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foundation

Benefitting people and society

Guidelines for applicants

HALLAS-MØLLER ASCENDING INVESTIGATOR 2026



Facts about the call

Total amount available for granting:
DKK **112.5** million

Amount available per grant:
Up to DKK **12.5** million plus relocation funding for international recruitment

Call opens:
21 October 2025

Call closes:
13 January 2026 at 14:00 (CET)

Applicant notification:
April 2026

Earliest start date:
1 June 2026

Latest start date:
1 April 2027

Review committee:
Committee on Bioscience and Basic Biomedicine

Contact:
Kristina Rohde Larsen
Grant Manager
E-mail: kro@novo.dk



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.

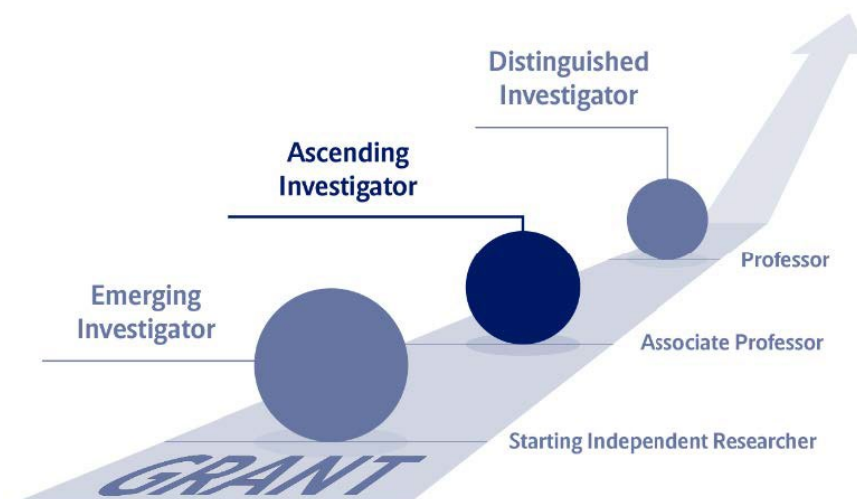


1 Hallas-Møller Ascending Investigator – Bioscience and Basic Biomedicine

1.1 The Research Leader Programme and the ‘Ascending’ Profile

To support the best and the most talented research leaders at all steps of their careers from start-up to established principal investigators, the Novo Nordisk Foundation offers three specific grants within the Research Leader Programme to stimulate excellence and the possibility to pursue original and ambitious five-year projects. The calls ‘Emerging’, ‘Ascending’, and ‘Distinguished’ each target principal investigators at specific career-stages, and applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the requirements in each call, to ensure they are eligible and apply for the appropriate call.

Read more about the Research Leader Programme here:
<https://researchleaderprogramme.com/>



The **Ascending Investigator** grant is intended for excellent and independent associate professors, who have the ambition and potential to rise to the highest international level within their research fields. Applicants should have their own research group and individual research profile and are expected to have a documented track record of peer-reviewed

research with a high impact and must at the time of application have senior authorships.

It is key that the project is novel, excellent, has the potential of high impact and is of a character that justifies a five-year grant of this magnitude, and that the applicant has momentum in the current research track. After their PhD degree, applicants should ideally have approximately 7-18 years of subsequent research experience (parental leave excluded), but the PhD age requirement is revocable, pending the assessment of the individual candidate.

1.2 Purpose

With the overall aim of catalysing Danish fundamental research impacting better health through knowledge, the purpose of the 'Hallas-Møller Ascending Investigator – Bioscience and Basic Biomedicine' grant is to support the continued development of excellent research leaders and promote and consolidate accomplished associate professors who propose to undertake novel and ambitious projects that will bring new and important insight into life and health. To support international recruitment at this career stage, extra funding and time can be allocated for relocation to Denmark, depending on the level of seniority and relocation needs.

1.3 Areas of support

The overall goal is to support fundamental research in bioscience and basic biomedicine relevant for understanding the human organism and/or basal mechanisms underlying health and disease. The research fields include, but are not limited to: molecular biology, cell biology, bioinformatics, modelling of biological systems, genetics, microbiology, pharmacology, experimental physiology, biophysics, biochemistry, biology, and biostatistics etc. The research will typically be carried out in animals, cellular or subcellular model systems, or in silico.

