Novo Nordisk Foundation

Guidelines for applicants

Postdoctoral Fellowships at MIT 2027

Facts about the call

Amount available per grant:
Up to DKK 3.6 million

Call opens:
30 September 2026

Call closes:
29 January 2027 at 14:00 (CET)

Applicant notification:
June 2027

Earliest start date:
1 October 2027

Latest start date:
30 September 2028

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

Contact:

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Scientific questions
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Administrative questions
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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 POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS AT MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY 2027

1.1 Purpose

The postdoctoral fellowship offers a unique opportunity to engage in cutting-edge research projects in collaboration with researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). MIT stands as a top global university in science and technology, renowned for its education, innovative research, and tradition of advancement. The programme invites early career researchers to apply for a three-year fellowship in collaboration with a research group at MIT. Fellows will conduct a research project at MIT for the first two years, followed by a return phase of up to one year at a Danish university or other Danish public or non-profit research institution.

The Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) aims to propel the career development of outstanding early-stage researchers by:

- Providing them with the opportunity to gain extensive research experience and training in a unique interdisciplinary environment at the highest international level, while fostering an open exchange of intellect and ideas.
- Promoting their scientific networks and innovative spirit through mobility, thus fostering scientific independence and international collaboration.
- Supporting their continued research collaborations and knowledge transfer between the Danish research ecosystem and MIT.

1.2 Areas of support

The programme supports research spanning from fundamental studies to innovative projects. Applications are welcome in all areas of natural and technical sciences, biomedicine, or biotechnology, provided the project is interdisciplinary and has potential impact on human health or sustainability. The project's potential applications for human health or sustainability must be clearly explained in the application.

1.3 Eligibility

The fellowship supports postdoctoral research projects for up to 3 years, where the first 2 years are spent at MIT. The final year must be dedicated to the return phase at the Danish host institution.

Applicants must:

- Have obtained a PhD degree in natural and technical sciences, biomedicine, or biotechnology within 5 years of the fellowship start date.
    - Leave of absence periods do not count towards the 5 years (documentation must be available upon request).
    - Applicants can apply as a PhD student if the PhD supervisor provides a statement that the applicant is expected to graduate before the start date of the fellowship.
- Establish contact with a host Principal Investigator (PI) at MIT who commits to being the primary research mentor for the duration of the stay abroad.
- Not have spent more than one year as a postdoctoral researcher at MIT at the time of application, although the stay may already have commenced.
- Have a confirmed Danish hosting institution, including a host PI, who will be the employer of the fellow for the duration of the fellowship, has committed to administrate the entire grant, and who will be the host of the fellow during the period in Denmark.
- Demonstrate association to the Danish educational system or research environment (e.g. graduated from a Danish University, Danish citizenship, or several years of research experience at a Danish institution).

A Danish university or other public, non-profit research institution in Denmark (Danish Host Institution) must employ the applicant and administer the fellowship for the entirety of the grant period.

Special rules for applications:

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

The general conditions for receiving a grant from NNF can be found on our webpage:

1.4 Funding

The duration of the fellowship is three years. NNF will support approximately up to DKK 1.2 million per year, with a maximum of DKK 3.6 million per fellowship.

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

- Salary for the applicant (1 FTE per year), including Project Supplement at Danish universities, administrative expenses at Danish hospitals and other non-profit research organisations, and bench fees at Danish hospitals and other non-profit research organisations.
- Operating expenses, including equipment and consumables, as well as direct administrative expenses and bench fee at MIT.
- Dissemination, training, and education, including conference participation (including travel), publication costs, relocation expenses (including travel), and expenses related to living abroad.

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

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

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 at a Danish Hospital or other non-profit research organisation, or at MIT. 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 at a Danish Hospital or other non-profit research organisation, as well as at MIT. 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 at a Danish host hospital or non-profit organisation and must be included therein.

