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POSTDOCTORAL
FELLOWSHIPS AT
MASSACHUSETTS
INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY 2023

Information and guidelines for applicants

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Information about the call

Award amount
Up to DKK 4 million per grant

Application form opens:
24 October 2022

Application deadline:
22 February 2023 at 2 pm (CET)

Applicant notification:
May 2023

Earliest start date:
1 August 2023

Latest start date:
1 August 2024

Review committee:
NNF Committee on Interdisciplinary Research,
with input from MIT Research Development Faculty Committee

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1 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS AT MIT

Please read these guidelines carefully before initiating the application process, as they contain the complete call text as well as instructions regarding the completion of the application:

- **Section 1** describes the overall frame and conditions of the call, eligibility criteria and evaluation process.
- **Section 2** provides technical guidance for how to access and navigate in the application and grant management system NORMA.
- **Section 3** gives essential information regarding the requirements to content, structure, and budget of the application.

NNF will treat all applicant and application information confidentially. Read more about how NNF processes personal data under 'privacy & security' in the online application system, NORMA. Furthermore, please read 'General Terms and Conditions' for grants from NNF that all Grant Recipients must comply with: <http://www.novonordiskfonden.dk/en/content/conditions-grants>

1.1 PURPOSE

The fellowship offers an opportunity for promising young, ambitious researchers to carry out a research project in which about three years are dedicated to work at **MIT - Massachusetts Institute of Technology**, followed by about one year at a Danish university or other public or non-profit research institution.

MIT is one of the world's leading universities in science and technology, with a strong tradition in education, cutting-edge research, and innovation. NNF wishes to fuel the career development of excellent early-stage researchers:

- By giving the awardee the opportunity to obtain research experience, training, and knowledge in a unique interdisciplinary environment at the highest international level, while also openly exchanging intellect and ideas with MIT peers.
- Through mobility, extending the awardee's scientific networks and innovative spirit, fostering scientific independence.
- By associating the awardee to a Danish research institution throughout the project, thereby facilitating the return of the awardee from MIT, and his/her continued research career in the Danish research environment.

NNF postdoctoral fellows will be appointed by MIT as a 'postdoctoral fellow' and will have status and benefits accorded all 'postdoctoral fellows' at MIT. This includes access to MIT Affiliate Health Insurance and access to MIT childcare benefits, with subsidy by the NNF. For further information, please contact NNF.

To exploit on and accelerate translation of potential project-specific discoveries created during the project period, the fellow can apply to NNF for a Proof-of-Concept grant over a maximum period of 12 months, that can be initiated during the return phase to the Danish hosting institution.

1.2 AREAS OF SUPPORT

The research supported in the programme can range from basic research to innovation. It is possible to apply within all research fields covered by natural and technical sciences, biomedicine, or biotechnology, under the condition that the project is of interdisciplinary nature with potential applications in human health or sustainability.

1.3 ELIGIBILITY

The fellowship supports postdoctoral research projects with a duration of 3-4 years. A minimum of 30 months must be dedicated to researching at MIT. The final 6 months in the case of a 3-year grant and at least 10 months in case of a 4-year grant, are dedicated to the return phase at the Danish hosting institution. The remaining grant period of up to 8 months of a 4-year grant can be distributed at any time during the grant period either at MIT or the Danish hosting institution. **Note: The applicant must plan how the 8 months are distributed in agreement with the hosting MIT principal investigator (PI) prior to submitting the application.**

A Danish university or other public, non-profit research institution in Denmark must employ the applicant for the entire fellowship period and this institution must administer the fellowship grant.

The successful applicant:

- will have obtained a PhD degree within 5 years of the fellowship start date. **Note: Periods with leave of absence should be excluded from the 5 years.**
- will have a solid education in natural and technical sciences, biomedicine, or biotechnology and a deep interest for interdisciplinary research.
- 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.
- has established contact with a MIT faculty member, who has committed to being the primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship.
- has a significant association to the Danish educational system or research environment, e.g., by having graduated from a Danish University or by having several years of research experience at a Danish institution and a clear intention of returning to Denmark after the stay abroad.