The Novo Nordisk Foundation offers mutually exclusive calls within the areas listed below. It is the responsibility of the applicant to apply within the call that is the most appropriate to her/his project proposal:

- Endocrinology and metabolism
- Clinical and translational medicine (for clinicians)
- Industrial and environmental biotechnology
- Plant science, agriculture and food biotechnology
- Natural and technical sciences (NERD and RECRUIT)

“Investigator grants” in the Novo Nordisk Foundation are defined to include the following calls/grants across all funding areas: Emerging Investigator, Ascending Investigator, Distinguished Investigator, NNF Young Investigator Award, NNF Laureate research grants, RECRUIT and NERD.

1.4 Eligibility

Who can apply:

- Applicants should be associate professors. Applications from assistant professors, senior researchers or people in similar research positions will be considered if the application meets all the other requirements in this call. Professors, including MSO, cannot apply for this particular call - but can apply for Novo Nordisk Foundation's Distinguished Investigator grant.
- The applicant cannot be a group leader in one of the Novo Nordisk Foundation research centres, where research support is included in the applicant's affiliation to the centre.
- At the time of applying, the applicant cannot have a grant portfolio exceeding an annual total of DKK 4 million (excluding possible overhead) in the year of commencing the project.
- Recipients of this grant must contribute to the pre-graduate teaching environment at their host institution. An Ascending Investigator grant must not be used to cover a teaching substitute for the applicant.
- The Ascending Investigator call is intended for 'full-time' researchers (teaching obligations included) and researchers with clinical obligations cannot apply for this grant.

Where must the research take place:

- The project must be anchored at a university, hospital or other non-profit research institution in Denmark.
- During the project, applicants must be employed and have their primary research group, in Denmark (only minor and/or time-limited affiliation with institutions abroad is allowed).

What types of projects can be supported:

- The application must describe a clearly defined research project with an appropriate budget. The project can be an independent project, delimited project or a clearly defined part of a larger, running project. In the latter case, the large project must be briefly described.

Collaboration and co-applicants:

- Ascending Investigator grants are individual grants at the disposal of the grant recipient. If the project involves collaboration, the collaboration and the nature of the collaboration should be described in the project description, but the grant recipient must be the clear driver of the project and the applicant's research must be central to the project.
- Invitation of co-applicants is not possible within this call and it is implicit that collaborators mentioned in the application support the application. Thus, uploading support letters from collaborators is not possible.

IMPORTANT RULES

- An applicant may submit only one application to the Novo Nordisk Foundation for an “Investigator grant” and cannot submit another application for an “Investigator grant” while the application is under review. If an applicant submits more than one “Investigator grant” application for simultaneous review, only the first application submitted will be evaluated, while the subsequent applications will receive administrative rejections.
- An applicant that holds an active “Investigator grant” from the Novo Nordisk Foundation is only eligible to apply for a new “Investigator grant” during the final year of the existing grant, and the two grant periods cannot overlap. I.e., recipients of NNF Investigator Grants 2021 will be eligible to apply in the 2026 Investigator calls and not before.
- While a project submitted to one call in the Novo Nordisk Foundation is under evaluation, a similar or overlapping project cannot be submitted to other calls from the Novo Nordisk Foundation. I.e., projects submitted for Hallas-Møller Ascending Investigator grants cannot be submitted to any other calls in the Novo Nordisk Foundation until the outcome of this call has been published.

1.5 Funding

A total of up to DKK 112.5 million is available, of which up to DKK 62.5 million is prioritised for international recruitment.

For candidates relocating to Denmark upon awarding of the grant, extra funding of up to DKK 12.5 million and extra time of up to 2 years can be allocated (i.e., total of up to DKK 25 million per grant distributed over a grant period of up to 7 years).

For each grant (non-relocation), approximately DKK 2.5 million can be awarded per year, over a 5-year grant period, for a total budget of up to DKK 12.5 million per grant.

In the case of many applications of exceptionally high quality within one career stage within the Research Leader Programme, funds may exceptionally be transferred from one career stage to another (within the same committee).