Administrative support:

can cover expenses such as for accounting, payment of salaries, purchasing, hiring, as well as auditing and financial reporting on the project
cannot cover administrative expenses that are not directly related to the project
is not automatically included in the grant and must be stated/applied for in the application budget but should not be specified in detail

The 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
- In general, grants and projects involving use of products where Novo Group companies have a commercial interest (e.g. anti-obesity medications) must be in accordance with the Foundation's Guidelines for Philanthropic Collaboration with NNF-Controlled Companies, as well as internal conflict of interest policies

1.5 Language

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

1.6 Application process

Before applying:
The applicant must establish contact with a PI at MIT who will serve as the applicant's primary research mentor for the duration of the fellowship. 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.

Once an MIT faculty host (PI) is identified, the faculty member may also contact postdocservices@mit.edu with any questions about hosting a fellow. The applicant should work closely with the MIT PI on the research proposal and budget. Additionally, the applicant is encouraged to consider other MIT faculty members as potential co-mentors for the interdisciplinary research conducted during the fellowship.

Note: As an employee at a research institution in Denmark, fellows are entitled to Danish benefits including annual vacation while at MIT. However, the timing of using these benefits must be discussed and approved by the PI at MIT.

While the project is being developed, applicants should contact their Danish Host Institution to obtain a Host Letter and support for application submission. Additionally, the applicant must verify with their Danish host institution that they are in accordance with MIT's Inventions and Proprietary Information Agreement (IPIA). MIT requires that all incoming researchers sign the IPIA, as it addresses the disclosure and assignment of intellectual property pertaining to research supported through external organisations. The fellowship applicant should work with the MIT host department to ensure that the proposal is submitted to MIT's Research Administrative Services (RAS) following standard deadline processing, prior to final submission to NNF.

After submission:
The proposals are evaluated by the NNF Committee on Interdisciplinary Research. Up to five proposals are selected for evaluation by the MIT Research Development Faculty Committee. Applicants will be informed of their grant status after all applications have been assessed. The notification e-mail will be sent from norma-noreply@novo.dk to the e-mail address provided when creating a profile in NORMA.

If selected:
Selected fellows must establish an IP agreement between their Danish Host Institution and MIT through MIT's Technology Licencing Office by signing and electronically submitting the MIT Visitor IPIA form (bottom of page) prior to the start of the grant.

Application system opens	**30 September 2026**
Application deadline	**29 January 2027 at 14:00 CET**
Evaluation of applications	**February – May 2027**
Applicant notification	**June 2027**
Earliest possible start date	**1 October 2027**

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

The Novo Nordisk Foundation's Committee on Interdisciplinary Research will primarily assess the applications based on the following criteria:

- The creativity, novelty and ambition of the proposed research
- The innovation potential, if relevant
- The scientific excellence and merit of the applicant
- The appropriateness and involvement of the host research group at MIT
- Recommendation Letter
- Support Letter from the prospective PI
- Host Letter from the Danish administrating institution

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). 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 the main applicant.

Main applicant
CV
Maximum 4,000 characters, including spaces. Include a short bibliographic overview summarising the total number of peer-reviewed publications, number of first authorships, number of corresponding authorships, and number of citations.

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

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

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

Note: If you receive funding for the project, or parts of the project, from other sources following submission of this application, please inform NNF by emailing INT-

support@novo.dk. Receiving other funding will not impact the assessment of your application with NNF, but failure to disclose other funds may result in retraction of this fellowship.

Previous and current grants from NNF
List previous or ongoing grants with NNF where you were/are the main applicant or co-applicant. You must provide the application number, project title, grant period (in years), grant amount and the percentage share of the grant (100% if there is no co-applicant). Briefly summarise how the grants are related to the current application. Leave this section blank if not applicable.

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

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

Project description
Describe the proposed project in detail (maximum 20,000 characters, including spaces, line breaks and special characters):

- Include purpose, background, methods, collaborations, and significance.
- Clearly demonstrate the novelty and interdisciplinary approach of the proposed research.
- Include a description of the activities at MIT and the Danish Host Institution.
- Consider including co-mentors to enhance interdisciplinary aspects of the project. Indicate any potential co-mentor(s) if applicable.
- Include a timetable specifying the amount of time the applicant will spend abroad and in Denmark.