IMPORTANT: *Although you are formally employed at a research institution in Denmark and therefore are entitled to Danish employee benefits while at MIT, for instance a certain amount of annual vacation, it is required that such benefits are discussed and agreed with the hosting MIT PI.*

Special rules for applications:

- a) An applicant can only submit one application for one of the NNF's postdoctoral fellowship grants and cannot submit a new application to the NNF while the application is under review. If the applicant receives a rejection from NNF for the submitted application, the applicant may again apply for another grant.
- b) NNF does not allow double funding of project-specific expenses. If an applicant has applied for, or has received, funding for the project or parts of the project from others, this must be detailed in the budget of the application. If the applicant receives funding

- for the project or parts of the project from other sources following submission of the NNF application, NNF should be contacted immediately.
- c) The project applied for can be partially funded by other mechanisms, but such co-funding must be clearly stated in the application.
 - d) The general conditions that apply when receiving a grant from the NNF can be found on our [webpage](#).

1.4 FUNDING

The duration of the fellowship is a minimum of 3 years and up to 4 years. The NNF will award approx. DKK 1 million per year, for a total of up to DKK 4 million per fellowship (*pro rata*).

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses (see section 3.4 for details):

- Salary for the applicant
- Operating expenses
- Equipment
- Conference participation
- Publication costs
- Travel
- Relocation expenses and expenses related to living abroad
- Bench fee
- Direct administrative expenses

The NNF will not award funding for overhead.

Please note, that the funds will be given by NNF to the Danish hosting institution to administrate for the entire duration of the fellowship.

1.5 LANGUAGE

The application and any additional uploads must be written in English.

1.6 APPLICATION PROCESS

Before applying

The applicant must personally establish contact with an MIT PI who will be the applicant's primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship. This will ensure placement in an MIT lab where the project will be carried out should the applicant be selected. It is encouraged that the applicant works closely with the MIT PI on the research proposal in the application and bring his/her own expertise and experience to the proposal process. It is also encouraged to consider potential other MIT faculty members who could be co-mentor(s) on the interdisciplinary research conducted during the period at MIT.

[The MIT website](#) provides a rich source of information for applicants beginning their search for a host PI. Applicants may also contact Ann Skoczenski, Director of Postdoctoral Services, Office of the Vice President for Research, MIT (postdocservices@mit.edu) with questions related to identifying a faculty host.

The applicant will need to verify with the Tech Transfer Office of his/her Danish host institution that they are in accordance with [MIT's Inventions and Proprietary Information Agreement \("IPIA"\)](https://web.mit.edu/tlo/documents/MIT-TLO-ipia-visitor.docx) (please go to <https://web.mit.edu/tlo/documents/MIT-TLO-ipia-visitor.docx>). MIT requires that all incoming visiting scholars and visiting postdocs sign the IPIA as it addresses the disclosure and assignment of intellectual property from the visiting scholars or visiting postdocs because they are formally employed by, and also financially supported through, an external organization.

Application and evaluation processes

The application must be completed and submitted using NNF's online application and grant management system, NORMA.

Further information on how to access and navigate in NORMA can be found in chapter 2 and information about the required application content can be found in chapter 3. **Please read Chapter 3 for detailed information on expected format of the application, budget, and required uploaded documentation.**

The proposals are first evaluated by the [NNF Committee on Interdisciplinary Research](#). Up to 4 proposals are selected to be sent for evaluation by a committee at MIT. As a part of their final evaluation, the committee at MIT may carry out online interviews with the selected candidates.



When all applications have been assessed, applicants will be notified whether they have been awarded a grant. The notification e-mail will be sent from noreply@norma.novonordiskfonden.dk to the e-mail address entered on initial registration.

If selected

- It is important that IP rights agreements are established between the Danish institution and MIT (through MIT's Technology Licensing Office ("TLO")) by a signed IPIA form. If selected, this form (please go to <https://web.mit.edu/tlo/documents/MIT-TLO-ipia-visitor.docx>) must be signed and submitted electronically to MIT's TLO prior to starting at MIT.

