investigator**' grants support highly promising starting group leaders with ambitious research projects rooted in data science and computational science.
- The '**Data Science Ascending Investigator**' grants are intended for excellent and independent Associate Professors or experienced Assistant Professors (or equivalent) who have the ambition and potential to rise to the highest international level.
- The '**Data Science Distinguished Investigator**' grants support outstanding professors with novel research ideas within data science and computational science that have the potential for high impact.

IMPORTANT: For the 2026 call, the guidelines for the Data Science Emerging, Ascending, and Distinguished Investigator grants have been combined into one document. Applicants must **carefully review the eligibility criteria and expectations for each career level** and ensure that they apply under the category that best matches their career stage (see Table 1).

Please note that the Emerging, Ascending, and Distinguished Investigator grants are **separate calls in the NORMA application system**. Applicants must select and submit their application to the **correct call in NORMA**. Applications will not be transferred between categories.

Table 1. Career Levels at a Glance:

Career Level	Position	Indicative Years Post-PhD*	Typical Profile
Emerging	Senior Post Doc/ Assistant Professor / early group leader	4–8 years	Track record of high-impact contributions in data science, including first authorship in top journals and conferences.
Ascending	Assistant Professor/Associate Professor / established group leader	7–15 years	Independent research group and profile; documented high-impact, peer-reviewed research and senior authorships.
Distinguished	Professor	15+ years	Own research group and clear profile; sustained high-impact contributions in data or computational science.

* Not including leave of absence

THE NNF RESEARCH LEADER PROGRAMME

To support the best and the most talented research leaders at all career steps, from senior postdocs, who intend to establish an independent research group, to established senior principal investigators, the Data Science Investigator Programme offers three different calls under the NNF Research Leader Programme.

Each of the three calls - '**Emerging**', '**Ascending**', and '**Distinguished**' - targets principal investigators at a specific career stage, and applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the requirements in each category, to ensure that they are eligible and apply for the appropriate call.

To allow the grant recipients the freedom and time needed to pursue original and ambitious ideas, the grants are for five years.

1.2 Areas of support

Research proposals eligible for funding should address:

- a) Development of new algorithms, methods and technologies within data science or computational science, artificial intelligence (incl. machine learning and deep learning), statistics, bioinformatics, and other computational sciences (incl. mathematical modelling, simulations, cybersecurity, etc.)

and/or

- b) Applications of data science and computational sciences to areas of relevance to the Foundation's strategy and grant awarding activities, including life science, biomedical- and health science, public- and global health, infectious disease, sustainability, green transition, agriculture, as well as natural and technical sciences.

For projects mainly concerned with methods development, it is important that the applicants argue convincingly for the potential application and impact within the Foundation's scientific focus areas. Vice versa, projects that have their primary focus on application must describe and explain the novelty and impact of their data- and computational science approach, be it a development of novel methods or novel applications of existing methods.

In general, projects without potential applications within the Foundation's scientific focus areas and projects with no novelty in terms of development or application of computational methods should not be funded in this programme and may be administratively rejected.

Projects where the primary focus is on financial or insurance, fraud detection, advertisement, commercial analysis, telecommunication, mass surveillance, defence, gaming, etc., are considered outside of scope and will not be considered for funding unless the applicants can convincingly argue for relevance and potential impact within the Foundation's scientific focus areas.

1.3 Eligibility

1.3.1 Shared Eligibility Rules Across All Three Career Levels

All three career levels are open to research leaders **based in Denmark**. Additionally, this is a personal grant that is administered by the host institution. This means that while the grant is at the disposal of the grant recipient, the grant agreement is with the host institution. If the project involves collaboration with other groups or independent investigators, the applicant must clearly demonstrate that they have full ownership and responsibility for the proposed project. **Co-applicants (and funding for them) are not allowed with this grant.**

INSTITUTIONAL ANCHORING

The Investigator grants are intended for 'full-time' researchers (teaching obligations included) who, during the project, are employed at a university or other non-profit research institution in Denmark. The project applied for must therefore be anchored at a university or other non-profit research institution, which will be considered the administrating institution of the grant. Only minor and time-limited affiliations with institutions abroad are exceptionally allowed.