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

Illustration uploads
A maximum of four illustrations can be uploaded 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).
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

Grant period
Enter the project grant period, defined by the project start and end date. NORMA generates a grant period in project years, which is reflected in the budget template. The fellowship supports postdoctoral research projects with a grant period of three years.

Create budget
The budget will open in a new tab, in which subcategories can be added. All budget items must be entered in Danish Kroner (DKK). Salary costs must be entered as two separate rows:

one for the period employed at the Danish host institution and one for the period employed at MIT. Refer to Section 2.1 for more information about working in NORMA.
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.

Eligible budget expenses
The total amount applied for should not exceed DKK 3.6 million, with approximately DKK 1.2 million per year. **A minimum of DKK 240,000 must be requested per year for total project-related costs** at MIT, which cover equipment, operating expenses, conference participation, travel, publication costs, bench fee, and MIT administrative expenses (see below). Please allocate the budget which project-related costs are allocated for MIT and the Danish host institution the two separate budget rows, respectively. The applicant should discuss and get approval from the PI at MIT on the use of project related funds before submitting the application. The funds allocated to MIT will be transferred as annual upfront instalments from the Danish Host Institution.

- *Requests for any exceptions to the DKK 240,000/year project-related cost minimum will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with mutual agreement by the MIT PI, the relevant MIT unit's Director of Administration and Finance, the relevant MIT Research Administration Services Contract Administrator, and the Senior Scientific Manager of the Novo Nordisk Foundation.*

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. Applicants should apply for a full salary that adheres to MIT's standards for minimum. The Danish host institution will administer the salary and process reimbursement for relocation. *Note: salary for people other than the applicant (scientific or administrative) cannot be covered.*
- **Project supplement** for time spent at Danish Universities as postdoctoral researcher. *Refer to Section 1.4 for more information.*
- **Administrative expenses at a Danish Hospital or non-profit organisation**. *Refer to Section 1.4 for more information.*
- **Bench fee for time spent at a Danish Hospital or non-profit organization and at MIT**. *Refer to Section 1.4 for more information.*
- **Equipment** required for the project, not exceeding 20% of the total budget total.
- **Operating expenses** related to the research, including consumables, reagents, analysis and computational resources.
- **Travel expenses** directly related to the project, i.e., experiments carried out in other labs for a limited period**.** Cannot be used for conferences or personal travel.
- **Conference participation** of up to DKK 50,000 per budget year can be requested for travel and registration expenses in relation to presenting the project at conferences and workshops.

- **Publication costs** can be requested to publish results emanating from the research project.
- **MIT Administrative expenses**. DKK 25,000 per year spent at MIT must be reserved as a budget post under Operation/Operating expenses for administrative expenses for MIT.
- **Relocation expenses** of up to DKK 110,000 over the total grant period**.**
- **Expenses related to living abroad** of up to DKK 70,000 annually for the recipient. An additional DKK 55,000 can be allocated for dependents.
    - NNF Fellows will be appointed as 'Postdoctoral Fellows' at MIT and are eligible for benefits offered by MIT (https://hr.mit.edu/eligibility-postdoctoral-fellows).
    - NNF Fellows (and dependents) are eligible for the MIT Affiliate Health Plan and budget should be allocated under "Expenses related to living abroad" to cover the insurance premium. The fellow will remit payment to MIT to cover their MIT Health Benefits. *Note: This budget post is only eligible if additional health insurance is required, cf. terms under 'Host Letter', section 3.5.*
    - Please do not allocate budget for 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.

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

3.5 Appendices

Please include the following supplementary documents:
All uploads must be in PDF format.

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

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

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

Applications may be administratively rejected if any mandatory information and/or appendices are missing or incomplete.