1.7 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

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

- The creativity, novelty, innovation potential, and ambition of the proposed research project
- The scientific excellence and personal drive of the applicant

- The appropriateness and involvement of the hosting research group at MIT
- Letters of recommendation

2 THE APPLICATION AND GRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM – NORMA

Sections 2 and 3 provide guidance on completing and submitting an application through NNF's online application and grant management system NORMA. Section 2 contains general technical information, while section 3 contains information specific to the individual call. All the fields of the application form must be completed in accordance with these guidelines and the instructions in NORMA.

2.1 USER REGISTRATION

NORMA can be accessed through links on NNF's website or directly at:

<https://norma.novonordiskfonden.dk>

Before you begin, please read the instructions on the login page.

If you do not have a user profile in NORMA, you can register by clicking REGISTER from the login-page. Here you can also retrieve forgotten passwords by clicking the FORGOT PASSWORD-link. The main applicant should only have one user profile. Please use your work e-mail address for registration. After registration, you will receive an e-mail with your user name and a temporary password, which you can then use to log in to NORMA. After logging in for the first time you will be asked to provide a password of your own choosing.

A registered user who submits an application is legally responsible for the truthfulness of the content of the application.

If you experience technical problems, please contact NORMA Support: norma-support@novo.dk.



An applicant cannot change the e-mail address provided at registration. Please contact NORMA Support if you need to change your e-mail address.

2.2 CREATING AN APPLICATION

Initiate an application by finding the call you wish to apply for in the OPEN CALLS-section on the Applicant Portal in NORMA. Use the search filters at the top of the section to filter by, e.g., overall funding area, and initiate an application by clicking APPLY NOW next to the relevant call.

Applications can be edited up until the deadline. A draft application can be saved by clicking SAVE DRAFT and may be cancelled at any time up until the deadline by clicking CANCEL.

APPLICATION. An application is not submitted to NNF until an applicant has clicked SUBMIT and has received confirmation that the application has been successfully submitted.

You can review the application at any time by reopening from within NORMA. Opening the application will also allow you to download the application in its entirety as a PDF. Make sure the PDF is readable and formatted appropriately before submitting your application.

2.3 TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

For all applications, the individual fields must be completed in accordance with these guidelines and the instructions supplied in NORMA.



To prevent loss of data, it is essential to press SAVE DRAFT before you leave NORMA or navigate in the system.

TEXT FIELDS

Text from Microsoft Word or comparable word processors can be copied and pasted into most text fields of the application. It is, however, important to check that formatting, special characters, and symbols have not been converted or lost in the text fields after copying and pasting. If the formatting looks wrong in NORMA or in the PDF, try changing all text to *Normal* using the FORMAT dropdown. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the pdf looks correct before submitting.

The available options for formatting text are at the top of the text fields. Some shorter text fields do not have the option to use rich text formatting.



For readability purposes, standard fonts, font size 11-12, and line spacing between 1.0 and 1.5 must be used.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations such as figures, charts, tables, images, etc. related to the project description can be uploaded under PROPOSAL. A Maximum of four illustrations are allowed. The illustrations will be placed on a separate page in the application PDF but can be referenced throughout the project proposal as needed. For readability, please name the files numerically by the order in which they are referenced.

The following file formats for illustrations are accepted in the system: JPG, JPEG, PNG, and BMP. The maximum accepted size for each illustration is 1050*1650 pixels.

2.4 SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

The application in its entirety must be submitted electronically via the application system by clicking SUBMIT. It is not possible to submit an application or any part of it by standard mail or e-mail. Any material submitted outside the application system will not be included in the evaluation and will not be returned.



Please remember to check that the PDF version of the application is legible and contains all data and uploads before submitting.

All applicants must read and accept NNF's [Standards for Good Research Practice](#) before submitting the application. Further, the applicant must declare that the information provided in the application is true and accurate.

An application cannot be submitted unless all the required fields have been completed. Applications can be cancelled at any time before submission. If you need to withdraw an application after the deadline, please get in touch with NNF via e-mail, using the contact information on page 3.