A hosting letter signed by the head of the department must be included in the application (see section 3.5 for details). The letter should confirm that the host institution will provide the required infrastructure, laboratory, and office facilities, as well as administration of the grant. The grant agreement is signed with the host institution.

CONTRIBUTION TO TEACHING

It is a requirement that the applicant contributes to educational or training activities within data science or computational science at their host institution and/or at other institutions in Denmark.

The grant cannot be used to cover teaching substitutes. Grant recipients must contribute to the teaching environment at the host institution in the ways, and at the levels, that are required or expected for the grant recipient's position.

1.3.2 Career-Level Specific Eligibility

Eligibility requirements differ by career level. Applicants must meet the criteria for the specific career level they apply to. Assistant Professors are encouraged to consider the 'Emerging' or 'Ascending' categories, depending on their career stage. Associate Professors are encouraged to apply to the 'Ascending' category; however, applications to the 'Emerging' category will be considered if a strong justification is provided. The Distinguished Investigator grant remains open to Professors only.

While the typical profile for successful applicants is outlined below, minor deviations may be accepted if adequately justified for the 'Emerging' or 'Ascending' categories. The typical profiles are also provided to illustrate the types of applicants expected in each category.

THE EMERGING INVESTIGATOR

This grant is for talented starting research group leaders within the field of data science or computational science. Applicants should be at the level of senior postdoc, senior researcher, or assistant professor at the time of application. They should be independent researchers who are in the early phase of establishing their own research group.

Track Record and Experience:

Ideal applicants should have 4-8 years of research experience after having received their PhD degree (leave of absence not included). Minor deviations from this range will be tolerated if they can be justified. Applicants are expected to have a track record of high-impact scientific contributions to the field of data science (relative to their career stage), which will typically include first authorship of research papers in high-impact journals, contributions to key conferences in the field, etc.

Applicants who are already established independent group leaders with more than 2-3 years of group leader experience should apply to our 'Ascending Investigator' programme. Only exceptionally could they be considered 'Emerging Investigators' and would need to argue for why they do not belong in the Ascending Investigator call.

Applicants who, at the time of application, have already secured a 'starting' grant of similar size and duration (e.g., Lundbeckfonden Fellowships, Villum Young Investigator, ERC Starting Grant, DFF Sapere Aude, or other grants) are only exceptionally awarded this grant. If applying while having such a grant, it is crucial to argue convincingly in the application for why one

would need a second starting grant, and for how the applicant plans to manage two large and non-overlapping projects.

THE ASCENDING INVESTIGATOR

The grant is aimed at supporting excellent and independent research group leaders within the field of data science or computational science. Applicants should be at the level of associate professors or experienced Assistant Professors (or equivalent).

Track Record and Experience:

Ideal applicants should have 7-15 years of research experience after having received their PhD degree (leave of absence not included). Minor deviations will be tolerated if they can be justified. Applicants should have their own research group and independent research profile and are expected to have a documented track record of high-impact (peer-reviewed) research contributions relative to their career stage. They must, at the time of application, have senior authorships.

Applications from established group leaders at the level of assistant professors, senior researchers or similar research positions will be considered if the application meets all other requirements in this call.

Starting group leaders are encouraged to compare the eligibility criteria of this level with that of the 'Emerging Investigator' profile to select the best fit. Professors cannot apply for this specific level and must apply as 'Distinguished Investigators' instead.

THE DISTINGUISHED INVESTIGATOR

The grant is aimed at supporting outstanding professors based in Denmark who have demonstrated the ability to execute and lead research at the highest international level within data science or computational science.

Key is that the proposed research project is novel, of excellent scientific quality, has the potential for high impact, and is of a character and scope that justifies a five-year grant of this magnitude.

Track Record and Experience:

The Distinguished Investigator grant is open to Professors of all ages; however, applicants must hold a professorship. Ideal applicants will have 15+ years of research experience after obtaining their PhD degree (leave of absence not included). Minor deviations may be accepted if adequately justified. Early-career professors who meet the requirements should not be discouraged from applying.

Applicants are expected to have their own research group and a clearly defined individual research profile. They must demonstrate a documented track record of high-impact scientific contributions within data science or computational science, which will typically include authorship of publications in high-impact journals and/or significant contributions to leading conferences in the field.

