Novo Nordisk Foundation

FAQ

Interdisciplinary Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme
2027

Novo Nordisk Foundation

Eligibility

Q: Who can apply?
A: Applicants must have a PhD in natural/technical sciences, biomedicine, or biotechnology within 5 years of the fellowship start date. Leave of absence periods do not count toward the 5 years. PhD students may apply if their supervisor confirms graduation before the fellowship start date.

Q: Is association with Denmark required?
A: Yes. Applicants must have spent time in Denmark beyond that corresponding to a vacation and have experience with the Danish educational system or research environment (e.g., Danish university graduate, Danish citizenship, or several years of research experience in Denmark).

Q: What are the host requirements?
A: Applicants must establish contact with a host PI at the target university (ETH Zurich, MIT, Oxford, or Uppsala) who will act as the primary research mentor. It is recommended to reach out to the appointed contact person with any questions related to the target university. With other questions, please reach out to NNF or your Danish host institution, who must employ and administer the fellowship for the entire grant period.

Q: Recommendation letter: must it be from a former advisor, and how many can be uploaded?
A: You may choose who writes the recommendation letter - a current advisor is acceptable. Upload only the documents listed in the guidelines, i.e. one recommendation letter. If you are still a PhD student, your supervisor must confirm that you will graduate before the grant starts.

Q: Danish PI: who can be Danish PI, and what seniority is required?
A: The Danish PI can be a former PI. Most important is that they have the relevant facilities and expertise, will provide office or lab access and mentorship, and are employed for the full grant period with permission to host you in their lab. A tenure-track assistant professor can be acceptable if those conditions are met.

Q: What is required from the international host institution at application stage?
A: For the application, you need a support letter and a short CV from the prospective PI at the international institution. Budget and hosting letters are handled by the Danish institution.

Funding and Expenses

Q: Salary shortfall because salary scales increased after the budget was set—can NNF add funding?
A: If possible, you may rebudget by moving funds from other budget lines to salary. NNF cannot provide additional funding to cover salary increases; if a shortfall remains, you must adjust within the awarded budget.

Q: Overall budget cap: can the budget exceed DKK 3.6 million, and how strict is DKK 1.2 million per year?
A: The total budget must not exceed DKK 3.6 million but some flexibility across years is acceptable if justified by the planned activities.

Q: Child or family allowance: does "DKK 55,000 for accompanying children" increase the DKK 3.6 million cap?
A: No. The budget frame is DKK 3.6 million and cannot be exceeded. If accompanied by family, funding must be found by reallocating within the existing budget categories. Please note that this budget cost is fixed regardless of number of children.

Q: "Expenses related to living abroad": what can it include?
A: NNF is generally flexible if the costs are genuinely related to living abroad, but eligibility can depend on what the Danish

administrative institution is allowed to reimburse. You should therefore confirm allowable items with your institution's administration or research support.

Q: Relocation costs: must they be used fully and what can they cover?
A: Relocation funding is intended for actual relocation costs, for example moving to and from the host location. The fellow does not have to use the full amount.

Q: Salary level: must it equal the host minimum, and can it be higher?
A: You must apply for a full salary that is not below the host institution's minimum standard. The guidance sets a lower limit, not a fixed amount. A higher salary can be applied for if it aligns with relevant Danish collective agreements and is approved by the Danish host institution.

Q: Who pays the salary and which tax rules apply?
A: The Danish host institution pays the salary to your Danish salary account, and it is taxed according to Danish tax rules. NNF cannot advise on tax matters, so you should consult the relevant authorities or your university support unit for tax specifics.

Q: ETH Zürich salary competitiveness: can salary plus "expenses related to living abroad" be used to match ETH net salary?
A: For ETH Zürich, the agreement is that the ETH minimum net salary should be met, and this can be achieved through a combination of salary and "Expenses related to living abroad", subject to what is eligible through the Danish administrative institution.

Q: Can we use non-standard or individual employment contracts to match salary, for example for ETH?
A: Please refer to your support unit at your Danish administrative institution.

Q: Administrative expenses or overhead-type items: what applies to MIT and Oxford?
A: MIT and Oxford require a fixed rate of DKK 25,000 per year

spent at MIT or Oxford as administrative expenses, budgeted under Operating expenses. A separate direct administrative expenses post is not applicable for Danish universities in this context.

Q: Bench fees: are they eligible and what are the caps?
A: Bench fee eligibility depends on the host institution. For ETH Zürich and Uppsala bench fees are not an eligible budget cost. For MIT bench fee is eligible if documented for an amount of up to DKK 8,000 per month per FTE. For Oxford bench fee is eligible if documented for an amount of up to DKK 10,000 per month. Bench fees are distinct from administrative fees, which cover general services and overhead-type costs.

Q: Can we cover Danish university administrative costs for the years the fellow is abroad?
A: No specific administrative cost post is available for Danish universities for the years abroad in the manner described. Also, project supplements only cover the year in Denmark, so NNF does not provide a solution for institute deficits arising from internal charges linked to this structure.

Q: Are there any special budget rules for MIT?
A: Yes. A minimum of DKK 240,000 per year must be requested for total project-related costs at MIT. Exceptions may be considered case by case with relevant approvals.

Application Process

Q: Where do I enter "Expenses related to living abroad" in NORMA?
A: Enter "Expenses related to living abroad" under the category Dissemination, training, education in NORMA. In the description field you can write "Expenses to living abroad".

Q: Changing circumstances: if a fellow returns to Denmark early, what happens?
A: A fellow may always return to Denmark, but in such situation NNF can only offer up to one year on the grant after the return.

Q: How do I enter project supplement in the budget?
A: For the Project Supplement, you will need to create two salary budget rows – one will contain the salary for the years of stay abroad and no project supplement (STEM or SOC/HUM) should be selected. And the other one will contain the salary for the year of stay in Denmark and the project supplement should be added. Please see example:

Budget items	Institution	Year 3 Budget DKK	FTE	Description
1. Salary		695.100		
1.1 Postdoc	Aarhus Universitet No project supplement	695.100		Working at Aarhus University
1.2 Postdoc	Aarhus Universitet STEM		1	

Specific Host University Details

Q: Project supplement: can it be budgeted for all years or only the year in Denmark?
A: The project supplement applies only for the year spent in Denmark, even if salary is administered and paid by the Danish institution across the full fellowship period.

Q: IP plan: does NNF provide a template or requirements?
A: The IP plan is to be prepared between the Danish and international host institutions. NNF does not provide templates or specific requirements and does not intervene in that process.

Q: Health insurance, for example J-1 requirements at MIT: does Danish travel insurance suffice?
A: Based on the latest available guidance in these answers, Danish Government travel insurance does not meet J-1 requirements. Applicants should check with their Danish university's research support unit to ensure compliance and identify any required additional insurance.