A list of any incorrect or incomplete entries will be generated at the top of the screen when you click SUBMIT. Clicking one of these error messages will take you to the relevant field. Amending incorrect or incomplete entries can be time-consuming, so we recommend submitting applications well before the deadline.

3 APPLICATION CONTENT

This section provides guidelines on the content required in the sections of the online application form for this call, and best practice of how to apply for this specific call.

3.1 APPLICANT

The applicant tab contains various sections with information about the main applicant:

- Personal information
- Educational information
- Current institution
- Experience
- Previous and Current Grants from NNF

MAIN APPLICANT

CV: Can be a maximum of 4,000 characters. Please include in your CV a short bibliographic overview summarizing total number of peer-reviewed publications, number of first authorships, number of corresponding authorships, and number of citations.

Publication list: Can be a maximum of 5,000 characters. Include a link to an updated profile with a full publication list for the applicant on either Google Scholar, Web of Science, or Scopus. State up to 10 of your most relevant publications for evaluating your merits. Include a complete specification of all authors for each publication with your own name highlighted.

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT GRANTS FROM NNF

If you have previously submitted other applications in the same calendar year, summarize how these applications are related to the current application.

If you have received any grants from NNF as an applicant or a co-applicant within the past five years, 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 summarize how the grants are related to the current application.

3.2 INSTITUTION

Please provide information about the institution where the grant will be administrated. This institution is where you will be employed during the grant period and the institution which will be responsible for budgeting, accounting, and staff supported by the grant.

3.3 PROPOSAL

Describe the project using the following fields on the PROPOSAL tab:

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 and activities (maximum 2000 characters, including spaces).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please describe in detail your proposed project that will be conducted with the MIT PI (maximum 20,000 characters, including spaces):

- Please include purpose, background, methods, collaborations, and the significance of the project. The proposal must clearly demonstrate the nature of interdisciplinarity and its novelty.
- It is encouraged to include co-mentors if needed to strengthen interdisciplinary elements of the project. If identified, please indicate potential co-mentor(s).
- Include a brief outline of how the grant period is planned and distributed between MIT and the Danish hosting institution.
- Describe the continuation of research activities upon return to Denmark and if relevant, the potential career trajectory following the grant period within the Danish research environment.

Use of abbreviations and acronyms should be limited and must be defined at first occurrence as abbreviations can have different meanings in different disciplines. The applications will be assessed by a committee that are not necessarily experts within all disciplines covered by the call.

ILLUSTRATION UPLOADS

A maximum of four illustrations of 50 mb each can be uploaded here. Accepted formats are .jpg, .png, .gif, .bmp.

LITERATURE REFERENCES

Please provide the reference information for the literature cited in the project description (maximum 4000 characters, including spaces).

LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a brief summary for non-experts in lay language. If the application is awarded a grant, the text may be used for publication (maximum 1000 characters, including spaces).

3.4 BUDGET

The budget only comprises the information entered in the BUDGET tab. Additional budget information attached under UPLOADS or added under any other tabs than BUDGET will not be considered. The budget must be entered in budget years following the grant period and not calendar years.

ELIGIBLE BUDGET EXPENSES

The total amount applied for should be up to DKK 4 million with approximately DKK 1 million per year. **A minimum of DKK 210,000 must be requested per year for total project-related costs** (i.e., operating expenses, equipment, conference participation, travel, publications cost, and bench fee), of which 8% (a minimum of DKK 16,800 per year) must be reserved for administrative expenses at MIT (please indicate this in the budget). The funds allocated for total project-related costs will be transferred as annual instalments from the hosting Danish institution to the MIT hosting department during the years that the postdoctoral fellow is at MIT. The applicant should discuss and get the MIT PI's approval on the use of these funds before submitting the application.