1.3.3 Important Restrictions for All Applicants

Definition of Investigator Grants:

In this context, 'Investigator grants' include all Novo Nordisk Foundation (the "Foundation") Emerging Investigator, Ascending Investigator, Distinguished Investigator, NNF Young Investigator Award, NNF Laureate Research Grants, RECRUIT, and NERD.

Number of Applications

- You may only have one active application under evaluation for a Foundation Investigator Grant at any time.
- If you submit more than one application for these calls within the same year, only the first application submitted (by timestamp) will be evaluated; all subsequent applications will be administratively rejected.
- After you have received notification of a funding decision, you may submit a new application for a Foundation Investigator grant.

Active Grants and Overlap

- You cannot hold more than one active Investigator grant at a time.
- If you are the main applicant or grant recipient of an active Foundation Investigator Grant or a Foundation Data Science Collaborative Research Programme grant, you may only apply for a new Investigator grant in the final year of your current project.
- The funding periods of the two grants must not overlap. The new grant can only start after the current grant has ended.

Data Science Open-Competition Applications Under Evaluation

- You may only have one Data Science Open-Competition application (Investigator or Collaborative Research Programme) under evaluation at a time. If you submit more than one, the first application submitted (by timestamp/date) will be evaluated; all subsequent applications will be administratively rejected.
- If your Collaborative Research Programme application does not proceed to stage two, you may apply for an Investigator Programme grant within the same year, as long as you have received notification of a funding decision or you have chosen to withdraw your Collaborative Research Programme application.

Co-applicants on a Data Science Collaborative Research Programme

- If you are a co-applicant (not main applicant) on a Data Science Collaborative Research Programme grant still in progress or under evaluation, you may apply for a Data Science Investigator grant.
- You must indicate any other Novo Nordisk Foundation proposals where you are listed as main or co-applicant and clearly identify any overlap in project descriptions.

1.4 Funding

The total annual grant budget for the 2026 Data Science Investigators Programme is up to DKK 99 million, across all three career levels. **Each grant can be up to DKK 14.7 million and up to 5 years.**

Table 2. Further budget breakdown is available below the chart.

Budget Category	Emerging	Ascending	Distinguished
Salary for the applicant if not tenured or permanent employment	X	X	
Salary for research and technical assistance (postdoctoral researchers, PhD students)	X	X	X
PhD Tuition Fee (up to DKK 80,000)	X	X	X
Operating expenses	X	X	X
Data management	X	X	X
Equipment	X	X	X
Conference participation (up to DKK 50,000 per budget year)	X	X	X
Travel expenses	X	X	X

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses directly related to the project:

- **Salary** for the applicant for all or part of the project period in case the applicant is not tenured (this means the applicant can apply for their own salary if the applicant does not hold a time-unlimited/permanent position or already have their salary covered).¹ The Distinguished category cannot apply for salary.

¹ Institutions can apply for funding of additional expenses if they incur for leave in connection with the birth of a child for all grant recipients and all personnel employed in Denmark with salary covered by a Foundation grant. For more information: [Novo Nordisk Foundation increases support for parental leave to promote diversity and equal opportunities - Novo Nordisk Fonden](#)

- **Salary for research and technical assistance** including postdoctoral researchers, PhD students (incl. tuition fee up to DKK 80,000 per budget year per PhD student), technicians and research-year students.
 - **Operating expenses**, e.g., supercomputer hours, lab consumables, sequencing/proteomics and other analysis services directly related to the project.
 - **Data management** expenses for collecting and storing data.
 - **Equipment** required for the project. The costs may not exceed 20% of the total budget.
 - **Travel expenses in relation to the project**, i.e., conference and workshop participation and presentation of research results. Conference participation up to DKK 50,000 per budget year.
 - **Other travel expenses** directly related to the project, i.e., experiments carried out in other labs for a limited period.
 - **Publication costs** of results emanating from the research project.
 - **Project Supplement** only available for Danish Universities. More information is below.
 - **Bench fee** not applicable for Danish Universities. More information is below.
 - **Administrative expenses** not applicable for Danish Universities. More information is below.
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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.