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 (unless the applicant is tenured or otherwise guaranteed own salary), and/or for research and technical assistance, including postdoctoral researchers, PhD students, technicians and research-year students.
 - *Salary at Professor level cannot be awarded with this grant. Host institutions of grant recipients who may be promoted to Professors in the grant period are expected to cover any such extra costs.*
 - *Salary to cover employees can only be applied for if they are employed at a lower job structure/salary level than that of the applicant.*

- **Tuition fee** for PhD students (up to DKK 80,000 per budget year per PhD student) - must be specified separately in the budget.
- **Operating expenses**, e.g. lab consumables, chemicals and reagents, research animals, sequencing/proteomics and other analysis services directly related to the project.
- **Equipment** required for the project, however not exceeding 20% of the budget total.
- **Conference and workshop expenses**, e.g. conference travel and participation for presentation of research results in relation to the project or participation in research leadership courses or workshops, up to DKK 50,000 per budget year.
- **Travel**, expenses directly related to the project, e.g. for experiment carried out in other labs for a limited period.
- **Publication of results** emanating from the research project, up to DKK 50,000 per budget year.
- **Project supplement** for research grants (Danish universities only)
- **Bench fee** (not applicable to Danish universities)
- **Administrative support** (not applicable to Danish universities)

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. 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 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.

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.

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.

1.6 Language

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

1.7 Application process

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@novoo.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.

1.8 Assessment criteria

NNF's [Committee on Bioscience and Basic Biomedicine](#) will primarily assess the applications based on the following criteria:

- Quality (scientific originality and relevance) and impact
- Scientific approach
- Scientific environment and collaboration
- Investigator track record (background, training, expertise, independence, and leadership potential). The applicant is assessed on her/his merits relative to age and career stage, potential and independence and the commitment to the applied project. Past mobility and international experience are considered advantageous.

If you have an active grant from the Foundation, this may be taken into consideration in the evaluation of your application for a new grant. In general, it is recommended that the main applicant has delivered results on the active grant(s) before submission of a new application to the Foundation. If you apply while having an active grant from the Foundation, you must describe how the project you propose in this application is different from and/or coherent with the project(s) already funded and briefly describe the progress of the already funded project(s).



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 can be maximum 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, number of citations, and H-index.
- A short paragraph on your teaching obligations. If no teaching obligations are presently in place, please provide a short teaching plan for the grant period.

Publication list can be a maximum of 5,000 characters.

Applicants should include a link to an updated profile with a full publication list for the applicant on either Google Scholar, Web of Science, or Scopus and below state up to the 10 most relevant publications for evaluating your merits. Include a complete specification of all authors for each publication with your own name highlighted.

Supplementary Information (under Applicant Information):

- Describe your terms of employment (where the project is to be carried out). Non-permanent employees should indicate when their current contracts are running out and how their salaries are covered. Tenure-track employees should indicate when they are up for tenure.
- Please include a clear overview of your current funding situation, listing your current grants and other major obligations and how much of your research time (in %) is committed to each of the projects.
- State 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.

PREVIOUS AND CURRENT GRANTS FROM NNF

- If you have submitted other applications to NNF you must list them in the table ONLY if they are still under review and thus a granting decision has not yet been made, if so, summarize how the(se) application(s) 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 any of the grants are related to the current application.

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.

PROJECT TITLE

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

BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a stand-alone summary of the project describing its purpose and primary methodologies and activities (maximum 2,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

(maximum 30,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters).

Please describe your proposed research project in detail – including purpose, background, state-of-the-art, methods, implementation, collaborations, and the significance of the project.

Please include a short paragraph of the synergy of the proposed project with project(s) already funded. Include also your thoughts regarding research leadership, your competitive edge and how you see your research programme unfold beyond this grant.

Abbreviations should be defined at the first use, and preferably a list of abbreviations should be included in the project description

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*1650 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).

LAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please provide a summary in English for non-experts in lay language. The lay project description should be short and suitable for publishing on the Novo Nordisk Foundation/[Research Leader Programme website](#) in case the project is funded, and thus cannot contain confidential information (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

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.

A **hosting letter from the administrating institution**, signed by the head of the institute, must be included. The hosting letter **must include**:

- A confirmation from the host institution that they accept that the project will take place at the given institution and that the institution will provide the required infrastructure, such as laboratory and office space, and administration of the grant.
- A confirmation that the host institution has agreed to the submitted budget and that the host institution will manage the potential grant according to this budget.
- A confirmation that the total external grant portfolio of the applicant does not exceed DKK 4 million (not considering this application), in the year of commencing the project.
- In case the applicant is not a permanent employee at the host institution the terms of employment should be described i.e., for non-permanent or tenure-track employees the hosting letter should indicate when their current contracts are starting/running out/are up for tenure and how their salaries are covered during the project period (if not applied for in this grant). Also, if the applicant has additional affiliations in addition to the one at the host institution (including affiliations to institutions abroad) the host institution must confirm the percentage time/affiliation that the applicant has to the host institution during the duration of this 5-year research project.

Please do not include other appendices.