Applicants may apply for funding for the following types of expenses:

- **Salary for applicant**, including pension, according to collective agreements of Danish public institutions for postdoctoral fellows. Furthermore, applicants should apply to NNF for a full salary that adheres to [MIT's standards for minimum](#). **Note:** *salary for other people than the applicant (scientific or administrative) employed on the project cannot be covered by this grant.*
- **Operating expenses** related to the research, including consumables, chemicals, and reagents.
- **Equipment** required for the project, however, not exceeding 20% of the budget total.
- **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.
- **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 (up to DKK 25,000 per budget year).
- **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 and may only be used for expenses that are related to the research project and which cannot be included within another individual budget category. 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, library access

Note that bench fee cannot cover rent, administrative support, representation, social contributions etc. To include a bench fee in the budget, the fee must be a part of the general expense policy of the administrating/hosting institution, and it must apply for all employees independently of funding source. Documentation that the institution has a general bench fee policy should be included in a Hosting Letter from the institution enclosed as link or appendix. An unspecified bench fee without documentation will not be accepted. The bench fee can be ,maximum DKK 8,000 per month per FTE working on the project.

- **Relocation expenses related to travelling and relocation** to and from Denmark of up to DKK 100,000. **Note:** *this budget category must align with the submitted plan for how the grant period is distributed.*
- **Expenses related to living abroad**, up to DKK 60,000 per year for the years spend abroad, for health insurance, visa, etc. for recipient and possibly family. Additional 50,000 per year abroad can be requested if the applicant has child/children.
 - NNF Fellows (and possibly family) are eligible for the [MIT Affiliate Health Plan](#) and the applicant must allocate budget under this post to cover the insurance premium.
 - NNF Fellows are eligible for benefits offered by MIT to postdoctoral fellows as described in <https://hr.mit.edu/eligibility-postdoctoral-fellows>. Please do not allocate budget for enrolment of child/children enrolled in one of [MIT's Technology Childcare Centers](#), as NNF will reimburse MIT directly for subsidised costs related to the [MIT Childcare Scholarship Program](#).
- **Direct administrative expenses** up to 5 % of the funding applied for. The following applies:
 - can cover non-scientific, administrative expenses in relation to the project, such as accounting, administration related to payment of salaries and 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.

GRANT PERIOD

Before you can fill in the budget template, start by entering the start and end dates for the grant. NORMA then generates a grant period in whole years, which is reflected in the budget template. The grant period is the duration of NNF's grant for the project, which for this call is up to 4 years.

CREATE BUDGET

After saving the project start and end dates, the budget template will become available to edit. The budget will open in a new tab, in which you will need to add the subcategories you need for your budget. Please follow the instructions at the top of the screen to complete the budget.

Notes:

- The budget continuously saves changes you've made without the need to manually save. You are free to leave the budget at any time and come back at a later point.
- When you are done filling in your budget, please use the *SAVE AND CLOSE* button. This will check that all information has been filled out correctly and in accordance with the guidelines, saving the budget to your application.
- You can always return to the *BUDGET* tab. A summary of the budget will be displayed, review it to ensure that it is correct.
- The full budget details can be viewed or edited at any time before submission of the application by reopening the budget template.

Any comments about the budget can be entered in the *SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION* field.

3.5 APPENDICES

- A signed letter of support from the MIT PI including an endorsement of the proposed research project (*Support Letter*).
- A signed letter from the Danish administrating institution that guarantees the return and integration to this institute following the years at MIT, confirms its role in administering the fellowship throughout the entire grant period, and is aware of MIT's rules regarding IP rights. Must be signed by the head of the institute (*Hosting Letter*).
- One other professional letter of recommendation (*Recommendation Letter*).
- If relevant: A statement confirming expected completion of PhD before fellowship start date from current PhD supervisor (only in case the applicant has yet to complete his/her PhD) (*Support Letter*).
- If relevant: Documentation that the administrating/hosting institution has a general bench fee policy (*Hosting Letter*).

All uploads must be in PDF format. NORMA automatically places these uploads at the end of the application. Please respect the page limitation and the upload requirements stated in the call. Uploads in excess of these limits may not be considered for evaluation.

October 2022 – updated January 2023

The Novo Nordisk Foundation

The Novo Nordisk Foundation is an independent Danish Foundation with corporate interests. The objective of the Novo Nordisk Foundation is twofold: To provide a stable basis for the commercial and research activities conducted by the companies within the Novo Group and to support scientific and humanitarian purposes.

The vision of the Novo Nordisk Foundation is to improve people's health and the sustainability of society and the planet.