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.

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.

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.

Administrative support (not applicable to Danish universities)

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
- can via the host institution be shared between the institutions of the main- and co-applicant(s), as detailed in the application budget
- 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 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. Please note that English language proficiency is not an assessment criterion and will not influence the evaluation of your application.

1.6 Application process

The application must be completed and submitted using NNF's online application and grant management system, NORMA, which can be accessed from:

<https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk>. The submission must adhere to the dates listed on page 3.

Further information on how to access and navigate in NORMA can be found in Section 2 of these guidelines.

When all applications have been assessed, applicants will be notified about whether they have been awarded a grant. The notification e-mail will be sent from norma-noreply@novo.dk to the e-mail address used when creating a profile in NORMA.

PLEASE NOTE: The Foundation does not provide feedback in case an application is declined.

1.7 Assessment criteria

NNF's [Committee for Data Science](#), consisting of 10 international experts within the field, will primarily assess the applications based on the following criteria:

Scientific quality and impact of the project proposal

- Research question and scientific impact
- Novelty and feasibility of the project
- Scientific approach
- Societal impact

Applicant(s) merits and potential

- Quality of past performance
- Independence
- Maturity
- Commitment
- Research leadership and/or potential
- Collaborations and scientific environment

Additional assessment considerations

- The project and the applicant will be evaluated equally.
- Applicants should plan to actively participate in and direct educational or training courses in data science.
- The applicant's current performance will be assessed relative to their career stage and seniority.
- The applicant's current funding situation will not affect the score. However, the committee may consider the level of commitment of the applicant to the project.
- The committee may take into account the applicant's level of commitment to the project, especially if the applicant has existing major obligations or large grants.

If you have an active grant from the Foundation, this may be taken into consideration during the evaluation of your new application. It is generally recommended that the main applicant has delivered results on the active grant(s) before submitting a new application to the Foundation. If you apply while having an active grant from the Foundation, please refer to the Important Restrictions in section 1.3 of these guidelines. If you determine that you are still eligible to apply with an active grant, you must describe how the project proposed in this application differs from or aligns with the project(s) already funded. Additionally, briefly describe the progress of the already funded project(s). **This information should be included in the Project Description.**



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 relates to information about all those involved in an application, meaning the main applicant or contact person applying on behalf of an organisation/institution

MAIN APPLICANT

The main responsible party for the application can enter their details through the Applicant Details-task with the type 'Applicant'. After filling in all mandatory fields, the applicant should complete the task to save the details.

Please include in the **CV** section:

- A short bibliographic overview summarising total number of peer-reviewed publications, number of first authorships, number of corresponding authorships, number of citations, H-index, etc.
- An overview of your current grants with indication of how much of your research time (in %) is committed to each of the projects.
- A short paragraph on your teaching experience and current obligations. In the project description, you must provide a clear plan for how you will actively direct or execute educational or training courses in data science in Denmark during the project period (see section 3.3).

Please include in the **Publications** section:

- A link to an updated profile with a full publication list on, e.g., ORCID, Google Scholar, Web of Science, or Scopus.
- A list of the 10 most relevant publications (or conference contributions) for evaluating your merits. Kindly include a complete specification of all authors for each publication.

Please include in the **Summary of own research** section an outline of your research focus and main contributions and achievements relevant for the present application.

Please include in the **Supplementary Information** section:

- A description of your terms of employment (where the project is to be carried out). Employees in time-limited positions must indicate when their current contracts expire and how their salaries are currently covered. Tenure-track employees should indicate when they are up for tenure (time-unlimited employment).
- An indication of how much of your research time (in %) you intend to commit to the project applied for.
- Applicants who do not fit the 'Ascending' profile and/or are borderline concerning the eligibility requirements described, must describe here why they consider themselves Ascending Investigators. If in doubt, applicants are welcome to contact the NNF for advice on which category is most appropriate.

3.2 Institution

Please provide information about the institution where the grant will be administered. This institution is where the main applicant will be employed during the grant period, and the institution that will ultimately be responsible for administering and allocating the grant, including budgeting, financial reporting and staff supported by the grant.



It can take up to five working days to register a new administrating institution in NORMA.

The application cannot be submitted before the institution has been registered.

3.3 Proposal

Describe the project using the fields in the **Proposal** tab.

Please note that a summary of the project description, including applicant name, may be shared with potential external peer reviewers to determine their eligibility in reviewing the application.

PROJECT TITLE

Please provide a short title for the project (maximum 150 characters, including spaces).

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief stand-alone summary of the project describing its purpose, target group and activities, including the major challenge and knowledge gaps being addressed, overall purpose and expected outcomes. (Maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The full project description can be a maximum of 30,000 characters (including spaces, line breaks, and special characters).

It is essential to clearly outline the development of data science methods and their applications within your project, linking them to the current state-of-the-art and highlighting the novelty your project introduces—whether through the creation of new methods or innovative applications of existing ones. Additionally, you should detail how the project contributes to advancing data science in Denmark and include plans for organizing or leading educational training courses in the field during the project period. Furthermore, it is important to specify how the project will secure access to the required data.

Please describe your proposed research project in detail – including:

- Purpose
- Background and Current State-of-the-art
- Central hypothesis and research idea
- Methods
- Work plan and Implementation
- Collaborations
- Expected outcomes and Potential future applications and impact of the project within the NNF's scientific focus areas (see section 1.2).
- Scientific impact, novelty, and significance of the project
- Teaching plans for data science in Denmark
- Synergy of the proposed project with any other projects for which you have already obtained funding.

ILLUSTRATION UPLOADS

A maximum of four illustrations can be uploaded here.

The following file formats for illustrations are accepted in the system: JPG, JPEG, PNG and BMP. The maximum accepted size for each illustration is 50 MB and 1050*1550 pixels.

LITERATURE REFERENCES

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

If not applicable, please fill in N/A.

LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief summary in lay language. If the application is awarded a grant, the text may be used for publication (maximum 1,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

3.4 Budget

Enter the project grant period, and the budget template will become available.

Only budget information submitted via the **Budget** tab will be considered in the review process. Any additional budget information attached under **Appendices** (or any other tabs) will not be considered.

3.5 Appendices

Only the following **mandatory upload** will be considered in the assessment:

- **A hosting letter** signed by the head of department/institute must be provided. The letter should confirm that the Danish host institution will provide the required infrastructure, laboratory, and office facilities, as well as administration of the grant. If relevant, the general bench fee policy of the institution should be included.
- *If relevant*, support/approval letters or permits regarding the data to be used in the project should also be included.

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.

V1 – 23 Feb 2026

Data Science 2026 Investigator Programme – General FAQ

1. General Application Process

Q: How do I apply for a Data Science Investigator grant?

A: Applications must be submitted via the Foundation's online system, NORMA. Guidance is available in the application guidelines and the [NORMA Help Centre](#).

Q: What should I do if I encounter technical problems while using the NORMA system?

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

Q: Is there a template for the host institution letter?

A: No specific template is provided. The letter must confirm the host institution's commitment to provide infrastructure, facilities, and grant administration, as outlined in the guidelines. If relevant, include any relevant institution policy.

Q: Who is evaluating the applications?

A: The applications are evaluated by the external Committee for Data Science. Write your application with this committee as your primary audience. The committee members are listed here: <https://novonordiskfonden.dk/en/committees/committee-for-data-science/>

2. Eligibility and Career Levels

Q: How do I determine which career level (Emerging, Ascending, Distinguished) to apply for?

A: Review the eligibility criteria for each level. If your career path does not fit neatly into one category, provide a brief justification in your application of why you chose that level. The committee recognises that career trajectories vary due to personal or professional circumstances.

Q: Are the post-PhD experience windows strict?

A: The indicated years post-PhD are guidelines. Minor deviations are accepted if justified (e.g., due to parental leave or career breaks). Clearly explain any deviations in your application.

Q: Can I apply if I am not a full professor but lead a large group?

A: The Distinguished Investigator grant is intended for professors and only professors should apply to this call. Large group leaders are encouraged to apply to the ascending category if they are not at the professor level.

Q: What are the requirements for employment and institutional affiliation?

A: Applicants must be full-time researchers (including teaching obligations) at a Danish university or non-profit research institution. A hosting letter from the head of department is required.

Q: Can I include co-applicants or collaborators?

A: No co-applicants are allowed for this call. Collaborations are permitted, but the applicant must demonstrate clear project ownership, and no funding can go to co-applicant.

3. Grant Restrictions and Overlap

Q: Can I hold more than one active Investigator grant from The Foundation?

A: No. In this context, 'Investigator grants' include all Novo Nordisk Foundation Emerging Investigator, Ascending Investigator, Distinguished Investigator, NNF Young Investigator Award, NNF Laureate Research Grants, RECRUIT, and NERD. You may apply for a new Investigator grant only in the "final year" of your current project, and the funding periods must not overlap.

Example:

If your current Investigator grant ends on 31 May 2027, you are eligible to apply for a new Investigator grant in the 2026 call. However, your new project must start after your current grant has ended (i.e., on or after 1 June 2027), and no later than 1 December 2027 (the latest allowed start date for this call). This ensures there is no overlap between the two grants, and you meet the Foundation's requirement that the project must start before 1 December 2027.

Q: Can I have multiple Investigator applications under evaluation?

A: No, only the first application submitted will be evaluated; all subsequent applications will be administratively rejected. This means that if you submit an application for an Investigator grant (such as NERD) and receive notification of the funding decision, you are then eligible to submit a new application for another Investigator grant within the same year, provided your previous application is no longer under review.

Q: Can I have more than one Data Science application under evaluation?

A: No, you may only have one Data Science Open-Competition application (Investigator or Collaborative Research Programme) under evaluation at a time. If you submit more than one, the first application submitted (by timestamp/date) will be evaluated; all subsequent applications will be administratively rejected. If your Collaborative Research Programme application does not proceed to stage two, you may apply for an Investigator Programme grant within the same year, as long as you have received notification of a funding decision or you have chosen to withdraw your Collaborative Research Programme application.

Q: What if I am a co-applicant on another Foundation grant?

A: Being a co-applicant (not main applicant) does not prevent you from applying. Indicate any overlap in your application.

4. Project Scope and Activities

Q: What types of projects are eligible?

A: Projects must focus on developing or applying data/computational science methods relevant to the Foundation's strategic areas (e.g., life science, health, sustainability, agriculture, natural/technical sciences). Projects primarily focused on commercial, financial, or unrelated technical areas are out of scope unless strong relevance is demonstrated.

Q: How should I balance methods development and application in my proposal?

A: Clearly explain the novelty and impact of your methods or applications, and how they align with [the Foundation's focus areas](#).

Q: Is it possible to see which projects have received funding?

A: Yes, you can view all previously funded projects here:

<https://datascience.novonordiskfonden.dk/projects/>

5. Budget and Funding

Q: What is the maximum grant amount and duration?

A: Up to DKK 14.7 million and up to 5 years. There is no strict minimum, but projects should be appropriately scaled. It is important to provide a clear justification for the requested amount in your proposal, demonstrating how it will enable you to achieve your objectives and deliver the expected outcomes.

Q: What expenses can be covered?

A: Eligible costs include salary (if not tenured or permanent employment) for the emerging and ascending categories, research/technical assistance, PhD tuition, operating expenses, data management, equipment (max 20% of budget), conference participation (up to DKK 50,000/year), travel, publication costs, and project supplement (for Danish universities).

Q: Can I include my own salary in the budget?

A: Yes, if you hold a time-limited position or are not tenured and are applying in the emerging or ascending category. If your employment status changes, inform the Foundation to adjust the budget accordingly and please keep this in mind as you apply for project supplement.

Q: Are there limits on the number of staff or equipment?

A: There are no strict limits, but all costs must be justified and reasonable for the project scope. Equipment costs must not exceed 20% of the total budget.

6. Teaching and Supervision

Q: What are the teaching requirements?

A: Grant recipients must contribute to educational or training activities in data or computational science at their host or other Danish institutions.

Q: Should we include information about teaching activities in the project description, or only in the dedicated text box in NORMA?

A: Please focus on the dedicated text box in NORMA for describing your plans for contributing to data science and computational science teaching at Danish universities. However, if you require additional space to elaborate, you are welcome to include a section about teaching activities in the project description as well.
